



A Means to an End or an End in Itself? The EU Integrated Approach to Conflict in Mali

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Abstract

Since the unrest in 2012, the European Union (EU) has become heavily engaged in establishing peace and stability in Mali, where today two missions of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and a range of EU security, development and governance tools are mobilised. This substantial commitment, combined with the deep-seated security problems in Mali, necessitates using various EU instruments coherently and to their full potential, particularly in light of the integrated approach in the EU Global Strategy (EUGS). Creating synergies between all EU tools and uniting them behind a common strategy is crucial to integrated action. This thesis explores the EU's integrated approach in Mali through three lenses: civil-military synergies, the security-development nexus and a 'multi-phased' approach where the EU integrates action at all stages of the conflict cycle. It argues that meaningful synergies are being created, particularly between security and development actions and actors.

However, amalgamating EU tools through innovations such as PARSEC¹ and the stabilisation action based on Article 28 TEU has become an end in itself – a 'laboratory of experimentation' for the EU as an external crisis manager – rather than a means to tackle the underlying violence and instability in Mali. This is not what the integrated approach aims to achieve. On the contrary, the EUGS presented the integrated approach as a means to make the EU more effective in promoting stability and managing conflicts and crises. The EU integrated approach is increasingly enacted through *ad hoc* short-term programmes and it lacks a long-term plan for the future of the country behind which all EU tools and instruments can unite. This is damaging not just for Mali but for the EU's credibility as a strategic global security actor, which the EUGS aspired to enhance.

¹ PARSEC = Programme d'appui au renforcement de la sécurité dans les régions de Mopti et de Gao et à la gestion des zones frontalières