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(De-)Stabilizing Europe's Neighborhood?

An assessment of the EU's Common Security and Defence
Policy's impact on host country stability

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Abstract

The EU's Common Security and Defence Policy was created to stabilize the EU's Neighbourhood, fuel the EU's geopolitical crisis management ambitions, and strengthen European values abroad. In the recent debate, however, it was criticized as ineffective or destabilizing. While specific regions and mission types were previously researched, a comprehensive analysis of all EU crisis management operations has not been conducted to this day. This thesis aims to fill this gap.

The (De-)Stabilization Meta Index (DSMI), which was developed specifically for this study, ranks 40 CSDP missions along 10 indicators of stability. Complemented with bivariate analyses, it reviews whether host countries are more, less, or equally stable after the conclusion of CSDP missions and examines explaining factors.

This paper argues that the impact of CSDP on host countries' stability is very limited. It finds that the closer "to home" a mission takes place, the more stabilized the host country will be. Especially in MENA states and the Sahel, CSDP underperforms. DSMI helps to identify which mission types perform most effectively and that missions before the Lisbon Treaty were slightly more stabilizing than those that came after Lisbon. Religious demographics and staff size also affect CSDP missions' performance.

Keywords: Stability, Common Security and Defence Policy, European Union, Crisis Management, Meta-Index

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II. List of abbreviations

ACLED	The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project
AU	African Union
CAST	Conflict assessment framework for assessing the vulnerability of states
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CMPD	Crisis Management Planning Directorate
CPCC	Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability
CPI	Corruption Perceptions Index
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
(the) Council	Council of the European Union
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
DSMI	(De-)Stabilization Meta-Index
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
EEAS	European External Action Service
EFP	European Peace Facility
ESDP	European Security and Defence Policy
FSI	The Fragile States Index
G5S	G5 du Sahel, former joint anti-jihadist task force of the 5 core Sahel states

EU	European Union
EUGS	EU Global Strategy
EUMS	European Union Military Staff
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
IDP	Internally displaced people
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PESCO	Permanent Structured Cooperation Mechanism
PSC	The Council's Political and Security Committee
RCA ¹	Central African Republic (French: République centrafricaine)
SIPRI	Stockholm International Peace Research Institute
UCDP	Uppsala Conflict Data Program
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
V-DEM	Varieties of Democracy (Index)
WGI	Worldwide Governance Indicators

Classification and abbreviations of the mission types

Mission Type	Abbreviations	Long Form
Military	EUFOR EUNAVFOR EUMPM	European Terrestrial Military Force Operations European Naval Military Force Operations European Union Military Partnership Mission
Military/Training	EUTM MATF	European Union Training Mission Military Assistance Task Force
Police and Police Training	EUPOL EUPAT	European Union Police Mission European Union Police Advisory Teams
Civilian Capacity Building	EUCAP EUAVSEC	European Union Capacity Building Mission European Union Aviation Security Mission
Rule of Law	EUJUST EUJUST LEX EULEX	European Union Rule of Law Mission European Union Integrated Rule of Law Mission European Union Rule of Law Mission
Border Assistance	EUBAM EUMA	European Union Border Assistance Mission or European Union Integrated Border Management Assistance Mission European Union Mission to Armenia
Advisory / Security Sector Reform	EUSSR EUAM EUMAM EUPM	European Union Security Sector Reform Mission European Union Advisory Mission for Civilian Security Sector Reform European Union Military Advisory Mission European Union Partnership Mission

¹In english-language literature, the Central African Republic is sometimes abbreviated as CAR. For this paper, the abbreviation RCA (French: **République centrafricaine**) is used in line with the EU's most widely used abbreviation in official CSDP publications.

1. Introduction

The EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) key objective is to contribute to security and stability in an increasingly unstable world characterised by what former Commission president Jean-Claude Juncker referred to as “polycrisis”². Today's multi-crisis environment presents the EU with overlapping environmental, health, security-related, economic, humanitarian, political, and social crises. Seeking stability, the EU has augmented its external action over the past two decades since the establishment of the first Monitoring Missions in Yugoslavia in the early 1990s.

To this day, the EU and its predecessors have conducted 48 civilian missions and military operations that fall under the scope of the CSDP. More than 20 are still ongoing. CSDP is the EU's framework of multilateral security governance³. Conceived as a crisis management tool, it serves to “inject some measure of stability in conflict zones”⁴. The security-focused, multidimensional, and complex⁵ civilian or military CSDP missions are central to the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). Set in more than 20 countries outside the EU, CSDP missions are the heart and soul of the EU's security and defence ambitions.

The European Defence Budget, a summary of all Member States' military spending, reached a record-high of €240 billion in 2022, marking the eighth consecutive year of increased defence spending in the EU⁶. It is not unlikely that this trend continued in 2023 as numbers are still standing out for this period. While the ever-growing amount of tax money spent on defence and the number of missions steadily increased, the international security situation has aggravated.

It would be naïve to assume that the EU could singlehandedly solve the crises it faces. As both military spending and the number of armed conflicts increase, the perceived security threats to the EU increase, too⁷. At the same time, the crises in it's neighbourhood are by no means closer to being sustainably solved, as considerable parts of the world plunge into increasingly chaotic situations. These include the coup series in the Sahel, the ‘disastrous’ termination of the international missions in Afghanistan, the bloody Sudanese civil war, Russia's attack on

² Juncker 2016

³ Tardy 2015: 7

⁴ Mattelaer 2010: 3

⁵ Tardy 2015: 9-12

⁶ European Defence Agency 2023: 3

⁷ Gizikis 2019

Ukraine or the exacerbated violence in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) – all in regions where CSDP missions were previously conducted or currently take place.

It is therefore to no one's surprise that criticism directed at the EU's main crisis management tool is surging. Described as an ineffective tool, having no real impact on stability or even as an alibi to avoid broader international security responsibilities⁸, CSDP seems to be undergoing a performance and legitimacy crisis. More positive voices award it a respectably successful record in the field. The Council of the EU even prides itself on "the significant contribution of the CSDP to international peace and stability"⁹.

With ensuring stability in the EU's immediate and wider neighbourhood being CSDP's central task, it is worth assessing how much CSDP missions and operations actually contribute to international and host countries' stability. Previous studies on the impact of CSDP have focussed on singular missions, specific mission types or specific regions. An overall, global assessment of the stabilization or destabilization that occurs during the mandate period of CSDP missions has not yet been conducted. Peters *et al.* (2022: 27) point out that "a systematic meta-review [comparing] missions and operations [...] is more than overdue"¹⁰.

In two steps, this paper approaches this comprehensive meta-review. Firstly, the analysis shows how host countries of 40 CSDP missions were more, equally, or less stable after the conclusion of the respective mission. Secondly, it investigates which internal and external factors could explain the changes in host country stability. The overarching research question therefore is:

Are host countries more, equally, or less stable after the completion of EU CSDP Missions and why do some missions perform better than others?

This research question shall be answered in two steps:

1. *Was a specific host country more, equally, or less stable after the conclusion of the respective CSDP mission?*
2. *Which internal and external factors could explain why some missions correlate with more stable host countries after their conclusion whereas other host countries seem further destabilized?*

⁸ Menon 2009: 228

⁹ Council of the EU 2024

¹⁰ Peters et al. 2022: 27

Thus, this study aims to contribute to filling the described gap and could be relevant for scholars of European Affairs, Security Studies, International Relations, or Political Science concerned with the EU, policy makers and civil servants of the EU and its Member States working on the CSDP. Findings of this paper could potentially provide data for a reform process of CSDP or at least help to understand the current state of affairs.

To measure and operationalize the research question, I designed and calculated the *(De-)Stabilization Meta-Index (DSMI)* which is built on two separate datasets created for this study. It maps out the change in stability of host countries that occurred during missions and operations. The DSMI stability score was calculated for every single mission. Based on a broad concept of stability, it goes beyond measuring security and conflict and covers ten social, political, humanitarian, security, and governance indicators of stability.

Without yet drawing conclusions on the reasons for these developments, DSMI shows if host countries are more, less, or equally stable after the conclusion of CSDP missions compared to the beginning of the missions. Respecting regional differences and differences in mission types, DSMI can be used to approximate CSDP mission performances and impact on stability.

The following section (2.) outlines the research interest and introduces the focal concepts by defining a broad idea of stability tailored to the purposes of this study. It explains how CSDP has evolved historically from early European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) endeavours to the diverse portfolio it covers now. The subsequent section (3.) provides an overview of the theoretical framework by discussing trends in the academic debate on CSDP missions and operations. Additionally, it presents the synthesized hypotheses and claims to be tested. The case and indicator selection for DSMI (4.) are explained in a comprehensive overview of the data, explaining case selection with a detailed list of mission types. Thereafter, a detailed review of the methodology and process of gathering and refining data, calculating, and ranking DSMI scores and visualizing results is presented. It is followed by an explanation on how the hypotheses were tested using bivariate correlation analyses of internal and external factors and various visualization tools (5). This is complemented by a reoccurring discussion of limitations. The analysis and results of this research process are discussed afterwards (6.). Lastly, the conclusion and outlook part complete this study (7.).

