

# **Why don't give European Peace Corps a chance?**

## **A common path for Civilian Crisis Management and Voluntary action**

Daniele Marchi, IUFE, June 2013

### **Abstract**

There is a sentence, in the European history, which can be seen as the start of the modern European architecture for crisis management. Actually, it is an assessment, a strong, enthusiastic assessment by Jacques Poos, President of the European Council under Luxembourg Presidency in 1991, at the beginning of the Balkan's war: «The hour for Europe has come [...] if there is one problem that can be solved by the Europeans, this is the Yugoslav Problem». From this assessment and from the failure of all European efforts within the Balkan's and the Kosovo war begun the long – and somehow intricate – path of European Crisis Management, which brought in two decades to the creation of ca. a dozen of different tools, mechanisms, divisions to direct or coordinate European interventions. Crisis management is long to be the only news of those years: in 1992, with the Treaty on the European Union (TEU) in Maastricht, the European Communities changed radically their structure, and gave an impulse to their humanitarian aid policy by establishing ECHO, the Humanitarian and Civil Protection Agency, which now coordinates the whole amount of EU humanitarian intervention around the world and is developing a new instrument for voluntary humanitarian aid, the European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps (EVAHC). In the early Nineties another idea finds an initial realisation and starts a debate within the European Institutions (mainly the European Parliament): the possibility for civilians to be active part in the resolution of a war, the idea at the basis of a Civil Peace Corps.

In this short essay I will try to develop an historical description of the main achievements the European Union (helped by other European organisations, such as OECD and WEU) has reached to deal with crisis situations such as political violence, conflicts, human- and natural-made disasters. A short analyze of the instruments will give me the opportunity to see how do they work together, if there are any repetitions or overlaps in the institutional organisation. Lastly, using some basic ideas from the Nineties and some useful feasibility studies, I will take a deeper look at the proposals and possible functions of an European Civil Peace Corps and at the recent developments.

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## **List of abbreviations**

CCM	Civilian Crisis Management
CDSP	Common Defence and Security Policy
CEIS	Common Emergency and Information System
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CPM	Civilian Protection Mechanism
CSCE	Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe
EEAS	European External Action Service
ECP	European Cooperation Policy
ECPC	European Civil Peace Corps
ECHO	European Community Humanitarian and civil protection Office
EDC	European Defence Community
EU	European Union
EVHAC	European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps
HR/VP	High Representative/Vice President
IfS	Instrument for Stability
MEP	Member of the European Parliament
MIC	Monitoring and Information Centre
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OAS	Organisation of American States
OAU	Organisation of African Unity
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PbP	Peace-building Partnership
REACT	Rapid Expert Assistance and Co-operation Teams
RRM	Rapid Reaction Mechanism
SG/HR	Secretary General / High Representative
TEU	Treaty on the European Union
UN	United Nations
WEU	Western European Union

## **Brief history of the (complicate) functioning of European Civilian Crisis Management**

The European Civilian Crisis Management covers both intern as well as external crisis situations and therefore it can be seen also as a foreign policy issue. These issues have always represented a complicate work field for the common European institutions since their creation: foreign policies have always been a State's matter and the European Member States never really showed a great interest in giving more power to a common institution, which would develop and carry out foreign policies. Even today, with the creation of multiple institutions and centres (with the European External Action Service at the top of them) and with the central figure of the High Representative/Vice President of the European Union (with the 2009 Lisbon Treaty, since then embodied by Cathrine Ashton), the EU as a supranational organisation does not seem to have that central power in international issues that it should have.

### a) The role of the OSCE and of WEU

This lack of willingness by the member states to cover together this policy area left, in the first decades of the European Communities, an empty space, which was taken (or given) to other institutions, not directly inserted in the Common European architecture. Two of those played an important role in the development of Crisis Management Tools: the WEU (Western European Union) and the OSCE (Organisation for the Security and Cooperation in Europe). The first one, founded in 1954 in Paris after the failure of the European Defence Community (EDC, Treaty of Brussels, 1948), had the purpose «of strengthening

peace and security and of promoting unity and of encouraging the progressive integration of Europe»<sup>1</sup> and had initially no crisis management target. The WEU was a security forum for the settlement of some disputes inside Europe, which became more important during the difficult path of the European Cooperation Policy (ECP, first introduced at the Le Hague Summit, 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1969<sup>2</sup> and institutionalized with the Single European Act, 28<sup>th</sup> February 1986) and became then a real European institution with the Treaty on the European Union (TEU, or Maastricht Treaty, 7<sup>th</sup> February 1992) and with the Amsterdam Treaty<sup>3</sup> («The Western European Union (WEU) is an integral part of the development of the Union providing the Union with access to an operational capability [...] it supports the Union in framing the defence aspects of the common foreign and security policy»<sup>4</sup>). This last one is very important, because it empowers WEU also with peace keeping and humanitarian rescue tasks, as well as «tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peacemaking»<sup>5</sup>, repeating the same words of the Petersberg Declaration, signed by the WEU in 1992. The Petersberg Declaration (also known as Petersberg Task)<sup>6</sup> is the final document of the Bonn WEU Summit in 1992, which represented the basis for peacekeeping, crisis management and peacemaking tasks:

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1 Modified Brussels Treaty (version of the Brussels Treaty, signed 17<sup>th</sup> March 1948, after the amendments of the Paris Agreement, signed 23<sup>rd</sup> October 1954), Article VIII.1.

