EU as a Peacemaker in Africa:
The Case of the Democratic Republic of the Congo*

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WORK IN PROGRESS

Abstract

This paper analyses the EU’s peace-building interventions in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) during the last decade. The study is based on several fieldtrips with considerable number of interviews in the DRC and in Europe during 2010. Through a number of security and development policies, security and policy missions, the EU claims to be a key player for building peace, stability and security in the Congo. The real practices and achievements on the ground point, however, in another direction. The EU’s organizational complexity provokes institutional divisions and bureaucratic ineffectiveness. Exacerbated by personality-driven policies as well as mistrust between EU officials, the Union is unable to pursue a coherent strategy. Instead of working closely with other actors and donors, the EU boosts the image of its own civilian and military missions whose effectiveness not least in Security Sector Reform remains negligible, despite the large budget expended. The poorly defined and incoherent strategy is closely related to the EU’s failure to develop the links and relationship to those intervened upon — that is, the internal forces of peace-building. The general conclusion of the study is that the EU appears to be more concerned with establishing a symbolic presence and a form of representation than with achieving specific goals.

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1. Introduction

The European Union (EU) is increasingly aspiring to be a global security actor and peace-builder. Following the implementation of the European Security Strategy (ESS) in 2003, and in addition to the EU’s accredited role as an influential actor in development cooperation and humanitarian assistance, the EU has continuously expanded its pledged commitments in terms of peace and security policies. Behind these commitments lies the stated ambition that “Europe should be ready to share in the responsibility for global security and in building a better world” (European Union 2003:1).

One area where the EU has sought to ostensibly play a role in ‘building a better world’ is in the African Great Lakes Region (GLR) and especially in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The EU has not only developed a strong relationship with the DRC in terms of development cooperation and humanitarian assistance, but has also been operating five civil and military missions in the country since 2003. The purpose of the chapter is to analyse the EU’s attempts and interventions to try to build peace in the DRC during the last decade. Three research questions are derived from previous research: (i) what is the EU’s internal institutional coherence and its ability to formulate and implement its own policies? (cf. policy design/implementation); (ii) to what extent does the EU coordinate and cooperate with other powers and agencies involved in peace- and state-building in the DRC (cf. donor coordination); and (iii) how does the EU interact with those national and local actors on the ground in DRC? (cf. ownership)

The chapter starts out with a discussion on previous research on peace-building intervention and the theoretical implications for this study. After that we make a general description of the EU’s policies and efforts in eastern Congo. After that follow three analytical sections, dealing with the three research questions. As a start, we illustrate the complexity of the Union’s institutional set-up, which creates disorder both in Brussels and on the ground in eastern DRC. Following this, we study whether the EU renders multilateralism effective as well as point out the short-sightedness of the peace-building strategies carried out by the EU as well as other donors/powers involved in the Congo. Against this background, we then focus in more detail
on the persistent gap between the interveners and the intervened upon. Finally, we draw some
general conclusions regarding the EU and its role as a peace and security actor in the Congo.

2. Previous Research and Our Perspective on Intervention

There is a vast amount of research that analyses the way in which external interventions (especially humanitarian interventions, peace-building and state-building interventions) are executed and implemented from a top-down perspective. This literature tends to focus on operational limitations, such as the lack of political will, the under-financing of missions, insufficient force, poor logistics, issues of coordination between actors, and interaction dilemmas between civil and military forces, which in turn lead to legitimacy and authority problems, and undesirable outcomes (Doyle and Sambanis 2006; Thakhur 2005; Weiss 1999). Good outcomes, it is assumed, follow from getting the technical or operational side of things right (usually starting on day one of the intervention and ending on the day of staff evacuation). In this way, much of the intervention literature favours political order and stability, and tacitly accepts and legitimises liberal governance. In other words, it approaches intervention in a problem-solving, operational-technical manner. Often, it evaluates efficiency and legitimacy within specific missions (see, for example, Diehl 1993; Durch 1993). By focusing on cases, typologies or mission-specific operational and institutional constraints, the analysis is rarely embedded in the local and national context and rarely considers those intervened upon as acting subjects. Indeed, those intervened upon are usually defined as objects or as powerless (illiberal), are not systematically discussed, or are overlooked (Richmond 2011). Likewise, critical issues, questioning and problematising for whom and for what purposes interventions are carried out receive rather muted attention in the debate. Here it needs saying that international development cooperation is more systematic in its emphasis on the relationship with national counterparts and recipients, and national/local ‘ownership’ and participation, than are military or emergency/relief interventions.

Research in the field of peace research clearly shows that many of the ‘problems’ of externally driven peace-building, state-building and conflict transformation cannot be divorced from the

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1 This section draws mainly on Gelot and Söderbaum (2011, 2012)
external origins of such strategies. A significant portion of empirical research in the field shows that external ‘interventions’ have all too often been based on an insufficient understanding of the surrounding context, and on an external definition of the problem/crisis they set out to solve.

As many have noted, interventions are often not primarily designed for those described as the ‘beneficiaries’ and those intervened upon (Rubinstein, 2005). There are very persuasive reasons that assessments of externally designed peace-building strategies are partial unless they take seriously the role of local/national dynamics and cultural meaning systems that inform social action and those ‘intervened upon’.

There are of course reasons why the encounter between intervener and those intervened upon has received too little attention. Framing a local political issue into a ‘concern’, something ‘dangerous’ that requires an external intervention, implies an act of detachment. It demarcates who brings the rescue (rational political order) and who needs it (zones of irrationality/political chaos). Indeed, societies in need of intervention or international rescue can be seen as irrational, assumed to be prone to chaos and sometimes even barbaric violence. This in turn results in these societies being objectified or deemed passive.