2. Research problem and central concepts

2.1. Research interest

The stabilization of host countries and regions is a, if not the, key feature of CSDP¹¹. The review of the academic debate¹² showed that while academia has in the past investigated CSDP extensively, studies on CSDP effectiveness and the impact on stability remain somewhat rare. Overall, it is noteworthy that some mission types are fairly present in the academic debate, such as training missions or military operations, whereas other types continue to be overlooked. Effectiveness and performance of CSDP missions are reoccurring themes and usually studies have a clear regional focus or investigate only specific countries or mission types. There are very few studies clearly examining the impact on stability and an overarching study such as this one, comparing all relevant missions since the beginning of ESDP, has so far not been conducted. While the EU's Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability (CPCC) conducts impact assessments for civilian missions¹³, the assessment reports remain classified. Moreover, they focus on their own objectives but not the wider impact on the security situation¹⁴. Stability remains under-researched. Most assessments tend to take the form of policy papers instead of independent theory-based research. According to Tardy (2015: 53), a key reason for assessing performance is to investigate if the EU is delivering on its mandate in an efficient manner and meaningfully contributing to international security¹⁵.

The (De-)Stabilization Meta Index (DSMI) contributes to research on stability by comparatively assessing how the stability of every single host country of CSDP missions has changed. This paper argues that it is necessary to systematically assess the (de-)stabilizations that occurred during mission periods before discussing reasons for these changes. By establishing *DSMI* and subsequently analysing the data and potential correlations, with *DSMI*, I hope to contribute to a better understanding of CSDP missions and their impact.

If the data suggested that host countries are generally more stable after the conclusion of CSDP missions, this would make a strong case for the continuation of CSDP as it is right now, possibly even for increased spending and activity. If the data suggested, however, that host countries'

¹¹ Mattelaer 2012:3; Tardy 2015: 11

¹² See 3.1. *Claims on CSDP for theory development*

¹³ Tardy 2015: 38

¹⁴ Zarembo 2017: 3; EPLO 2013: 12

¹⁵ Tardy 2015: 35

stability does not change or missions even leave a destabilised state behind, one could formulate the argument that CSDP needs to be reformed or even disbanded. It would possibly need to be replaced by more suitable stabilization and crisis management mechanisms. In any case, factors influencing the outcome of CSDP missions should be investigated in order to find out how CSDP missions can be improved.

While assessing the change in stability of the host country before and after the mission, one should also consider an alternative path in which the EU had not intervened. Possibly a violent conflict would have escalated in a downwards spiral. Potentially, the factions would have come together for negotiations, paving the way to stabilize the country. Writing this paper, it was considered to conduct a time-series analysis with various points before and within the conflict to map possible developments. This idea, however, was discarded simply because it is nearly impossible to predict the past of an alternate universe without EU interventions. Research can only analyse what actually happened and is reflected in the data.

2.2. Conceptualizing Stability and CSDP

Stability

In the Social Sciences, there are different approaches to conceptualize stability. This is in part due to the different roles that stability plays in different research projects or because of different schools of thoughts. Some definitions are quite narrow, focusing merely on the security or military dimension: For Berger (2000: 407), “stability is defined as the absence of a direct military conflict or the build-up of military forces in anticipation of such a conflict”¹⁶. In an attempt to create a forecasting model of instability, US-American researchers expanded the military dimension, claiming that “political instability is a general condition that may be defined by a single onset or a combination of [...] ethnic war, revolutionary war, genocide or politicide¹⁷, and adverse regime change”¹⁸. Marshall (2004) proposed to include successful and unsuccessful coup attempts¹⁹. Marshall (2008: 12) expects “higher risks of instability until central authority is reasonably well established and institutionalized”²⁰ hinting towards the issue of a state’s coping capacity and state fragility. State fragility, opposing resilience, is perceived to become an increasing threat to international peace and security²¹.

¹⁶ Berger 2000: 407

¹⁷ Goldstone et al. (2005) *define Politicide as the systematic destruction, in whole or in part, of a political entity.*

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Marshall 2004

²⁰ Marshall 2008: 12

²¹ Raineri and Baldaro 2020: 170

Other, broader definitions of stability include the system of government, citing democracy as particularly prone to stability²². Stability further includes the absence of political discrimination²³, which could for the purpose of this paper fall under the category of freedom. De Spiegeleire *et al.* (2014: 55) pointed out that the EU's stabilization efforts feature the Rule of Law dimension as a key element, too²⁴. Further, the negative effect of corruption on political and/or state stability has been observed many times²⁵. The effect that political instability can have on corruption should not be neglected either, more specifically how instability can be an incentive for corruption²⁶. Evidently, there is a reciprocity between stability and corruption.

Both Internal Displacement and Refugees are a mirror of the stability of states which has been observed in different regions and in different points in history²⁷. Additionally, not only for CSDP endeavours, the protection of Human Rights is a key element. Actively promoting and furthering Human Rights is a cornerstone of EU action as laid out in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU. A central feature of crisis management operations, aiming for more stability, is their hybrid civil-military nature²⁸. This supports the need for a broad definition of stability.

Therefore, this paper proposes a very broad concept of stability going way beyond the military aspect. Stability encompasses a broad spectrum of interrelated factors. For the purpose of this study, stability shall cover *Conflict Incidence, Democracy, Freedom, Coping Capacity of the State, Rule of Law, Corruption, Internal Displacement, Number of Refugees by country of origin, Governance, and Human Rights*. All ten factors, further explanations and sources for their operationalisation are listed below in *4.2 DSMI Indicator Selection*.

Common Security and Defence Policy – CSDP

The Common Security and Defence Policy is a framework of multilateral security governance²⁹ and an integral part of the EU's comprehensive approach towards crisis management, drawing on civilian and military assets³⁰. CSDP missions are a central asset to the EU's CFSP and its Integrated Approach to External Conflicts and Crises³¹. In addition to that, CSDP is a useful

²² Marshall 2008: 14

²³ *Ibid.*: 12

²⁴ De Spiegeleire *et al.* 2014: 55

²⁵ Farzanegan and Witthuhn 2017; Shabbir *et al.* 2016

²⁶ Campante *et al.* 2009

²⁷ Cohen 2004; Herbert and Idris 2018; Matthews 1972; Macqueen and Baxter 2014

²⁸ Tardy 2015: 10

²⁹ Tardy 2015: 7

³⁰ EEAS 2021a

³¹ Smit 2023: 3

tool for the EU's ambitions towards Strategic Autonomy. While it remains an ambiguous concept lacking a clear definition, it is widely agreed that Strategic Autonomy aims at reducing the EU's vulnerability and dependencies on other international actors³². Conceived to promote peace and security within and beyond its borders, it aims at enhancing self-reliant capabilities³³.

CSDP missions are described as the most visible EU contribution to international peace and security³⁴. Prior to the Lisbon Treaty³⁵, the CSDP's predecessor was known as European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). With the Treaty of Nice in 2000, Member States first formally declared the wish to "give the European Union the necessary means and capabilities to assume its responsibilities regarding a common European policy on security and defence"³⁶. Based on values like democracy, respect for basic rights and freedoms, ESDP has evolved into the CSDP as it is today.

A novelty with the Treaty on the European Union in 2007, CSDP entails the "*operational capacity drawing on civilian and military assets*"³⁷. These can be deployed for "*peacekeeping, conflict prevention, or strengthening international peace and security in accordance with the United Nations charter*"³⁸ outside the Union. The ability to use both civilian and military capabilities is a unique strength of the EU³⁹. The EU tasked its CSDP with the so-called "Petersberg-tasks"⁴⁰:

*joint disarmament operations, humanitarian and rescue tasks, military advice and assistance tasks, conflict prevention and peace-keeping tasks, tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peace-making and post-conflict stabilisation. All these tasks may contribute to the fight against terrorism, including by supporting third countries in combating terrorism in their territories*⁴¹.

³² Keukeleire and Delreux 2022: 74

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ *Treaty of Lisbon amending the Treaty on the European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community 2007*

³⁶ Teixeira 2012: 1

³⁷ Art. 42(1) TEU

³⁸ Art. 42(1) TEU

³⁹ Smit 2023: 3

⁴⁰ Keukeleire and Delreux 2022: 187

⁴¹ Art. 43(1) TEU

Beside the military capacity, CSDP missions in recent years have focussed on training and technical assistance⁴², monitoring, advisory tasks, and the political aim to contribute to fighting smuggling, human trafficking, and illegal migration⁴³.

