



The European Union's Approach to Security Sector Reform: new capacities for effective engagement*

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The European Union has a long history of carrying out Security Sector Reform programmes in partner countries. In recent years, it has strengthened its capacity in order to improve the quality of its support as well as to increase coordination among the different actors and instruments.

Introduction

Security sector reform (SSR) plays a crucial role in building solid foundations of long-term governance and development. According to the European Union, SSR

is the process of transforming a country's security system so that it gradually provides individuals and the State with more effective and accountable security in a manner consistent with respect for human rights, democracy, the rule of law and the principles of good governance (European Commission 2016 a : 2).

The SSR concept has evolved in parallel with the transformations occurred at the international level, in particular the evolution of the security concept. If in the past times security was largely linked to the national defence from military threats, now it must include the economic, environmental, social and political aspects of the security itself.

The new approach to security addresses both the security providers and the security beneficiaries, those whom the security activities are addressed to. The population takes the place of the State as the main recipient of SSR programmes, becoming the ultimate objective of security interventions. Consequently, and in line with the majority of the international actors, it is now better to use the expression "human security" since it stresses the broadening of the concept of security without replacing it.

As a strong advocate of human security and a long-standing supporter of reform processes in many countries, the European Union played a key role in the development of the SSR concept.

The Council's *EU Concept for ESDP support to SSR* (2005) along with the Commission's *Communication A Concept for European Community Support for Security Sector Reform* (2006) are the first very complete documents on the topic, proving to the International Community that the EU was aware of "its identity as a global player and partner [...] in the area of security sector reform" (Commission of the European Communities 2006 : 3), and that there was a need for a European definition of the concept to show its real engagement.

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However, despite the long-term engagement in supporting SSR, only in recent years the European Union has taken a further step towards “the identification, planning and/or implementation/execution of all EU SSR-related external action instruments/programmes/projects” (European Commission 2016 a : 4).

As the EU is becoming increasingly involved in SSR and this concept is growing in relevance at the international level, the EU's approach to SSR appears to be an interesting subject to study. Accordingly, this article aims to analyse the role of the European Union in supporting partner countries towards the reform of their security sector by taking in consideration its old and new capacities and the policy framework on SSR. Furthermore, a case study on Georgia will provide an example of EU support to SSR in neighbourhood countries. The analysis will take in consideration the different actors engaged in SSR, by attempting to offer an overview of their activities in Georgia.

1. Security Sector Reform: the concept

The word security sector reform was used for the first time in 1998 by the former UK Secretary of State for International Development, Clare Short, during a speech at the Royal College of Defence Studies, where she stressed the need for a comprehensive approach to the processes of security sector reform in the developing countries.

During those years the European Union was engaged in assisting the Eastern European countries who formerly belonged to the Soviet Union towards the development of a stronger security sector. According to Clare Short, the new concept of SSR better defined the different security assistance activities in place in the post-soviet countries by including them into a wider and more coherent perspective.

SSR not only refers to those programmes aimed at training the security forces like the army or the police, but inevitably includes all those actors and structures which together contribute to the development and the democratic governance of a State, while strengthening the accountability and transparency of institutional activities.

Despite the fact that the concept of SSR is relatively recent, external interventions carried out by the Western States on security matters in the developing countries are not new. Throughout time, many of the former colonies have maintained tight relations in the military field with their respective European colonialists.

For example, during the Cold War, they received help in the traditional form of the security assistance activities, mentioned earlier. The strong military powers were used to offer training for the police and the army forces as well as economic support in the area of security.

However, the support and assistance were conceived as an instrument to maintain a sort of political influence in the former colonies, while these latter kept falling under a logistic and economic dependency, thus encouraging trading and sales of weapons, vehicles and military equipment.

After the Cold War, these strategic assistance activities were replaced by cooperation between countries in the defence and security matters, and the SSR concept could finally rise as a new and comprehensive perspective.

Since then, SSR has become part of the international vocabulary, gaining relevance in the most diverse contexts.

The following table resumes the relevant actors involved in SSR, namely the “SSR actors” or security providers:

State security and justice providers	Non-State security and justice providers
Armed forces	Private military and security forces
Law enforcement agencies	Unofficial armed groups (militias, factions)
Intelligence and secret services	Self-defence groups
Border and custom services	Other informal security providers (customary)
Courts (civil and military)	Defence lawyers/Bar association
Prosecutions service	Legal aid bodies
Corrections service	Victim support groups
	Informal justice providers (customary)
Governance oversight and management bodies	Civil Society
Legal framework	Human rights NGOs
Legislature/parliamentary committees	Media
Political oversight	Victim groups
Human rights institutions	Unions
Anti-corruption bodies	Academic and research institutions
Ministry of Justice	Religious groups
Ministry of Home Affairs	Citizens
Ministry of Defence	

Table 1: Relevant SSR actors

Traditionally, security actors are those who are authorised by the institutions to use force, like the armed forces, the police and the *gendarmerie* (State security and justice providers).

However, the security sector is much more complex, due to the fact that in the majority of the national contexts security and justice are not provided by the traditional actors framed within the government bodies. In fact, security providers might not even be legally recognised, but yet be very popular among the population.

For example, failed or fragile States, who are not capable of ensuring security and justice throughout the national territory, must rely on non-institutional actors to provide security in the remote areas of the country.

Furthermore, in the current international scenes there is a fifth category who has an increasingly central role through the whole SSR implementation process: the external actors.

The most relevant being:

- International and regional organisations (UN, EU, NATO, OSCE, etc.);
- Single nations as bilateral donors;
- International NGOs;
- International private security companies (private military companies and private security companies);
- Multinational security forces;
- Transnational criminal and terroristic networks, playing as 'spoilers';
- Academic institutions and experts.

2. The European Union's approach to SSR

2.1 EU SSR Policy Framework

The EU policy framework was developed in 2005 and 2006 with the Council and the Commission shaping the EU concept of security sector reform.

Although the *EU Concept for ESDP support to SSR*(2005) was meant to be complementary to the *Commission's A Concept for European Community Support for Security Sector Reform*(2006), the two documents contain interesting peculiarities that need to be analysed separately.

As regards the ESDP support to SSR, both the *European Security Strategy* (ESS)¹ and the *OECD/Development Assistance Committee (DAC) guidelines*² are mentioned as reference documents. While the ESS is important because is the first document outlining that "support to Security Sector Reform in partner countries is one of the core areas for EU action" (Council of the European Union 2005 : 4), the latter serves essentially as a basis for the development of a concept for ESDP support.

