

POLITICKÉ VEDY / POLITICAL SCIENCES

Časopis pre politológiu, najnovšie dejiny, medzinárodné vzťahy, bezpečnostné štúdiá / Journal for Political Sciences, Modern History, International Relations, security studies

URL časopisu / URL of the journal: <http://www.politickevedy.fpvmv.umb.sk>

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Článok / Article: European Union as a Specific Actor of New Paradigm for Conflict Prevention
Vydavateľ / Publisher: Fakulta politických vied a medzinárodných vzťahov – UMB Banská Bystrica / Faculty of Political Sciences and International Relations – UMB Banská Bystrica

Odporúčaná forma citácie článku / Recommended form for quotation of the article:

DUBSKÝ, Z. – SRŠEŇ, R – ŠLAJS, J. 2016. European Union as a Specific Actor of New Paradigm for Conflict Prevention. In *Politické vedy*. [online]. Roč. 19, č. 2, 2016. ISSN 1335 – 2741, s. 132-154. Dostupné na internete: <http://www.politickevedy.fpvmv.umb.sk/archiv-vydani/2016/2-2016/zbynek-dubsky-radim-srsen-jan-slajs.html>.

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EUROPEAN UNION AS A SPECIFIC ACTOR OF NEW PARADIGM FOR CONFLICT PREVENTION

Zbyněk Dubský - Radim Sršeň - Jan Šlajs*

ABSTRACT

The research of the conflict prevention has become intensive after the end of the Cold War. In that period, prevention of conflicts becomes defined goal of a high number of global and regional organisations including the EU. The article focused on the role of the EU in the formation of a more general attitude to conflict prevention and its redefinition. The effect of the EU as an international actor was given not only by its specific form of external activities, but dominantly also by its normative effect. The aim of this study was to analyse the specific position of the EU as a normative actor vis-à-vis conflict prevention paradigm and to find out whether it has any potential to co-establish this paradigm. The presented study attempted to identify the EU as a power sui generis, where conflict prevention could be considered as one of the important characteristic features of identification of the EU as a normative power. The theoretical framework was also based on the constructivist concept assuming the ability of the actor to influence and socially establish the security paradigm. The study explored if the EU acts as a normative power in external relations and, as a result, if it is able to exercise influence not only in its real behaviour but also in relation to redefining the paradigm of the approach to conflict prevention as such. Strategic pro-active concept based on conflict prevention could be one of the ways in which the EU can address the need for greater clarity about its goals and methods as a global security actor.

Key words: conflict prevention, EU security and foreign policy, EU normative power

Introduction

Certain attempts to prevent conflicts in international relations were done

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especially in the era after the World War II (see for example chapters VI. and VII. of the United Nations' Charter). The explicit usage of the idea of preventing conflicts in a wider range as well as a more significant institutionalisation of this idea, however, comes mostly in the 1990s. In that period, prevention of conflicts becomes a clearly defined goal of a high number of global and regional organisations including the EU. We can state that during last twenty years the extent of devastation resulting from violent national and international conflicts caused them to be viewed more and more as a phenomenon, which is necessary to limit or totally prevent. As a result, the ability of international community to help people and society as such is highlighted. At the same time, it also confirms that neither violent conflicts nor wars have vanished from the reality of this world and in present days there still exists a high number of potential conflicts that could escalate into a violent form.

The conflict prevention can become one of the major terms for the EU and its external activities vis-à-vis unstable security situation in the European neighbourhood. With respect to expected increasing role of the EU within framework of the practical entrance to conflicts' solution, we can also expect an increasing impact on the formation of a more general attitude to conflict prevention and its redefinition. It is vital to point out here that the EU is a special case of the establishing and already partly operating political and security actor hardly comparable to traditional state actors. As a result, it has also a vital impact on the structure of the concept of conflict prevention in its interpretation. The effect of the EU as an international actor is given not only by its specific form of external activities, but dominantly also by its normative effect. As a starting point, we can use the constructivist concept assuming the ability of the actor to influence and socially establish the security paradigm. The aim of this article is to analyse the specific position of the EU as a normative actor vis-à-vis conflict prevention paradigm and to find out whether it has any potential to co-establish this paradigm. We proceed from the hypothesis that the EU as a normative actor fulfils the paradigm in a specific way and potentially has the ability to influence the other actors as well. These assumptions will be analysed at the same time.

The article will, therefore, first deal with the identification of the EU as a power sui generis, where conflict prevention can be considered as one of the important characteristic features of defining the EU as a normative power. At the same time, if we assume that the EU acts as a normative power in external relations, it should influence not just its real behaviour in practise but also the

paradigm of the approach to conflict prevention. In other words, our goal is to verify if the conflict prevention is becoming a norm for the EU and one of the important principles of a normative power and, at the same time, whether the EU influences the paradigm of conflict prevention. **Tocci (2007)** presents three dimensions of a normative foreign policy: “what an actor wants (its goal), how it acts (the deployment of policy means) and what it achieves (its impact)” (Tocci, 2007). The paper will focus especially on the first two dimensions. For this purpose, we will also respect some major documents of the EU that relate to conflict prevention. Further in the article, we will analyse the EU as an operating organisation entering conflict prevention and its view of practical prevention. Conflict prevention will be perceived as a complex of operative and structural measures. For this purpose, we will proceed from the institutional framework as well as the evaluation of the capacities of the EU. With respect to the concentration on the conceptual level, the individual particular activities of the EU in the field of conflict prevention on the regional and global level, as well as the evaluation of their success or lack of success will be missing.