Being an intergovernmental policy domain of the EU⁴⁴, the CSDP is controlled and mandated mainly by the Member States. This could explain the considerable variation between Member States' contributions⁴⁵: Germany, Italy, and France lead both expenditure and personnel statistics, whereas Eastern European states such as Bulgaria and Hungary trail in these rankings⁴⁶. Initially, Denmark even opted out of the evolving CSDP process⁴⁷.

The Council of the EU, the Union's body of representation of the Member States, authorizes CSDP missions and mandates, whereas the authority on political control and strategic orientation lies with the Council's Political and Security Committee (PSC)⁴⁸. The PSC's decisions require consensus among all Member States as they are taken on the basis of unanimity⁴⁹. In general, civilian missions are funded by the CFSP budget, whereas the majority of the costs of military operations are, except some common costs, covered by the Member States⁵⁰. Common costs are nowadays financed by the European Peace Facility (EPF), which merged the Athena Mechanism for cost distribution with the African Peace Facility⁵¹.

The EPF has been subjected to some criticism, as it not only allows the financing of EU military endeavours or the training of third-state militaries but also arms transfers to partners or even States with dubious security or human rights records⁵². These instruments, together with the Permanent Structured Cooperation Mechanism (PESCO), serve "to develop European military capabilities, [...] to encourage states to channel the resources already spent on defence to focus on collective interests"⁵³. Another goal is to homologate European defence systems and allow

⁴² De Spiegeleire et al. 2014: 54

⁴³ BMI 2023

⁴⁴ Tardy 2015: 33

⁴⁵ Keukeleire and Delreux 2022: 188

⁴⁶ European Defence Agency 2022

⁴⁷ Keukeleire and Delreux 2022: 188

⁴⁸ Mattelaer 2010: 3; Smit 2023: 4

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Tardy 2015: 27, Smit 2023: 4

⁵¹ Milland 2023: 7

⁵² Hauk and Mutschler 2020: 2

⁵³ Teixeira 2012: 4

for coherent research and development as well as defence cooperation with non-EU third states⁵⁴, giving the EU “a broad and coherent vision, allowing it to become a global player”⁵⁵.

For the purpose of this paper, missions that are not PSC-led but stand under the leadership of the European Commission⁵⁶ such as EUBAM Moldova and Ukraine⁵⁷ will also be investigated as part of the EU’s CSDP given their clear security focus. Missions that began prior to the Lisbon Treaty⁵⁸, such as ESDP missions, will also be analysed under the CSDP umbrella.

3. Theoretical framework and testable claims

This section entails the theoretical framework of this paper. Central to the theory development was the synthesis of claims that previous researchers made on CSDP and its effect on stability and the EU’s performance as crisis management actor. Previous research suggested that a complex research programme combining approaches from International Relations, European Studies, or other fields is the prerequisite for assessing CSDP effectiveness⁵⁹.

The research question of this paper, investigating a change in stability, implies a causal mechanism. There is a relatively clearly visible dependent variable, stability, as well as several independent variables influencing the former. They have been introduced and discussed above. For the ontological premises, this means that there must be at least some sort of observable reality allowing for underlying causal structures. Ontologically, this does not necessarily mean, that “reality” is looked at from a purely positivist perspective as the socially constructed nature of it cannot be fully denied and the interdependent relationship between the perceived and operative reality⁶⁰ make for a mutually affective construction of reality and the way we speak about reality, but not a purely interpretivist/constructivist perspective either because the observable causality can be assumed as given.

3.1. Synthesizing claims on CSDP for theory development

This section is a synthesis of over 100 observations and claims on the effectiveness and performance of CSDP missions(3.1.1.), internal or inherent (3.1.2.) and external variables affecting the outcomes of missions (3.1.3.) and the assumed objectives or motivations (3.1.4.)

⁵⁴ Keukeleire and Delreux 2022: 189

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Zarembo 2017: 5-16

⁵⁷ European Union Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine

⁵⁸ Teixeira 2012: 3

⁵⁹ Peters et al. 2022: 27

⁶⁰ Patzelt 1989

of the EU to conduct CSDP missions abroad. The claims raised in this section serve as a basis to create hypotheses for testing CSDP's effects on the stability of host countries.

3.1.1. CSDP and its effectiveness

Criticism

The academic debate is split into two camps with diverging assessments of CSDP's impact. Merlingen (2012: 186) holds that the "overall record of CSDP missions is characterized by incompleteness, unevenness, and partial frustration"⁶¹. Tardy (2015: 32) claims that they have not been "drivers of major changes in the recipient state(s) or region(s)"⁶². Others agree that the impact of CSDP operations on UN peacekeeping is of limited extent⁶³ and the record of specifically "EUTM's impact effectiveness has been low at best"⁶⁴. For theory development, this would suggest that CSDP has little to no effect on stability in the host country.

Not only from a European perspective criticism is raised, as Malian researchers deem "EUTM Mali incompatible with Malian needs"⁶⁵. Some even go as far as to state that EU interventions in the Sahel and the Middle East caused a series of "disasters" for the EU's crisis response policy⁶⁶ which would amount to a negative impact. Certainly, another disaster is that an investigation in the Central African Republic (RCA) found that most of the deployed units of the Armed Forces of RCA, including at least one EU-trained battalion, were operating under the direct command or supervision of the Wagner Group⁶⁷ which is the Russian "Africa-Corps" predecessor on the African Continent following Wagner's integration into the Russian military apparatus after its leader Yevgeni Prigozhin died in August 2023. The arrival of the Russian "Africa-Corps" in Niger following the Russian-Nigerien military agreement in early April 2024 is the most recent example of EUTM and EUCAP – trained troops that are now allegedly cooperating with systemic rivals of the EU and actively work against the humanitarian and values-based ideals of EU⁶⁸.

This is in line with the observation that every single coup d'état and junta leader of the recent coup series in the Sahel – referring to the coups in Mali, Niger, Guinea, and Burkina Faso – has

⁶¹ Merlingen 2012: 186

⁶² Tardy 2015: 32

⁶³ Marek 2020; Peters et al. 2022: 8

⁶⁴ Lebovich 2017

⁶⁵ Djiré et al. 2017: 41

⁶⁶ Peters et al. 2022: 1-2

⁶⁷ EEAS 2021b

⁶⁸ Ewokor and Armstrong 2024

received some sort of Western or EU training or played a leadership role in EU CSDP missions prior to the coups⁶⁹. One could argue that the EU provides elite-training to exactly the personnel that will expel European military forces and staff of European enterprises NGOs later. Further, the EU was chastised for abusing CSDP as “an alibi for a tendency to avoid broader international security responsibilities”⁷⁰ or “doomed to under-deliver”⁷¹.

Giegerich (2008: 27) has interviewed EU officials who stated that CSDP serves more to “satisfy [the European] conscience rather than achieve a certain effect on the ground”⁷². Lastly, due to the variance in defence systems, security ambitions and diverging priorities among Member States as well as the fact that security, its financing, and coordination remain very much intergovernmental. CSDP has been criticised as a misleading name, given that it is “not that common”⁷³ of a policy.

Praise

There are more positive assessments, too: Tardy (2015) sees “no tangible indication that the EU would perform less effectively than any other comparable organisation”⁷⁴ and remarks that “EU has revealed a certain capacity as a crisis management actor, in Europe and beyond”⁷⁵. When measured against their mandate, “CSDP operations have by and large delivered in an efficient manner. All military operations have implemented their mandate more or less as planned and in accordance with the set objectives”⁷⁶ which contributed to security and stability. According to Chivvis (2010: 39), the EU “is capable of making a real contribution to the civilian dimension of post-conflict stabilization and reconstruction.”⁷⁷ Soon after its implementation, research awarded CSDP “a short but respectably positive record in the field”⁷⁸.

For EUTM Somalia, a “small, indirectly positive impact on the protection of civilians [and] the human rights environment” is observed⁷⁹. Marek (2020) observed that CSDP “transformed from peace-enforcement in 2003 to [...] peace-building [...] in 2013 and onwards”⁸⁰ but the

⁶⁹ Gantenbein 2022, Gantenbein 2023

⁷⁰ Menon 2009: 228

⁷¹ Tardy 2015: 15

⁷² Giegerich, 2008: 27

⁷³ Keukeleire and Delreux 2022: 187-188

⁷⁴ Tardy 2015: 37

⁷⁵ Ibid.: 7

⁷⁶ Ibid.: 42

⁷⁷ Chivvis 2010: 39

⁷⁸ Dobbins 2008

⁷⁹ Van der Lijn et al. 2022: 3

⁸⁰ Marek 2020

focus on military elements⁸¹ is continuously criticised, as observers point out a lack of attention to state-building⁸².