The complementarity between the CFSP/ESDP and the Community action is frequently mentioned in the Council's paper, thus emphasising the aim to develop a broad SSR concept that doesn't constraint ESDP or Community activities.

As we read, ESDP contribution is essential for integrated and focused approach to SSR, mainly because of "its dimensions of both civilian and military crisis management, including an emphasis on the prevention of conflict" (Ivi, 6).

Integrated actions comprising civilian and military elements indeed characterise the ESDP support to SSR, serving as an important tool for EU's involvement:

ESDP support to SSR in a partner state will apply to an ESDP action which usually will take the form of advice and assistance to the local authorities (executive, legislature and judiciary) in reform issues in the Security Sector, in a manner consistent with democratic norms and sound principles of good governance, human rights, transparency and the rule of law (Ivi, 7).

On the other hand, *A Concept for European Community Support for Security Sector Reform* represents the Commission's contribution to the development of an EU concept on SSR.

¹ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/30823/qc7809568enc.pdf> (last consulted on 04/10/2019).

² <http://www.oecd.org/development/incaf/31785288.pdf> (last consulted on 04/10/2019).

The EU has been engaging in SSR by supporting reform process in partner countries through several Community instruments and policies falling under:

Development Cooperation, Enlargement, the Stabilisation and Association Process, the European Neighbourhood Policy, Conflict Prevention and Crisis Management, Democracy and Human Rights, and the External Dimension of the area of Freedom, Security and Justice (Commission of the European Communities 2006 : 3).

However, the lack of a common EU concept on SSR across the three pillars has been challenging the EU external action in this area. Therefore, the Commission attempted to provide a solution by setting out “principles and norms for the European Community’s engagement in SSR” (Ivi, 4).

A strategic framework for EU support for SSR would ensure that Community activities falling under different policies have the same targets and share a common strategy when managing SSR programmes.

The European Community (EC) supports SSR through “reform of law enforcement institutions, justice institutions, and state institutions dealing with management and oversight of the security system” as well as “activities designed to strengthen civilian control and democratic governance of the public sector in general and to guarantee the respect for human rights” (Ivi, 6). However, the EC can engage in this under several policies, which means it can follow different approaches and methods of implementation, increasing the risk of negative duplication of efforts.

Consequently, the Commission endorsed the OECD/DAC guidelines since they “provide an important basis for EC engagement in this area, in terms of norms, principles and operational guidance” (Ibid.).

Finally, the Commission defines new perspectives for EC support for SSR. First, with regard to external assistance instruments, the Community should focus on the governance aspects of SSR, “including the strengthening of parliamentary oversight, judicial independence and media freedom” (Ivi, 9), and take a more holistic approach to SSR. This would result in a more coherent and goal-oriented implementation of EC programmes in SSR.

Second, to engage in short to medium-term in SSR, the EC, through the Stability Instrument, would respond rapidly in different parts of the world in the early stages of crisis or in the post-crisis.

Third, the EU should seek to take a comprehensive and pragmatic approach to SSR processes. This can be achieved by increasing coordination between the EC, Member States bilateral support and ESDP actions in the field of SSR.

Last, the Commission calls for implementation guidelines, by stating that it would improve coordination among SSR donors, such as between the EU and external actors and between the EU and the civil society in the partner country.

At the present time, the EU SSR policy framework is based on the 2016 Commission’s Communication *Elements for an EU-wide strategic framework to support security sector reform*. This document comes exactly ten years after the 2005 and 2006 EU concepts, finally providing a common strategy for EU’s engagement on SSR.

Although both the Council and Commission documents call for complementarity and coordination with regard to activities in support of SSR, the EU has engaged in this area either under the Second pillar (ESDP), or under the First pillar (Community instruments) separately. In fact, each document outlined the capabilities and experience of each Pillar, but without making any reference to the other.

The strategic framework was therefore defined by two non-communicating policy papers reflecting the two types of EU SSR support, resulting in unclear division of competences and overlap between their roles in SSR.

In 2007 there was a first attempt to increase coherence among the two Pillars with regard to support to SSR through the Lisbon Treaty. In particular, it launched the *European External Action Service*, which was meant to provide a more coherent approach to EU external interventions in the security sector, as well as to reduce coordination issues among the Council and the Commission instruments and policies.

However, the Lisbon Treaty did not codify any procedure with regard to the EU's engagement on SSR, nor did it outline a framework for EU's approach to SSR. Therefore, it was the Council's *EU concept for ESDP support to SSR* and the Commission's *A Concept for European Community Support for Security Sector Reform* which have been providing the policy framework and "guiding the EU activities in the field of SSR" (European Commission 2016 b : 4) until 2016.

For ten years the EU has shaped its interventions in accordance with the concepts produced in 2005 and 2006. But the lack of a single policy framework undermined the coherence of EU engagement on SSR. In particular, there was no clear division of labour, as EU programmes and CSDP missions (former ESDP) operated on parallel tracks without agreeing on formal coordination mechanisms.

Therefore, there was need for an upgrade of the EU common strategy towards SSR, so that it would provide clear guidance on how to engage on SSR. By recognising that SSR is an important tool for EU's external action in promoting peace, stability and development in partner countries, the Commission agreed on a common SSR roof for EU activities, thus reflecting the "comprehensive approach" to external conflict and crisis.³

The document of 2016 identifies ten guiding principles for EU support to SSR, each followed by an "action box" on how to implement them.

The action boxes represent a real innovation compared to the former policy framework, as the EU defined clear guidelines of action against which to plan its interventions. In doing so, it also demonstrated its commitment towards an effective, efficient and coherent engagement on SSR.

However, the new policy framework is not limited to guide EU action through these principles. In fact, the Commission also developed new instruments to improve the performance of the EU in SSR. These tools take the shape of structures, actors and documents to be employed in SSR programmes, thus addressing the lack of significant SSR capacities within the EU.

³ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A52013JC0030> (last consulted on 04/10/2019).

2.2 EU SSR Capacity

The Commission's Communication *Elements for an EU-wide strategic framework to support security sector reform* is important for two reasons: first, it defines a common path for all EU activities directly or partially aimed at reforming the security sector, second, it creates new tools, which are intended exclusively for EU external action in the field of SSR.

