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## **The EU's Comprehensive Approach to Crisis Management and the Sahel Strategy**

### **Abstract**

The Comprehensive Approach to Crisis Management (CA) can be considered the EU's own way of acting in the field of international relations. An encompassing crisis prevention strategy that takes account of the complex structures of a globalized world coincides perfectly with the EU's self-image as a "responsible global actor" (Smith 2013), engaging for an effective multilateralism. Following the claims of the 2003 European Security Strategy, the Union recognizes the interconnectedness of security and development and tries to make the CA's principles "the guiding principles for EU external action across all areas" (COM/HR 2013).

Hence, and despite the fact that the EU has not yet provided a clear definition of the term, the CA has been referred to regularly when it comes to characterizing EU Crisis Management Missions on a conceptual level. As a consequence, uncertainties and divergences concerning the scope and aim of the CA as well as institutional and operational obstacles prevent it from its effective implementation. Thus, several observers (e.g. Coelmont 2014, Pirozzi 2013, Zwolski 2012) point out the lack of a strategic guideline to be one of the main sources of these problems.

The dissertation project attempts to clear the confusion about the CA, assess its translation in concrete policy documents and evaluate its actual implementation, using the example of the Sahel Strategy.

In a first step, the relevance of a holistic security strategy for the EU's positioning as a global actor will be outlined. Secondly, the characteristics of the CA are elaborated in order to clarify its meaning and scope. To that end, document analysis and expert interviews will be conducted, considering both official EU statements and an informal policy-maker perspective. In a third step, the thesis examines whether these criteria have been applied in the formulation of the Sahel Strategy and specifying documents such as Council Conclusions referring to CSDP Missions. Finally, particular programs of the Sahel Strategy will be evaluated as case studies, examining if the implementation can bear up with the criteria elaborated previously. Again, content analysis and expert interviews will provide a complementary framework to point out the weaknesses of the CA implementation in the Sahel and test the formulated goals against the actual implementation. The concluding chapter sums up the results, clarifying to what extent the CA concept is present in the Sahel Strategy's policy formulation and stating whether or not the strategy's implementation has delivered the desired results in terms of comprehensiveness.