Most observers agree that CSDP missions tend to be more successful on the operational or tactical level, but it can be subsumed that they have no real impact on higher norms- and value-related objectives or real stabilization⁸³. Small successes tend to be overshadowed by poor results in trainings or general governance indicators⁸⁴. The example of EUTM Mali shows that by 2018, more than half of the Malian armed forces have gone through the training provided for by EUTM⁸⁵ but performed very poorly during the clashes against non-state armed groups, losing control of important towns or strategic objectives. Not only in Mali are allegations of human rights abuses raised⁸⁶ as “training devoted to human rights and gender issues in the courses seems insufficient to change the behaviour of trainees”⁸⁷ and reinforcing armed forces could even increase the risk and degree of human rights abuses⁸⁸.

Commenting on the academic debate up to this point, Zaremba (2017) concludes that evaluating CSDP’s effectiveness so far has been a challenge for academia⁸⁹. If effectiveness has been analysed, it was rather in the form of policy analysis than theory-based research⁹⁰. Researchers agree, however, that evaluating effectiveness objectively is next to impossible⁹¹ as the notion of effectiveness is conceptually vague and prone to subjectivity. Further, it overlaps with “notions [like] effect, outcome, impact, consequence, and performance”⁹². DSMI and this study certainly are not free of inherent biases, but controlling the results with a wide variety of well-respected indices aims to reduce the bias as much as possible.

3.1.2. Internal factors and structural challenges affecting CSDP performance

Peters *et al.* (2022: 25) have observed that the large number and sheer variety of possible factors “imply that the explanation of the achievements and shortcomings of EU CSDP missions are ‘overdetermined’ in the sense that more causes are present than are necessary to cause the

⁸¹ Smit 2023: 1

⁸² Raineri and Baldaro 2020: 171

⁸³ Van der Lijn *et al.* 2022: 4; Peters *et al.* 2022: 9; Raineri and Baldaro 2020: 174

⁸⁴ Peters *et al.* 2022: 10

⁸⁵ EEAS 2018

⁸⁶ HRW 2017; MINUSMA 2018

⁸⁷ Van der Lijn *et al.* 2022: 4

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*: 8

⁸⁹ Zaremba 2017: 1

⁹⁰ Zaremba 2017: 2

⁹¹ Zaremba 2017: 3, Tardy 2015: 37

⁹² Hegemann *et al.* 2013, p. 15

effect”⁹³. Nonetheless, the clear aim of this section is to identify as many factors as possible and to try and establish conclusions if and to what extent they actually are having an influence.

Regardless of their general assessment of CSDP missions, it seems as there is a general consensus that in a majority of missions, there is a lack of understanding of local historical, conflict or cultural contexts, country-specific expertise, and analytical capacity⁹⁴. Analysing EUTMs, Peters *et al.* (2022: 11) found that “EU priorities are often diverging from local understandings and practices”⁹⁵. Trying to simplify the understanding of the mission environment for EU staff in different Sahel-missions, external stressors, such as radicalisation and irregular migration, were emphasized, rather than the institutional fragilities that are characteristic of Sahel states⁹⁶.

In this context as well as in the Middle East, shortcomings in language, training and operational skills were observed time and time again⁹⁷. Together with other governance deficits within missions⁹⁸ and the high turnover of personnel, the “ability of EUTMs to build institutional memory, improve situational awareness and build strong relations with counterparts” is thereby reduced⁹⁹. Bøås and Rieker (2019: 15) describe how the EU focused on “narrow security concerns in terms of mission safety rather than addressing structural issues of the conflicts”¹⁰⁰.

Resource insufficiencies and the budgets of the missions could be other reasons affecting the outcome of missions¹⁰¹. Another criticism is that mission mandates are too short to substantively change systems or to stabilize the mandate areas¹⁰². The argument that the mission’s duration contributes to determining a mission’s outcome could be made. Additionally, the human power or staff size might be a factor within the control of the EU¹⁰³, while the mission type could play a role too.

⁹³ Peters et al. 2022: 25

⁹⁴ Zarembo 2017: 1-2, 4; Peters et al. 2022: 11, 14, 15; Raineri and Balduino 2020: 171; Tardy 2015: 14; Van der Lijn et al. 2022: 10

⁹⁵ Peters et al. 2022: 11

⁹⁶ Raineri and Balduino 2020: 171

⁹⁷ Carrasco et al. 2016, Djiré et al. 2017: 42, Tardy 2015: 15; Raineri and Balduino 2020: 174

⁹⁸ Peters et al. 2022: 3

⁹⁹ Van der Lijn et al. 2022: 13

¹⁰⁰ Bøås and Rieker 2019: 15

¹⁰¹ Tardy 2015: 44, Smit 2023: 5, Dietz 2022

¹⁰² Raineri and Balduino 2020: 176

¹⁰³ Dietz 2022

Many scholars further point out the lack of local ownership¹⁰⁴, some even state that European efforts “undermine the coherence of African institutions’ efforts, such as the AU’s¹⁰⁵ security structure and ECOWAS’¹⁰⁶ political agency”¹⁰⁷. Host governments sometimes don’t know the mandate prior to the Council’s decision¹⁰⁸ and have limited influence on its alteration afterwards¹⁰⁹. Given that “Sovereign consent and so-called local ownership are the two guiding principles for CSDP deployment”¹¹⁰, this is a severe factor.

Another crucial part of a CSDP mission should be lesson-learning and evaluation, not only to improve efficiency, but also to define the EU’s action and scope, the organisational “raison d’être” for CSDP¹¹¹. Unfortunately, many researchers point out a lack of accountability due to significant shortcomings or an altogether lack of monitoring and performance or lessons-learned analyses¹¹².

Neorealist scholars would argue that the EU’s major players judge their sovereignty in the field an important aspect of their political ambitions, leading to a continuously intergovernmental CSDP¹¹³. Perceived as peripheral to the state, the European Union, according to Neorealist scholars is not much more than a toolbox from which governments choose when it is required and suits their interests¹¹⁴. This could be applied to the situation abroad, where Member States could potentially utilize the missions rather for individual gains than to pursue common objectives. Claiming that Member States have diverging foreign policy priorities, on which they seek no compromise, Hoffmann (1966) assessed the integration of security policy as unlikely¹¹⁵.

Piechowicz and Szpak (2019: 68) recognized Germany’s and France’s important roles in formulating European security policy¹¹⁶. While the consensus-principle demands that every state’s concerns are heard and technically every state is required to form agreement, European

¹⁰⁴ Zarembo 2017: 4; Tardy 2015: 14, 46, Peters et al. 2022: 23

¹⁰⁵ *African Union*

¹⁰⁶ *Economic Community Of West African States*

¹⁰⁷ Venturi 2019: 10

¹⁰⁸ Zarembo 2017: 4

¹⁰⁹ Ginsberg and Penksa 2012: 114

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*: 112

¹¹¹ Minard 2014, p. 18

¹¹² Van der Lijn et al. 2022: 8, 13; Zarembo 2017: 1-2; Raineri and Baldaro 2020: 183; Dietz 2022, Peters et al. 2022: 20

¹¹³ Hyde-Price 2006; Howorth 2012

¹¹⁴ Mayer 2011: 325

¹¹⁵ Hoffmann 1966

¹¹⁶ Piechowicz and Szpak 2019: 68

realism underlines that without France and Germany signing off, no agreement can be made¹¹⁷. This puts both in a better position for bargaining, a key concept of intergovernmentalism, and allows them to take more control of where the missions are going without necessarily respecting smaller Member States concerns. In turn, they might therefore choose to form new alliances or operate on their own.

Member States' own goals are at times put above the European-formulated ambitions. The early history of EU action in Mali can serve as example of how first France conducted an own operation, Serval and later Barkhane¹¹⁸, which developed into several EU missions in Mali and Niger with different targets but almost always French-led. Realists would argue in this case that France used the EU as tool for its own ambitions. Considering the aftermath of the missions, which were put into the same category as Afghanistan in terms of leaving hastily without an exit-strategy leaving behind a ravaged country and an even more ravaged reputation¹¹⁹, the Sahel missions can hardly be seen as prime examples of fruitful European security action.

Communication, in various ways, seems to be another repeatedly raised challenge. Among EU Member States and together with other international organizations' missions and undertakings abroad, insufficient policy and tactical coordination is observed¹²⁰. It was repeatedly postulated that the lack of EU-internal cooperation and communication can be attributed to diverging ambitions and priorities. Moreover, EU's communication about CSDP missions to research, the wider public, media, or the European electorate leaves much to be wished for. Communication on the ground to local populations is in some cases virtually non-existent, too¹²¹. Instead of addressing local needs, the missions engage directly with key leaders in their respective defence ministries and armed forces, and with other international partners attempting to stabilize host countries¹²². This can lead to a wrong understanding of the situation, reinforcement of exploitative power structures, and patronage networks or to a lack of legitimacy which affects the local support of missions. Resentment among local populations¹²³ is a serious impediment to a mission's success and sustainability.