By acknowledging that the effectiveness of EU support for SSR was hampered by insufficient institutional capacity within the EU institutions, the Commission has strengthened its expertise on SSR and improved its guidance instruments. These either added as new tools to the box of SSR capacities of the EU (the coordination matrix, the inter-service SSR task force and the joint monitoring and evaluation guidelines) or updated the existing ones (the ESDC training courses on SSR).

Others, although not mentioned in the policy document of 2016, were established to comply with the principles and action boxes set out in the paper, thus providing additional support to EU's efforts in SSR. These are the former PRISM division within the EEAS and the EU Security Sector Governance Facility.

However, the SSR toolbox also includes those instruments that have not been introduced by the policy framework but already existed within the EU, namely the Pool of SSR experts and the Executive Academic Board in support of training on SSR (hereinafter EAB SSR).

Pool of SSR experts

In November 2008 Member States agreed upon the creation of a pool of SSR experts, endorsing the draft proposal sent from the Council to the Delegations.

As highlighted in the document, the EU aimed "to increase the EU's capacity for external action in the field of Security Sector Reform by establishing a community of experts familiar with SSR problems". At the same time, the pool was an attempt to reduce "a number of the staffing problems for CSDP missions and for EU SSR activities more generally" (Derks and More 2009 : 29).

The proposal also outlined the possible engagements for the pool of SSR experts, which focused on four main tasks:

- Carrying out assessments and audit activities;
- Planning of missions;
- Participating in CSDP missions and Community SSR actions;
- Contributing to development of the SSR concepts within the EU.

In June 2009, the Council issued a first document regarding the profiles of SSR experts. Nine different categories were identified: "Head of SSR team, policy and strategy including democratic control, defence, intelligence, criminal justice including penitentiary matters, police, border management/custom, public finance, civil society" (Council of the European Union 2009 a : 4).

Later in the same year the Council also addressed the financial and legal aspects of the pool, including "the modalities for establishment and management of the pool (and) deployment of the SSR experts from the pool" (Council of the European Union 2009 b : 2). The document stated that only experts proposed by the Member States,

the Commission and the Council General Secretariat (CGS) would have been accepted into the pool. A call for contributions from the Secretariat, containing the information regarding the eligibility criteria, would have started the selection process.

The Council also agreed to creating a database with the details of the experts, allowing to identify the relevant expertise in case of deployment. This database is currently managed by the EEAS.

The SSR pool was activated for the first time in July 2011 after the Council had sent a call for contributions for Libya (Tripoli and Benghazi) requiring expertise for conducting assessing and planning activities prior to the deployment of a border management team.

Since 2009, SSR experts have been invited to attend regular courses on security sector reform. For example, the Austrian Study Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution (ASPR) has been holding twice per year a course on SSR open to civilian, military and police experts under the framework of the ESDC.

Elements for an EU-wide strategic framework to support security sector reform has stressed the importance of appropriate expertise and experience with regard to deployment of staff in SSR missions and actions. Accordingly, the pool has proved to be an effective tool in gathering a community of SSR experts and spreading knowledge regarding the concept at the headquarters, as well as across Member States.

Coordination matrices

With regard to SSR and external action activities more generally, the EU has always stressed the importance of coordinating efforts to conduct tasks successfully. Additionally, coordination reflects the comprehensive approach to conflict and crisis, which affirms that "all EU diplomatic, development and CSDP support action should be coherent, coordinated, complementary, properly sequenced and in line with legal, policy and institutional frameworks" (European Commission 2016 a : 9).

Reflecting the principles "Coordinate EU support" and "Coordinate with other international actors", coordination matrices have been developed in 2016 as a tool for SSR activities in partner countries.

A coordination matrix is a document that allows EU actors to define common objectives and identify the best sequencing between political dialogue, cooperation activities/instruments and CSDP missions/operations. Since EU instruments are subject to different legal constraints and consequently follow different decision-making procedures, the coordination matrix cannot pass over these rules but instead has to acknowledge them. In fact, this is probably the main challenge of this new tool: it has the responsibility to find common priorities and action paths among all different EU actors, as well as define their roles.

As the majority of information about coordination matrices is confidential, I have been conducting interviews with policy officers working at the EEAS. In particular, I have asked them to give me more details about the application of the matrices in the field.

- Interviewer: You told me that it might be possible to send me a coordination matrix. In fact, I am finding it very difficult to gather information from the internet. If you happen to have documents regarding the application of the matrices in the field, it would really help me through my research.

- Unluckily, I cannot send you any document regarding coordination matrices. They are confidential documents and belong to EU Delegations (EUDEL). I am not surprised that you cannot find much information about them. Although there is a standardised structure for the document, each matrix is different and tailored to the country to which it has been developed for. In addition, it consists in a living document which is constantly updated. In other words, a coordination matrix is a document, an instrument, drafted by the Delegation in coordination with Brussels, Member States (through embassies) and international/regional organisations (UN, OSCE, World Bank, African Union, etc.) which gathers under a single SSR perspective: the actors involved, identifies the gaps, shares the objectives of SSR/DDR actions and projects, establishes links between the different activities carried out by different actors in order to maximise resources and avoid duplication, analyses emergent risks within SSR activities while identifying mitigating measures, lists the potential of the end States and defines the exit strategies. The coordination matrix is aimed at offering an effective sequencing between political dialogue in the country, EU cooperation and development activities and possible CSDP missions/operations, in addition to providing a monitoring and evaluation system for the activities which have been carried out. At the present moment there are some fully operational coordination matrices (e.g. Mali) or in advanced processing state (Somalia and Lebanon), while others will probably be developed in short time (e.g. Eritrea, Central African Republic, etc.).⁴

Therefore, a coordination matrix guarantees that all the actors involved in SSR are provided with the same information regarding the context where they are operating, and at the same time it ensures that each actor knows its role and tasks as well as those of the other actors.

Nevertheless, the coordination matrix is crucial with regard to cooperation with other international actors. It is supposed to improve the international commitment in support to SSR in partner countries by contributing to the development of a single action strategy.

As mentioned in the interview, SSR coordination matrices are at the service of the Delegation, which is tasked with drafting the document along with MS diplomatic missions. In addition, Heads of Delegation are also responsible for coordinating the matrix in the field since they are in charge of the coordination of security sector support on the ground.

However, where the EU has a significant SSR engagement but lack relevant coordination structures, the EU Delegation should be paired with appropriate SSR expertise. In this direction, the 2016 policy paper suggests that the EU should “seek to establish coordination task forces for security sector support at country level” (European Commission 2016 a : 13).