1 The EU as a normative actor and its relation to conflict prevention

The EU itself can be described as a “perpetual peace” project. It is a pioneer with regard to advancing the idea of conflict prevention among the European nation states (Rummel, 2004). Conflict prevention, expressed in the effort to prevent wars on the European continent, has been one of the goals and basic motives of the European integration process since the 1950s. In the preamble of the establishing treaty of the ECSC, it was stated that the intention of its member states was “by establishing an economic community, to form a basis for a wider and deeper community of people who were separated by blood conflicts for a long time.” After all, in Schuman Declaration, considered the basis of the integration process, it was stated that „the proposal will lead to the realization of the first concrete foundation of a European federation indispensable to the preservation of peace“ (European Commission, 2015).

The question, however, was, if the European Union can reproduce such a success story beyond its borders and how. The integration forming the EU was not intended as an attempt to create an external actor or security organisation in the traditional sense. The EU has attempted to contribute to international peace and stability through the process of enlargement, the development of the CFSP

and the ESDP, as well as *EU's development cooperation and external assistance programs* (Bjök Dahl, 2008).

Its external activity rather reflected a dominant inward focus of integration where the integration played its strategic role by establishing a new system of relations among European states [so-called security by being] (Moler, 2014). In the academic as well as political debate, the EU has traditionally been considered as a distinctly "different" type of international actor (Tocci, 2007). We can state that there is a widespread belief that "the EU is a novel kind of power not only in its own institutional set-up, but also in its external relations. It is said to rely on civilian rather than military means." (Diez, 2005). There is thus a high number of reasons for perceiving the EU as an utterly specific actor and we can especially highlight. Among these are: the EU's own history, polity and policy; the almost magnetic attraction of the EU to its European neighbours; economic and political influence through partnership agreements with surrounding countries; identification of itself with multilateralism on the global as well as the regional level; contribution to global governance by collectively encouraging states on other continents to deepen regional cooperation; ability to count on the sizeable collective multi-level diplomatic corps; increasing military peacekeeping and peace-enforcing role (Telo, 2006). **Tocci** (2007) argues that different reasons for this have been brought to the fore: "*Some have focused on the EU's institutional set-up, arguing that the multiple layers of the EU authority (member state governments, parliaments, courts, EU institutions and public opinion) create a set of constraints that make the EU's pursuit of hardnosed realpolitik less likely... Others have focussed on how the Union's institutional setting filters and channels member state interests, shaping the output of the EU's external policies in normative terms. The EU's internal governance is thus transposed externally..., moulding the nature of its foreign policies. More specifically, the EU's internal system of rules and laws is transposed externally through the contractual relations the Union establishes and develops with third parties...*" (Tocci, 2007).

Therefore, the EU is often portrayed as a "normative power" in world politics, being a strong promoter of the normative principles generally acknowledged in the United Nations system (Sira, Gräns, 2010). **Wessels and Bopp** (2015) noted that the authors from the seventies to the present describe the EU as a "civilian power", "soft power", "peace power", "normative power", "l'Europe puissance" and recently also as a "model power" or "smart power" (Wessels, Bopp, 2015). Nevertheless, we can also encounter terms like "gentle power"

(Padoa-Schioppa, 2001), “ideational power” or even “cooperative empire” (Whitman, 2005).

Regardless of the terms used, it is apparent that these concepts have been closely interlinked and they are to manifest a certain distinction from the traditional interpretation of power, dominantly seen in the military field. Normative power can be associated with actors that have limited traditional power resources such as military capabilities. In relation to the concept of conflict, prevention is our fundamental notion of “normative power”, as concept is a product of the 21st Century. It is obvious that the emphasis on conflict prevention in international relations and the structure of the EU as a normative power are interlinked. **Björkdahl** (2008) argues that it „was evidently a potential to construct a normative match between the norm pertaining to conflict prevention and the EU normative context, facilitating the institutionalisation of conflict prevention. “ (Björkdahl, 2008) The EU has no ambition to be a traditional player and is unable to define its strategic interests. Many still argue that the normative foreign policy of the EU is the result of the fundamentally different way in which the EU views the world. The EU identifies itself as a “power”, which could contribute to the normative “Europeanization” of the rest of the world (Wessels, Bopp, 2008). **Cooper** (2004) states: *“the post-modern European response to danger is to further expand the system of cooperative empire”* (Cooper, 2004). We can assume that the EU will aim to use its experience from evolution processes on the European continent within its external activities. In its external activities, the EU constructs social realities on basis of its experience from the history. It then acts as a post-modern actor in international relations. Tocci, therefore, describes EU as an actor with “intent on shaping, instilling, diffusing – and thus ‘normalising’ – rules and values in international affairs through non-coercive means” (Tocci, 2007).