2 Le Hague Summit, *Final communication*, point 15, 2<sup>nd</sup> December 1969.

3 *Treaty of Amsterdam amending the Treaty of the European Union, the Treaties establishing the European Communities and certain related acts*, signed on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1997.

4 Treaty of Amsterdam, Art. 17.

5 *Ibidem*.

6 Petersberg was the name of the hotel where the summit took place.

Apart from contributing to the common defence [...] military units of WEU member States, acting under the authority of WEU, could be employed for:

- Humanitarian and rescue tasks;
- Peacekeeping tasks;
- Tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peacemaking.

[Petersberg Declaration, Chapter II Art. 4, WEU Bonn Summit, 19<sup>th</sup> June 1992]

WEU Petersberg declaration does not only refer to WEU (said military) capacity, but it «emphasize[s] the importance of strengthening the role and institutions of the CSCE for peace and security in Europe»<sup>7</sup>. The CSCE (Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe) is the former name of the OSCE, an organization founded with the Helsinki Final Act in 1975 by 36 States, with the principle aim to serve as a multilateral East-West forum in Europe and to commit the participating States on certain issues (political, military, environmental and human rights). The CSCE became very important for civilian crisis management after its Paris Summit in November 1990, at the end of which the Charter of Paris for a New Europe was signed. This Charter sought to unify Europe and forget the cold war past (« [...] at a time of profound change and historic expectations. The era of confrontation and division of Europe has ended»<sup>8</sup>) and sets a list of 10 principles for a better Europe. The 'Security' one is the most interesting:

Being aware that an essential complement to the duty of States to refrain from the threat or use of force is the peaceful settlement of disputes, both being essential factors for the

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<sup>7</sup> *Petersberg Declaration, Chapter I, Art. 1.* WEU Bonn Summit, 19<sup>th</sup> of June 1992.

<sup>8</sup> Charter of Paris for a New Europe, CSCE, Paris, 21<sup>st</sup> November 1990.

maintenance and consolidation of international peace and security, we will not only seek effective ways of preventing, through political means, conflicts which may yet emerge, but also define, in conformity with international law, appropriate mechanisms for the peaceful resolution of any disputes which may arise. Accordingly, we undertake to seek new forms of co-operation in this area, in particular a range of methods for the peaceful settlement of disputes, including mandatory third-party involvement.

[Charter of Paris for a New Europe, CSCE, Paris, 21<sup>st</sup> November 1990]

This article opened to new perspective for civilian aspects of conflict management, mainly for the last sentence's 'mandatory third-party involvement'. This issue will be part of the so called Moscow Mechanism<sup>9</sup>, part of the Human Dimension Mechanism<sup>10</sup> (one of the first point of the Charter), which allowed participating states to establish *ad hoc* missions of independent experts whose «purpose [...] is to facilitate resolution of a particular question or problem relating to the human dimension of the CSCE»<sup>11</sup>. These missions of State-nominated-experts could long from 3 to 6 years and had (and still have) observatory and mediation tasks.

Regarding peace building strategies, the Paris Charter established as well the Conflict Prevention Centre, with seat in Vienna, another positive step for the peaceful resolution of pre-conflict situations,

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9 Established at the CSCE Meeting of the Conference on Human Dimension, Moscow 1991.

10 The other part is the Vienna Mechanism, established 1989 with the Vienna Conclusion Document, which enables participating States to raise questions about human rights in a certain State.

11 Moscow Mechanism 1991, Art.5, as amended by the Decision of the Rome CSCE Council Meeting, Chapter IV, Rome 1993.

which would have been reinforced with the 1992 Helsinki CSCE Summit, defining CSCE peacekeeping operations:

A CSCE peacekeeping operation, according to its mandate, will involve civilian and/or military personnel, may range from small-scale to large-scale, and may assume a variety of forms including observer and monitor missions and larger deployments of forces. Peacekeeping activities could be used, inter alia, to supervise and help maintain cease-fires, to monitor troop withdrawals, to support the maintenance of law and order, to provide humanitarian and medical aid and to assist refugees.

[Final Declaration, Helsinki CSCE Summit 1992, Chapter III, Art. 18]

These first initiatives brought in 1999 to the creation of REACT, Rapid Expert Assistance and Co-operation Teams, established by the OSCE<sup>12</sup> Istanbul Council in 1999<sup>13</sup>; their principle aim represents the possibility of a rapid deployment in «effective conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation»<sup>14</sup>. Furthermore, their rapid deployment «will give [OSCE] the ability to address problems before they become crises and to deploy quickly the civilian component of a peacekeeping operation when needed»<sup>15</sup>.

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12 The CSCE changed its name to OSCE (Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe) at the Budapest Summit of Heads of State or Government in December 1994.

13 Istanbul OSCE Summit, December 1999. *Charter for European Security*, Art. 42.

14 *Ibidem*.

15 *Ibidem*.

## b) First autonomous steps of the European Union

The European Union followed the evolution of those instruments, giving them place in declarations and treaties (Maastricht and Amsterdam Treaty), but kept always beside the matter, supporting the regional organisations (OCSE and WEU) and the international ones (UN). It is with the Helsinki Council in 1999 (10<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> December, also after the Istanbul OCSE Meeting) that the idea of an autonomous EU-driven instrument takes form for the first time:

A non-military crisis management mechanism will be established to coordinate and make more effective the various civilian means and resources, in parallel with the military ones, at the disposal of the Union and the Member States.