Since I have not found any documentation concerning this subject, I have asked about it in my interviews and got the following answer.

⁴ Interview conducted by email with Col. Claudio Fiore, SSR Military Policy Officer, ISP Directorate, EEAS, 4/6/2019.

- Interviewer: The new SSR policy framework document mentions coordination task forces. What is it about? Is it possibly like a human workforce to be added to the coordination matrix?
- The coordination task force for security at country level should gather all the actors (EU and not EU) involved in the support to SSR in a given country. In fact, this has not happened yet, except that for Gambia where experts from the UN, the EU, the ECOWAS⁵ and the USA are together in an International SSR Advisory Group which supports the National Security Advisor.⁶

Therefore, coordination matrices can be described as a standardised tool, as it is employed in the context of SSR with the single purpose of improving coordination among all EU actors and instruments, Member States and International actors. Although it has been defined as a living document that adapts to the single context, it maintains the same structure and logic, in a view of conducting successful joint SSR programmes as well as ensuring goal-oriented sequencing of actions and choices.

The European Union Security Sector Governance Facility

Although not mentioned in the 2016 EU strategic framework to support SSR, the EU Security Sector Governance Facility (EU SSG Facility) addresses the new SSR policy by implementing its key principles and guidelines.

The EU SSG Facility is tasked with

providing rapid, flexible and effective expertise in countries where there is an ongoing reform or transformation process of the security sector or where there are identified needs for specialized expertise.⁷

In other words, it puts at the disposal of all EU actors and instruments professionals with experience in the security, justice and governance sector, as well as teams of individuals from the three members of the consortium.

The consortium is the group responsible for implementing the EU SSG Facility, it comprises three organisations, namely:

- The Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), an international foundation responsible of improving the security of people and states.
- The Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA), the Swedish government agency for peace, security and development.
- Justice Coopération Internationale (JCI), an agency belonging to the French Ministry of Justice which leads technical judicial cooperation projects around the world.

Experts from the consortium can be deployed for short-term assignments, from

⁵ ECOWAS is the Economic Community of West African States, a 15-member regional group with a mandate of promoting economic integration in all fields of activity of the constituting countries.

⁶ Interview conducted by email with Mr. Gianmarco Scuppa, Security Sector Reform Section, PRISM Division, EEAS, 31/10/2018.

⁷ DCAF's documents on delivering the EU SSG Facility <https://issat.dcaf.ch/Learn/SSR-in-Practice/Countries-Regions/EU/Delivering-the-European-Union-Security-Sector-Governance-Facility>.

a few days to several months. In addition, more than one expert can be involved in the same task, at the same time.

The consortium can also use the support offered by the African Security Sector Network (ASSN) and the Netherlands Institute of International Relations, Clingendael.

The EU SSG Facility is funded by the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP), the EU's main instrument supporting security initiatives and peace-building activities in partner countries. The IcSP allocated two million euros for the period 2018-2020.

The EU SSG Facility has been developed with the purpose of improving EU's action with regard to security sector governance and reform processes in partner countries. In particular, it can provide expertise for the following tasks:

- Security and justice assessments;
- Support to political dialogue on security;
- Support to EU SSR coordination matrices;
- Programme design;
- Monitoring and evaluation frameworks;
- Security sector governance and reform trainings;
- Studies, research, analysis;
- Coaching and backstopping.

The Facility is jointly steered by the European Commission Foreign Policy Instrument (EC-FPI2), the former PRISM division within the EEAS and the Facility's key experts. However, other EU actors/instruments can be involved, such as EU Delegations, the Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO), the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR) and the CSDP.

Furthermore, the Facility is composed by a Project Core Team (PCT) which includes the Head of the Facility, the Principal Advisor, the Methodological Advisor, the Backstopping Coordinator and the Administrative Assistant.

With regard to the functioning of the EU SSG Facility across the different phases of an intervention in the field of SSR, I have found an interesting presentation on the official website of the DCAF describing the role of the PCT, as well as that of the actors mentioned above.⁸

The acronym PSG in the following image stands for Project Steering Group, which is responsible for coordinating the EU SSG Facility.

⁸ The whole presentation can be found at <https://issat.dcaf.ch/Learn/SSR-in-Practice/Countries-Regions/EU/Delivering-the-European-Union-Security-Sector-Governance-Facility>.