The reason why the EU promotes norms is strictly connected with its nature and limits: “the first is to prevent global norms from being less exacting than European ones so as not to place Europe at a comparative disadvantage. The second is its lack of power- in the sense of hard power to impose norms on reluctant actors” (Tocci, 2007).

Manners (2008) argued, that *“the EU as a normative power has an ontological quality to it – that the EU can be conceptualized as a changer of norms in the international system; a positivist quantity to it – that the EU acts to change norms in the international system; and a normative quality to it – that the EU should act to extend its norms into the international system”*. It is very

important that besides the so perceived normativity, it also emphasises that “the most important factor shaping the international role of the EU is not what it does or what it says, but what it is.” (Manners, 2008)

The official texts of the EU often make similar claims about the EU's role on the world stage. The Lisbon treaty states: “In its relations with the wider world, the Union shall uphold and promote its values and interests and contribute to the protection of its citizens. It shall contribute to peace, security, the sustainable development of the Earth, solidarity and mutual respect among peoples, free and fair trade, eradication of poverty and the protection of human rights, in particular the rights of the child, as well as to the strict observance and the development of international law, including respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter“(European Commission, 2010). According to the Treaty one of the main goals of the CFSP is „to preserve peace and strengthen international security in accordance with the principles of the United Nations’ Charter, as well as the principles of the Helsinki Final Act and the goals of the Paris Charter of the OSCE“. The founding treaty additionally defines a set of principles upon which the EU is built, and which are the starting point for its external activities. Ian Manners works with the nine substantive normative principles promoted by the EU. They are: sustainable peace, social freedom, consensual democracy, associative human rights, supranational rule of law, inclusive equality, social solidarity, sustainable development and good governance (Manners, 2008).

The normative nature of the EU is also connected with other aspects of its external activities, which may be represented by two principles. We are especially talking about the stress on co-operation, expressed in the principle of multilateralism, and a self-limiting approach to the use of force, represented by the principle of preference of non-violent instruments in international relations. The reasons include the fact that there are only few problems the EU can tackle on its own, but mainly the maintenance of effective multilateralism providing better opportunities to the EU as a primarily non-military organisation to raise the profile of its influence. Multilateralism can be regarded as the „environment“ within which the EU is „embedded“ (Evangelista, 2006). The focus on multilateralism reflects a “non-aggressive” strategy when the EU follows international legitimacy and responsibility, and underlines the EU's intention to use force as the last resort only (Whitman, 2007). Europe tends to prefer a policy of “constructive engagement” to build stability and security on various levels of international system. **Hyde-Price** (2006) states that „*there is a*

distinctive „European“ approach to international politics that favours diplomacy, persuasion, negotiation and compromise“ (Hyde-Price, 2006) The EU is a kind of “post-modern” unit acting on the basis of other rationales than the modern state. The EU is trying to pursue its goals by cooperation rather than by power logic (Wessels, Bopp, 2008).

Military power is, therefore, perceived as a necessary but “unwanted” and “reactive” part of the whole range of instruments the EU has at its disposal (Martinsen, 2004). In reality, there is a conceptual shift where the EU becomes an organisation using its soft power, i.e. a successful peace project can persuade other partners in a political discussion without the use of military or economic power (Kotsopoulos, 2006). In addition, the soft power policy is an appropriate means in the environment of multilateral cooperation and interdependence. The emphasis on conflict prevention then seems to be the opposite of the application or threat by power. As the opposite to “hard power” (which can be perceived as a threat or application of power), there is the term “exchange and integrative power” [which can be perceived as the ability to split difference and accept a solution good for all the parties] (Ramsbotham, 2011).

In the political dimension the typical theoretical strategic EU approach can be seen as an adoption of a “doctrine of non-escalation”. The EU becomes the holder of the “conflict prevention doctrine”. The conflict prevention doctrine becomes a general political goal *“bridging the Union’s traditional status as a civilian power and the new foreign policy instruments”* (Martinsen, 2004). The emphasis on prevention from the side of the EU may be explained by different motives. The prevention of conflicts certainly has a humanitarian dimension since it saves human lives and human dignity. The actual visible destruction and loss of life are not namely the only outcomes of a violent conflict but there is also loss of hope and belief in the future here. The prevention of conflicts should as well be an economic necessity as it enables to save costs of a violent solution. We proceed from the assumption that prevention is less costly (than the solution of a violent conflict itself or the renewal of the destroyed area after the conflict). The prevention of conflicts is also politically necessary for the credibility of the international cooperation and the international organisations such as the EU.

