

# Analysing the Effectiveness of EUFOR Althea Operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina\*

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## ABSTRACT

European Union has since the 1990s established close links with the countries of the Western Balkans, aiming to secure stable, prosperous and well-functioning democratic societies on a path towards the EU integration. It had placed operations in the framework of then European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), now renamed Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), high on the political agenda of the Union. Following the decision by NATO to hand over its own operation that had the task of maintaining security in the region, the EU launched a military operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina titled Operation EUFOR Althea, on 2 December 2004, 9 years after the war ended. EUFOR Althea is a military operation and up until now the longest CSDP operation in its history. The present paper undertakes an analysis of the effectiveness of EUFOR Althea, which is defined as: “when an operation achieves its purpose in an appropriate manner both from

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the perspective of the EU and the conflict it seeks to prevent.” So-called ‘effectiveness success criteria/indicators’ are used to evaluate the effectiveness. Indicators take into account two levels of perspectives, EU and non-EU, the first one including the general EU and EU personnel perspective, and the second entailing local stakeholders’ view. For assessing effectiveness, the article draws lessons from the findings of the research of EUFOR Althea’s capabilities. The article argues that despite the long-lasting presence of the operation on the ground and no official sign of the operation leaving soon, the operation has nevertheless achieved certain success, especially in maintaining safe and secure environment, advancing human rights and gender equality as well as capacity-building of the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

**KEY WORDS:** European Union, Bosnia and Herzegovina, CSDP, EUFOR Althea, effectiveness

## POVZETEK

Evropska unija je od 1990-ih let vzpostavila tesne stike z državami Zahodnega Balkana, da bi zagotovila stabilne, uspešne in dobro delujoče demokratične družbe pri integraciji v EU. Ta cilj je postavil misije in operacije znotraj takratne Evropske varnostne in obrambne politike (EVOP) visoko na politično agendo držav EU, kasneje preimenovane v Skupno varnostno in obrambno politiko (SVOP). Ob odločitvi Nata, da preda svojo misijo, ki je bila vzpostavljena z namenom zagotavljanja varnosti v regiji, je EU 2. decembra 2004 v ta namen ustanovila vojaško operacijo EUFOR Althea v Bosni in Hercegovini (BiH). EUFOR Althea je do danes najdlje trajajoča SVOP operacija. Pričujoči prispevek analizira uspešnost le-te, ki je definirana kot: ‘ko operacija doseže svoj namen na primeren način, tako z vidika EU, kot tudi konflikta, ki ga želi preprečiti.’ Za potrebe analize so bili vzpostavljeni tako imenovani kriteriji/indikatorji za merjenje uspešnosti. Indikatorji upoštevajo dve perspektivi, EU raven ter raven izven EU, kjer prva vključuje EU kot celoto ter njene predstavnike, medtem ko se druga osredotoča na raven končnih lokalnih deležnikov. Pri oceni učinkovitosti članek črpa zaključke iz ugotovitev raziskave o zmogljivostih operacije Althea. Članek tako navaja, da operacija kljub dolgi prisotnosti v BiH ter brez znakov, da bo kmalu zakl-

jučena, dosega določen uspeh, predvsem pri ohranjanju varnega in stabilnega okolja, spodbujanju človekovih pravic in enakopravnosti spolov ter krepitvi zmogljivosti oboroženih sil BiH.

**KLJUČNE BESEDE:** Evropska unija, Bosna in Hercegovina, SVOP, EUFOR Althea, uspešnost

## INTRODUCTION

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), one of the six constituent republics of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Yugoslavia), entered a period of bitter war in March 1992, which lasted more than three years. It ended with a death toll estimated between 100.000 and 200.000 people and left almost half of the population displaced (New World Encyclopedia, 2016). The war was brought to an end in 1995 with the assistance of the international community under auspices of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), bringing the leaders from Belgrade, Sarajevo and Zagreb to negotiation table in Dayton, and with the signing of the Dayton Accords<sup>4</sup> in Paris, which signalled a long road towards restoring peace and security in the country. NATO remained in BiH for nine years, ensuring the successful implementation of the Dayton Accords in all entities of BiH, meaning de-escalation of the conflict, demilitarization and disarmament of the armed forces and civilian population, as well as repatriation of the displaced persons. NATO's first task force was named Implementation Force (IFOR) and became operational in December 1995, containing over 60.000 troops. Exactly one year later, the subsequent task force known as Stabilisation Force (SFOR) took over IFOR's mandate, until NATO expressed intention to retreat its forces at the Istanbul Summit in June 2004 after eight years of its operation (Knezović, 2005).

European Union (EU) clearly expressed its objective to take over the operation in BiH. The approach of the EU to the Western Balkans was based on the strategic objectives aiming at an eventual membership of these countries in the EU and has guaranteed

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<sup>4</sup> United Nations, General Assembly, Security Council S/1995/999 *General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina*.

European commitment to BiH (Council of the EU, 2004b). In June 2003, Romano Prodi, the tenth President of the European Commission, addressed all EU member states and nations from the European region at the Thessaloniki Summit and declared that Europe's unification cannot be completed without all countries from the region becoming members. The final document of the Summit, Thessaloniki Declaration<sup>5</sup> also confirmed that the future of the Western Balkans, consequently BiH, lies within the EU. 9 July 2004 United Nations Security Council (UNSC) welcomed the intention of the EU to provide for the new operation in BiH with the UNSC Resolution 1551<sup>6</sup> and authorized the EU operation to proceed in November 2004 with the UNSC Resolution 1575<sup>7</sup> (ibid.).