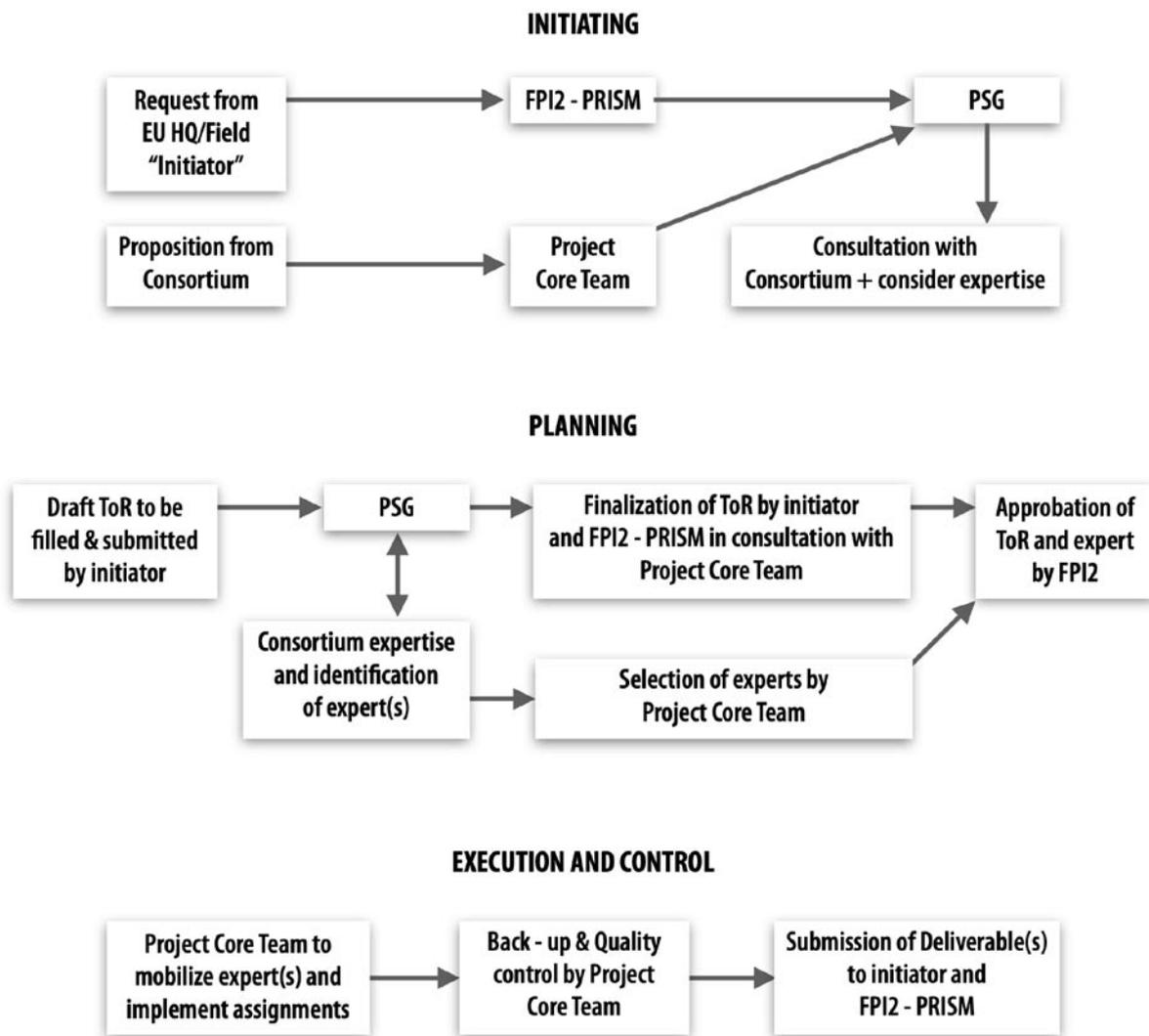


Figure 2: EU SSG Facility's role in the SSR process

Inter-service SSR task force

As noted above, one of the most relevant principles outlined in the 2016 EU SSR policy framework is the one on the employment of experienced staff for SSR missions and activities: "Make best use of EU SSR expertise". Accordingly, it proposed the establishment of a permanent informal inter-service SSR task force (hereinafter SSR task force) at the headquarters, with a view to deliver advise and support activities for all EU actors in the planning and design of SSR activities.

The SSR task force has been operational since December 2016, when it was officially created by the Commission and the HR. It is composed by SSR representatives of the EEAS: the former PRISM division, the former Crisis Management and Planning Directorate (CMPD), the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability (CPCC), Global, Secpol, the ESDC and the European Union Military Staff (EUMS); and of the Commission: DG NEAR, DG DEVCO and Foreign Policy Instrument.

Since I could not find any document commenting the state of play of the SSR task force, in my interviews I have asked about its internal organisation and tasks.

- Interviewer: A power point presentation from the European Commission defines the SSR task force as operational. However, I cannot find any document regarding its functioning. Do you have some additional information that you could share?
- The EU inter-service SSR task force meets on a monthly basis and is co-chaired by PRISM, DG DEVCO and DG NEAR on a rotating basis. It serves as a platform for information sharing and contributes to the coherence and effectiveness of EU actions in support to the security sector of partner countries by providing policy/methodological advice in line with the SSR communication and the principle of the integrated approach. In particular it:
 1. promotes the application of principles laid down in the joint communication in the design and implementation of SSR support;
 2. oversees the preparation of methodological documents such as guidance on security sector analysis, joint monitoring and evaluation guidelines, a risk management methodology, etc.;
 3. support the development of EU engagement strategies in the security sector at country level that may take the format of 'coordination matrices';
 4. strengthen the capacity of EU actors at HQ and in the field through facilitating trainings, lessons learning, general information sharing.⁹

The SSR task force appears to be an essential tool for EU's engagement in SSR. It assists EU actors in preparing SSR projects and drafting CSDP planning documents, it develops methodological tools, procedures and standards, as well as it supports the ESDC in defining new training *curricula* for EU experts.

In addition, the SSR task force helps identifying joint guidelines for monitoring and evaluation, thus contributing to assess the implementation state of the EU SSR policy framework and track positive results of SSR programmes carried out by EU Delegations, the EEAS and the Commission.

PRISM division

One of the five priorities outlined in the 2016 *Global Strategy* is the *Integrated Approach to Conflicts and Crisis*. It aims at improving the general working method of the EU's institutions in all the stages of conflict (multi-phased) by coordinating all instruments and actors involved in conflict and crisis matters (multidimensional). Accordingly, the EU agreed to strengthen its engagement by adopting the Integrated Approach along with other relevant actors such as the UN (multilateral) and across local, national, regional and global levels (multilevel).

To deliver EU's Integrated Approach, in January 2017 the EEAS established the PRISM division. The word PRISM stands for Prevention of conflicts, Rule of law/Security Sector Reform, Integrated Approach, Stabilisation and Mediation.

This structure unifies former CSDP.1 division (Common Security and Defence Policy- Coordination and Support) with SECPOL.2 (Security Policy and Conflict Prevention- Conflict prevention, peace building and mediation), it reports directly to the Deputy Secretary General (DSG) for CSDP and crisis response Mr. Pedro Serrano and also receives political guidance from the DSG for Political Affairs, Mr. Jean-Christophe Belliard.

⁹ Interview conducted by email with Mr. Gianmarco Scuppa, Security Sector Reform Section, PRISM Division, EEAS, 31/10/2018.

PRISM division is conceived as a support service for EU decision-making and actions with regard to crisis/conflict prevention and response. In particular, it reflects the Integrated Approach by engaging in fragile contexts through:

- capacity building on conflict prevention, crisis response and stabilisation;
- context-specific technical advice;
- conflict analysis;
- resources programming under the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace;
- deployment of experts and teams;
- promoting sensitive EU engagement along the conflict cycle.¹⁰

As its name suggests, PRISM covers different areas of expertise: conflict prevention, mediation, crisis response and mediation, rule of law, SSR and demobilisation disarmament and reintegration (DDR).

However, for the purpose of this research, we will take in consideration only the role of PRISM for implementing SSR policy and activities within EU. In particular, it:

- co-chairs the inter-service SSR task force;
- provides analyses of the security sector of partner countries;
- supports EU actors at the headquarters and field level with the designing of SSR actions and development of country-specific strategies;
- implements 'capacity building in support of security and development';
- engages with the UN and other relevant actors.