¹¹⁷ Bendiek 2012

¹¹⁸ Gantenbein 2022: 62

¹¹⁹ Abba 2022

¹²⁰ Raineri and Baldaro 2020: 176; Peters et al. 2022: 3; Tardy 2015: 46; Van der Lijn et al. 2022: 11

¹²¹ Van der Lijn et al. 2022: 9

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid.: 10

Last but definitely not least, women are still underrepresented in the staff of CSDP missions¹²⁴. The Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda, in line with United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1325 on WPS¹²⁵, is a key feature – at least on paper – of the EU’s actions abroad. Especially considering the broad consensus that when women participate in a peace-building process, the resulting peace is more durable¹²⁶, the share of Women in CSDP missions needs to increase.

3.1.3. External factors affecting CSDP performance

External factors here refer to factors that are outside the EU’s control or grounded in the host countries’ individual situations. Among the external factors certainly are regional differences between the host countries¹²⁷. A hypothesis in the debate is that missions closer “to home” perform better than missions with less geographical proximity to Europe. Additionally, the culture and religion of the host countries can affect a mission’s outcome. While culture is difficult to measure, Marshall (2008) postulated that in states where the “large majority of population (greater than 65 percent) [is] from a single religious group”¹²⁸ the stabilization tends to be more difficult because convincing populations of a shift towards a more secular system based on western values is an increasing challenge. In the study at hand, this serves as a surrogate for the hypothesis that missions are more effective in stabilizing host countries that are religiously and culturally closer to the EU.

Hegemann *et al.* (2013: 39) raised the attribution problem¹²⁹. In a complex environment, there can be no “mono-causal attribution of success to the EU”¹³⁰. Especially in the early years of CSDP, missions often occurred together with the military presence of other foreign powers or institutions. Some hold that CSDP missions are not even meant to stand by themselves¹³¹.

Corruption and organized crime, which CSDP sets out to fight, are inherent in many host countries and to an extent even their governments. The “presence of Patronage Politics and organised crime in [a] host country”¹³² and its leadership can certainly affect CSDP

¹²⁴ Smit 2023: 2, Van der Lijn *et al.* 2022: 11

¹²⁵ UNSC Res 1325

¹²⁶ Diaz and Tordjman 2012

¹²⁷ Tardy 2015: 32

¹²⁸ Marshall 2008

¹²⁹ Hegemann *et al.* 2013: 39

¹³⁰ Peters *et al.* 2022: 5

¹³¹ Tardy 2015: 11

¹³² Raineri and Baldaro: 183

performance. It can be a fine line to walk between stabilising central state institutions and fighting organised crime, smuggling, or militant networks if the authorities stand to have personal gains from these activities or are participating in them. Additionally, host countries have different levels of regional integration. Where Mali and Niger were, up to the coups, active members of ECOWAS and G5S¹³³, Afghanistan had basically no active regional integration¹³⁴. It can be held that a more integrated state is less susceptible to conflict and instability. Lastly, the colonial past of EU states remains a legitimacy challenge¹³⁵.

3.1.4. Assumed objectives and motivations

The key objective of CSDP is to “preserve peace, prevent conflicts, and strengthen international security”¹³⁶. CSDP aims to “contribute to the stabilisation of states or regions that may potentially be the source of further destabilisation”¹³⁷. Nonetheless, since the EU Global Strategy (EUGS) in 2016¹³⁸, a shift away from values- and norms-based global action towards “protecting the EU” is observable¹³⁹. This can be attributed to security developments in the EU’s immediate neighbourhood such as the Russian attack on Ukraine. Projecting military prowess for reasons of deterrence is not a new concept, but EU officials have routinely assigned CSDP military missions deterrence roles¹⁴⁰. Deterrence is only one element of classic bargaining theory that emerges in this context. CSDP missions can also take on compliance and compellence functions towards partners or rivals abroad. Moreover, with the prospect of enlargement or specific policies, the EU convinces neighbours to take part in EU endeavours abroad, fully in the spirit of the conditionality aspect of bargaining theory¹⁴¹. Thus, Georgia has participated in EU missions abroad and Ukraine, Moldova and Balkan states have agreed to CSDP missions on their territories.

Before the 2016 EUGS, the most visible trend was that domestic politics in the EU and its Member States strongly shape the Union’s external action, especially in the case of migration¹⁴². Migration has been increasingly securitised in the aftermath of 9/11¹⁴³. Further,

¹³³ *G5 du Sahel, former joint anti-jihadist task force of the 5 core Sahel states*

¹³⁴ Peters et al. 2022: 4

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Art. 21 TEU

¹³⁷ Tardy 2015: 33

¹³⁸ EUGS 2016

¹³⁹ Pietz 2022

¹⁴⁰ Merlingen 2013: 43, 45

¹⁴¹ Merlingen 2013: 47

¹⁴² Pietz 2022

¹⁴³ Ceyhan and Tsoukala 2002

stability is seen “as a means to migration management”¹⁴⁴. Hoeffler (2019) describes the CSDP’s policy-making hybridity, combining “a more intergovernmental policy-making mode ([...]operational-military elements) with more supranational elements ([...]industrial armament-related elements)”¹⁴⁵.

Geopolitical ambitions, “solidarity with allies, the need to deploy troops or assets (to maintain a given area of expertise or justify a budget)” are other motivations for conducting CSDP missions¹⁴⁶. Geopolitically, the EU wants to present itself increasingly as a global player¹⁴⁷ with the ability to influence security in its neighbourhood and abroad. Therefore, the EU needs to prove its capabilities. The strive for “visibility (“waving the EU flag”)” instead of a needs-orientated approach, focused on the problems on the ground, has greatly increased¹⁴⁸.

Economic motives can be behind CSDP endeavours, too¹⁴⁹. Attaining more favourable trade conditions, keeping trade routes clear from piracy or terrorism or getting better access to resources are only some motivators. The claim was raised that “interventions do not occur when these may be functionally most appropriate but when they are considered politically [or economically] appropriate”¹⁵⁰.

3.2 (Testable) Claims/Hypotheses

Consolidating these claims provides a series of hypotheses that shall be tested over the course of this paper. These hypotheses are grouped into two categories which will be analysed in 6. *Analysis*: The first group are hypotheses that can be tested with the DSMI information and data without utilizing further tools. The second group shall be investigated by conducting bivariate correlation analyses. The DSMI scores will be used as the dependent variable representing stability when testing the hypotheses below. The twelfth hypotheses is used as proxy for cultural differences

¹⁴⁴ Raineri and Baldaro 2020: 172

¹⁴⁵ Hoeffler 2019

¹⁴⁶ Tardy 2015: 11

¹⁴⁷ Borell 2021

¹⁴⁸ Pietz 2022

¹⁴⁹ Tardy 2015: 11

¹⁵⁰ Peters et al. 2022: 13

3.2.1 Hypotheses and claims tested with DSMI

1. **H0:** CSDP has on average little to no effect on stability in the host country.
H1: CSDP has a positive or negative effect on stability in the host country.
2. CSDP missions post-Lisbon have been more successful than pre-Lisbon.
3. Human Rights are neglected in CSDP training and formation processes.
4. Military missions perform better than other mission types.
5. The closer a mission is to the EU, the more successful it is.
6. Missions in Europe and its Eastern Neighbourhood are more successful than missions in MENA states and Sub-Saharan Africa.

3.2.2 Hypotheses tested with correlation analyses

7. Higher mission budgets correlate with a high degree of stabilization.
8. The longer the mission, the more successful it is.
9. The bigger the staff size, the more successful the mission.
10. The more international missions are active in one host country, the more successful EU operations are.
11. The more women participate in a CSDP mission, the more successful it is.
12. CSDP missions are more successful in Christian-dominated host countries rather than Muslim-dominated host countries.

4. Case Selection and clarifications on the data

This section provides a comprehensive overview over the data used in the case selection for DSMI (4.1.), the reasoning behind selecting the indicators for DSMI as well as their sources (4.2.) and the data selection for the bivariate analyses (4.3.).

4.1. Case selection and clarifications on mission types

The 40 missions and their host countries, as listed in *table 4.1*, have been selected because they fulfil all selection criteria to be listed on DSMI in the first step of the paper and can be assigned to one of seven mission types that are compared in the second step. The list of missions was created by supplementing the EEAS' list of ongoing missions and operations¹⁵¹ with historic and completed missions that were researched manually. The specific selection criteria for this study are potential impact on stability, clear territorial scope, part of the ESDP/CSDP

¹⁵¹ EEAS 2023a

framework or security relatedness, that selected missions shall be EU-financed and staffed and mission mandate's fittingness to one of the seven mission types.