[Helsinki European Council, II. Common European Policy on Security and Defence, Art. 28]

But the final decisions of the Helsinki Council seemed to underline first of all the military capacities and the military role in crisis management<sup>16</sup>. Nevertheless, the Helsinki final document asks the Presidency, together with the Secretary-General/High Representative (SG/HR), to carry on studies and comprehensive programs on civilian capacities and on conflict prevention<sup>17</sup>, and therefore represented a starting point for the new progresses of those years. Doubtless, the most important one is the institution of the Civilian Crisis Management (CCM), with the Feira (Portugal) European Council in 2000, under the new born Common Defence and Security Policy

16 «The European Council underlines its determination to develop an autonomous capacity to take decisions and, where NATO as a whole is not engaged, to launch and conduct EU-led military operations in response to international crises». Helsinki European Council, II. Common European Policy on Security and Defence, Art. 25.

17 European Council, II. Common European Policy on Security and Defence, Art. 29.

(CDSP), which responded to the Helsinki provisions for the establishment of a «non-military crisis management mechanism».

The European Council welcomes the setting-up and first meeting of the committee for civilian aspects of crisis management, as well as the identification of priority areas for targets in civilian aspects of crisis management and of specific targets for civilian police capabilities<sup>18</sup>.

[Feria European Council, I. Preparing the future, C. Common European Security and Defence Policy, Art. 11]

The most important document between the Feria ones is the third appendix of the first Annex<sup>19</sup> to the Conclusions of the presidency, called *Study on concrete targets on civilian aspects of crisis management*. This Appendix gives a first structure to EU Civilian Crisis Management Intervention, pointing out in a very pragmatic way the duties of such interventions («[...] prevent[ing] the eruption or escalation of conflicts [...] consolidating peace and internal stability in periods of transition [...] ensuring complementarity between the military and civilian aspects of crisis management»)<sup>20</sup> and four priority areas:

- Police: is the number one priority and to this matter is dedicated a whole Appendix<sup>21</sup>. The goal is to provide 5 000 police officers to international mission, who will be selected, on voluntary basis, from the member states and to deploy groups of them in a short time (30 days), in order to «prevent or mitigate international crises and conflicts,

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18 A Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management had been set up on 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2000.

19 Annex I: Presidency report on strengthening the common European security and defence policy.

20 Feria Annexes to Presidency Conclusion, Annex I, Appendix III, Introduction.

21 Appendix IV, Concrete targets for police.

[acting] in non-stabilised situations, such as e.g. immediate post-conflict situations, in support of local police [...] putting a greater emphasis on the training of local police»<sup>22</sup>;

- Strengthening of the rule of law, to re-establish the judicial and penal system, by finding judges, prosecutors and penal experts to be deployed in a short term to help peace process;
- Strengthening civilian administration, by sending experts to help restore the destroyed administration or to train locals;
- Civil protection, to resort to EU Member States tools and capacities in the field, and to promote a better cooperation and organisation in crisis interventions.

All experts of the 4 priority areas had to be chosen by the member states, which could bring to some difficulties, as reluctant position in case of a double (intern and external) necessity, risking the employment of 'second national lines'<sup>23</sup>.

The last point of Chapter III of Annex I (*Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management*) gives an insight on the next step of European Civilian Crisis Management:

In addition to these measures, the Council has received and is examining the Commission's proposal for a Council Regulation creating a Rapid Reaction Facility to support EU activities as outlined in the Helsinki Report.

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22 Ibidem, Point 2: Rapid Deployment Capability.

23 This aims to strengthen the national control over a Commission driven instrument; member States seek to keep the CCM under the second pillar, the intergovernmental one.

This Rapid Reaction Facility will find its implementation one year later, with the institution of the Rapid Reaction Mechanism (RRM)<sup>24</sup>:

A mechanism is created, hereinafter referred to as 'the Rapid Reaction Mechanism', designed to allow the Community to respond in a rapid, efficient and flexible manner, to situations of urgency or crisis or to the emergence of crisis, under the conditions defined by this Regulation.

[Council Regulation No 381/2001, Art. 1]

The RRM had not that precise and pragmatic approach which characterized the CCM, but brought a good innovation: the possibility for the Commission to «conclude financial agreements or framework agreements with relevant government agencies, international organisations, NGOs and public or private operators on the basis of their ability to carry out rapid interventions in crisis management»<sup>25</sup>. The biggest problem of RRM was its financial organisation: the budget had to be planned yearly and the financed program could not last more than 6 months<sup>26</sup>. These two rules could not apply very well for emergencies and crisis management, which often request a longer intervention period and can not easily be planned year by year.

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24 Council regulation (EC) No 381/2001 of 26<sup>th</sup> of February 2001 creating a rapid-reaction mechanism.

25 *Ibidem*, Art 6.2. The partner organisations had to be non-profit organisations and must be seated in an EU country.

26 *Ibidem*, Art. 8. Just in some extraordinary situations the action taken could last longer.

### c) Recent instruments

The RRM regulation applied until the 31<sup>st</sup> of December 2006 and was not renewed, but the majority of its ideas and tools were integrated and strengthened in the Instrument for Stability (IfS), instituted by the Regulation No 1717/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the 15<sup>th</sup> of November 2006<sup>27</sup>. The IfS is a wider instrument, facing crisis situations in their most various differences, both EU intern and external, and explaining in a precise way the different duties in the different crisis environments<sup>28</sup>. Article 4 (*Assistance in the context of stable conditions for cooperation*) gives a positive insight regarding civil intervention in conflict situation:

Pre- and post-crisis capacity building: Support for long-term measures aimed at building and strengthening the capacity of international, regional and sub-regional organisations, state and non-state actors in relation to their efforts in: (a) Promoting early warning, confidence-building, mediation and reconciliation, and addressing emerging inter-community tensions;

(b) Improving post-conflict and post-disaster recovery.