One year after its establishment, PRISM's expertise has been employed in four integrated SSR missions: Mali, Somalia, Georgia and Gambia, "in support of these countries' authorities and security forces in strengthening accountability and professionalism" (Dirosa 2018 : 10).

However, at the time speaking the PRISM division is no longer existing within the EEAS. New structures have been created and PRISM's functions are now managed by other divisions.

The following interview will present the main changes occurred within EEAS with regard to PRISM.

- Interviewer: Two years after its creation, PRISM does not appear anymore in the EEAS organisation chart. Therefore, I would like to know when it has been substituted and why. Could you also provide me a brief description of the new structures (acronyms, new objectives, actors, etc.)?

- The main change has occurred on 1st March 2019. However, the reorganisation of the entire DSG for CSDP and crisis response (Mr. Serrano) was more radical than we expected. If you check the new organisation chart of the EEAS, you will see that PRISM does not exist anymore and that its functions have been taken on under the new Directorate for an Integrated Approach for Security and Peace (ISP.DMD) by two divisions: for the 90% the Conflict Prevention and Mediation Support (ISP.2) and for the remaining 10% the Concepts, Knowledge, Management and Programmes

¹⁰ Considerations drawn from the intervention *EU's integrated approach to SSR and the role of PRISM Division* by Col. Claudio Fiore Military Policy Officer, PRISM Division, EEAS at the 1st Basic Course on Security Sector Reform held in Turin from 4-6 December 2018.

(ISP.1). With this latter comprising the thematic group on SSR, Rule of Law and DDR once working under PRISM.

In addition, the Crises Management and Planning Directorate has been reformulated and its functions divided between: Integrated Strategic Planning for CSDP and Stabilisation division (ISP.3), ISP.1 division and the Directorate for Security and Defence Policy (SECDEFPOL.DMD).

The CPCC and EUMS did not undergo transformations.

The last important change is the introduction of a new level of management, which regarded all DSGs, with the new position of General Managing Director under the authority of Mr. Serrano.¹¹

Therefore, PRISM's tasks regarding SSR are now carried out by the new ISP.1 division Concepts, Knowledge, Management and Programmes, which reports to the Directorate for an Integrated Approach for Security and Peace.

ISP.1 monitors EU's response throughout the conflict cycle, provides methodological tools and practical support to all EU actors in the field of SSR, DDR, stabilisation, human security, as well as supports training and analysis under CFSP with a view to deliver an effective knowledge management.

SSR training courses

The 2016 policy framework also recommended to update the ESDC's training courses to reflect the new EU-wide approach to SSR. Training of personnel is an important step towards a European culture of SSR since it ensures that staff at the HQ and those deployed in missions are provided with the same skills and knowledges, while contributing to a common understanding of SSR among Member States.

In the past years, the EU has suffered from poor training with regard to staff involved in SSR-support activities. In particular, at Brussels level few courses were provided for those responsible of designing, planning and overseeing SSR programmes, while training of EU personnel in the field always lacked a formalised structure.

Furthermore, since Member States were in charge of the pre-deployment training of SSR experts, they could not but employ their financial and human resources as well as the national training institutions. As a result, they delivered different qualities of training, reflecting their conception of SSR and budget.

This situation has significantly improved through the European Security and Defence College (ESDC), a virtual network college established in 2005 with the aim to spread knowledge of CSDP and security issues in general.

Since its creation, the ESDC has been providing online material as well as organising courses on CSDP for personnel from the Member States and the EU institutions.

Through the years, the ESDC has improved coordination among Member States as regards delivery of SSR courses by supporting training institutes across the EU. Furthermore, participants were provided with same SSR training material reflecting the single European perspective on the subject. As a result, cooperation amongst mission personnel was enhanced since individuals had a clear understanding of EU SSR objectives and of the instruments at their disposal.

¹¹ Interview conducted by email with Col. Claudio Fiore, SSR Military Policy Officer, ISP Directorate, EEAS, 4/6/2019.

In addition, ESDC contributed to create a solid EU SSR expertise by ensuring that the relevant actors received adequate training on EU's support to SSR.

Nevertheless, in 2011 a specific Executive Academic Board in support of training on SSR (EAB SSR) was inaugurated within the ESDC. This Board gathers experts and trainers specialising on SSR from the Member States, the EEAS, the Commission and other EU institutions. It is chaired by the Folke Bernadotte Academy, the Swedish Agency for peace, security and development and it works closely with the SSR task force to organise seminars and courses for SSR experts as well as to develop common training curricula alongside the ESDC.

At the present time, the EAB SSR and ESDC deliver three standard courses to Member States' personnel and EU experts:

- Basic Course on SSR (level awareness raising), which focuses on the principles and objectives of SSR as outlined in the EU-wide strategic framework, as well as on the role of SSR within the Integrated Approach.

- Core Course on SSR (level advanced/specialised), aimed at strengthening the skills and knowledges of those involved in SSR programmes. It also provides an overview of SSR tools and techniques.

- In-mission Course (joint and/or specialised training in the field), by focusing on the political dimension of SSR, this course provides guidelines for coordination and cooperation in the field both among EU actors and between the EU and other international organisations.

Monitoring and evaluation activities

M&E activities are conducted through the whole SSR process, from the preparatory phase, to the implementation and the consolidation phases. Monitoring, as defined by the EC, is "the systematic and continuous collecting, analysis and using of information for the purpose of management and decision making" (Babaud 2009 : 5).

Through monitoring activities, the EU can review its progresses, keep track of the relevant achievements and difficulties, as well as identify future courses of action. On the other hand, evaluation is the activity aimed at identifying best practices and trends of implementation, in addition to provide lessons learned reports.

With regards to SSR, M&E activities have been carried out both by the EC and the Council. However, each institution has been using two separate M&E systems, reflecting their different working method and approach to SSR programmes.

It was noted that one of the main obstacles to the efficiency and effectiveness of EU support for SSR were the weaknesses in M&E activities, in particular as regards the development of baselines and defined indicators within EU programmes, as well as of a strong monitoring capacity. On the other hand, benchmarks used by CSDP missions did not address the reform process overall and difficulties were found in monitoring the process of SSR.

As a result of these findings and thus recognising the importance of M&E within SSR activities, the EU agreed to

systematically incorporate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms through developing and strengthening guidelines on the use of baselines, clearly defined

indicators and benchmarks, and other monitoring and evaluation tools (European Commission 2016 b : 13).