At the same time, some judgements and documents aimed at conflict prevention and search for resources, which the EU should have at disposal, were accepted by the EU. The first of such documents was the April 2001 European Commission’s *Communication on Conflict Prevention*; June 2001, the

Göteborg European Council adopted the *EU Programme for the Prevention of Violent Conflicts*; in December 2003, the European Security Strategy *A Secure Europe in a Better World* was endorsed by the European Council; in 2004 were approved two documents devoted to the so called military and civilian *Headline Goals Communication on Conflict Prevention* which underlined the normative approach of the EU towards the conflict prevention: "The EU is in itself a peace project and a supremely successful one... Through the process of enlargement, through the Common Foreign and Security Policy, through its development cooperation and its external assistance programmes the EU now seeks to project stability also beyond its own borders." (European Commission, 2011). As a part of the *EU Programme for the Prevention of Violent Conflicts* there is also an obligation to improve one's possibilities concerning the conflict prevention. The programme defined four key areas: the definition of a clear political priority of preventive measures, improvement of a timely caution, action and the policy of togetherness, improvement of instruments of long-term and short-term prevention, and, finally, to build up effective partnership for prevention. This document can be regarded as a current solution for prevention of conflicts from the EU even today since it recognised that conflict prevention was at the heart of European concerns and originated a process of annual reporting about the EU's activities in the realm of conflict prevention since 2002. Another document, important for the development of conflict prevention, is the European Security Strategy from 2003, which, at the same time, sets its priority in "preventive engagement" and utilisation of all instruments for conflict prevention, which the EU has at its disposal, including political, diplomatic, military and civil, commercial and development instruments. Therefore, it is obvious that the prevention of conflicts is - at least on the rhetorical level - perceived as a complex activity interconnecting various short-term and long-term instruments. In 2008, there was a discussion about the fulfilment of the security strategy and some of its outcomes are important for the development of the concept of the conflict prevention from the EU (European Commission, 2008).

That is however not completely crucial for the evaluation of success. After the first ten years of the 21st Century, conflict prevention can namely be perceived as an integral part of the normative concept of the EU, which closely goes together not only with the principles and experience of the European integration process, but which also complies with a certain ambivalent approach of the EU to the use of force. The EU focus should be rather on conflict prevention, region stabilisation within post conflict reconstruction (it also

contains components of prevention of a further conflict), military advice and help, and support to third countries in combating terrorism. The finding is not surprising because the 20th Century became a tragic period of fatal conflicts in the human evolution due to European problems resulting in two world wars and consequently to the Cold War. The aim is not to obtain or approximate a dominant position in the military area, as this cannot lead on its own to resolution of security problems. That is also why the conflict prevention doctrine as a part of perceiving the EU as a normative power approximates the interpretation of the so-called human security. The concept of human security is based on the principles of primacy of human rights, multilateralism, combination of top-down and bottom-up approach, use of legal instruments and appropriate use of force, i.e. minimal use of force. Though it remained subject to many varying definitions and disputed for its political appropriateness, scope, content and analytical ambiguity, the concept of human security as a new paradigm “subsequently became something of a benchmark for an emerging new model of “security”. (Henk, 2005) Human security can be regarded as a paradigm shift from traditional national security approaches usable for external identification of the European integration process.

The EU is an international organisation *sui generis*, for which, within framework of conflict prevention, we can state the following:

- Conflict prevention is a concept popularised by a new emphasis on the reference object, its normative power and ability not to include traditional strategic interests of states. The new EU security concept adds economic, social, cultural and environmental aspects to the traditional military and political dimension of security. Security is much broader and complex, falling into many interconnected areas that influence each other.

- Conflict prevention in the new interpretation after the end of the Cold War is based on universality (and a universal and global dimension of problem solutions), where an individual action is basically not important, but the emphasis is dominantly put on a collective action materialised by the emphasis on multilateralism and placing international organisations to the centre of attention and moving the responsibility for conflict prevention from the states to the activities of the organisations. Conflict prevention is not justified by making the benefit of individual actors as big as possible, but by universal principles of the community that are based on rejection of violence.

- The concept of conflict prevention is dominantly suitable for players whose strategic interests are difficult to achieve by force. It is also suitable for players whose strategic interests in the system are different from the traditional powers (if there are any). The concept is suitable for the EU if it does not become a superpower in the traditional sense and does not jeopardize the interests of the Member States.

EU conflict prevention is expressed in a range of policies some with direct mandate and others with an indirect one. If we consider the direct mandate, we mean that conflict prevention is the primary goal of the actor's (here the EU) manners, if we talk about the indirect mandate, we mean that kind of EU policies which lead to conflict prevention although it is not their primary goal. The direct link can be observed, for example in the European Neighbourhood Policy, direct negotiations of the EU with partners or other actors (EU-3 with Iran, mediation of HR), sanctions politic or CSDP operations. Indirect links prevail with the EU development and cooperation policy and EU enlargement goals. The EU sent out EU Special Representatives to unstable countries and regions, and became involved in electoral assistance activities, peacekeeping and rescue tasks. A significant development was the creation of the Rapid Response Mechanism in 2001 to allow for quick, short-term and primarily civilian responses to crises. In 2007, this Mechanism was transformed into the Instrument for Stability (IfS). It is obvious that within the framework of the direct mandate rather the means of the operative prevention are used, while within the framework of the indirect mandate mainly means of the structural prevention are used.