The purpose of this article is to introduce the findings related to the effectiveness of the EUFOR Althea operation, drawn from the research in the framework of the project Improving the Effectiveness of Capabilities in EU Conflict Prevention (IECEU).<sup>8</sup> The case of EUFOR Althea operation will be utilized to present the outcomes and considerations that should be taken into account when discussing the real impact of Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) military and civilian missions and operations on their host countries. In the article, we will firstly research the main background information on the EUFOR Althea, which are needed to understand the security, and especially the political environment, that has brought to the establishment of the operation – we will especially stress the EU's perception of the

<sup>5</sup> *Thessaloniki Declaration* 10229/03, adopted in Thessaloniki on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2003, at EU – Western Balkan Summit.

<sup>6</sup> Security Council Resolution S/RES/1551 (2004), adopted on 9<sup>th</sup> July 2004.

<sup>7</sup> Security Council Resolution S/RES/1575 (2004), adopted on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2004.

<sup>8</sup> The IECEU (Improving the Effectiveness of Capabilities in EU Conflict Prevention) is project aiming to enhance the conflict prevention capabilities. This project has received funding from the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation HORIZON 2020. The IECEU Consortium (11 participants from 7 different European countries) itself consists of a diverse group of civilian, research and military organizations. IECEU analyses the best practices and lessons learned with a view to enhance the civilian conflict prevention and peace building capabilities of EU with a catalogue of practices, new solutions and approaches. The main goals of the IECEU -project are: Analyzing the current situation of on-going and past European Union CSDP missions and operations; Learning from lessons provided by these CSDP operations and assessing the different options; Providing new solutions, approaches and recommendations for EU to guarantee long-term stability through conflict prevention and peacebuilding. For more info check: <http://www.ieceu-project.com/> (23 November 2016).

operation's significance for the development of the CSDP pillar, which even today still affects its functioning. The mandate and its evolution will also be presented. Secondly, we will closely examine EUFOR Althea's effectiveness and assess the considerations emerging from it and the challenges due to the lack of it. The evaluation of effectiveness is inherently based on the preceding case-study research of the key capabilities – planning capacity, operational capacity, interoperability, competencies, comprehensiveness and technologies. The objective is to assess the effectiveness of the EUFOR Althea operation through the four so-called effectiveness success criteria/indicators, developed as a methodological approach in the IECEU project; namely internal goal attainment, internal appropriateness, external goal attainment and external appropriateness. The paper seeks a deeper understanding of concrete factors furthering the effectiveness and impact of CSDP crisis management operations. The article argues that EUFOR Althea, being a testing ground for CSDP missions, has achieved certain success, especially in maintaining safe and secure environment, advancing human rights and gender equality as well as capacity-building of the Armed Forces of BiH.

## **METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK**

The research method applied is qualitative data content analysis. The data used in this article has its basis in the interviews and discussions, carried out in the framework of the IECEU project. The interviews were conducted in the period between November 2015 and March 2016, with former and current personnel of EUFOR Althea, local and international regional experts, representatives of the governmental actors of various EU member states, European External Action Service (EEAS) representatives as well as other EU, non-EU and civil society representatives, NATO, Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and international development agencies. All discussions were confidential; the names of the interviewees will therefore not be disclosed. The interviews were carried out by seven experts in English, Finnish and Bosnian language. Analysis of primary and secondary sources serves as a supportive research method.

Within the IECEU project, level of effectiveness in CSDP operation is measured based on success factors. Effectiveness of the EU's crisis management is defined as "*when a mission/an operation achieves its purpose in an appropriate manner both from the perspective of the EU and the conflict(s) it seeks to prevent.*" Effectiveness thus encompasses both, achievements of a certain mission/operation, as well as the path and tools the operation used to achieve it. Effectiveness is assessed through internal and external perspective. The internal perspective should reflect the extent to which the operation succeeded according to EU's politico-strategic goals and objectives, and if the implementation went well according to the EU's plans (hence, whether it achieved the goal in the way in which they had set out to do it). The internal perspective looks for the views of the policy-makers, civilian mission personnel and military operation personnel. The external perspective should assess the operation according to the overall purpose of conflict prevention – it considers the effectiveness with regard to medium term peacebuilding and long term stability. It takes into regard the perspective of local actors in the host country and the international community.

The effectiveness of EUFOR Althea is assessed through the lens of the four 'effectiveness criteria' established in the project, namely internal goal attainment, internal appropriateness, external goal attainment and external appropriateness:

#### Internal effectiveness

- *Internal goal attainment* – to what extent does an operation achieve what the EU set out to do? It analyses whether the operation has achieved its intended purpose and the tasks it had set out to do, taking into account key objectives and the overall mandate of the operation. Indicators of internal goal attainment take into consideration *fulfilment of operational objectives* and *politico-strategic goals* of the operation.
- *Internal appropriateness* – to what extent has an operation been implemented according to EU plans? It examines

whether the way in which the operation has been implemented is appropriate, looking at it from the intervener's perspective. Internal appropriateness assesses whether an operation is implemented well on the ground and has the desired politico-strategic effect at home as well as abroad. *Timeliness*, *efficiency* and *cost-effectiveness* in implementation are three key indicators of internal appropriateness.

