



EUNPACK

A CONFLICT SENSITIVE UNPACKING OF THE EU COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH TO CONFLICT AND CRISES MECHANISM

Unpacking the EU's Crisis Response Mechanisms



Introduction

The European Union is confronted with a **range of crises** in its immediate and wider **neighbourhood** - partly solved conflicts in the Balkans, the ongoing conflicts in Ukraine, Afghanistan, the Middle East (e.g. Syria and Iraq), North Africa (e.g. Libya) and the Sahel (e.g. Mali). These crises present a **challenge for the EU as a global actor**.



The EU is also challenged by the **capability-expectations gap** - the mismatch between the EU's own expectations and ambitions on the one hand, and its capabilities and capacity to act, on the other.

There is a need for an in-depth analysis of the EU's crisis-response mechanisms in specific target countries, so as to understand how these mechanisms are received and **perceived on the ground**.

Analytical Framework

By introducing a **bottom-up perspective** combined with an **institutional approach**, we will be able to explore local agencies and perceptions in target countries without losing sight of the EU's institutions and their expectations and ambitions.

Such an approach allows EUNPACK to analyse the full cycle of dynamic events, **from EU intentions**, motivations and subsequent implementation, **to local actors'** perceptions and reactions, **and back again** to EU intentions and understanding.

Case Selection

The cases studied in EUNPACK are selected on the basis of a range of challenges that the EU addresses (different types of crisis and different levels of crises) and the **variation in policy frameworks and instruments** employed to respond to these challenges.

Our project therefore studies the EU's crisis response mechanisms in the policy realms of **EU enlargement** (Kosovo and Serbia), **neighbourhood** (Ukraine and Libya), and the **EU's extended neighbourhood** (Mali, Afghanistan and Iraq).

Objectives

EUNPACK project aims to further our understanding of whether **the EU** may or may not be **capable**, and why, of successfully advancing its tool box of facilitating the **management of conflict** in its immediate and extended neighbourhood.

The main objective of EUNPACK is therefore **to unpack EU crisis response mechanisms** in order to provide new insights that can increase our understanding of **how crisis response functions** and **is received on the ground** in target countries, and **how it can be improved**.

EUNPACK has been designed to critically examine whether EU's external crisis response is sensitive to the political and social context on the ground. It takes a holistic approach that covers the whole crisis cycle, the full EU toolbox, and the EU's ability to respond to crises in different regions.

Methods

In line with **grounded approach** to research, EUNPACK will collect primary empirical data with a **focus on practices rather than mandates**, focusing on **how the EU is seen** as an operating actor in crisis response **by target states and audiences**.

Our methodology consists of a **mixed-methods approach** that combines **desk research and fieldwork**, including surveys, perception studies, and in-depth interviews.



Comenius University

The team of researchers based at the **Department of Political Science** at Comenius University **participates in three work packages**:

In **'Conceptual and analytical'** work package we develop theoretical and methodological frameworks for studying the EU as a crisis response institution.

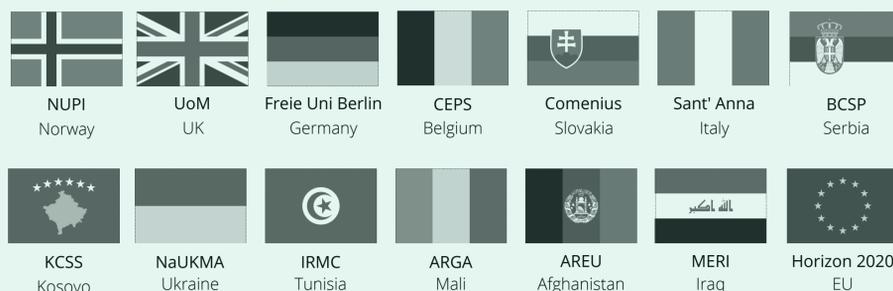
In **'EU crisis response and management'** package, we provide answers on how the EU comprehensive approach to crisis management works and what are the gaps between EU ambitions and effective policies. We formulate recommendations to fine-tune the EU's crisis response mechanisms to better match the needs on the ground.

In **'Crisis response in candidate states'** package, we analyse the micro-level practices of EU foreign policy in relations between Serbia and Kosovo. We examine how the EU representatives work to support reform processes in these countries and how the local counterparts perceive the EU's role and contribution.



Consortium

The consortium consists of researchers with a special competence on the EU and specialists on peace and conflict studies within different sectors and/or regions. More specifically, it consists of the following key institutions:



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