The strong emphasis on top-down analysis, from the standpoint of the interveners, is not simply an academic problem. The bias to conceptualise and theorise intervention more or less in isolation from those intervened upon is part and parcel of the failure of many contemporary practices of intervention. There is a growing literature that draws attention to the failure of liberal intervention and liberal interventionism in most parts of the world (in the global South in particular, where most liberal interventions are carried out). In widely different settings, such as Liberia, Sierra Leone, the former Yugoslavia, Cambodia, Sudan, the DRC, Haiti, El Salvador and Afghanistan, research has shown that intervention can exacerbate the inequalities in the target society that give rise to conflict (Duffield 2001; Richmond 2011; Sörensen and Söderbaum 2012). Indeed, interveners sometimes leave behind a society afflicted by a culture of impunity, and sometimes the situation is more prone to the ‘chaos’ and criminality that the intervention was ostensibly meant to rectify (Bellamy 2004; Pouligny 2006: 257-258). Significantly, critical and post-structuralist contributions have repeatedly shown that in the
wake of interventions, new types of conflicts, tensions and frictions are generated – which very rarely appear in more orthodox assessments. As pointed out by Richmond:

Liberal peacebuilding has caused a range of unintended consequences. These emerge from the liberal peace’s internal contradictions, from its claim to offer a universal normative and epistemological basis for peace, and to offer a technology and process which can be applied to achieve it. When viewed from a range of contextual and local perspectives, these top-down and distant processes often appear to represent power rather than humanitarianism or emancipation (Richmond 2011: i).

Furthermore, many studies of ‘good governance’ and neoliberal aid interventions in African domestic economies reveal that these interventions have primarily benefited the local elites and the donors themselves (Abrahamsen 2000). Interventions have also weakened the state’s domestic moral legitimacy. For instance, if the government acts as middleman between international aid donors and rural recipients locally, it may with time become perceived as transferring loyalty from the local to the international arena. Governments (or national elites) thus become interveners in relation to their own people. To the extent that interventions alter the political economy of a poor nation, the state may lose domestic legitimacy (Hughes 2003). These studies underline the significance of research on the perspectives of those intervened upon and the national context. They have also helped reveal the limits and silences of orthodox top-down analysis.

Intervening (successfully) in the domestic jurisdiction of a state would require getting close to local communities, because of the far-reaching and value-laden political projects and changes that this entails (Pouligny 2006: 251). Our argument is not simply to replace the prevailing top-down analysis with bottom-up analysis, but to combine them into a single framework. This entails a broadening of the conventional parameters of intervention impact where we combine the top-down approach with a bottom-up perspective, in order to study the encounter between intervener and those intervened upon. It may imply a call for more empirically grounded research to show how perceptions of intervention differ dramatically when local conditions and people on the ground are included in the analysis. Through the top-down perspective one can analyze how an intervention is implemented and legitimized by the interveners whereas the bottom-up perspective can provide evidence regarding how the intervention is perceived,
appropriated and reacted upon by those being the object or recipient of intervention, both on the national and the local level.

In such an analysis it is necessary to avoid simple categorisations and simplistic understandings of what constitutes intervener and intervened upon. It is therefore necessary to problematize and ‘unpack’ both the intervener (and the underlying motives and goals of external interveners) and ‘those intervened upon’. The ‘targets’ of intervention are neither a homogenous group, nor objects deprived of agency. They do not speak for all of society, nor do they represent moral rightfulness any more than the interveners. Having argued that the exclusion of the targets of intervention has led to poor peace and security governance, we cannot simplistically assume that their inclusion will ensure the best outcome in all cases.

Having said this, it is still important to understand the intervener. After the descriptive overview in the next section, the following two sections focus on the EU’s peace-building interventions form a top-down perspective. We focus on the EU’s internal institutional coherence and its ability to formulate and implement its own policies, as well as the EU’s ability to coordinate and cooperate with other powers and agencies involved in peace- and state-building in the DRC. Thereafter, we focus more specifically on the encounter between interveners and those intervened upon. Such an analysis can be demanding and we therefore limit ourselves to two specific aspects of the relationship between intervener and those intervened upon. First, we analyze the difficulties the EU faces in dealing with the Congolese Government as counterpart and as a representative of those intervened upon. Second, there is consensus among both academics and policy makers about the fact that the conflict in the GLR must be understood in a regional perspective. In fact, few observers would dispute that the conflict is in itself a regional conflict. The question is therefore to what extent the EU’s strategies take such regional conditions into account.

3. The EU in the Congo: An Overview

The Democratic Republic of the Congo is the twelfth-largest country in the world covering 2.3 million km² (CIA 2010). Despite its abundant resources, the DRC is among the world’s poorest countries and was last in the 2011 Human Development Index (UNDP 2009). Out of a
population of about 70 million, divided between more than 200 ethnic groups, 1.9 million people are internally displaced and another 458,000 Congolese refugees live in the neighbouring countries (European Commission 2010c). Not least this huge number of displaced people mirrors the long-lasting and complex conflict dynamics in the DRC and the wider Great Lakes Region.

The EU’s overall objective in the Congo is to stabilize the DRC and to support the reconstruction of the country. To achieve this, the European Commission currently provides roughly €584 million under the 10th European Development Fund (EDF) covering the period from 2008 until 2013 (European Commission 2010a). Consistent with the objectives outlined in the Country Strategy Paper for the DRC, 50% of the money provided is targeted at infrastructure issues, 25% on governance aspects including initiatives to reform the Congolese security sector and 10% go directly to the health sector (Government of the DRC and European Commission 2008). Furthermore, the Humanitarian Aid department, provides the DRC with humanitarian assistance which in 2009 totalled €45 million (European Commission 2010b:21).

Hence, the main actors on the Commission side in Brussels are the DG for Development and Cooperation (DG DEVCO), the Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (DG ECHO) and the Directorate General dealing with External Relations (DG RELEX). In the GRL on the ground, the Commission is represented by its various Commission Delegations in the capitals of Kinshasa (DRC), Kampala (Uganda), Kigali (Rwanda) and Bujumbura (Burundi). Furthermore, ECHO operates two field offices in eastern Congo, namely in Bukavu (South Kivu) and Goma (North Kivu).