#### External effectiveness:

- *External goal attainment* – to what extent does an operation help prevent violent conflict? EU operations are usually a part of wider efforts to prevent conflict and this criterion considers CSDP operations in the light of these broader efforts. It analyses whether an operation has had a meaningful, positive and sustainable impact on the potentially violent conflict on the ground. The indicators of external goal attainment are, whether or not there is an initiation of violent conflict (violent conflict begins), continuation (continues over time or reoccurs), diffusion (a conflict in one geographic area spreads to another), escalation (new actors have become involved in an existing conflict) or intensification (increase in number or nature of violent incidents) of the conflict.
- *External appropriateness* – to what extent has an operation been proportionate in its preventive measures? It assesses the ways in which an operation seeks to achieve its purpose. It assesses whether more good than harm is done, as well as ensures that what is done is done by proportionate means of power and persuasion to facilitate effective prevention of (more) violent conflict. The indicators, which measure external appropriateness, are proportional prevention i.e. more good (positive and sustainable contribution to preventing violent conflict) than harm (force, coercion and other negative effects).

## EUFOR ALTHEA AT GLANCE

EU's objectives regarding external and foreign relations were first identified in the Maastricht Treaty<sup>9</sup> as EU realized it had no power over conflict in its immediate neighbourhood, which had clear effect on its borders and member states became interested in development of common crisis management capabilities. Two approaches were established, aiming at complementing each other, Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), concentrating on foreign policy objectives, and European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), which aimed at execution of crisis management in the field. The need for operational capabilities was expressed already in St. Malo declaration<sup>10</sup> and Treaty of Amsterdam,<sup>11</sup> which encompassed crisis management into CFSP. In 1999, European Council approved the Action plan for civilian crisis management and development of institutional structures for its implementation (Gourlay and others, 2006). ESDP, renamed Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) after Lisbon Treaty<sup>12</sup> entered into force and became operational in 2003, with first missions being carried out (Juncos, 2014). The then President of the European Commission, Romano Prodi, confirmed in his speech in June 2003 at the Thessaloniki Summit that the Thessaloniki declaration officially stressed that the future of the Western Balkans lies within the EU (European Commission, 2004). EUFOR Althea was launched in the proper momentum for ESDP when the future of BiH mattered not only for maintaining peace and security in EU's neighbourhood but for EU's self-perception as a foreign policy and security actor.

Indicating the significance of the operation is the fact that BiH has sometimes been referred to as a 'testing ground' for CSDP. Firstly, it has been the impetus providing for the development of the EU crisis management instruments (Council of the EU,

<sup>9</sup> European Union, *Treaty on European Union*, Treaty of Maastricht, signed 7 February 1992 in Maastricht, in force from 1 November 1993.

<sup>10</sup> Saint-Malo Declaration, signed on 4 December 1998 in Saint-Malo.

<sup>11</sup> European Union, *Treaty of Amsterdam*, amending the Treaty on European Union, the Treaties establishing the European Communities and certain related acts, as signed on 2 October 1997 in Amsterdam, in force from 1 May 1999.

<sup>12</sup> European Union, *Treaty of Lisbon*, amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty Establishing the European Community, 13 December 2007, 2007/C 306/01



2004b). The EU has been able to evolve from a civilian power to a more multifaceted one, resorting to military instruments – with an aim to promote its own values and goals – through the development of the CSDP. Moreover, EUFOR Althea has allowed the EU to experiment with its military capabilities in a relatively safe multi-actor environment. With deployment of EUFOR Althea, the EU has been aiming at constructing itself as a credible security actor, while doing so in a relatively risk-free environment. Furthermore, EUFOR Althea has been explicitly framed as an element of a broader, comprehensive EU policy towards the region, like stated in Thessaloniki Declaration – promoting instruments, which will strengthen BiH, bringing it closer to the European perspective and towards eventual EU membership (Juncos, 2015). This was also stated in public official documents, as the EU medium term objective: “[EU is] supporting BiH’s progress towards the EU integration by its own efforts, by contributing to a safe and secure environment with the objective of signing the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA)” (Council of EU 2004, 3).

EUFOR Althea, EU’s third military operation, is a concrete embodiment of this perception. Since it has been explicitly framed as part of a comprehensive approach to the Balkans, Althea can be seen as a mix of civil-military operation, rather than a purely military one. Established in December 2004, with the decision of the Council of the EU,<sup>13</sup> EUFOR Althea has been the longest military intervention launched in the framework of CSDP, as one of the EU’s crisis management instruments. It was deployed in 2004 under the Berlin Plus Agreement<sup>14</sup> enabling the EU to utilize NATO’s assets and capabilities in the operation (Council of EU Secretariat, 2015).