2 Potential of the EU in prevention of conflicts

As has been stated, the EU itself is the proof of the success of prevention of conflicts using the uniting process among the member states taking part and the ability to solve some problems regarding this area with the help of diplomacy. The uniqueness of this process is at the same time visible in its external politics, as well. The prevention of conflicts in the outer environment is important not only from the economic point of view but it is also a certain kind of political obligation. As has been shown, the emphasis on the prevention of conflicts goes together with the rising effort for its international function, it is an important component of its definition as an actor in security, as will be demonstrated in more details in the following part. As far as the practical level is concerned, we can indicate the effort to prevent external conflicts as a part of the appeal of the

European institutions of the European Union that have existed for several decades. Definition of this goal on its general level and the development of the specific structures and instruments serving to it is, nevertheless, a recent matter. Therefore, we can state that the European Union is both a pioneer of and a latecomer in conflict prevention (Rummel, 2004). We can claim that the initial approach to conflict prevention was dramatically modified by the development of a Common and Foreign Security Policy and, within this, the emerging European (after Lisbon Treaty Common) Security and Defence Policy. In the past twenty years, the EU has been forced into a decision whether it wanted to be a pure “civil power” or partly a “military power”, to what extent it would be able to resolve the issues of social hardship, failed regions and extreme political forces solely through its economic strength and appeal (. The EU is not transforming itself into a standard “hard security” organisation. To a certain level its “militarisation”, i.e. capacity building, is not intended for traditional military actions of coercion. It seems that the European tendency to a “holistic approach to security is as much a reflection of its postmodern tradition as of its martial weakness” (Payne 2003).

It is a question whether EU has an added value for the field of prevention of conflicts and even has much to offer as the actor in prevention of conflicts as such. It creates new possibilities for peace initiatives, where it can employ its political and financial importance and complex approach towards preventing conflicts and their solution concerning CFSP/ESDP but other instruments which formerly belonged to the community area, as well. It is then necessary to realize that different interpretations and concepts proceed mainly from different expectations about the appropriate scope, timing and leading for preventive action. It must also reflect the interests of the actors involved in conflict prevention, in the EU's practice it is mainly the Commission and the Council. For the EU, on the practical level, the prevention of conflicts is then a multiple complex of measures for monitoring or control of timely phases of a conflict and stable environment, from short-term intensive diplomacy and civil or military intervention to long-term policy (Stewart, 2003). The prevention of conflicts today is at least on the rhetorical level integrated into all fields of action of the EU. From the outer point of view, logically especially into CFSP, the development and humanitarian aid and area of trade. The area of the Space of freedom, security and justice has proved to be an important area of the outer action in the conflict prevention as well.

For the EU, conflict prevention can refer to instances where a major conflict has threatened to occur and where the emphasis is either on reducing the conflict or preventing escalation. That is, however, very general and causes many problems as far as the understanding of the approach of the EU is concerned. The Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflicts states that there are “three broad aims of preventive action”, namely to prevent the emergence of violent conflict, to prevent ongoing conflicts from spreading and, finally, to prevent the re-emergence of violence (Carnegie Commission, 1997). The EU tends to this concept of conflict prevention, although the main stress is put on the first aim today. When the EU gained new tasks and competences connected to conflict prevention, there appeared especially terms “form crisis prevention”, “conflict and crisis management”, “peace-building”, and others in the EU jargon (Wallenstein, Möller, 2009). The further part of the text will proceed from the division of prevention into the operative and structural type. **Carment, Schnabel** (2003) denote the conflict prevention as “a medium and long-term proactive operational or structural strategy undertaken by a variety of actors, intended to identify and create the enabling conditions for a stable and more predictable international security environment” (Carment, Schnabel, 2003). In relation to the EU, we are especially speaking about the following needs: to solve the causes of conflicts, not its outcomes; the acceptance of the concept of human security (which nevertheless stays quite ill-assorted in a document mainly based on the security concept, which aims at the security of states or a group of states); the acceptance of the need to spread the EU capacities to mediation and dialogue; and at the same time acceptance of the role of the civil society in conflict prevention and the reaction to the emerging conflict.