[Regulation No 1717/2006, Art. 4.3]

This article, that promotes some typical characteristics of Peace Corps, is the starting point for the Peace Building Partnership (PbP)<sup>29</sup>, which aims to develop the capacity of EU's potential partners to

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27 Regulation No 1717/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 November 2006 establishing an Instrument for Stability.

28 Due to space reasons and to avoid confusion, I will not go too deep into the functioning of the IfS.

29 To know more about the PbP, see Sarah Bayne & Patrick Trolliet, *Stocktaking and Scoping of the Peacebuilding Partnership*. For the European Commission DG RELEX A/2, August 2009.

respond to crisis situations worldwide, both in pre-crisis situations (early warning) as well as in post-disasters one.

But the Instrument for Stability is long to be the only instrument dealing with crisis and emergencies. In the last 10 years, within the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy, now united under the same European External Action roof, the institutional architecture for the European Civilian Crisis Management has grown bigger, involving nowadays 9 different offices. The political control of these offices and instruments is hard to proof, due to the Lisbon Treaty that cancelled the 'pillar structure' of the European Union. To avoid a simple and dry repetition of acronyms and to try simplifying a complex architecture, I drew a reassuring table. All the instruments and offices named in the table refer to Cathrine Asthon, High Representative for the European Union and Vice President of the Commission, with the important exception of the Instrument for Stability.

## European External Action Service

<b>Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP)</b>		<b>Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)</b>	
<p><b>Crisis Response</b> (brings together the different Crisis Management structures from High Representative to Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability to ECHO. - European Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection). - <u>Crisis Response Planning and Operations</u> (supports HR, undertakes specific missions, coordinates work of Crisis Platform, follows developments in the world). - <u>EU situation room</u> (monitors world situation 24/7) - <u>Consular Crisis Management</u> (crisis management at consular/embassy level).</p>	<p><b>Conflict prevention, Peace building and Mediation Instruments Division</b> (supports geographic services, EU Delegations, EU Special Representatives and EEAS in taking decisions in the pursuit of peace, peace mediation and prevention of conflict).</p> <p><b>Mediation Support Team</b> (coaching, knowledge manager, operational support).</p>	<p><b>Civilian Crisis Management (CCM)</b> (4 areas of intervention, police, rule of law, administration, civil protection, Feria 1999) Civilian Headline goals.</p>	<p><b>CSDP Structures: Political and Security Committee (PSC)</b> prepares a coherent EU response to a crisis and exercises its political control and strategic direction. <b>Committee for Civilian Aspects Crisis Management (CIVCOM)</b> advises the PSC on civilian aspects. <b>Crisis Management and Planning Directorate (CMPD)</b> Contributes by the political-strategic planning of CSDP civilian and military missions, ensuring coherence and effectiveness of the EU comprehensive approach to crisis management. <b>Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability (CPCC)</b> Ensures the effective planning and conduct of civilian CSDP crisis management operation, as well as the implementation of all mission-related tasks.</p>
<b>Instrument for Stability → Peace Building Partnership</b>			

A last instrument is given by ECHO, the European Agency for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection, which controls the Community Mechanism for Civil Protection (CPM), established in 2001<sup>30</sup>. The CPM has two different offices: a Monitoring and Information Centre<sup>31</sup> (open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week) and a Common Emergency and Information System. Last but not least, ECHO administrates also the Civil Protection Financial Instrument, set up in 2007.

### **ECHO: Humanitarian Aid, Civil Protection and Aid in Action**

As we saw in the latter chapter, ECHO, the Humanitarian Aid Agency of the European Union, plays a role in civilian crisis management as well. ECHO (European Community Humanitarian Office) was created in 1992<sup>32</sup> as a unique instrument to coordinate and facilitate EU's humanitarian aid policies. Before that, humanitarian policies were included under the European Political Coordination (EPC, predecessor of the CFSP). ECHO was first instituted as part of the EU development policy (Development commissioner's portfolio)<sup>33</sup> and only with the Lisbon Treaty in 2009 the Humanitarian Policy gain an own commissioner<sup>34</sup>, necessary structure for an office with a yearly budget of around 800 millions euro<sup>35</sup>, making the EU the biggest international

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30 Regulation 2007/779/EC.

31 Currently being transformed into European Emergency Response Centre (ERC).

32 Regulation (CE) 1257/96.

33 The commissioner's official name was then *Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid*.

34 In the person of Kristalina Georgieva, first European Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response, nominated in 2010 by the Barroso commission.

35 Median budget from the planning program 2007-2013, [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/funding\(budget/finances\\_2007\\_2013.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/funding(budget/finances_2007_2013.pdf) (last consulted 10<sup>th</sup> June 2013)

donor worldwide. This new structure was given to ECHO when ECHO started to manage Civil Protection duties and responsibilities, gaining its final denomination, *European Union Internal Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response Department*. This Commission-driven agency could be, both for budgetary as well as for political reasons, the best suited institution to develop a unique instrument for voluntary action and civilian crisis management.