The goal of the EUFOR Althea was at the time of its founding to ensure the continued implementation of and compliance with the Dayton Agreement, to contribute to a safe and secure envi-

<sup>13</sup> Council of the European Union Decision 2004/803/CFSP of 25 November 2004 on the launching of the European Union military operation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

<sup>14</sup> The Berlin Plus agreement is a comprehensive package of arrangements finalized in 2003 between the EU and the NATO and it enables EU to make use of NATO assets and capabilities for EU-led crisis management operations (European External Action Service, 2016a).

ronment and, finally, to support the Euro-Atlantic integration of BiH. It was deployed at a force of 7.000 troops (Kim, 2006). However, due to the changes in the security situation in BiH, the mandate has evolved and has been reconfigured four times, most recently in September 2012 – however, it continues to act in accordance with its peace enforcement mandate under the Chapter VII of the UN Charter. The new mandate of the EUFOR Althea now encompasses three main objectives: to provide for capacity-building and training of Armed Forces of BiH (AFBiH) (non-executive part), to support BiH authorities in maintaining a safe and secure environment in BiH and to provide support to overall EU comprehensive strategy for BiH. The non-executive part of training of AFBiH, aims at achieving that BiH becomes a security provider, rather than a security consumer in the long term. The executive part, a goal of supporting the authorities in maintaining a safe and secure environment, consists of tasks such as: countermines activities, military and civilian movement, control of weapons, ammunition and explosive substances and management of weapons and ammunition storage sites (Council of EU Secretariat, 2015). The operation EUFOR Althea maintains its presence throughout the BiH through Liaison and Observation Teams (LOTs), which are mostly made up of troops from Austria, Hungary and Turkey (Interview no. 2). Following reconfiguration in 2012, EUFOR Althea's troop level is currently approximately 600. It has been argued that the restructuring was driven primarily by lack of political will and by withdrawals of participating nations (Interview no. 21).

EUFOR Althea has been present in BiH for 12 years so far, and despite the fact no violence among the ethnic lines occurred during this mandate, yet the operation with its executive mandate is still present in the territory of BiH. The strategic planning seems to be problematic, since there was no open discussion on the exit strategy or phasing out of the operation: what milestones should be reached for the operation to be able to end? (Interview no. 67, 68). There is no timetable or benchmarks that the operation should achieve, for the gradual transfer of power to the national government – the exit strategy is listed as: “to be based on progress in building efficient state level structures, in particular in

the area of security and defence. This objective is primarily the responsibility of the BiH government assisted by EU civilian actors. Moreover, it will be important to avoid the creation of a culture of dependence upon EUFOR,” (Council of EU 2004, 4). With no clear reform agenda nor the exit strategy, it is highly difficult to assess the success of the ongoing operation, while the wide perception is that the continuation of the operation serves political purposes (IECEU, Roundtable discussion of experts, 2016).

## EFFECTIVENESS OF EUFOR ALTHEA

### INTERNAL EFFECTIVENESS: SUCCESS FOR THE EU

Success for the EU takes into account the extent to which EUFOR Althea has succeeded in relation to the EU’s politico-strategic goals and operational objectives, along with whether their implementation is going well in the light of Union’s plans, procedures, and principles. It analyses whether the operation has been implemented well on the ground and had the desired politico-strategic effect at home as well as abroad. In other words, the internal assessment focuses on whether the EU achieved what it set out to do, in the way that it set out to, both strategically and operationally.

#### **Internal goal attainment: to what extent does the operation achieve what the EU set out to do?**

The operation was established in line with the EU’s comprehensive approach, to assist in creating conditions for meeting the long-term political objective of a stable, viable, peaceful and multi-ethnic BiH, as well as supporting BiH’s progress towards the EU integration by its own efforts (Council of EU, 2004). In this framework, its original operational objectives were to provide deterrence and contribute to a safe and stable environment in BiH. In 2012, Althea’s focus shifted to capacity building and training for the AFBiH and supporting them in their progress towards NATO standards. Its obligation to support authorities in maintaining safe and secure environment remained (Council of EU Secretariat, 2015).

Deriving from the former, in terms of deterrence and maintaining a safe and secure environment, EUFOR Althea can be considered a success, but we have to take into account that the security environment into which EUFOR Althea arrived had been relatively stable and safe. There has been no recurrence of the fighting along the ethnic lines in the time of EUFOR's presence in BiH (Interview no. 68). The operation is also performing well with regard to its achievements in the field of capacity building and training of the AFBiH (Interview no. 28, 34). The goal is to create an effective domestic army that will be able to support BiH authorities in a humanitarian role and in the spirit of a 'dual use of forces,' besides performing conventional army roles (European External Action Service, 2016b). There are some indicators supporting the notion that the development has been reached. Firstly, AFBiH troops have been participating in NATO- and UN-led peace-support operations since 2006 (Commission of the European Communities, 2007) and an agreement enabling participation in CSDP operations was signed in September 2015 (European External Action Service, 2015). Secondly, Peace Support Operations Training Centre (PSOTC)<sup>15</sup> has within the last 10 years increased its number of yearly activities from five to thirty-two and has managed to provide training for more than 6,000 individuals, 25% of them consisting of international personnel (Interview no. 55). However, no clear goals or baselines have been agreed upon for capacity building and training that would enable more precise assessment of the effectiveness of the EU efforts (Interview no. 21). Furthermore, the CSDP operation recently failed to carry out an assessment of the capacity building and training activities carried out that was assigned by the member states, because of the six-month rotation of the EU staff. This indicates a shortfall in operational capacity, which ultimately resulted in NATO taking over the assessment process (Interview no. 68, 27, 41, 59).

<sup>15</sup> In order to train the officer corps, the international community set up the Peace Support Operations Training Centre (PSOCT) in 2005, co-located at Camp Butmir with the AFBiH Operational Command as well as EUFOR and NATO Headquarters. PSOCT started functioning under international leadership and since its inception has offered training both for the multi-ethnic AFBiH and international participants. According to interviewees deployed in BiH during the first years of the CSDP operation, the cooperation both between the ethnic groups in AFBiH and between AFBiH and EUFOR worked well.