The effort to include not only the signs of the conflict as such in the concept of the conflict prevention but also its causes traditionally leads to a division between short-term (light, soft, low, possibly direct or immediate) prevention and long-term (deep, hard, high) prevention (Mial, 2001). Most often, nevertheless, within framework of such a division we use a division between operative and structural prevention, in the EU theory as well as in the EU practice (Annan, 1999). There is an apparent inspiration and interconnection with the view of the United Nations, where the 2001 report of the UN General Secretary works with the division of preventive measures between operative prevention and structural prevention (United Nations, 2001). Communication from the Commission on Conflict Prevention refers to two different but interconnected categories of

instruments. With a similar approach, it refers to long-term prevention (“projecting stability”) and short-term prevention (“reacting quickly to nascent conflicts”) tools (Carnegie Commission, 1997). We can claim that the conflict prevention is connected firstly to the actual signs of a conflict and secondly to its roots as well. The EU admitted that due to the cyclical character of the conflict which very it is necessary to create and make use of instruments intended to solve two areas of a conflict. Firstly the social, economic and political circumstances of the emergence of conflicts, namely their “*root-causes*”, as well as the most “*proximate causes*” which lead to the actual outbreak or escalation of violence in the conflict (Brown, 1998).

The operative prevention, therefore, mainly aims at short-term activities while the structural prevention aims at those long-term ones. The goal of the operative prevention is at the same time to avoid escalation of the conflict to a violent form and thus lower the possibility of intensifying of the conflict. The operative prevention aims at an entirely specific conflict where it does not matter whether we talk about a potential conflict or an already manifested one (Carnegie Commission, 1997). From the viewpoint of the benefit from entering a conflict in its early phases, we can consider this thought as a completely realistic approach (Zartman, 2001). In these days, the prospect of an acceptable solution of a conflict and making the violence minimal or even eliminating it is very positive. The parties of a potential conflict are apparently flexible, they do not consider the game intentions to end up with a zero-total (if one party wins, the other one must necessarily lose in the same measure). The hostility is not evidently defined yet, it does not come to clear polarisation of parties and it is to be expected as well that outer influences having an impact on and an interest in heightening the conflict are relatively limited and eliminated. Nevertheless, the most important is apparently the fact that there still exists a high degree of confidence between the parties, there is an open continual communication and we can expect a mutual degree of empathy (Council of the EU, 2009).

The operative prevention depends on a timely warning and can especially use the methods of preventive diplomacy (mediation, facilitation, dialogue, arbitration, good service, investigation, further delegation of missions, no matter if we speak about civil investigative missions, viewers, monitoring and proving teams, possibly holding peace conferences, unilateral gestures of good will, international challenges, support for peace initiatives...). The EU also has a broad range of economic, humanitarian and crisis management instruments for operative prevention. These include: political dialogue, sanctions, deployment of

observers, preventive military intervention, preventive demobilisation and disarmament, humanitarian aid, etc. It is therefore apparent that operative prevention from the EU can be divided into two kinds of approach: positive strategies (i.e. promises, persuasion, and rewards) and negative strategies (i.e. threats, coercion and punishments), called coercive diplomacy (Väyrynen, 1997). It has been increasingly stressed that positive incentives are probably a more effective mode of influence than coercive punishments, although they also may be more expensive. This is admitted also by **George** (1991): „whether coercive diplomacy will work in a particular case may depend on whether it relies solely on negative sanctions or combines threats with positive incentives and assurances“ (George, 1991).

Operative prevention can make use of the series of tools within framework of the CFSP. These include a number of diplomatic measures undertaken either in the framework of a Common Action or of a Common Position, or declarations, demarches, high level visits, Special Envoys. The Lisbon Treaty amendments, in particular the creation of the High Representative (HR) and the European External Action Service (EEAS) are widely seen as major opportunities to make the EU more visible, capable, active and, last but not least, coherent in operative conflict prevention.

Within framework of the operative prevention, it is possible to consider even the use of armed forces, not to force someone but especially for preventive peacekeeping or to help by covering other preventive activities. Operative prevention therefore strongly goes together with building up capacities of civil and military crisis management. The (military) Headline Goal 2010 already stated that the “EU must be able to act before a crisis occurs and preventive engagement can avoid that a situation deteriorates” (European Council, 2004). Then the missions of the EU within the framework of the European Security and Defence Policy can be an important instrument for the prevention of conflicts. It was reflected in the development of the ESDP institutional framework taking into account the conflict prevention as one of the main tasks. Alongside with the already existing PPEWU this activity became also one of the programs of two institutions that emerged within framework of the ESDP - Joint Situation Centre – SITCEN and the Military Staff – EUMS. At the same time, it is true to say to that these institutions did not emerge as part of the effort of the EU for conflict prevention but based on the more general effort for strengthening the security dimension of the EU and prevention of conflicts is only one of the instruments. The institutions among whose basic functions belongs conflict prevention has

worked since 2000 in the form of the Conflict Prevention and Crisis Management Unit – CPCMU. In the last decade, the EU went on especially in the development and investment of more financial resources into the capacities of the crisis management. On the other hand, the capacities created within framework of the crisis management can serve even within framework of conflict prevention and optionally support as well other activities of prevention.