Alongside the European Commission’s activities, the Council of the European Union launched a first military mission in 2003, code-named ARTEMIS, which aimed at contributing to the stabilisation of the security conditions and the improvement of the humanitarian situation in Bunia, eastern DRC (Council of the European Union 2003). From 2005 until 2007, a civil police mission called EUPOL Kinshasa was established to help the Congolese National Police to keep order particularly during the electoral period in 2006 (EU Council Secretariat 2005). In addition and to support the United Nations Organisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) during the first democratic electoral process in the DRC since gaining independence, a third mission, code-named EUFOR RD Congo, was launched (Delestre 2006).
One year later, in July 2007 EUPOL Kinshasa was replaced by EUPOL RD Congo and the scope of the mission was expanded from Kinshasa to other areas all over the country and especially to the eastern provinces of North and South Kivu. Since then, the purpose of the EUPOL RD Congo mission is to support the reform of the security sector in the field of the police and its interaction with the justice system (EU Council Secretariat 2010b). Since June 2005, the EU has carried out a second mission to provide advice and assistance for the reform of the security sector in the DRC, code-named EUSEC RD Congo which aims at supporting the Congolese authorities in the rebuilding of the Armed Forces of the DRC (FARDC) (EU Council Secretariat 2010a).

Until August 2011, a specific role was further held by the EU Special Representative (EUSR) for the GLR. In 1996, the first EUSR for the GLR was appointed to acknowledge the regional nature of the conflict in the Great Lakes. While his task at the beginning was rather broad - to assist the countries in solving the regional conflict - his mandate had gradually become more specific in line with the deeper engagement of the European Union in the region. Hence, besides the EUSR’s task to provide political guidance to the Heads of Mission, the EUSR had to ensure the coordination between these missions, as well as between the missions and the other EU actors on the ground. Furthermore, the aim of the EUSR was to cut across the institutional divide between instruments applied under the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) managed by the Council versus Commission approaches (Council of the European Union 2010).
Table 1: Overview of EU Civil and Military Missions in the DRC since 2003 (as in 2011)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Completed Missions</th>
<th>Period of Deployment</th>
<th>Mission Character</th>
<th>Mission Mandate</th>
<th>Size/Budget</th>
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| Artemis            | June 2003 – September 2003 | Military Mission | To contribute to the stabilization of the security conditions and the improvement of the humanitarian situation in Bunia | About 1800 personnel  
7 Million Euro |
| EUPOL Kinshasa     | February 2005 – June 2007 | Civil Mission | To support the Congolese National Police's Integrated Police Unit (IPU) in Kinshasa | 30 personnel  
4.3 Million Euro |
| EUFOR RD Congo     | June 2006 – November 2006 | Military Mission | To support MONUC during the election process | 16.7 Million Euro |

| On-going Missions | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------|
| EUSEC RD Congo    | May 2005 – on-going (the current mandate ends September 2012) | Civil Mission | To support the Congolese authorities in rebuilding an army that will guarantee security throughout the country and create the conditions for making social and economic development possible again | About 50 military and civilian personnel  
12.6 Million Euro (2010-2011) |
| EUPOL RD Congo    | July 2007 – on-going (the current mandate ends September 2012) | Civil Mission | To contribute to the restructuring of the Congolese police by supporting the establishment of a police force that is viable, professional and multi-ethnic/integrated | About 38 international and 19 local staff |
Focusing on the ambitious formulation of EU policies, the large budget expended and the mere number of missions deployed, it could be concluded that the EU indeed has become a significant actor in the GLR and more specifically in the Congo which has been referred to as “the largest laboratory for EU crisis management, together with the Balkans” (Grevi 2007:114). This engagement thereby clearly follows the general European understanding that the African continent plays an increasingly important role not least regarding economic and security aspects. Hence, during the last decade, EU rhetoric and policy formulation has increasingly centred peacebuilding, conflict prevention and resolution policies as well as approaches to mitigate state fragility besides the more traditional focus on poverty reduction (Cotonou Partnership Agreement 2010).

4. Institutional disorder within the EU

While on paper, the EU’s approach appears comprehensive and rich in content, any deeper analysis instantly weakens the Union’s self-portrayed image of an influential global actor. What is immediately striking regarding the Union’s activities in the GLR and especially in eastern Congo is the high level of intra-EU tension leading to bureaucratic ineffectiveness at most levels of the organizational structure (Lurweg 2011; Froitzheim, Söderbaum and Taylor 2011).

One aspect of this is the inter-departmental rivalry between Commission and Council entities and actors. This rivalry is caused or at least exacerbated by a continuous expansion of the civilian side of the CSDP regarding civilian crisis management and security sector reform, two approaches applied in the conflict context of the GLR. In other words, there is no longer a clear detachment of the intergovernmental and the community method with the result that almost all approaches could be undertaken either under the CSDP or as part of development assistance programmes, except for military crisis management. Consequently, activities under the frame of civilian crisis management are no longer exclusively carried out by Commission actors. Hence, the Council has become increasingly influential in terms of the Union’s approach in the GLR and eastern DRC. Another difficulty in terms of coordination is rooted in the long-term/short-term dichotomy between development cooperation and CSDP missions. Long-term development instruments are frequently difficult to adapt to CSDP perspectives and vice versa.
Problematic is further the financial situation. While development assistance is financed through the general budget of the European Development Fund (EDF) for Commission activities, there are only limited resources for civilian CSDP activities included in the general budget (Aggestam and Anesi 2008).