#### a) The Civilian Protection Management in ECHO

The main instrument for Civilian Protection Management inside ECHO is represented by the Civilian Protection Mechanism (CPM). The CPM was launched in 2001<sup>36</sup> and served in this last 12 years in more than 150 crisis situation. It includes two offices, the Monitoring and Information Centre (MIC) and the Common Emergency and Information System (CEIS) and involves the 28 EU Member States plus 4 States from the European area (Norway, Liechtenstein, Iceland and Macedonia - former Yugoslav Republic of,). The mechanism activates under request from a world state (both EU members or not) to the CEIS, which then contacts member states to examine which possible intervention and helping tools can be provided.

The Mechanism should make it possible to mobilise, and facilitate coordination of, assistance interventions in order to help ensure better protection primarily of people but also of the environment and property, including cultural heritage, thereby reducing loss of human life, injury, material damage, economic and environmental damage, and making achievement of the

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<sup>36</sup> The initial Council decision (23<sup>rd</sup> October 2001) has been modified by the Council decision 2007/779/EC, Euratom, 8<sup>th</sup> June 2007.

objectives of social cohesion and solidarity<sup>37</sup> more tangible.

[Council Decision 2007/779/EC establishing a Civil Protection Mechanism (Recast), Preamble, point 12]

It should apply to «event[s] of natural and man-made disasters, acts of terrorism and, technological, radiological or environmental accidents, including accidental marine pollution, occurring inside or outside the Community»<sup>38</sup>. It is not specified whether situations of conflict or war could fit in this article, although war is a 'man-made' disaster and causes 'loss of human life'. Furthermore the CPM has been used 4 times over the past 6 years in conflict situations, or civilian unrest: in Georgia in 2008, in the Gaza-Strip 2009, in Libya 2011 and Syria 2012 (ongoing)<sup>39</sup>. But the CPM cannot «affect obligations under existing relevant legislation of the European Community»<sup>40</sup>, that is to say, cannot interfere with Title V of the Treaty on the European Union, the only legal basis for common European foreign policy (External Service of the European Union)<sup>41</sup>. It is therefore difficult to imagine the CPM applying in conflict situations, or being suitable for a Civil Peace Corps intervention. In a broader political view, it seems that the CPM should only be used to cover first

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37 It is important to underline the importance of this word „solidarity“, because it should represent one of the founding principles of the European Union from its beginnings (Treaty Establishing th European Economic Community, Rome 1958, Preamble «[...] intending to confirm the solidarity which binds Europe and overseas countries»).

38 Council decision 2007/779/EC establishing a Civil Protection Mechanism (Recast), Art. 1.2.

39 European Community Civil Protection Mechanism, Activations overview 01.01.2007 - 31.12.2012.

40 Council decision 2007/779/EC establishing a Civil Protection Mechanism (Recast), Art. 1.2.

41 The content of the note next to the description of the CPM in Georgia 2008 is therefore interesting: «The EU Presidency has confirmed that a European civil protection intervention would not be integrated in crisis management operations under Title V», European Community Civil Protection Mechanism, Activations overview 01.01.2007 - 31.12.2012.

aid to demanding population, without interfering with the European External Action Service.

#### b) The European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps

The Lisbon Treaty introduced also another new instrument, which tries to put together humanitarian aid and civilian engagement under the denomination 'aid in action'.

In order to establish a framework for joint contributions from young Europeans to the humanitarian aid operations of the Union, a European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps shall be set up.

[Lisbon Treaty, Chapter 3 Humanitarian Aid, Article 214]

The institution of the European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps (EVHAC) had to respond to various problems, disclosed by the rapid augmenting of voluntary forces of the last years. This malfunctioning of the whole system was revealed by the Impact Assessment wrote by the Commission and accompanying the Proposal of the European Parliament and European Council establishing the EVACH<sup>42</sup> and could be summarized in six points:

- Lack of EU structures dealing with volunteering and the differences between member states;
- The poor visibility of EU volunteers, which does not permit a better awareness raising;
- Lack of consistent selection and formation standards in the member states, which makes it difficult for organisations to find volunteers;

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42 Document SWD(2012) 265 final, Brussels 19<sup>th</sup> September 2012.

- Lack of sufficient formation between the volunteers what sometimes leads organisations to deploy people abroad without the minimum knowledge of humanitarian principles;
- The financial shortcomings for humanitarian aid, due to the increase of humanitarian crisis and needs;
- The host organisations' weak capacity to ensure that volunteers have the right impact on the situation.

Therefore, six different specific objectives (next to the general one, as specified in the Lisbon Treaty) have been outlined in the Impact Assessment<sup>43</sup>:

- To improve the capacity of the Union to provide humanitarian aid (through better capacity building of the hosting organisation);
- To improve skills and competences of volunteers and their working conditions (through certifications and training programmes, both for volunteers as well as for hosting/sending organisations);
- To promote the visibility of the Union's humanitarian values (through communication, awareness raising and visibility);
- To build capacities of hosting organisations in third countries;
- To enhance the coherence/consistency across Member States in order to improve opportunities for European citizens to participate in humanitarian aid operations;
- To strengthen the identification and selection criteria of volunteers (establishing a volunteers register of EU Aid

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43 The six main phrases are literally part of the impact assessment, document above. For the parenthetical ones cf. *Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and the Council establishing a European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps*.

volunteers and an EU Aid Volunteers' network, developing standards for the participations).

The EVHAC is a very recent instrument with the first pilot projects started in summer 2012 and yet on-going, so it is impossible to draw conclusions about the effectiveness and the results of them. Anyway the regulation is a big step forward for a better management and understanding of the function and duties of a civilian volunteer in a humanitarian crisis situation, and it is therefore important to underline the definition of 'volunteer' and 'humanitarian aid' as outlined by the Article 5 of the Regulation:

'Volunteer' means a person who chooses, out of free will and motivation and without a primary concern for financial gain, to engage in activities that benefit the community, him or herself, and society at large.