Currently, NATO and EUFOR seek to coordinate their efforts to reach some kind of defence reform, which can help both organisations achieve their long-term objectives over the country. From the EU perspective, after 20 years since the end of the conflict, the politico-strategic goal of BiH's membership in the EU has still not been reached. Although BiH formally applied for the EU membership in February 2016, there is still a long way to go with several political and social challenges awaiting BiH along the way (Minard 2016, 2). Therefore, the internal goal attainment clearly balances closer to partial success, rather than success.

Nevertheless, there are open questions that should be presented, regarding the politico-strategic goals and operational objectives. Firstly, even though the security situation seems to be stable in BiH, there has been something bubbling under in regard to the social situation. Factors threatening security are socio-economic, starting at unemployment and healthcare, and continuing with radicalization contributing to terrorism (Security Council Report, 2016). Hence, we can identify a discrepancy – the current security concerns are relatively far from the daily life of citizens and the tool the mission uses is only adequate for military threats (Interview no. 67). Should the operation finally be phased out, should the resources be allocated to something else? For taking the steps towards the EU membership and reaching democratization and reconciliation, BiH needs economic and social development. So why did the EU first opt for closing the civilian CSDP mission in BiH<sup>16</sup>? For example, law enforcement in BiH is too complex; it burdens the public administration and is not trusted by the local population. Hence, policing is clearly an area, where BiH would need further support (European Commission, 2015). Several other questions are also still left unaddressed by the operation when it comes to the politico-strategic goals and operation's objectives. First of all, several interviewees and experts noted that

<sup>16</sup> The civilian mission European Police Mission (EUPM) in BiH started on 1 January 2003, for an initial period of three years. It overtook responsibilities from the UN's International Police Task Force. The mission's objectives were to strengthen the capacities of the law enforcement agencies engaged in the fight against organized crime and corruption, assist in the investigations and the development of criminal investigative capacities of BiH, enhance police-prosecution cooperation, strengthen police-penitentiary system cooperation, as well as to contribute to ensuring a suitable level of accountability. Ultimately, the mission continued with modified mandates until 30 June 2012 (European External Action Service 2012).

although no violence has occurred since the deployment of the operation, threats in the country still exist, but they are of a societal nature (Knauer 2011, 5 and Interviews no. 39, 57, 62). For years now threats for everyday citizens have shifted and evolved, where biggest problems currently include socio-economic issues, health and radicalization, while the tool at hand has stayed appropriate for tackling military threats solely (Interview no. 70).

**Internal appropriateness: to what extent has the operation been implemented according to EU plans?**

*Internal appropriateness* examines whether the way in which the operation is implemented is appropriate, looking at it from the intervener's perspective. Internal appropriateness assesses whether the operation is implemented well on the ground and has the desired politico-strategic effect at home as well as abroad. Timeliness, efficiency and cost-effectiveness in implementation are three key indicators of internal appropriateness.

The first indicator measuring internal appropriateness is timeliness. The EU response timeframe in case of EUFOR Althea was not a critical question in the case of BiH. The military problem had largely ceased to exist by the time EUFOR Althea took over its tasks from SFOR. Therefore, no rapid deployment was deemed necessary and force generation did not present a challenge for the Union. Furthermore, the operation was not very demanding in terms of planning, since it has been carried out with recourse to NATO assets and capabilities under the Berlin Plus arrangements. On the other hand, even though the deployment and initial planning were successful actions, the EU has failed to define and agree on the end state for the exit strategy (Interview no 67, 68). Evaluation criteria for the operational tasks have been discussed and drafted at the Headquarters level since 2005, but the CSDP operation still lacks official time-limited conditions. Lack of coordination or planning guidance exercised from strategic/political level toward operational level is a clear inadequacy mentioned by several interviewees. As for the capacity-building and training work, like previously mentioned, EUFOR Althea has only recently come to an understanding with NATO and the AF-

BiH on the coordination of efforts and resources to aim at a specific set of capabilities of the AFBiH (European External Action Service, 2015). What is still needed is a fully funded plan for procurement of key assets and equipment and an agreement on the goals against which the development of the AFBiH could later be evaluated.

The second appropriateness indicator, efficiency associated with the capabilities and their implementation, is less clear to assess. Liaison and Observation Teams (LOTs) that are living among the local population across BiH seem to have been an excellent tool for gathering information, bringing visibility to the operation, and engaging with a wide audience, but as already mentioned, the operation had good planning capacity from the outset although with certain gaps and weaknesses, which manifest in the operational capacity and were identified in the course of the research process. Firstly, lack of Human Intelligence (HUMINT) capability is a gap that hinders efficient and effective intelligence-gathering. Also subject to question is the extent to which the 17 LOTs can maintain and produce situational awareness, especially in the current context in which EUFOR has less mobile capability than it previously had. Other problems with the LOTs lie in the personnel breakdown (specifically, a low proportion of female officers and older personnel) and the above-mentioned short rotation cycle that hinders development of relationships of trust with locals and following up on the policies implemented (Interview no. 41, 59).