However, this does not mean that coordination problems exclusively emerge between Commission and Council entities. On the Commission side, the interplay of short-term humanitarian and long-term development cooperation remains difficult. Although both DGs are managed within the Commission, they have been institutionally separated since February 2010. Instead of being represented by a joint commissioner, both Directorates are now headed by their own commissioners. According to one EU diplomat, this has led to a situation of limited cooperation since the two DGs no longer speak with the same voice especially at Brussels level. Furthermore, and in terms of policy implementation in eastern DRC, the differing time frames of development and humanitarian programmes remain the biggest obstacles. While development cooperation is defined in so-called Country Strategy Papers covering a five year period, humanitarian programs are designed for 12 to 18 months. Thus, the differing time frames render joint strategic planning difficult which in turn leads either to an overlap or a lack of activities in certain areas. Although, according to several interviewees, the attempt is made to interlink and build a bridge between the two policy areas through developing and participating in common strategies, no satisfying solutions have been found yet.

Tensions also occur within the Council Secretariat. Regarding the two on-going EU missions in the DRC, EUPOL and EUSEC RD Congo, it is striking that although they are very closely related with regard to content, the two have been separated from the beginning. Hence, they respond to different lines of command and report back to different institutions. As a consequence, both missions possess their Head Quarters in the capital of Kinshasa and run their own field offices in the eastern provinces of the DRC.

However, even more striking than these intra-departmental obstacles on Brussels level is the remarkable amount of personal rivalry, mutual envy and open disrespect expressed by both Commission and Council actors against each other. It further exacerbates the already existing

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difficulties following the aforementioned complex and demanding institutional set-up of the Union and the unclear distribution of roles and responsibilities. While one Commission employee asserts that ‘we [the Commission] are not there [in the DRC] for the show but there to address the problem’\(^3\), an employee of the Council Secretariat accuses the Commission of being ‘traditionally (...) jealous of civilian ESDP. Military they can accept because it’s military and they’re not in charge. But civilian, they say: We can do it as well.’\(^4\) Hence, the relationship between the two entities is described as ‘a very, very, very bad example of coordination and cooperation. Almost not existent.’\(^5\)

Inter-departmental rivalry is not only found at Brussels level but it is then also transferred to the ground in the DRC as outlined by one informant of the Council Secretariat: ‘People don’t like each other. People don’t understand each other and they don’t want to understand each other. Personal agendas, personal opinions sometimes override the political guidance, the strategic directions they [EU actors in the DRC] get from here, from Brussels. If we don’t really cooperate [in Brussels], how can they do a better job [in the DRC]?’\(^6\)

The interviews conducted highlighted furthermore that there are also tensions between people working in Brussels and on the ground: ‘There is a total misunderstanding. It is very serious and we [representatives working on the ground] always have to justify what we’re doing.’\(^7\) The relationship was described as hierarchical and byzantine due to the multitude of actors, an overlapping of bilateral policies and those pursued under the EU umbrella and a top-down approach from Brussels that often negated or side-lined policy advice emanating from the field in favour of prescriptions from Brussels-based bureaucrats who, although remote from what is actually happening in the DRC, believed their analysis was superior and—crucially—were strategically closer to decision-makers at EU headquarters.\(^8\)

When it comes to cooperation and coordination between EU institutions on the ground, the picture is also disillusioning. A representative of the Commission working both in Kinshasa and in Goma in the eastern DRC, described the EU Delegations as ‘quite jealous’ vis-à-vis

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\(^3\) Interview with a representative of the European Commission in Brussels, Belgium, 4 March 2010.
\(^4\) Interview with a representative of the Council Secretariat in Brussels, Belgium, 4 March 2010.
\(^5\) Ibid.
\(^6\) Ibid.
\(^7\) Interview with an EU member state representative in Kigali, Rwanda, 13 October 2010.
\(^8\) Ibid.
their institutional turf, noting that there were various ‘races between people’, i.e. inter-personal rivalry, which resulted in ‘games played with Brussels.’\textsuperscript{9} Institutional wrangling rather than coherence in the EU’s external activities in the eastern DRC was detected throughout the research and it was clear that this directly led to ineffective and inefficient approaches. This was itself acknowledged by some EU actors on the ground, who lamented that ‘we realize that everyone does the same thing, without any dialogue…what bothers me is that we can detect that there is a loss of energy and loss of money by acting so. Here, we do not know how to coordinate ourselves.’\textsuperscript{10} On top of that, one informant even believes that her presence in North Kivu as a delegate of the EU Delegation in Kinshasa has an exclusively political character. Although information about the situation specifically in the eastern provinces is gathered and shared with Kinshasa, the interviewee states that ‘I don’t know what they do with my information.’ Regarding the European actors in general, the informant further admits that: ‘We share information but we don’t listen to each other.’\textsuperscript{11}

Weak staff competences and difficulties regarding contract periods further impinge on the EU’s actor capability. The weakness of the voice of in-field actors was compounded by the nature of recruitment for EU positions. In fact, due to the unattractive living conditions in the eastern DRC, it was rare for experienced or senior staff to volunteer for positions or to remain in post long. Indeed, it was noticeable that many EU staffers based in the Congo were obviously young and inexperienced and often in their first post abroad. One EU employee confirmed that ‘in the EU Delegation in Kinshasa, there are many young and inexperienced people working because of the working and living environment’. A shortage of staff due to such factors then led to a constant switching of roles within the EU offices: ‘people in charge of infrastructure just change to governance’ overnight.\textsuperscript{12} Where expert knowledge was needed most, due to the difficult working environment of the DRC, the reality was that the EU has to predominantly rely on inexperienced junior employees whose knowledge of the situation in the DRC was, at best, scant and often disturbingly naïve.

\textsuperscript{9} Interview with a representative of the European Commission Delegation to the DRC in Goma, DRC, 19 October 2010.
\textsuperscript{10} Interview with a representative of EUPOL RD Congo in Bukavu, DRC, 8 April 2010.
\textsuperscript{11} Interview with a representative of the European Commission Delegation to the DRC in Goma, DRC, 19 October 2010.
\textsuperscript{12} Ibid.
This problem of competency was then compounded by the structural difficulties caused by EU employment practice, which further exacerbated problems in attaining any long-term coherent European approach. Differing contract periods meant that there was a continuous change in staffing. Institutional incapacity was the result. As one respondent noted, ‘The problem is that everyone arrives at a different time during the year which means that there is always a renewal in staff which is very complicated. If you are looking for a medium-term goal, it requires almost every time to rebuild contacts. It is quite difficult.’\textsuperscript{13} In other words, the nature of the bureaucratic machine of the European Union served to increase the significance of personalities (which has been seen to be problematic) and decrease institutional and vertical coherence in that experienced staff are outnumbered by junior colleagues who themselves are in a constant state of rotation and replacement.