Operative measures may traditionally involve political mediation or negotiations between parties involved in the conflict. The acceptance of the Concept on Strengthening EU Mediation and Dialogue Capacities from 2009 is therefore fundamental for the operative prevention with emphasis on diplomacy (Council of the EU, 2009). It is stated in the document that the EU will aspire to create and support the use of mediation as an instrument of the first reaction to the emerging and ongoing crises. In the EU, mediation is considered as a way to help by negotiations with the parties of the conflict and to transform them to compromise with the support of the acceptable third party. The main goal is to avoid or finish violence through stopping hostile actions or working out armistice. With the goal to provide peace and stability for a longer term, the mediation should also include a solution of basic causes of a conflict. The mediation of processes and measures for the fulfilment of the peace agreements can be then (in case of need) further supported through several civil and military instruments as well as business and development instruments. The EU then perceives the added value especially in the ability to stabilise and keep on the peace processes and their results, not only by strengthening a legal state and democratic administration of public affairs, by supporting measures for building up trust and creating a connection between the governmental level and the community level. Thanks to the support of local mechanisms for negotiations and leading of dialogue, these EU activities can help with the transformation of relations between the conflict parties, which leads to an actual and sustainable solution.

Besides mediation, the EU also speaks of an ease (facilitation), which is similar to mediation, but it concentrates less on directing the behaviour and forming its contents. Another term mentioned in connection with mediation in the EU is a dialogue. A dialogue is an open process that aims to form a culture of communication and searching for a common solution, which leads to developing trust and improving interpersonal comprehension between the representatives of opposition parties that, in return, can help preventing conflicts and be the means of reconciliation and forming peace of the processes. A

successful dialogue can help the de-escalation of a conflict and prevent the necessity of a formal mediation (Council of the EU, 2009).

Mediation, facilitation and dialogue are thus different but closely interlinked and complementary instruments of conflict prevention. The EU promotes the use of mediation as a tool of first response to emerging or ongoing crises. What they have in common is that they are an offer to the third party to help to support communication between the parties of the conflict and at the same time, similar communication techniques and methods are used. The dividing lines between these instruments are thus not always clear. The actual operative prevention in the narrower sense is then realised with help of the use of various institutional levels of the EU. It can belong to the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy or the European External Action Service (it adopted the instruments and activities that originally belonged to DG REFLEX of the European Commission) or special representatives (expert teams can also be formed), and other authorities significantly enter the operative prevention (especially the Commission). Following the establishment of the European External Action Service in 2011, a Mediation Support Group was set up within the “Division for Conflict Prevention, Peace Building and Mediation Instruments” to promote and support the use of tool of mediation within conflicts. This includes operational support and expert deployments, coaching and training, knowledge management and mediation support partnerships with the UN, regional organisations (namely OSCE, AU, ASEAN), NGOs and academic institutions.

On the contrary, the goal of the structural prevention is generally to form such conditions that conflicts emerge only in a minimal and limited degree. This time, we deal with activities that generally focus on the stabilisation of the environment, either on the local, regional or global level; nevertheless, without an obvious connection to any potential or already ongoing conflict. If the conflicts emerge, it is important that the probability of their escalation is as low as possible. The structural prevention is basically understood as forming peace and it is basically the effort to solve the causes of the conflicts (Council of the EU, 2009). There exist two broad fields of structural prevention from the European point of view. The first one is the development of cooperation and strengthening the relations between states and the development of measures on international level. The second one is the development of mechanisms that provide security, justice and health to all inhabitants of the individual states. It encompasses such strategies of solving the causes of violent conflicts, which

are based on international legal systems, mechanisms of solving potential conflicts and on rules of mutual cooperation. At the same time, their goal is to provide people with basic social, economic, cultural and humanitarian needs and to rebuild societies affected by a war or a great crisis. Long-term prevention often operates with terms like measures for strengthening security and trust, disarmament, sustainable development and development cooperation, economic cooperation policies, legal state, civil society, good governance, respecting fundamental human rights and basic freedoms, environmental policies (including management and access to natural resources as well as environmental degradation).

In the past, these mechanisms were generally given much less attention than they deserved, although they have a significant importance for the prevention of violent conflicts. Quite specific is the fact that these activities are typical for the EU. Leonard says that „what makes the EU unique is that it can bring together its aid, trade and development assistance to prevent hotspots from collapsing into war.“ (Leonard, 2005) The EU is dominantly visible in the field of structural prevention. Ian Manners says that „the prime EU normative principle of sustainable peace addresses the roots or causes of a conflict, mirroring the European experience of ensuring that war ‘becomes not merely unthinkable, but materially impossible’. The EU policy emphasis is placed on the development aid, trade, interregional cooperation, political dialogue and enlargement as elements of a more holistic approach to conflict prevention.“ (Manners, 2008) For the EU conflict prevention in practice can be defined as a situation in which a major violent conflict can be avoided and implies an emphasis on financial and technical assistance, economic co-operation in the form of trade or association agreements, or enlargement provisions, nations-building and democratisations efforts. Conflict prevention for the EU generally requires long-term commitment.