Mission Abbreviation	Assessed Host Country	Mission Type	Duration
AMIS EU Supporting Action	Sudan	Military	07/2005-12/2007
EUAM Iraq	Iraq	Advisory	11/2017-ONGOING
EUAM Ukraine	Ukraine	Advisory	12/2014-ONGOING
EUAVSEC South Sudan	South Sudan	Civilian Capacity Building	02/2013-01/2014
EUBAM Libya	Libya	Border assistance	05/2013-ONGOING
EUBAM Moldova Ukraine	Moldova	Border assistance	12/2005-ONGOING
EUBAM Rafah	Palestine	Border assistance	11/2005-07/2007
EUCAP Sahel Mali	Mali	Civilian Capacity Building	04/2014-ONGOING
EUCAP Sahel Niger	Niger	Civilian Capacity Building	07/2012-ONGOING
EUCAP Somalia	Somalia	Civilian Capacity Building	07/2012-ONGOING
EUFOR Artemis	Dem. Rep. of Congo	Military	06/2003-09/2003
EUFOR BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina	Military	12/2004-ONGOING
EUFOR Concordia	Macedonia	Military	03/2003-12/2003
EUFOR RCA	Central African Republic	Military	02/2014-03/2015
EUFOR RD Congo	Dem. Rep. of Congo	Military	06/2006-11/06
EUFOR Tchad/RCA	Chad	Military	03/2008-03/2009
EUFOR Tchad/RCA	Central African Republic	Military	03/2008-03/2009
EUJUST LEX Iraq	Iraq	Rule of Law	07/2005-12/2013
EUJUST Themis	Georgia	Rule of Law	07/2004-07/2005
EULEX Kosovo	Kosovo	Rule of Law	12/2008-ONGOING
EUMA	Armenia	Border assistance	01/2023-ONGOING
EUMAM RCA	Central African Republic	Advisory	03/2015-07/2016
EUMAM Ukraine	Ukraine	Advisory	10/2022-ONGOING
EUMPM Niger	Niger	Military	02/2023-ONGOING
EUNAVFOR Atalanta	Somalia	Military	11/2008-ONGOING
EUNAVFOR Med Irini	Libya	Military	03/2020-ONGOING
EUPAT	Macedonia	Police	12/2005-06/2006
EUPAT Armenia	Armenia	Police	12/2022-01/2023
EUPM Moldova	Moldova	Military	04/2023-ONGOING
EUPOL Afghanistan	Afghanistan	Police	06/2007-12/2016
EUPOL COPPS	Palestine	Police	01/2006-ONGOING
EUPOL Kinshasa	Dem. Rep. of Congo	Police	04/2005-06/2007
EUPOL Proxima (FYROM)	Macedonia	Police	12/2003-12/2005
EUPOL RD Congo	Dem. Rep. of Congo	Police	07/2007-09/2014
EUSSR Guinea-Bissau	Guinea-Bissau	Military	06/2008-09/2010
EUTM Mali	Mali	Military/Training	02/2013-05/2022
EUTM Mozambique	Mozambique	Military/Training	11/2021-ONGOING
EUTM RCA	Central African Republic	Military/Training	07/2016-ONGOING
EUTM Somalia	Somalia	Military/Training	04/2010-ONGOING
MATF Gazelle	Niger	Military/Training	08/2018-12/2022

Table 4.1: List of selected CSDP missions in alphabetical order

Types of CSDP missions

The types of CSDP missions analysed in this paper are (1) Military missions, (2) Military/Training missions, (3) Police missions, (4) Civilian capacity building missions, (5) Rule of law missions, (6) Border assistance missions and (7) Advisory missions. Certainly, a variety of missions has a mixed approach encompassing both military and civilian elements. Thus, they were categorized along the key element in their mandate and their tendency towards more military or civilian engagement. The selection of a diverse set of mission types in line with previous studies, providing cases varied enough to uphold nuanced interpretations¹⁵².

Mission Type	Abbreviations	Long Form
Military	EUFOR EUNAVFOR EUMPM	European Terrestrial Military Force Operations European Naval Military Force Operations European Union Military Partnership Mission
Military/Training	EUTM MATF	European Union Training Mission Military Assistance Task Force
Police and Police Training	EUPOL EUPAT	European Union Police Mission European Union Police Advisory Teams
Civilian Capacity Building	EUCAP EUAVSEC	European Union Capacity Building Mission European Union Aviation Security Mission
Rule of Law	EUJUST EUJUST LEX EULEX	European Union Rule of Law Mission European Union Integrated Rule of Law Mission European Union Rule of Law Mission
Border Assistance	EUBAM EUMA	European Union Border Assistance Mission or European Union Integrated Border Management Assistance Mission European Union Mission to Armenia
Advisory / Security Sector Reform	EUSSR EUAM EUMAM EUPM	European Union Security Sector Reform Mission European Union Advisory Mission for Civilian Security Sector Reform European Union Military Advisory Mission European Union Partnership Mission

Table 4.2: CSDP mission types

- (1) Military missions comprise military interventions which the EU distinguishes into *missions* with non-executive mandates and *operations* with executive mandates and typically own operational headquarters¹⁵³, thereby not relying on the EU Operations Centre or not having to recourse to the NATO command structures¹⁵⁴. Others have approached this duality by claiming that missions have a civilian and operations a military character¹⁵⁵, which is not entirely true, as the lines in the hybrid crisis management environment are blurry. For the sake of this paper, the terms missions and

¹⁵² Raineri and Baldaro 2020: 172

¹⁵³ European Court of Auditors 2018: 2

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ Tardy 2015: 17

operations will be used synonymously. The military category comprises EUFOR, EUNAVFOR and EUMPM missions.

- (2) When the mission's key component is the training and formation of the host countries' armed and special forces, they are considered Military/Training missions in this classification. Complementary to military tactics, strategy and battle training, these missions also teach lessons in "command-and-control, logistics, and applicable international law"¹⁵⁶ or feature humanitarian elements aimed at reducing war crimes, torture, or sexual assaults by state militaries¹⁵⁷. This, previously overlooked, feature became increasingly necessary after allegations of very serious misconduct and human rights abuses by the Malian military were raised¹⁵⁸. Training missions include EUTM and MATF missions. The MATF Gazelle in Niger's mandate extended beyond training. Its mandate, when it was still known as German-led JSOTF Gazelle¹⁵⁹, also included operational tasks¹⁶⁰ but during this time and after its inclusion under the EUTM Mali mandate, the focus was on the formation of Nigerien special forces and strengthening their capabilities. Thus, MATF Gazelle is categorized as Military/Training.
- (3) Missions that aim for the establishment and training of the hosts' police forces are classified as Police missions. These include EUPOL and EUPAT missions.
- (4) The EU also conducts capacity building missions that aim to complement the military and police dimensions and "promote resilience"¹⁶¹ in regions threatened by state fragility. These missions comprise EUCAP and EUAVSEC missions. Specific activities of EUCAP Sahel Niger e.g. included "training, advice, and capacity-building in the fields of rule-of-law [sic!], criminal investigation, forensic techniques, and intelligence"¹⁶². Thus, capacity building missions can be at the point of interlinkage between the other mission types and feature components of other, more specifically mandated missions, too. Members of the government, police forces or judiciary of the host countries are offered classes ranging from "professional methods to human rights issues"¹⁶³ to migration management affairs¹⁶⁴.

¹⁵⁶ Raineri and Baldaro 2020: 175

¹⁵⁷ Van der Lijn et al. 2022: 4

¹⁵⁸ HRW 2017; MINUSMA 2018

¹⁵⁹ *Joint Special Operations Task Force*

¹⁶⁰ Bundeswehr 2024

¹⁶¹ Raineri and Baldaro 2020: 171

¹⁶² Council of the EU 2012a

¹⁶³ Bøås et al. 2018

¹⁶⁴ *GAR-SI SAHEL (Groupes d'Action Rapide – Surveillance et Intervention au Sahel)*

- (5) To support “rule of law [...] towards increased effectiveness [and] accountability [and freedom] from political interference”, the EU conducts Rule of Law missions. These include EUJUST, EUJUST LEX and EULEX.
- (6) Missions for Stability for border areas and Border assistance missions aim to help dealing with contested borders or to supervise migration flows. EUBAM and EUMA make up this mission type.
- (7) Finally, the EU also undertakes advisory or security sector reform missions such as EUSSR, EUAM, EUMAM and EUPM.

Some missions follow their predecessors directly, taking place in the exact same host country. When their mandate has switched and the subsequent mission followed new objectives, it was treated as an entirely own mission. In the case of EUFOR Chad/RCA, the mission took place in two separate host countries: Chad and the Central African Republic (RCA). To ensure the best quality of DSMI and the most precise analysis, both Chad and RCA were effectively treated as own missions so that the evolution of stability could be traced simultaneously.

When researching the missions, it soon occurred that availability and quality of both public information and data can vary quite substantively from one mission to another. This explains why some values can occasionally be missing. These changes, however, can be accounted for and easily be controlled by the large amount of data that went into the index creation.