However and as much as personalities exacerbate existing difficulties due to the institutional complexity, personalities also find ways to work in this environment and to overcome these obstacles. Consistently highlighted both in Brussels and in the DRC is for example the EU Special Representative for the GLR. He is described as ‘a fantastic example of somebody taking the coordinating role’\textsuperscript{14} facilitating a ‘super exchange of sensitive information.’\textsuperscript{15} Another positive example is the so-called Rejusco programme (Programme de Restauration de la Justice à l’Est de la République Démocratique du Congo) which had the aim to fight against impunity as well as ordinary crime through capacity building activities in the justice sector. The programme was conducted by the European Commission in collaboration with several individual EU member states and established close cooperation with the Council-led EUPOL and EUSEC RD Congo missions in eastern DRC. According to the former general coordinator of Rejusco, this collaboration demonstrated that the given separation between Council and Commission activities from a Brussels perspective can be overridden when it comes to policy implementation in the field because ‘here on the ground, I do not see why, I mean we are (…) three European programmes. If we do the same activities, what should prevent us to do them

\textsuperscript{13} Interview with a representative of EUPOL RD Congo in Bukavu, DRC, 8 April 2010.
\textsuperscript{14} Interview with a representative of the Council Secretariat in Brussels, Belgium, 4 March 2010.
\textsuperscript{15} Interview with a political advisor of the EU Special Representative for the GLR in Goma, DRC, 13 April 2010.
together? We know each other and we organize together. It’s always the European house that is visible.”

These examples illustrate that the European Union’s efforts in the DRC can be effective and efficient whenever people defy institutional boundaries. In many cases however, severe tensions remain between the different European entities which strongly limits the Union’s potential as a peace and security actor in the GLR.

5. (In)effective Multilateralism: The Failure of Coordination

In EU’s rhetoric, both ‘effective multilateralism’ and global security governance is clearly emphasized, for example in the ESS that calls for “an international order based on effective multilateralism”. It is then further stated in the ESS that “in a world of global threats (…) our security and prosperity increasingly depend on an effective multilateral system” (European Union 2003:9). But what does this mean in the context of the European Union’s engagement in the conflict in the GLR and especially in eastern DRC?

Applied to the situation in the Congo and especially in the eastern provinces, the EU has indeed been understood as an actor which has the greatest possibility to render multilateralism effective. In relation to the on-going MONUSCO peacebuilding intervention, one UN employee acknowledges on the one hand that: ‘We [the international community] do not have a focus and we don’t have a direction’. On the other hand, the informant is nevertheless convinced that ‘the mission can do something for the DRC’. However, what puzzles the interviewee most concerns the question of taking the leadership and defining a joint strategy: ‘what I fail to understand is why it is so difficult to define what we’re doing. Why is it not possible to raise these issues under the EU umbrella at the UN level? The people here on the ground see pretty clear what the major problems are but why do the donors not get the UN to listen to them?’

In such sentiments, the EU is considered to be an actor that could make a difference regarding rendering multilateralism effective, but the current situation where there is a palpable lack of

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16 Interview with a representative of Rejusco, in Gisenyi, Rwanda, 15 April 2010.
17 Interview with a representative of MONUSCO in Goma, DRC, 18 October 2010.
EU coherence vis-à-vis policy delivery, means that there is a concomitant lack in any strategy by the EU in the eastern DRC that may lead to such an outcome.

Another aspect adding to the EU’s inability to take the driver’s seat in a multilateral approach in the Congo lies in its internal fragmentation not only in terms of rivalry between the Commission and the Council, but also when it comes to cooperation and coordination between the Union and its member states. Of specific importance regarding policies targeted at the DRC are a few EU member states which are strongly pursuing their own national interests – besides and/or within the joint European approach. These are in particular Belgium (the former colonial power), France, the UK and the Netherlands but to a lesser degree also Sweden and Germany, the latter in particular regarding their extensive development cooperation efforts. In such an environment, it is indeed acknowledged that clear political guidelines and defined roles regarding the member states are needed, as highlighted by one interviewee: ‘To be a dynamic power means to work together with the member states and under a clear chain of command.’

However, instead of implementing a comprehensive and joint approach, as outlined in EU rhetoric, the Union’s real conflict management policy towards Africa is rather dominated and shaped by some influential member states, setting the agenda and exploiting the EU to be still perceived as an ethical actor (Gegout 2009). In line with this, one EU member state diplomat based in Kigali highlights that ‘France uses the EU instead of speaking for itself. EU multilateralism is therefore very convenient for France.’

One reason for this is that “the EU provides even the larger states (especially those with colonial histories), a means to re-engage in areas of former colonial influence in Africa.” Thus, “by acting as an agent of European foreign policy, Britain, France, Belgium, Portugal, and the Netherlands could claim more credit for their dual national/European roles in troubled areas in the African Great Lakes Region” (Wong 2005:147). In addition, the cooperation with other EU member states in Africa is considered to allow for more influence on the continent compared to potential unilateral interventions (Chafer 2002).