The composition of the force in terms of personnel is a weakness also in a broader sense; participating nations do not provide staff with the background and skill sets needed (Interview no. 26). The short rotation cycle, in turn, undermines institutional memory and has a negative effect on the lessons-learned process. Also, it appears that the national pre-deployment training could be more harmonized and suited to the tasks at hand (Interviews no. 34, 40, 46). In addition, lack of strategic communication is a weakness that affects both the institutional efficiency and the political visibility of the CSDP operation – unless the EU has a proactive and coherent information strategy, local politicians will

use the platform, which is also going to be affected by geopolitical power games (Interview no. 57, 61, 63 and 36).

Thirdly, the lack of resources within the AFBiH for acquiring appropriate equipment is a significant external barrier to effectiveness. The Althea mechanism cannot be used to fund AFBiH equipment. For this reason, training is frequently cancelled. Even when training is conducted with the aid of EU assets and equipment the result is not sustainable because the AFBiH may have gained the skills but still lack the means to deliver. Lack of common equipment reduces the ability to cross-train and hence demands that training be carried out by each equipment-providing nation (Interview no. 36, 34, 39 and 24).

Other major external barriers include the political structure, a culture plagued by corruption and lack of meritocracy in BiH, and extensive power games in the region. The EUFOR Althea operation is clearly most popular among the Bosnian population and on the side of the Federation (FBiH), whereas Republika Srpska (RS) is not genuinely committed to cooperation with the EU actors (Interview no. 37). Cooperation with all ethnic groups requires a balancing act and is time-consuming on account of the inflexible institutional structures. In order to reach the operational objectives related to capacity-building and training, EUFOR Althea will also have to enhance its cooperation and coordination with NATO, which is leading the defence reform at the strategic level.

The main internal institutional barriers of EUFOR Althea mission, when it comes to efficiency, are largely connected with political will and comprehensiveness. Firstly, the future of EUFOR Althea may be debated between those in favour of discontinuing the operation and those who wish to stay in BiH, but as long as the operation continues, there should be stronger political will to provide human and other resources that its mandate requires (Interview no. 21).

As in the case of other CSDP operations, common operational costs are covered jointly through the Althea mechanism. Since



the definition of common costs is relatively narrow, most costs fall to the troop-contributing countries. However, the cost of EUFOR Althea for the participating nations both in terms of common costs and nationally borne costs is relatively low (Council of the EU, 2014b). All in all, the operation keeps the EU flag waving and, with its annual budget of approximately 10 million Euros, represents a minimal cost presence to ensure that no deterioration in the security situation occurs (Council of EU Secretariat, 2015). From the cost-effectiveness angle, the operation can therefore be considered a success. On the other hand, it can be argued that the EU is gambling its reputation and credibility since it maintains a Chapter VII mandate without real capability to carry out the security task fully (Interview no. 50 and 62). In the worst case, with the current configuration and contributions, the political costs could be significant, both from the perspective of individual member states and from that of the rest of the world. In consequence of the above-mentioned gaps and weaknesses, the operation can only be seen as a partial success in terms of efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

## **EXTERNAL EFFECTIVENESS: ASSESSING THE SUCCESS FROM THE CONFLICT PERSPECTIVE**

Looking from the external perspective, CSDP operation is assessed in terms of its contribution towards the overall conflict prevention or to preventing further violent conflict. This criterion takes into account the effectiveness of short-term EU crisis management with regard to medium term peace-building and long-term stability. The external perspective is focused on what can reasonably be expected of operational conflict prevention and the ways in which the operation has sought to prevent violent conflict, for purposes of determining whether the prevention efforts were and are proportional to the challenge at hand.

### **External goal attainment: to what extent does the operation help prevent violent conflict?**

*External goal attainment* analyses whether an operation has had a meaningful, positive and sustainable impact on the poten-

tially violent conflict on the ground. The indicators of external goal attainment are, whether or not there is an initiation of violent conflict (violent conflict begins), continuation (continues over time or reoccurs), diffusion (a conflict in one geographic area spreads to another), escalation (new actors have become involved in an existing conflict) or intensification (increase in number or nature of violent incidents).

By the end of 2004, when transition establishing EUFOR Althea happened, BiH was well beyond the stabilization stage and was progressing towards the integration to the EU, and the state-strengthening process was already happening (Azinović and others, 2011). The relationship between the two parties in the conflict, FBiH and RS, improved (Knauer, 2011), and despite the tensions still existing, the intensity of the conflict was defined as “low” (ibid.). Since EUFOR Althea was not deployed in a crisis, but in an already stable post-crisis security environment, it is difficult to analyse to what extent the CSDP operation has been the reason for preventing continuation, diffusion, escalation, and intensification of violence (Interview no. 68). However, EUFOR Althea, being a military tool, with focus on capability development, has limited resources and capabilities for responding to the mentioned challenges of socio-economic environment, corruption or radicalization that could lead into the potential conflict (Security Council Report, 2016). But, judging from the facts at hand, EUFOR Althea has provided safe and stable environment, as there has been no recurrence of violence, and the operation’s forces have never been asked to intervene, we can assess that the operation has been successful in external goal attainment. At this point it is important to note that no direct proof exists proving the causal relationship of no occurrence of violence and EUFOR Althea, so no direct success can be attributed to the operation, while improvement of certain conditions, listed further in the research, prove that EUFOR Althea had its fair share in it.