In one case, nonetheless, this shed light on an issue that certainly must be addressed: Media reports and official EU statements and publications rarely, but sometimes, have different contents. This became apparent in the case of the ongoing involvement in the Sahel. In December 2023, different media outlets, ranging from the Turkish news agency¹⁶⁵ to an US-American financial newspaper¹⁶⁶, reported that the military junta in Niamey was ending Niger’s Security and Defence partnership with the EU, effectively terminating EUMPM Niger and EUCAP Sahel Niger. Nevertheless, in Mid-March 2024, both missions have still not ended according to the EEAS¹⁶⁷, which is still advertising priorities and goals for 2024 on its website¹⁶⁸. The message about the end or at least temporary substitution of EU engagement in Niger seems to not have reached the Member States either, as the German Federal Government

¹⁶⁵ Tasamba 2023

¹⁶⁶ Barron’s/AFP 2023

¹⁶⁷ EEAS 2024

¹⁶⁸ EEAS 2023b

continues to report on the EUMPM mandate running until the End of May 2024¹⁶⁹ and Sweden still claims to contribute with personnel to EUCAP Sahel¹⁷⁰. Differing claims like these can pose obstacles for research and policy making.

In the case of EUTM Mali, even though it is technically not terminated, due to Mali's internal situation after a series of coups almost every aspect of the mission came to an abrupt halt around May 2022, following the decision of Mali's military junta to expel Western, especially French, military, and civilian personnel¹⁷¹. This is why a technical end date of 05/2022 was used for this study. While the mission technically moved its scope to Niger, which was around that time hailed as "anchor of stability" in the region by German Chancellor Scholz¹⁷², it was not after a long time that Niger plunged into chaos following its own coup d'état¹⁷³, finally nailing the mission's coffin. To further clarify: EUBAM Rafah has merely been on stand-by since 07/2007¹⁷⁴. Therefore, in this study, this date is used for the mission's termination.

Excluded CSDP missions

Table 4.3 lists the missions that have been excluded from the analysis as well as the reasons for their exclusion. The Monitoring missions have been excluded from observation due to their mandate which prohibits an active intervention. These missions "provide third-party observation of an activity or a process, be it the performance of a given sector (police, justice, border, etc.) or the implementation of an agreement (ceasefire line, peace agreement, etc.)"¹⁷⁵. Aiming to observe effects or impacts that proactive CSDP missions have on the stability of host countries, it seemed rational to exclude them. Although its mandate could be considered similar to something in between capacity building and advisory missions, EUSEC¹⁷⁶ RD Congo has been excluded because its deployment period overlaps with other EU missions in the Democratic Republic of Congo whose mandates already cover military, police, capacity building and to a certain extent advisory elements.

EUNAVFOR Aspides does technically qualify for analysis. The mission, however, started very recently in late February 2024. It is therefore considered to be too early to draw conclusions

¹⁶⁹ Bundesregierung 2023a

¹⁷⁰ Regeringskansliet 2024

¹⁷¹ Gantenbein 2022: 61

¹⁷² Süddeutsche Zeitung 2022

¹⁷³ Gantenbein 2023: 68

¹⁷⁴ Armed Forces of Malta 2024

¹⁷⁵ Tardy 2015: 24

¹⁷⁶ EEAS 2011

about it at the time of writing. EUNAVFOR Med Sophia, on the other hand, will not be investigated due to its territorial scope. Most CSDP missions take place in a specific host country, whereas EUNAVFOR Med Sophia's territorial scope is the southern and eastern Mediterranean Sea. This also somewhat applies to EUNAVFOR Aspides whose scope is the Red Sea. The investigated indicators and indices do, however, not provide values for oceans but only for states and territories. EUNAVFOR Med Irini, also known as Operation Irini, which follows EUNAVFOR Med Sophia, however has clear mission scope on Libya and its mandate contends several objectives, such as capacity building, within Libya and therefore qualifies for observation.

Mission Abbreviation	Host Country (-ies)	Type
ECMM / EUMM	Former Yugoslavia	Monitoring, started in 1991
EUSEC RD Congo	Dem. Rep. of Congo	Reform of Security Sector
AMM	Aceh/Indonesia	Monitoring
EUMCAP	Armenia	Monitoring
EUMM Georgia	Georgia	Monitoring
EUNAVFOR Aspides	Red Sea / Yemen	Military
EUNAVFOR Med Sophia	Mediterranean Sea	Military
EUSDI Gulf of Guinea	Benin, Togo, Ghana, Ivory Coast	Capacity Building, started in late 2023

Table 4.3: List of excluded missions

As it worked together with the anti-jihadist force G5 Sahel¹⁷⁷, which by now has effectively been disbanded¹⁷⁸, the EU's Regional Advisory and Coordination Cell for the Sahel is a contribution to stabilization but not a mission. Lastly, EUSDI GoG¹⁷⁹ will not be included either. This mission, which aims to train the police forces of Benin, Togo, Ghana, and the Ivory Coast, was established in late 2023. According to the German Federal Cabinet, seconded police officers only took up their work on December 11, 2023¹⁸⁰. The time frame of less than 3 months between mission start and data gathering is the reason for not including the mission as reliable data is simply not yet available.

This mission is another prime example of a key limitation that occurred during the writing of this paper: On the EU's official websites on CSDP in general there was no mention whatsoever of EUSDI GoG at the time of researching. Seemingly only through national governments' information outlets and one academic source¹⁸¹, researchers could get word of this mission. An

¹⁷⁷ Secrétariat exécutif du G5 Sahel 2023

¹⁷⁸ Africanews / AFP 2023

¹⁷⁹ *EU security and defence initiative in support of West African countries of the Gulf of Guinea*

¹⁸⁰ Bundesregierung 2023b

¹⁸¹ Smit 2023: 3

EU factsheet on EUSDI GoG was only released in late January 2024, months after the decision to implement the mission¹⁸². According to this factsheet, six experts are present in the region¹⁸³. Germany's Federal government, however, claimed to deploy up to 15 police officers alone¹⁸⁴. One finding during the research process alone was that the EU and its Member States' public communication is in dire need for clarified information management.

4.2. DSMI Indicator selection

Analysing the effect of 40 selected EU's CSDP missions on their respective host countries' stability requires a comprehensive assessment of (in-)stability. Several research institutions, international organizations and NGOs provide indices covering a variety of indicators that can be used to measure aspects of a state's stability. To provide the broadest possible assessment of stability, while researching for this paper, a meta-index was created. It combines seven different recognized indices, covering hundreds of indicators assessing factors affecting a state's stability, with three instances of raw data on conflict and displacement.

The factors that are considered to be indicative of a state's stability are listed below in *table 4.4* and were chosen because together, they offer a multi-dimensional, quantifiable assessment of stability. An extension of the central "principles and values at the heart of the Union – democracy, respect for basic rights and freedoms"¹⁸⁵, they reflect the definition of stability that lies at the core of this paper. Below the table is a more detailed overview over the indicators, their relation to stability, and their methodology. A critical look follows at how the indicators' sources themselves are researching, coding and finally deciding how each country is valued. The question that will be answered in this section is why the used indicators are relevant for stability, who is behind the data, how the data is measured using which methodology and which sources the researchers use for their information. A general limitation can be that most indices do not yet have 2024 data available. Further, it is indicated, if and when 2023 or 2022 data was used for ongoing missions.

¹⁸² EEAS 2024b

¹⁸³ Ibid.

¹⁸⁴ Bundesregierung 2023b

¹⁸⁵ Teixeira 2012: 2

Factor	Data Source	Behind the Source	Type
Conflict Incidence	ACLED Dataset	ACLED	Raw Dataset
Democracy	Liberal Democracy Index	V-DEM	Index
Freedom	Freedom in the World Index	Freedom House	Index
Coping Capacity/State Fragility	Fragile State Index	Fund For Peace	Index
Rule of Law	World Governance Indicators	World Bank	Index
Corruption	Corruption Perception Index	Transparency.org	Index
IDP	Displacement Data	IDMC	Index and Raw Data
Refugees by country of origin	Refugee and Asylum Data	UNCHR Reports	Raw Data
Governance	World Governance Indicators excluding Rule of Law	World Bank	Index
Human Rights	Human Rights Index	V-DEM	Index

Table 4.4: List of DSMI indicators

Conflict Incidence

The conflict incidence is measured by aggregating raw data on conflict events and conflict deaths and subsequently calculating a percentage. Since stability is very closely related to security and conflict, or rather an absence thereof, conflict data is an integral part of DSMI. Berger (2000: 406) even narrowly defined stability as the absence of a direct military conflict¹⁸⁶. Human security and the reduction of conflict is a necessary prerequisite for peace, development, and stability. Behind the conflict data used here is ACLED - The Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project¹⁸⁷.