Another interesting aspect deals with the accentuation of visibility from the donors’ perspective. There is clearly a lack of coordination between the administrative EU centres in

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18 Interview with a representative of the European Commission in Brussels, Belgium, 4 March 2010.
19 Interview with an EU member state representative in Kigali, Rwanda, 13 October 2010.
both Brussels and Kinshasa and the ground level in the eastern DRC and this has led to both a
detachment of the two levels and also hindered coordination of the actors involved. As per one
EU informant’s comments in Goma, ‘there is an overlap with other European countries. The
training of police officers, for example, is done by EUPOL and other countries. We share
information but we don’t listen to each other. Our problem as donors is that we want to have an
immediate result.’\(^{20}\) Even more outspoken was another interviewee, who stated that with regard
to the wider international community, ‘I believe that there is a massive communication
problem. Kinshasa sucks in all information, but nothing comes out of Kinshasa.’\(^{21}\)

Clearly, all donors focus on their specific projects and want to see immediate results as a
means to justify the expenditure of resources to domestic constituencies. This is because in a
complex humanitarian emergency such as the DRC, long-term goals and achievements are
incredibly complicated and unlikely to deliver results any time soon. Yet it is in such an
environment where a comprehensive and long-term vision is the most needed. In this regard,
and contrasting EU’s rhetoric, the Union lacks a clear strategy regarding what to do. Instead, it
seems obvious from research in the field that there is in fact no clearly defined strategy on how
to build peace, security and development in the eastern DRC.

Hence, instead of pursuing a coordinated and long-term peacebuilding strategy, the European
Union, like many other actors, focuses on the implementation of its own specific projects. In
addition, and instead of enriching ‘effective multilateralism’ with content, it largely remains a
buzzword in EU rhetoric.

6. The Gap between the Intervener and the Intervened Upon

As we have elaborated previously, there is a vast amount of intervention research that analyses
the way in which external interventions are executed and implemented from a top-down
perspective (or from the perspective of the ‘intervener’). This literature tends to focus on
constraints on the strategy or the implementation of the externally defined peace-building and
state-building strategy. Such type of analysis is both relevant and important. The two previous

\(^{20}\) Interview with a representative of the European Commission Delegation to the DRC in Goma, DRC, 19
October 2010.

\(^{21}\) Interview with a representative of MONUSCO in Goma, DRC, 18 October 2010.
sections (‘Institutional Disorder’ and ‘(In)effective Multilateralism: The Failure of Coordination’) have analyzed the EU in the Congo from such a top-down perspective (i.e. from the perspective of the ‘intervener’).

Yet, the argument made previously is that we need to move beyond a top-down analysis in order to also analyse the encounter between interveners and those intervened upon. This section analyzes to what extent the EU’s peace and security policies are adjusted to the local conflict dynamics and to what extent there is a functioning relationship with ‘those intervened upon’. This is obviously a comprehensive (and difficult) task, and in what follows below we limit ourselves to two specific aspects of the relationship between intervener and those intervened upon. First, we will analyze the difficulties the EU faces in dealing with the Congolese Government as counterpart and as a representative of those intervened upon. Second, there is consensus among both academics and policy makers about the fact that the conflict in the GLR must be understood in a regional perspective. In fact, few observers would dispute that the conflict is in itself a regional conflict. The question is therefore to what extent the EU’s strategies take such regional conditions into account.

**The Congolese Government as Partner in Peace**

Generally speaking, peacebuilding interventions are predominantly designed as well as analysed from the standpoint of the interveners. This implies that insufficient attentions is given to the national context in which the intervention takes place and the targets of the intervention, the so-called intervened upon (Schulz and Söderbaum 2010). Relating to the conflicts in the Congo, this becomes visible in the fact that the international community has focused on and succeeded, at least to some extent, in imposing peace settlements at the national and regional levels. However, they failed to establish peace at the subnational level with the consequence, that throughout the eastern provinces of the DRC, violence was sustained through continuing bottom-up rivalries (Autesserre 2010).

This shortcoming in relation to the European Union’s efforts in the GLR and the DRC is revealed in the fact that the Union heavily focuses on the top leaders in the conflict, namely the Congolese Government. Hence, in the DRC, the EU follows a statist approach with the aim to
build up the formal structures of the Congolese state, not least through its efforts regarding SSR. However, this state building approach becomes highly problematic in a context where the ruling regime is both part of the problem and cause of the humanitarian emergency. This reality is indeed acknowledged by some EU observers. One informant remarks for example that ‘the DRC is not a state but an entity. It is not controlling its territory, not its army and not the East. There is anarchy in the DRC and in the GLR which makes the situation very complex.’ However, and despite this situational awareness on the ground, the EU feels compelled to pretend that a Congolese state exists and therefore continues to exclusively deal with the Congolese government as if the state apparatus in the DRC was functioning although it is not. Hence, the problem, as phrased by one UN representative, is that ‘The DRC is a sovereign country, but it is run by a criminal elite network.’ This poses a serious challenge for the EU in a situation where ‘the EU does not have real policies’ because there is no real state, as highlighted by another EU informant working in eastern Congo. The same person arrives at the conclusion that this has led to a situation the EU is unable to handle and has therefore become ‘an actor for financing but not an actor for policies.’ In addition and although any financial support is theoretically linked to conditionalities, these requirements are not effectively enforced. In contrast, the EU is rather fooled as highlighted by the same respondent: ‘There is a lot of conditionality. But then, the money for the elections for example, is just taken from another side. The Congolese Government knows how to play the game. They know that in the end, we’ll pay.’

One UN informant further notes that ‘the problem is that the Congolese Government is pretty good in dividing the donors – Belgium, France, the US – in terms of the SSR following its own interests.’ And this happens although the on-going EU and UN missions, EUSEC and EUPOL RD Congo as well as MONUSCO, share their focus on the reform of the Congolese security sector as one aspect of the wider aim to sustainably stabilize the country. According to the interviewee, this is a missed opportunity of the EU to bring all donors together: ‘an agreed

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22 Interview with an EU member state representative in Kigali, Rwanda, 13 October 2010.
23 Interview with a representative of MONUSCO in Goma, DRC, 18 October 2010.
24 Interview with a representative of the European Commission Delegation to the DRC in Goma, DRC, 19 October 2010.
25 Ibid.
26 Interview with a representative of MONUSCO in Goma, DRC, 18 October 2010.
agenda would be very helpful. And if the EU as the political umbrella manages to bring the member states together, that would be of great help.’