'Humanitarian aid' means activities and operations intended to provide needs-based emergency assistance aimed at preserving life, preventing and alleviating human suffering and maintaining human dignity in the face of man-made crises or natural disasters.

[Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and the Council establishing a European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps, SWD(2012) 265 *final*, Article V]

If only these definitions would mention the words 'conflict' or 'war', the EVACH could be used as a real Civil Peace Corps. Primary, it could fit in ECHO's Forgotten Crisis Assessment, which «attempts to identify severe protracted humanitarian crisis situations where affected populations are receiving no or insufficient international aid and where there is no political commitment to solve the crisis, due in part

to a lack of media interest»<sup>44</sup>. This lack of political commitment, definitely regrettable from an international relations point of view, could instead be useful to prove the utility and effectiveness of an European Voluntary Civil Peace Corps, mainly for two reasons:

- This lack of political and international interest could enforce the EVACH and therefore ECHO with a soft power to really tackle crisis situations (mostly due to a precedent or current war) without interfering too much with the high political level of the European External Action Service which refers mainly to the national Member States and their foreign policy prerogative;
- In the countries listed under the Forgotten Crisis Assessment there is an active presence of European regional experts and organisations collaborating with ECHO. The collateral and coherent activity of an European Voluntary Peace Corps, embodied by the EVHAC, could be therefore inserted in a yet organised environment.

### **European Voluntary Civil Peace Corps**

What do I regard to, talking about European Voluntary Peace Corps? The basic idea, that civilians could play an important role in conflict management and conflict resolutions finds an initial realisation in the early Nineties, when normal people, conscientious objectors and volunteers of different organisations spontaneously went to the crisis areas in the Balkan region, to prove their nearness to the population affected by war. The positive response from the populations and some

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44 Definition from ECHO site: [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/policies/strategy\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/policies/strategy_en.htm)

small-scale, but important, successes<sup>45</sup> brought the topic on an higher level, firstly in the European Parliament and thanks to the action of the Green Group, in particular of Alexander Langer, Italian MEP. An European Voluntary Civil Peace Corps has never been established by the European Union, despite the positive experiences of similar corps around the world<sup>46</sup> and despite two feasibility studies<sup>47</sup>, by European Parliament and by the European Commission, underlining the importance and the utility of such institution.

#### a) History of a proposal

The first official document of the European Parliament regarding, and officially proposing, the institution of an European Civil Peace Corps (ECPC) is the so called *Bourlanger/Martin Report on the Functioning of the European Union* on 17<sup>th</sup> of May 1995.

A first step to contribute to the prevention of conflicts could consist in the creation of an European Civil Peace Corps (comprehending conscientious objectors), securing the formation of reporters, mediators and specialist on conflict solution.

[Bourlanger/Martin Report, 17<sup>th</sup> May 1995]

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45 From basic humanitarian aids to telephonic 'bridges', from 'war postmen' to support and protection of local voices against war.

46 Only to mention a few examples of grass-roots Peace Corps engaged in different conflicts in the world: Christian Peacemaker Teams, Fellowship of Reconciliation, Operazione Colomba, Brigada de Paz, Nonviolent Peaceforce, etc.

47 Catriona Gourlay, *Feasibility Study on the European Civil Peace Corps (ECPC)*. For DG research, European Parliament. Berlin: Berghof Research Center for Constructive Management, 2004. Robert Pierre, Knud Vilby, Luca Aiolfi, Ralf Otto, *Feasibility study on the establishment of a European Civil Peace Corps (ECPC), Final report*. Ohain: Channel Research, 2005

This annotation has to be accredited to the efforts of the Green Group<sup>48</sup> in the European Parliament which, since the beginning of the Nineties, was trying to raise the awareness of the European Parliament on the matter. One of the most important documents demonstrating how crucial this issue was for the Greens, is a motion for a resolution presented by Alexander Langer on the 21<sup>st</sup> of June 1993, the day after the killing of three European volunteers in Bosnia Herzegovina. In the motion – not approved by the Parliament – Langer requests the Commission and the Member States to support voluntary work in the former Yugoslavia, asserting that:

This voluntary work on behalf of the refugees, providing them with health and food aid, taking them in, providing counselling, re-establishing communications between the various parts of the former Yugoslavia, developing permanent twinning and links, setting up work camps, caring for the injured, raped women and children, providing education and training, etc. in some cases even proves to more effective, more appropriate and more credible than the political, diplomatic, military and welfare measures implemented by the official UN and EC bodies.

[Motion for a resolution B3-0939/39 on behalf of the Green Group, 6/21/1993]

These sentences contain themselves a description of utilities and possible work fields for a Civil Peace Corps, but certainly do not describe a precise project, which came to light only in 1999<sup>49</sup> within

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48 The amendment A\$-0102/170 introducing this sentence was presented by Alexander Langer and Claudia Roth on behalf of the Green Group.