The 2016 EU SSR policy framework addressed this issue with the principle “Measure progress: monitor and evaluate”. Specifically, the Commission and EEAS have been tasked with preparing “joint monitoring and evaluation guidelines, including indicators for security capacity-building and SSR-related activities applicable to all external action instruments and missions” (European Commission 2016 a : 11).

Furthermore, the policy paper stated that the coordination matrix, the new tool for improving coordination among different SSR instruments and activities, will constitute the basis for a single M&E system “allowing measurement of progress and the impact of EU support” (Ivi, 9).

3. Case Study: Georgia and EU SSR

The policy documents and the SSR toolbox represent the potential of the European Union as regards its engagement on SSR. The new instruments, as well as the current strategic framework were elaborated at the policy level with the aim to improve EU support to SSR both at the headquarters and in the field.

However, the study of the EU’s approach to SSR must also take into consideration the activities and programmes carried out at the operational level.

Georgia is not a casual choice, its relationship with the EU dates back to the mid-nineties when the EU engaged in the eastern neighbourhood to support ex-Soviet countries with political transition. Furthermore, following the 2008 war with South-Ossetia and Abkhazia, the EU displaced a Monitoring Mission under CSDP to supervise the implementation of the *Six Point Agreement* in Georgia.

As a result, Georgia happens to be a real challenge as regards the role of the EU in delivering SSR. On the one hand, a transitional country in need of security and justice capacity building, on the other hand, a post-conflict environment requiring constant attention in order to maintain peaceful international relations.

Nevertheless, Georgia is not a simple case. First of all, there is not a CSDP mission in place with a specific SSR mandate as it happens for example in Somalia or Mali.¹² The EU Monitoring Mission (EUMM) does not engage directly in capacity building, although its tasks contribute to the work of the EU Delegation, which instead is the major SSR actor in Georgia.

Secondly, studies on the EU as an SSR provider in Georgia are poor and where existing, they focus on the period following the war between Russia and Georgia rather than on recent activities.

Accordingly, this paragraph aims to provide the reader with a clear understanding of the EU actors, policies and instruments that are directly aimed at SSR in Georgia, which represent the EU’s engagement in the country.

¹² EU Training Mission (EUTM) in Somalia since 2010 and EU Capacity Building (EUCAP) in Sahel Mali since 2014.

EU Special Representative for the South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia

The EU has engaged in Georgia and more generally in the South Caucasus mainly to support the political transition from the communist regime. Accordingly, the EUSR's tasks in the country were always related to SSR to a certain degree. In particular, the EUSR has worked for consolidating democracy, open society and state structure and has supported political and economic reforms in Georgia, notably in the fields of rule of law, democratisation, human rights and good governance. In addition, the EUSR has been responsible of the Border Support Team and has engaged alongside the Commission for the implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) Action Plan (2006-2011).

As we already know, one of the pillars of the SSR building is the reform of the border sector. Indeed, border security is an important step within the process of developing the conditions for long-term stability and security of a country.

In 2005, the BST was deployed in Georgia to carry out border management tasks in the country. Unlike EUMM, the border mission did not belong to CSDP (although financed by the CFSP budget) but constituted an *ad hoc* deployment under the structure of the EUSR. It was tasked with developing a border management strategy and implementation plan for Georgia, in addition to provide mentoring to the border police.

In 2011 the work of the BST ended in parallel with the conclusion of the mandate of the EUSR, who have not since dealt anymore with border management issues, which instead have been transferred to the EUDEL. However, the BST had accomplished its tasks in assisting Georgia with the elaboration and implementation of legislation and standard operating procedures for the border police, as well as moving the country towards best EU practices for Integrated Border Management (IBM).

Through IBM principles, the EU aimed to facilitate the movement of people and goods across the South Caucasus and between EU Member States and the countries in this region, while at the same time maintaining secure borders.

From 2006 to 2011 the EUSR has also worked with the Commission for the implementation of the ENP Action Plan, which was meant to boost the relationship between the EU and Georgia through economic integration and political cooperation, as well as to enhance stability, security and welfare.

The Action Plan has been the first step in the long-standing partnership between Georgia and the EU, showing their mutual effort towards stronger political and economic relations. In addition, it has proved the willingness of Georgia to align with European standards and best practices.

With regard to SSR, several objectives outlined in the Action Plan addressed this issue directly. One priority was the strengthening of the rule of law through the reform of the judicial system, including the penitentiary system and the transformation of state institutions, while another one focused on enhancing cooperation in the fields of justice, freedom and security, including border management.

In the late years, the EUSR's tasks have focused more on promoting regional cooperation in the South Caucasus and contributing to a peaceful settlement of the

Georgian conflict alongside EUMM, rather than on capacity building with regard to SSR. Although the presence of the EUSR in the field is meant to consolidate peace, stability and the rule of law, in the last eight years his mandate has mainly addressed the issues related to the effects of the 2008 war, thus *de facto* leaving SSR programmes aside.

The current EUSR for the South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia, Mr. Toivo Klaar, was appointed in November 2017. His tasks include taking part in the Geneva International Discussions (GID) on the behalf of the EU and alongside the UN and OSCE. The GID is an international platform where all the relevant actors discuss about the consequences of the 2008 conflict in Georgia, particularly the security of people and borders.

EU Delegation

The EUDEL works under the mandate of the Commission and has the status of a diplomatic mission, officially representing the EU in the field. In Georgia, the Delegation was deployed for the first time in 1995.

SSR programmes carried out by the EUDEL are funded by the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) which is the financial instrument through which the EU provides support to its neighbour countries, in the framework of the ENP.

The Neighbourhood Policy, as revised in November 2015, sets ambitious objectives for achieving greater cooperation between the EU and its Southern and Eastern Neighbours, in political, socio-economic and security terms.

One of the revised policy's components is "dialogue on security" which mentions SSR alongside conflict prevention and crisis management. The ENP also defines border management and justice sector reform as EU's major SSR areas of commitment in the Georgia.

In 2009 the Eastern Partnership (EaP) was established as a specific eastern dimension of the ENP, allowing the EU to engage more directly in the support of reforms in Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, in the fields of democracy, stability, economy and security. Within the EaP, the EU continued the work of the BST as regards border management in Georgia and from 2009 to 2012 it supported the introduction of European IBM principles through the SCIBM project (South Caucasus Integrated Border Management).

The project aimed at enhancing cooperation between Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan as regards border security and movement of people and goods.