A Country Perspective on a Regional Conflict

Further impinging on the EU’s effectiveness in the GLR and the DRC is the gap between EU’s understanding of the conflict as regional and its reaction to exclusively target the DR Congo. Indeed, the war in the DRC is a primary example for a regionalised war in Africa while most contemporary conflicts around the world are still specified as ‘domestic’ or ‘civil wars. However, the conflict in eastern Congo cannot be isolated from the regional neighbourhood since strong cross-border dimensions defy borders and neat categorisations. As Gegout notes, an understanding of African regional politics is a prerequisite to effective engagement on the continent (Gegout 2009). In this context, in analysing the EU’s efforts in the GLR and eastern DRC, it is therefore necessary not only to assess to what the extent the EU actually conceives the conflict as regionalised but also how the Union’s perception shapes its activities.

Indeed, the EU clearly acknowledges the significance of dealing with regional conflicts which are identified as ‘key threats’ in the ESS. The GLR is given as one example and it is stated that these conflicts “impact on European interests directly and indirectly”. Furthermore, they “threaten regional stability” and they “destroy human lives and social and physical infrastructures; they threaten minorities, fundamental freedoms and human rights” (European Union 2003:4). As one response to that, the EU has appointed an EU Special Representative for the GLR as early as in 1996.

Nevertheless and in contrast to its official rhetoric, EU policy and planning frameworks remain state-centric and limited to specific countries. Hence, the EU finds itself acting ambiguously. On the hand, the significance of a regional perspective and a regional approach is generally officially acknowledged which was also supported by a member state diplomat working in the GLR stating that: ‘You have to have a regional approach. (...) If you don’t have a regional approach, you do not solve national problems.’ Or in the words of an UN official: ‘It is a total mess until you tackle it [regionally].’ On the other hand, the role of the DRC as main actor in

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27 Interview with an EU member state representative in Kigali, Rwanda, 13 October 2010.
28 Interview with a representative of MONUSCO in Goma, DRC, 18 October 2010.
the conflict sticks out since ‘everything [in the GLR] has a Congo-link.’

This leads to a situation in which the EU mainly focuses on the DRC in its actual policy implementation in line with other multilateral bodies which are described as being ‘frankly crap when dealing with cross-border issues’, related to the Congo.

The reason behind that is that in practice, the EU is mainly organised to deal with nation-states (however dysfunctional these may be) and not with regions. And, above all the EU deals with governments. In spite of the regional nature of the conflict, the Union has found it very difficult to successfully engage in the context of a regional conflict where there is an absence of a credible regional counterpart (any visit to the Economic Community of the Great Lakes Countries (CEPGL) headquarters in Gisenyi, Rwanda will confirm this analysis of the moribund state of that organization). Despite the real state of the CEPGL, the natural attraction of one regional organization (the EU) to another (the CEPGL) has meant that Brussels has exerted some effort in establishing links with the latter body, in spite of negligible success. One EU member state diplomat asserted that ‘the EU focuses on regional economic integration and puts weight on regional organizations’. Thus, ‘the CEPGL can be seen as an umbrella for contacts’. However, recognising the somewhat derelict state of the Great Lakes organisation, the diplomat added that ‘from a Brussels perspective, there is more weight on the CEPGL than it deserves.’

An EU diplomat based in Goma was more forthright, stating that the CEPGL was in fact ‘a project of the donor countries in the Great Lakes Region, but we don’t know exactly what we’re planning. I don’t know where we will end. The CEPGL was dead but now there is a kind of rebirth. However, there are only directors sitting on the top floor and they have no staff to implement projects.’ This confirms the comments of another EU member state diplomat who acknowledged that an approach taking the regional aspects into account and working with bodies such as the CEPGL was ‘certainly a challenge.’

Nevertheless, it has to be acknowledged that the EU maintains diplomatic missions, the EU Commission Delegations, in the capitals of Kigali (Rwanda), Kampala (Uganda), Bujumbura (Burundi) and Kinshasa (DR Congo) to open up opportunities for implementing its policies on

29 Interview with a political advisor of the EU Special Representative for the GLR in Goma, DRC, 13 April 2010.
30 Interview with a representative of MONUSCO in Goma, DRC, 18 October 2010.
31 Interview with an EU Member State representative in Kigali, Rwanda, 13 October 2010.
32 Interview with an EU Member State representative in Goma, DRC, 18 October 2010.
33 Interview with an EU Member State representative in Kigali, Rwanda, 13 October 2010.
the ground following a more regional focus, at least theoretically. However, and against EU’s lip service to internalize the regional perspective, there is no comprehensive exchange between the various Delegation offices set in place yet. Officially, coordination simply implies the sharing of information but all further initiatives depend on the personal ambitions especially of the Head of Delegations, their interests and affiliation with the region as highlighted by one informant from the EU Delegation in Kigali. The same interviewee admits that Michel Arrion, the present Head of the EU-Delegation in Rwanda ‘sees the regional dimension’ which is according to the informant ‘a question of personality.’ Nevertheless, there are no common projects for the provinces of North and South Kivu although important issues imply questions regarding the repatriation of refugees and the general movement of people – aspects which are of explicit cross-border interest. This inward-looking approach even entails the curiosity that a staff member of the EU Delegation in Kinshasa who is stationed temporarily in Goma, North Kivu, directly bordering Rwanda, reports back to Kinshasa but is not supposed to directly share any information with the EU-Delegation in Kigali.