49 IN 1997 (B4-0278/97) and 1998 (B4-0791/98) other two motions for a resolution were presented in the European Parliament about this topic. The second one had a larger result and committed the Presidency of the Parliament to instruct the Foreign Affairs, Security and Defence Policy Committee to write a report about it.

the European Parliament and thanks to another Green Parliamentarian, the Swedish Peer Garthon. The Report (which follows the structure of Langer's project, written by his assistant Ernst Guelcher in 1993 and published only after Langer's death in 1995)<sup>50</sup> lists all the functions mentioned in the 1993 Motion for a resolution (above), asserting that «the ECPC (*European Civil Peace Corps*) will rely on a holistic approach, including, inter alia, political and economic efforts [...]»<sup>51</sup> but setting clearly the priorities:

The first priority of an ECPC will be conflict transformation of human-made crises, e.g., the prevention of violent conflict escalation and contribution towards conflict de-escalation.

[Garthon's Report on Motion for a Resolution B4-0791/98]

The composition of the Corps has always been a big deal: it was clear, from the beginning of voluntary and civilian action in war areas, that a certain degree of professionalism was necessary to participate. Therefore the Report states that all the members of an ECPC should receive a good training before joining the Corps. Volunteers and conscientious objectors (personnel on voluntary basis) should respond to the authority and be directed by full-time employed professionals, responsible for management, recruitment, preparation and deployment. Regarding the institutional structure, the ECPC would be an official body of the European Union, but it «will function only under a mandate backed by the UN or its regional organisations: OCSE, OAU or OAS»<sup>52</sup>. But there was no certainty about the real potential of an

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50 Alexander Langer, Ernst Guelcher, *Per la creazione di un corpo civile di pace dell'ONU e dell'Unione Europea. Alcune idee, forse anche poco realistiche*. In Santarelli and Cereghini, 2005. A shortened version had been published in October 1995 by the Italian magazine *Azione Nonviolenta*.

51 Gerthon's Report on Motion for a Resolution B4-0791/98.

52 *Ibidem*.

ECPC. Therefore the report stressed the fact, that a wider feasibility study should have been done.

The European Parliament recommends that the Council: [...] should without delay request the European Commission to produce a Feasibility Study on the European Civil Peace Corps [...]. In the case of a positive outcome of this study [it should] establish a pilot project as first step to the establishment of an European Civilian Peace Corps.

[Recommendation on the European Civilian Peace Corps, B4-0791/98]<sup>53</sup>

Five years after this recommendation, in 2005, the Commission designated Channel Research with the *Feasibility Study on the establishment of a European Civil Peace Corps (ECPC)*<sup>54</sup>. The study, published in November 2005, reaffirms that «the original thinking behind ECPC is still valid. ECPC can be a flexible and effective instrument to respond to crisis situations world wide. In addition, the establishment of ECPC is likely to support the development of EU-based civil society activities on peace and conflict»<sup>55</sup>. The recruitment processes are stressed as well, assuming that volunteers' profile should be characterized by a certain degree of expertise «due to the sensitive context in which they will be deployed»<sup>56</sup>. The ECPC should be, according to the Feasibility Study, a small and efficient unit inside

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53 *Annex to the Report on the establishment of an European Civilian Peace Corps*, Foreign affairs, Security and Defence Policy Committee, European Parliament, 28<sup>th</sup> January 1999.

54 So did the European Parliament on year beafore, in 2004, designating the Berghof Institute for Peace and Conflict Transformation (Berlin) with a similar feasibility study. Considering the Commission's one more complete and due to the similarity of the final outcomes, I will just mention the first one.

55 *Feasibility study on the establishment of an European Civil Peace Corps (ECPC)*, Channel Research, 2005, p.1.

56 *Ibidem*.

the Commission, working to manage projects but also to connect yet existing instruments at national or NGOs level in Europe. The next two steps should have been the creation of a white book on ECPC (the first step for a European Commission Regulation) and the start of small scale pilot projects, to be designated to NGOs.

b) Where are we now?

Since 2005 no white book has been published, nor has a pilot project started to promote and evaluate the European Civil Peace Corps. It seems that, after the necessary political decisions by the European Parliament and after the complete and problem-tackling feasibility studies, both by the Parliament and by the Commission, the project for the establishment of an European Civil Peace Corps has turned into a death-end path. The European Union, reinforced by the Nobel Prize for Peace in 2012, seems to concentrate more on its dialogue and mediation capacities. The most important recent document on this topic is the *Concept on Strengthening EU Mediation and Dialogue Capacities*, published by the General Secretariat of the Council in 2009<sup>57</sup>. The document provides the two definitions of 'mediation' and 'dialogue':

Mediation is a way of assisting negotiations between conflict parties and transforming conflicts with the support of an acceptable third party. [...] In order to ensure peace and stability in the long-term, mediation should be cognisant of and, as appropriate, address the root causes of conflict.

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<sup>57</sup> 10<sup>th</sup> November 2009, after the agreement by the Political and Security Committee, 28<sup>th</sup> October 2009.

Dialogue is an open-ended process which aims primarily at creating a culture of communication and search of common ground, leading to confidence-building and improved interpersonal understanding among representatives of opposing parties which, in turn, can help to prevent conflict and be a means in reconciliation and peace-building processes.

[Concept on strengthening EU mediation and dialogue capacities, p. 2-3]

These two features could apply perfectly in a Civil Peace Corps<sup>58</sup>. The document goes further underlining how necessary it should be to coordinate better EU strategies on dialogue and mediation tasks, pointing out the necessity to collaborate with other international actors or NGOs on the field and to support confidence building and the engagement of local experts. Again these issues were already highlighted in the European Civil Peace Corps project and in the feasibility studies<sup>59</sup>.