As a result, more than 1,000 border and custom guards received training, the Government of Georgia developed a border management strategy and successfully completed the IBM benchmarks requested by the Visa Liberalisation Action Plan (VLAP), which was presented for the first time to the Georgian authorities in 2013. By providing a solid training system on IBM, the EU managed to transfer some of its best practices and lessons learnt to Georgian security actors.

However, the dialogue on visa liberalisation between the EU and Georgia started in June 2012 and aimed at investigating the conditions for visa-free travel for Georgian citizens to the EU. The visa liberalisation addresses several issues such as document

security, border management, migration, mobility and asylum, fight against corruption and organised crime, protection of human rights, minorities and anti-discrimination, all priority areas which contribute to a more secure environment.

The VLAP is the instrument that has been used to conduct visa liberalisation dialogues with Georgia. It consisted of two phases: "legislation and planning" and "implementation of measures", which when completed would have allowed the EU to grant visa-free travel to the Georgian citizens.

VLAP reforms were divided into four main blocks, namely (1) Document security, including biometrics; (2) Integrated border management, migration management, asylum; (3) Public order and security; and (4) External relations and fundamental rights.

By the end of 2014, Georgia had met the first phase benchmarks outlined in the 2013 VLAP and therefore advanced to the next phase, the implementation.

In the same year, the EU and Georgia signed the Association Agreement (AA), which was meant to push forward their relations by offering a policy basis for deeper economic and political integration.

Since 2016, when the AA entered into force, the visa liberalisation dialogue with Georgia and the VLAP have been carried out within the framework of the Agreement, their implementation being fundamental for the economic integration and political association of Georgia with the EU.

In March 2016, the Commission proposed allowing visa-free travel to the Schengen area for Georgian citizens holding a biometric passport. Only one year later, following the successful implementation by Georgia of all the benchmarks set in the VLAP, this proposal entered into force, precisely on the 28th of March.

Thanks to visa liberalisation, Georgian citizens now have the possibility to travel through Europe without holding a visa. The success of the VLAP has proven the genuine interest of Georgia to work alongside the EU in order to move towards best border management standards. Moreover, it has paved the way for further economic and political cooperation.

The EUDEL is responsible of monitoring the implementation of the AA with Georgia and of participating to the implementation of cooperation and assistance programmes developed by the EU in the country. At the present time, the EUDEL is responsible of one project that directly addresses SSR in Georgia.

The programme, agreed by the EU and the Government of Georgia on the occasion of the 16th Georgia's European way Conference in Batumi, is entitled *SAFE: EU4 Security, Accountability and Fight against crime*.¹³

The EUR 28 million SAFE programme started in 2019 and will last for about five years, addressing important local issues such as fight against crime, cyber and hybrid threats, border management, civil protection and oversight of the security sector. It is important to note that this is the first ever EU support programme on security sector reform for Georgia.

¹³ https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/eni_2018_041443_eu4security_accountability_and_fight_agaisnt_crime.pdf (last consulted on 28/9/2019).

In line with the EU-wide strategic framework to support SSR, SAFE

aims to improve governance and human security by supporting the development of accountable security institutions and the provision of effective security services to the population, thus providing the environment for sustainable development and peace (European Commission 2018 : 3).

Furthermore, the EU SSG Facility is mentioned in the SAFE programme as it could provide “technical expertise to support and underpin national policy planning, implementation and dialogue on SSR” (Ivi, 20).

The SAFE project is financed under ENI, whose programming document is the Single Support Framework (SSF) for EU support to Georgia for 2017-2020.¹⁴

One priority sector identified by the SSF is “Strengthening institutions and good governance, including the Rule of Law and addressing Security”, through which the EU stressed the importance of justice and state reform to gain citizens and investors’ confidence, as well as democracy and respect for human rights.

The document also mentions the SSR coordination matrix, since Georgia was chosen as a pilot country for implementing the new SSR instrument as described in the 2016 strategic framework.

The coordination matrix is also mentioned in the document presenting SAFE, which states that the EEAS and the relevant Commission services are currently working on developing an SSR matrix for Georgia.

However, according to the phone interview I conducted with Mr. Romain Bertrand from the EEAS ISP.1 Division (Integrated Approach to Security and Peace), the coordination matrix is not being implemented in Georgia.¹⁵

In fact, the EUDEL, which is responsible of coordinating the matrix in the field, is currently using it for internal purposes, as an instrument for testing whether its implementation within future SSR activities could be beneficial or not to Georgia. The coordination matrix is not being shared with the Georgian actors involved in SSR alongside the EU and therefore, it is for the exclusive use of the EUDEL.

As Mr. Bertrand said, it is very likely that in the next future the EUDEL will implement the SSR coordination matrix together with the local and international security actors, so that the EU will be able to engage even further in Georgia’s security reforms.

Conclusion

In recent years the EU has engaged even further in the support of SSR programmes in partner countries by applying new policies and developing innovative instruments. In 2016, the EU-wide strategic framework brought under the same roof the formerly separate CSDP and Community support in the field of SSR.

By updating the policy framework, the EU ensured to deliver a more coordinated approach among the different instruments and policies involved in SSR.

¹⁴ https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/georgia_2017-2020_ssf_final.pdf (last consulted on 28/9/2019).

¹⁵ Phone interview with Mr. Romain Bertrand, Rule of Law & Security Sector, ISP.1 Division, Directorate for Integrated approach to Security and Peace, EEAS, 26/3/2019.

The 2016 policy framework also placed great emphasis on the monitoring and evaluation moment of SSR activities by highlighting the importance of measuring progress to identify best practices and common difficulties of implementation. Monitoring and evaluation should be part of every SSR programme, thus contributing to enhance the effectiveness of EU engagement now and in the future.

A single M&E system, as suggested by the 2016 framework on SSR, would simplify the activity of conducting comparative analyses, with due regard to the specific characteristics of the single cases.

As a result, the EU would have access to relevant data regarding the implementation of SSR programmes around the world, which should be used “to grasp the similarities, differences, and specificities of EU practices across different contexts” (Dursun-Ozkanca and Vandemoortele 2012 : 142).

As consistent analyses of EU's engagement in SSR are carried out, the collection of best practices and lessons learnt would contribute to the “codification of procedures and policies” (Gross and Jacob 2013 : 6), thus strengthening the operational guidance provided by the 2016 EU SSR policy framework. Consequently, the EU would improve its performance when planning and conducting activities in the field of SSR by making reference to more robust policy guidelines.

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