However, in contrast to this rather negative assessment of EU’s engagement in the GLR and the DRC, the EUSR has to be highlighted since he was complemented throughout the interviews as being ‘a fantastic example of somebody taking the coordinating role.’ One of his political advisors highlights furthermore, that in contrast to Brussels, where the relations between the various actors are characterized by mistrust and hierarchy, the work done on the ground is more action oriented and that it is ‘more apparent that we work towards a common goal since institution wrangling is less apparent.’ Thus, the EUSR was not only supposed to take over the role and responsibility to harmonize EU’s security governance in the Great Lakes Region but also seems to have managed to actually interlink the various actors at least partially. While it was already questionable to what extent one policy unit was eventually able to straighten out the various deficiencies in the EU’s approach both from an institutional perspective and with regards to content, it remains to be seen how the situation develops now that this post has been abandoned.

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34 Interview with a representative of the European Commission Delegation to Rwanda in Kigali, Rwanda, 10 May 2010.
35 Interview with a representative of the Council Secretariat in Brussels, Belgium, 4 March 2010.
36 Interview with a political advisor of the EU Special Representative for the GLR in Goma, DRC, 13 April 2010.
7. Conclusion

Although history offers many examples of international intervention, the post-Cold War era has seen a burgeoning of different forms of outside interference and intervention by a range of state and non-state actors and for many different purposes. These include practices known as humanitarian intervention, responsibility to protect, development intervention, governance intervention as well as peace-building and state-building intervention. Many of these interventions are controversial and many are judged as having mixed results, or even as being complete failures, as illustrated by present-day Iraq, Afghanistan and a number of interventions throughout Africa.

In this chapter we have argued that ‘the problem of intervention’ and “building peace form the outside’ cannot be divorced from its external political origins. A significant portion of research in the field shows that interventions and externally induced peacebuilding and state-building strategies have all too often been based on an insufficient understanding of the surrounding context, and on an external definition of the problem these interventions set out to solve. As many have noted, interventions are often designed for purposes other than solving the problems of those described as ‘beneficiaries’ and ‘targets’ (Rubinstein 2005; Richmond 2011). Building on the arguments we have developed elsewhere (Sörensen and Söderbaum 2012; Gelot and Söderbaum 2011 and 2012) we argued for the need to rethink external interventions in general and what occurs in the encounter between interveners and those ‘intervened upon’ in particular. Indeed, determinations of the success or failure of interventions are partial unless they take seriously the role of local dynamics and cultural meaning systems that inform social action as well as the encounter between interveners and those intervened upon. This chapter represent our attempt to conduct such analysis focusing on the EU’s intervention in the DRC.

The EU’s role in the DRC is very comprehensive and the country has become somewhat of a laboratory for EU crisis management. One important result is that the EU’s coherence and effectiveness as an actor in peace-building and security sector reform is severely compromised by the Union’s bureaucratic and organisational complexity. The EU’s institutional set-up provokes institutional divisions as well as overlapping competencies within the Union and
among its member countries. The top-down and Brussels-led approach that is applied by EU bureaucrats negates or sidelines policy advice emanating from the field. These shortcomings are further exacerbated through personality-driven policies as well as mistrust, personal rivalry, mutual envy and open disrespect expressed by various Commission and Council actors against each other. Although the EU tries to follow a multifaceted approach both in its rhetoric and through the provision of a significant amount of development as well as humanitarian assistance and the deployment of various civil and military missions in the DRC, its efficiency and relevance as an external intervener is deeply problematic.

The EU’s official stance is to support a UN-led system and to contribute to a more “effective multilateralism”. However, there is a systematic tendency for external powers and donors involved in peace-building in the DRC to focus on their own ‘visibility’ through implementing highly noticeable (unilateral) projects that promise immediate results rather than following a comprehensive and coordinated – and thus necessarily joint and long-term – strategy. Most donors focus on their specific projects and want to see immediate results as a means to justify the expenditure of resources to their domestic constituencies. This is perhaps understandable. However, in a complex humanitarian emergency, such as the DRC, long-term goals are incredibly complicated. To achieve sudden results is highly unlikely. Yet it is in precisely such environments where coordinated and long-term approaches are most needed.

The inefficient and poorly defined strategy is closely related to the EU’s internal weaknesses as well as its failure to develop appropriate links and relationships with those intervened upon (Froitzheim, Söderbaum and Taylor 2012). Importantly, the Union focuses exclusively on the Congolese government as its counterpart and largely fails to develop links to larger segments of society and those intervened upon in a broader sense.

The EU’s approach is state-centric and rather formalistic. The government in Kinshasa is the EU’s main counterpart and from the EU’s perspective seen as ‘those intervened upon’, which is flawed in a context where the ruling political regime in the DRC is both part and cause of the problem. This means that neither the context nor the logic of the conflict are sufficiently taken into consideration by the EU, with the resulting effect that it becomes an actor for financing rather than for policies.
In addition, while the regional dimension of the conflict is highlighted in the EU’s rhetoric, the Union lacks functioning instruments and policies to deal with cross-border and regionalising effects. The EU continues to deal exclusively with the Congolese state, no matter how dysfunctional it is, and even if there is much talk about accommodating the regional dimension of the conflict. This demonstrates the EU’s inability to deal with a regional conflict where no credible regional counterpart is present. Taken together, in spite of the enormous amount of attention and spending on the DRC and the larger Great Lakes region, the EU lacks a coherent strategy for its peace-building interventions in the DRC (also see Froitzheim, Söderbaum and Taylor 2012). Our research reveals that the EU’s interventions are poorly designed in terms of their links to those intervened upon. This is closely linked with the fact that the EU appears to be more concerned with establishing symbolic presence and political representation than with real achievements and genuine peace-building on the ground.

The EU has to transform the political will of being ‘present’ into actual achievements through increasing both the resources as well as bolstering its effectiveness. This is particularly relevant regarding the various CSDP missions so far, which have been simply too weak and underfinanced to have any real impact. Some observers have claimed that several of the EU’s interventions are not carried out to help civilians in conflicts or to achieve lasting impact on the ground, but rather to first and foremost promote the EU’s identity and visibility as a security actor instead of long-term peacebuilding: This severely undermines the credibility of the EU and needs to change.
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