Nevertheless, the 2009 concept can be seen as basis for the further development of new ideas in the field: in 2010 Sweden and Finland proposed the creation of a European Institute of Peace to support EU 's mediation engagement objectives. The only European institution responding to this request was, as usual for such matter, the European Parliament, which in 2012 requested the European External Action Service to produce cost-benefit analysis. The final report, *European Institute of Peace costs, benefits and options*<sup>60</sup>, underlines

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58 As they were mention in the Commission *Feasibility Study on the establishment of an European Civil Peace Corps*, p.60 (Profile of volunteers [...]), p.86 (Specific conclusions and recommendations).

59 Commission *Feasibility Study on the establishment of an European Civil Peace Corps*, Specific conclusions and recommendations, pp. 85-89.

60 Drafted by Peter Brorsen (Team leader, expert in conflict management), in cooperation with Catherine Guicherd, under the implementation by SACO.

two main priorities: consolidate EU mediation capacity and support the development of independent capacity<sup>61</sup>. According to my opinion and regarding to the previous discussion on ECPC, the most important topic refers to the different levels of EU mediation engagement: «a greater investment should be made in linking direct EU track 1 engagement with track 2 and 3». In the diplomacy discourse, track 1 refers to high-level diplomacy<sup>62</sup>, track 2 to engagement of influent civil society actors (intellectuals, religious authorities etc.) and track 3 to the grassroots level («it is undertaken by private groups to encourage understanding between hostile communities [...]»)<sup>63</sup>. The first track addresses the highest level of EU diplomacy, i.e. the HR/VP, who, representing the whole EU, can act as a 'power mediator', with a great bargaining power. The role of official EU civil servants (EU special representatives, Heads of EU delegations) is still very important in track 1 and track 2, thanks to their capacity to talk to a wide range of actors on behalf of the EU. On the letter track, the grassroots level one, there is no official EU body or institution. The EU usually supports grassroots diplomacy funding NGOs, but does not take concrete or direct initiative. Track 3 represents a perfect environment for an European Civil Peace Corps, whose establishment could enable the EU to have an own grassroots diplomacy tool. The possibility to coordinate and manage an ECPC could finally bring to «pursue a both top-down and a bottom-up approach in parallel

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61 I will not go any further in the analysis on the creation of an European Institute of Peace, which deals more with institutional architecture, concentrating only on the main ideas.

62 There is an intermediate track between track 1 and 2: track 1 ½. This «involves situations where official representatives give authority to non-state actors to negotiate or act as intermediaries on their behalf». *European Institute of Peace costs benefits and options*. Final Report, p.3.

63 *Ibidem*.

tracks»<sup>64</sup> and to reach this holistic approach on conflict prevention and peace building, recommended by the Garthon's report in 1997, by the Commission's feasibility study in 2005 and by the *Concept on strengthening EU mediation and dialogue capacities* in 2009.

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64 *Concept on strengthening EU mediation and dialogue capacities*, p.7.

## Conclusions

In this short article I tried to broadly analyse the two faces of EU civilian crisis management: on the first hand the EEAS tools and offices dealing with rapid reaction and more institutional issues of a crisis, on the second hand the humanitarian and civil protection skills provided by ECHO, with a focus on the newest instrument for civilian intervention, the European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps. It is possible to understand how the two faces differ from one other, the first one regarding to the very delicate issue of foreign policy, one of the most complicated and struggled policy fields in the EU, and the latter one facing humanitarian and first intervention only, without the possibility to tackle international problems in a holistic perspective. This difference costs a certain lack of coordination between the various tools and a multiplication of offices and bodies dealing with crisis management in its different aspects.

The last chapter, dedicated to the different attempts and projects for the establishment of an European Civil Peace Corps, tries to cope these differences, looking for a common path for humanitarian intervention and crisis management related to conflict (therefore sensitive to foreign policy issues). This idea, quite popular in the Nineties, seems to have lost power and interest among EU institutions, despite feasibility studies supporting the proposal and despite the good experience of many organisations around the world. Anyway, if the European Civil Peace Corps project almost disappeared from the EU agenda, this is mainly a matter of denomination. The basic concept of strengthening EU capacities in crisis response and peace building is still valid and active, at least at declamatory level. But the path of voluntary intervention, intended not only as professionals working at non market rates and on a voluntary basis but much more as a direct engagement by the people for the people, seems to follow humanitarian routes only and no longer civilian conflict management.

Following this conception could bring to the loss of many opportunities. The augmenting willingness of European people to engage themselves in voluntary operations could fit into the on-going professionalism of conflict management, enhancing on one side EU capacities and giving, on the other, a possible professional future to EU citizen. An European Civil Peace Corps could enforce the EU with a grassroots level diplomacy tools, the 'Track 3' diplomacy, which EU only indirectly supports; it could fit, with some necessary formation and deployment changes, into the EVHAC project, combining voluntary work with ECHO's *Forgotten crisis assessment*. But it isn't definitely just a matter of jobs creation or professional formation: it is a matter of values as solidarity, nonviolence, peace, brotherhood, values that were central by the EU creation and should stay central in the EU present and future.

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Daniele Marchi, born in Trento (Italy) in 1988, is an international relations student. He graduated at the Università degli Studi di Trento in International Studies in March 2012, with a thesis on Alexander Langer and his project for the establishment of an European Civil Peace Corps. With this thesis he participated at the journalistic prize *Maria Grazia Cutuli*, sponsored by the Italian newspaper *Il Corriere della Sera*, earning a honourable mention. He is a voluntary for the nonviolent Peace Corps *Operazione Colomba*, with whom he participates in the Colombian project by the Peace Community of *San José de Apartadó*. He now studies at the University of Torino.