The role of EUFOR Althea in stabilizing the society and creating conditions for long-lasting, sustainable peace has been clear in the field of capacity-building training, as it has contributed to the professionalization of the AFBiH (Interview no. 55). EU-

FOR plays an important part in implementation of the reform's technical and tactical aspects, while it is coordinating its efforts with NATO (Interview no. 39). EUFOR Althea can be viewed as having contributed to the concrete institutional development of the AFBiH and its capabilities, by helping to set a good example of the benefits to be achieved with ethnic integration (Interview no. 69). The operation has also improved conditions for structural conflict prevention particularly in the field of gender and human rights. It may be considered that the more the vulnerable population groups are included in maintaining sustainable peace, the lower the likelihood of these groups becoming targeted by violence or their rights being ignored or violated. Nevertheless, there are almost no examples of representatives of vulnerable or underrepresented groups being included in peace negotiations in a timely and effective manner. In consequence, potential for deficiencies in the peace arrangements can be expected, and BiH is no exception with regard to these deficiencies (UN Women 2016). BiH for example, has not yet modified its State Constitution in accordance to the Judgment made in a case *Sejdić-Finci v BiH* (2009). The appellants, a Roma minority and a Jewish minority, filed an application to the European Court of Human Rights after being illegible to stand for the House of Representatives and Presidency of BiH. In its Judgment, the Court assessed that the Dayton Peace Agreement and its constitutional provisions were designed to end one of the deadliest conflicts in Europe. The Court recognized, although did not justify, that due to the nature of the conflict, such constitutional provisions of giving certain power-balancing mechanisms to the 'constituent peoples' have served to ensure peace and stability in BiH (*ibid.*).<sup>17</sup> The Court went an extra mile by citing sources that clearly demonstrate appropriate alternate mechanisms in which the same ends could be achieved without racially discriminating other ethnic groups/minorities, hence concluding that the State Constitution of BiH is in respect to election to the House of Representatives in violation of Article 14 in junction with Article 3 of Protocol no. 1 of the European Convention on Human Rights (*ibid.*).

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<sup>17</sup> *Sejdic and Finci v. Bosnia and Herzegovina* (2009), application 27996/06 and 34836/06, Council of Europe: European Court of Human Rights.

In the context of our interviews conducted with EUFOR Althea personnel, we deem particularly important to problematize this structural violence that is constitutionally enforced over minorities in BiH. UNICEF BiH (2013, 14) in one of its final reports states *“pattern of social, economic and political exclusion that Roma experience shows that their life expectancy and living standards are below average. Health problems start earlier. A majority of Roma children never complete primary school, very few go to secondary school, even fewer attend university. Roma are virtually absent from politics, their civil society organizations tend to be weak and they are often without official representation as a minority. Attitudes towards Roma are more negative than towards any other [ethnic] group”*. To understand inequality and especially to understand the root cause of inequality in the case of minorities in BiH, requires a more methodological approach of examining and assessing structural violence.

It seems that all relevant activities aimed at gender equality in BiH started after the Dayton Agreement, not having been acknowledged as a necessity already during the peace negotiations. In consequence, many gender-related issues have not been addressed properly or in a timely manner, and some may not be adequately addressed even today. This is evident particularly with respect to sexual violence during conflict. Increased participation of women in governmental and public institutions may not only act toward the achievement of gender equality, but also foster better prevention of future conflicts. In BiH this work is in progress and has already shown measurable results; the BiH defence sector has shown particular success in increasing female engagement. Also, EUFOR Althea has managed to put gender equality on the agenda of the post-conflict society through its gender mainstreaming efforts (Interview no. 33, 53, 38).

Finally, EUFOR Althea has contributed relatively successfully to further conflict prevention initiatives through the lessons learnt output. On some occasions, lessons have truly been learnt, though, on others old problems have either re-emerged or not been sufficiently dealt with. Examples of these are the need for better coordination of the EU instruments, including calls

for trained personnel, and for more efficient procurement procedures. Most of the progress has been made in regard to coordination and coherence among the various actors in BiH (Interview no. 30). Further lessons have been learnt from the Berlin Plus agreement, cost-sharing agreements, intelligence-sharing and clarity in delineation of tasks whenever there are NATO and EU military operations in the same theatre (Emerson and Gross, 2007).

**External appropriateness: to what extent has the operation been proportionate in its preventive measures?**

*External appropriateness* assesses the ways in which an operation seeks to achieve its purpose. It assesses whether more good than harm is done as well as ensures that what is implemented is done by proportionate means of power and persuasion to facilitate effective prevention of (more) violent conflict. The indicator measuring external appropriateness is proportional prevention; i.e. more good (positive and sustainable contribution to preventing violent conflict) than harm (force, coercion and other negative effects) has been done.

External appropriateness of CSDP operation is evaluated through the preventive measures taken and their possible positive or negative impact on civil society and local institutional structures. Taking into account that EUFOR Althea has never been asked to intervene in order to maintain safe and secure environment in BiH, we can argue that the operation has carried out its tasks in a way that at least it has not worsened the security situation. Through the interviews conducted, we may conclude that Bosnians, in general, consider the presence of EUFOR Althea necessary and a stabilizing influence, contributing to their sense of security (Interview no. 38). EUFOR Althea has through the capacity-building and training also positively contributed to the professionalization of the AFBiH. By integrating all ethnic groups in one organization, EUFOR Althea advanced sustainable changes in Bosnian society, while good cooperation was established in the field of human rights and gender equality as well. According to local and international actors the cooperation has

positively contributed to changes in the attitude and values of the society (ibid.)