Within the EU, the emphasis on operative prevention capacities has been put especially in the last 5 years. As well as the EU engages in the long-term conflict prevention, it also tries to engage more and more successfully in the conflict prevention by operative prevention. Nevertheless, unlike long-term prevention, this type needs a quick decision and a quick reaction. The quicker can the reaction be the more effective can be the whole action. This type of preventive diplomacy was, therefore, not very popular, because long-term prevention had more obvious results and was built upon a longer cooperation. For the EU the merits of an approach to conflict prevention based primarily on

long-term preventive action. Especially the Commission had been for a long time convinced that a comprehensive preventive strategy must first focus on the underlying political, economic, social, and environmental causes of conflict.

As a result, according to the EU, conflict prevention has a very transformative character. Structural measures thus contribute to form an environment in which smooth functioning of preventive mechanisms is possible. There is not only an effort to prevent violence as such, but at the same time, there is also an effort to eliminate the causes of a violence, important are often institutional changes, new social relations leading to elimination of the “image of the enemy”.

The activities of the operative as well as the structural prevention in particular cases run parallel in the EU praxis; moreover, they are interlinked and supported by each other (Ackerman, 2003). It is obviously difficult to use many of the measures just within one of the fields, either the operative or the structural one. Some types of measures can then be a part of the operative prevention, as well as the structural one, it only depends on whether they are applied primarily in connection with a particular potential conflict (and are also exactly specified by it), or whether they are applied for a long period without a clear relation to a conflict. As a result, it is not possible to state unambiguously that the operative and structural prevention influences or affects “different parts of the society”, or that the activities run in “a different period of time” (Wallensteen, 2002). The Lisbon Treaty established a potential of further bridging of activities of the operative and structural prevention thanks to the reform of institutions, where the High Representative and the European External Action Service (subordinated to the High Representative) may be the connecting link.

Conclusion

The EU is the youngest, however, no doubt, a very ambitious actor in the global security sphere. In December 2000, the EU Summit in Nice confirmed that Europe should play fully its role also on the international scene, taking over responsibility if faced with crises. It was noted that the EU should strengthen its capacity to mobilise “a vast range of both civilian and military means and instruments, thus giving it an overall crisis-management and conflict-prevention capability in support of the goals of the Common Foreign and Security Policy”. The EU instruments in the area of security and defence are expanding to

include an autonomous capacity to take decisions and action. Nevertheless, the EU is not only another security actor, but it also redefines the concept of security, building a new security paradigm.

The aim of this article was to stress that the concept of conflict prevention is important for the normative role of the EU. Not only in terms of emphasizing the value of the European integration process, but in its ability to reflect the EU as a specific foreign policy and security actor. The uniqueness of the EU as a normative actor appears to be an advantage in the area of security. To this, we may also add the specifics of the institutional structure of the EU as a political actor.

Although on rhetorical level the EU prefers prevention to the ad hoc solution of the conflicts, from the point of view of the instruments of the CFSP, the EU should at first concentrate primarily on the conflict management. Nevertheless, thanks to its normative nature, it has not vitally affected its manners in the international system. Moreover, a strategy focused primarily on long-term prevention logically privilege long-term instruments as they are best placed to address root causes of conflict action. In a long-term, holistic approach, short-term/crisis management instruments are to be intrinsically linked with long-term/conflict prevention and peace building tools and, therefore, it is important to provide synergies across the whole range of long-term conflict prevention and short-term crisis management strategies and actions. Long-term, structural instruments can have more significant impact on a comprehensive approach to conflict prevention than short-term on-going/imminent crises oriented tools. Furthermore, complex set of instruments, including diplomatic, political, military, economic, legal, humanitarian, and development ones should be used, moreover, in their mutual interconnection to reach the multiplication effect. It is true to say that also an appropriate mix of positive and negative instruments should be used and as a combination of “a carrot and a stick” may achieve outcomes not obtainable solely with one of them. The main frame for the EU policy in this field is multilateralism and the global dimension, with apparent dominant orientation on forming the zone of security and stability all around Europe.

Conflict prevention still has a long way to go before there is an agreement on one precise definition what it is and how it is to be realised. However, it can be argued that this paradigm shift is already under way. Despite its lack of clarity on the theoretical level the concept has survived and has become vital, bridging human security, human rights and human development, and provoking

further reflection on sustainable concept of conflict prevention in the EU. There are three fundamental motives for the EU to adopt the conflict prevention: morality, legality and self-interest (Glasius, Kaldor, 2005).

Strategic pro-active concept based on conflict prevention is one of the ways in which the EU can address the need for greater clarity about its goals and methods as a global security actor. As a result, it has the potential to further EU foreign policy integration. The Lisbon Treaty contains an extended catalogue of common values (Wessels, Bopp, 2008).

The emphasis on the conflict prevention concept could also bridge the distinct divisions between an emphasis on norms or soft techniques of persuasion and a readiness to use coercive measures using the full range of military and civilian instruments. The human security concept requires a combination of both civil and military capabilities and, as a result, could justify the development of European capacities in the frame of CFSP as well as collective actions.

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