On the other side, EUFOR Althea has also contributed to some negative developments. Firstly, as EUFOR Althea is one of the elements of EU's comprehensive approach towards the region, operation has participated in enabling and creating certain aid-dependency in terms of institutional change. As some interviewees pointed out, the EU should be stricter in demanding deliverables in return for the money that is spent in BiH, which would force local institutions to deliver changes (Interview no. 24). Secondly, the fact of always considering ethnicity creates and perpetuates the divisions in the society as a whole and will be continuously used by political elites as a tool to avoid fundamental change and progress in the country. Thirdly, certain bilateral actions (for example donations of military equipment) have caused counter-productive actions, as operation has been forced to allocate time and human resources to activities that have not supported sustainable development of the AFBiH (Interview no. 36, 34 and 39). Despite the negative consequences, which are mostly the result of bad coordination, it can be argued that negative effects are proportionate with regard to the good done by the operation.

## CONCLUSION

For the EU, the stabilization and reconstruction of a multicultural and multi-ethnic community in BiH became a litmus test for the Union's commitment to becoming a political and security actor that projects peace and stability across the entire continent. Accordingly, BiH's future mattered not only to the citizens of the country but also to the EU's perceptions of itself as a foreign-policy and security actor. Deploying EUFOR Althea meant projecting its aspirations for the region in a relatively safe, risk-free environment, with low costs.

When it comes to success of EUFOR Althea regarding the internal effectiveness, as the analysis of success factors has shown, EUFOR Althea has been a success in terms of internal goal attainment, as no recurrence of violence along the ethnic lines has

occurred since its presence in BiH, while safe and secure environment was maintained. Here it is important to note that the maintenance of safe and secure environment cannot be attributed solely to the operation since different internal and external factors cannot be excluded. It is namely difficult to measure how much of the deterrence can be attributed only to the operation. EUFOR Althea is also performing well with regard to capacity building and training of AfBiH, as the forces have been participating in peace support operations within NATO and UN, while the PSOTC has so far successfully trained around 6.000 people for the missions abroad. On the other side, no baselines have been set up, that would allow us to measure the success of Althea in capacity building of AfBiH. When it comes to politico-strategic goals of Euro-Atlantic integration of BiH, membership in EU nor NATO has not been reached. Based on the above mentioned facts, operation can be considered partially successful with regard to internal goal attainment.

From the perspective of internal appropriateness, where we measure whether EUFOR Althea has been implemented according to the EU plans, the operation can be considered partial success again. Firstly, when it comes to timeliness, operation can be considered a success, but we have to take into account that at the time of the deployment, no rapid response was needed, as military danger seemed to exist by then. Operation also took over NATO assets and capabilities, so planning was rather simple. One part they have failed to address during the planning was the end state for the exit strategy, which consequently causes lack of clear guidelines. Secondly, in relation to efficiency, operation has several weaknesses. Despite the good planning capacity, which was stressed during the research, operation lacks Human Intelligence, some personnel can be considered a weakness since they do not possess sufficient professional background and skills needed for their posts, while short rotation cycles hinder development of long-lasting trust with the local population. Further on, AfBiH lacks resources for acquiring appropriate equipment, which means they are trained on borrowed equipment that they will never again use. Other challenges for the efficiency include the political structure, corruption and power games in the region,

while the country and EU member states lack political will and comprehensiveness. And thirdly, when it comes to cost efficiency, operation is run at relatively low cost, so it can be concluded it is successful concerning the cost efficiency.

When taking into account external effectiveness and firstly talking about external goal attainment, we can conclude the operation has been successful in helping to prevent the conflict. There was no occurrence of violence since EUFOR Althea is present on the ground, while it is important to notice there is no proof of direct causal relationship. Further on, operation is a military tool and has been incapable of adapting to current causes of insecurity in BiH, which are mostly of economic and health care nature. Despite the fact that operation has enhanced gender equality and human rights, EUFOR Althea has failed to address the structural violations of minority rights, which is shown through the Sejdīć-Finci case.

When it comes to external appropriateness, it can be concluded that the mission is acting proportionately in its preventive measures and more good than harm has been done so far. Althea has positively contributed to the sense of security within the population, professionalization of AfBiH, where it managed to integrate all ethnic groups in one organization, advancing sustainable changes and achieved good cooperation in the field of human rights and gender equality. On the other side, EUFOR Althea has to a certain extent contributed to the aid dependency in terms of institutional changes, where it should put more conditionality on its spending. We can conclude that, taking into account external effectiveness criteria, EUFOR Althea has achieved partial success.

Nonetheless, a CSDP operation is always part of a comprehensive approach toolbox and also part of a wide array of activities carried out by the international community as a whole, so the outcome cannot be solely contributed to the mission. The EU can bring added value, above all, through special expertise instead of vast numbers of personnel. Furthermore, the ongoing and completed CSDP operations have already proved the challenges faced by the Union in terms of seconding civilian experts and getting



boots on the ground. Sticking to a relatively limited mandate should also help the EU to avoid repeating the mistakes that have been made in the case of BiH – related to lack of exit strategy and lack of political will after twelve years of operation. In fact, the EU would benefit from an in depth introspective debate regarding its crisis management instruments and other conflict prevention capabilities. Defining a clear exit strategy, suitable indicators and exit-connected milestones before or immediately after the launch of a CSDP operation should be mandatory to keep CSDP from being a purely open-ended political tool.

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