ACLED “collects real-time data on the locations, dates, actors, fatalities, and types of all reported political violence and protest events around the world”¹⁸⁸. Thus, it is possible to map conflict events and the related death rates with precise locations, the exact day of the events, and details on the actors involved. Conflict events are grouped into six non-violent and violent event types and 25 sub-event types¹⁸⁹. Examples for event types range from *excessive force against protestors* or *sexual violence* to *Air/Drone Strike* or *Remote explosive/landmine/IED*¹⁹⁰. The data is updated weekly¹⁹¹.

According to its own publications, ACLED’s over 200 international researchers spread all over the world¹⁹² use traditional media, reports of international institutions and NGOs, and local

¹⁸⁶ Berger 2000 : 407

¹⁸⁷ ACLED 2023a

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.: 9

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.: 10

¹⁹¹ Ibid.: 3

¹⁹² ACLED 2024a

partner data, supplemented by targeted information from verified new media – including social media and messenger apps – as sources for their projects¹⁹³. Prioritizing local sources is ACLED’s strategy to reduce the bias in information of international traditional media¹⁹⁴. The ACLED Dashboard¹⁹⁵ was used to gather data which was manually added into the spreadsheet for this study’s calculations. Since data was limited before 2016 for Iraq, Palestine (West Bank + Gaza), and Afghanistan, the conflict data was supplemented by data gathered from UCDP - Uppsala Conflict Data Program¹⁹⁶. For ongoing missions, a 12-month period ending in 27/02/2024, the date of data extraction for Conflict Data, was used.

It has been a matter of concern to select a conflict mapping tool, that specifically tracks sexual and gender-based violence. Since there is no comparable real-time specific mapping of these abuses with a comparably wide coverage, ACLED seemed like an appropriate tool to include this domain of armed conflict. Especially considering that reports of sexual violence conducted by armed forces of host countries even after EU-led trainings are continuously an issue¹⁹⁷, this should not remain unaddressed.

Democracy

Nonetheless, CSDP missions do not only aim to mitigate armed conflict but utilize multi-faceted approaches trying to stabilize regions. A serious part of this paper’s understanding of stability is democracy, especially when considering a long-term solution for stability. The Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem) project has been chosen to measure the change in democracy in host countries. V-Dem’s “Liberal democracy index” is suitable for this endeavour as liberal democracy is the type of democracy that EU Member States strive for – within and outside the EU. Further, the index includes a combination of V-Dem’s “Electoral Democracy Index” as well as the “Liberal Components Index” which takes into account equality before the law, judicial, and legislative constraints on the executive¹⁹⁸.

This ensures a broad assessment of democracy and allows to compare trends in the beginning and conclusion years of CSDP missions. The index is created on a yearly basis using the judgements of a pool of over 3700 country experts from almost all over the world¹⁹⁹. These

¹⁹³ ACLED 2023b

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.: 4

¹⁹⁵ ACLED 2024b

¹⁹⁶ UCDP 2024

¹⁹⁷ Van der Lijn et al. 2022: 8

¹⁹⁸ V-Dem 2024a

¹⁹⁹ V-Dem 2024b

experts code their assessment of respective countries' democracies using an elaborate questionnaire. V-Dem and its algorithm then integrate the results to consolidate the scores. V-Dem's "Variable Graph" graphing tool has been used to extract the data²⁰⁰.

Freedom

Data on Freedom was found in the "Freedom in the World Index" by Freedom House²⁰¹. The organization provides their ratings on all countries and territories since 1973 as downloadable dataset²⁰². Split up into "personal rights" and "civil liberties", it was investigated how free states and territories are and how this changed over time. According to Freedom House, "external analysts assess 210 countries and territories, using a combination of on-the-ground research, consultations with local contacts, and information from news articles, nongovernmental organizations, governments, and a variety of other sources. Expert advisers and regional specialists then vet the analysts' conclusions. The final product represents the consensus of the analysts, advisers, and Freedom House staff."²⁰³

Coping Capacity/State Fragility

The ability or inability of a state to cope with challenges faced by its apparatus or its population describes a state's fragility. A more fragile state tends to be more unstable²⁰⁴, which is why the inclusion of The Fragile States Index (FSI) is crucial to DSMI. FSI, powered by the Fund for Peace, was previously known as Failed-State-Index. It is based on a conflict assessment framework for assessing the vulnerability of states to collapse which is known as CAST²⁰⁵. It includes triangulated data from content analysis, quantitative data, and a qualitative review of thousands of documents²⁰⁶. The index is made up from 12 indicators covering the cohesive, economic, political, and social dimensions²⁰⁷. Its integrated approach makes for a detailed yet weighed analysis of factors contributing to state fragility. The data was retrieved from the FSI's country dashboard²⁰⁸. The primary limitation for this paper is that the FSI does not provide data for the period before 2006, in the case of Palestine 2021, which means that for 12 missions, there is no percentual change of fragility which could be calculated.

²⁰⁰ V-Dem 2024a

²⁰¹ Freedom House 2024a

²⁰² Freedom House 2024b

²⁰³ Freedom House 2024a

²⁰⁴ Cf. Marshall 2008: 17, 21

²⁰⁵ The Fund For Peace 2017

²⁰⁶ Ibid.: 5

²⁰⁷ The Fund For Peace 2024a

²⁰⁸ The Fund For Peace 2024b

Rule of Law and Governance

Beside the fact that the EU conducts own specific missions²⁰⁹ “to strengthen the rule of law in accordance with best practices and internationally accepted principles”²¹⁰ in the host countries, the promotion of Rule of Law is an element of many other CSDP missions, too²¹¹. While the World Justice Project offers a comprehensive Rule of Law Index²¹², its coverage only starts in 2015. This is why in the writing of this paper, the choice was made to use the Rule of Law Indicator out of the Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI), made available by the World Bank²¹³. For the Governance values, the WGI excluding the Rule of Law factor were used. “The WGI are composite governance indicators based on over 30 underlying data sources. These data sources are rescaled and combined to create the six aggregate indicators using a statistical methodology known as an Unobserved Components Model”²¹⁴. The governance factors, excluding Rule of Law, are Voice and Accountability, Absence of Violence/Terrorism, Government effectiveness, Regulatory Quality and Control of Corruption²¹⁵. The issue that the most recent year of available data is 2022 causes that for missions starting in 2023 there is no Rule of Law or Governance value included in the calculation of DSMI. Further, for Kosovo there is no data which excludes one more mission.

Corruption

The negative effect of corruption on political and/or state stability has been observed many times²¹⁶, albeit to different degrees and not neglecting the effect that political instability can have on corruption, more specifically how instability can be an incentive for corruption²¹⁷. To assign corruption a value, the “most widely used global corruption ranking in the world”²¹⁸ was used: The Corruption Perceptions Index – CPI. For CPI, “each country’s score is a combination of at least three data sources drawn from 13 different corruption surveys and assessments. These data sources are collected by a variety of reputable institutions”²¹⁹. The data has been retrieved from the CPI dashboard²²⁰. A central issue with the CPI is that in 2012, the research team has changed their methodology. For years before that, an adapted grading system has been used.

²⁰⁹ Cf. EUJUST Themis, EULEX Kosovo and EUJUST LEX Iraq

²¹⁰ Tardy 2015: 25

²¹¹ De Spiegeleire 2014: 55)

²¹² WJP 2023

²¹³ World Bank 2024a

²¹⁴ World Bank 2024b

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Farzanegan and Witthuhn 2017; Shabbir et al. 2016

²¹⁷ Campante et al. 2009

²¹⁸ Transparency International 2023

²¹⁹ Ibid.

²²⁰ Transparency International 2024

Refugees by country of origin and Internal Displacement

Both Internal Displacement and Refugees by country of origin are indicators this study uses to mirror the stability of states. It has been observed time and time again in different regions and in different points in history²²¹ that displacement is both a consequence of and a contributing factor to instability. For data on internally displaced people (IDPs) and Refugees, different sources have been used.

Refugee data was gathered by manually scanning the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Global Refugee Trends documents from 2003 onwards²²². These documents of roughly 105 pages each on yearly refugee data offer dozens of tables and lists of refugee and IDP numbers and trends by state and territory, thereby giving the best and most precise data on global displacement. To ensure comparability, the used data always refers to “Refugees by country of origin”. The dataset was completed by adding data from the UNHCR Refugee Data Finder accessible through World Bank’s data viewer²²³.

For IDPs, the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre’s Internal validated displacement data²²⁴ has been used. The IDMC provides downloadable datasets as well as dedicated country overviews²²⁵. Since these datasets only go back until 2008, the DSMI dataset has been complemented with raw UNHCR data on IDPs which is also included in the UNHCR documents above.

Human Rights

For CSDP endeavours, the protection of Human Rights is a key element. The Human Rights Index²²⁶ portrays the state of Human Rights in any given country and its development over time. It is curated by V-DEM which assesses the characteristics of human rights mostly through evaluations by experts, who are primarily academics and members of the media and civil society. They are also often nationals or residents of the country they assess, and therefore know its political system well and can evaluate aspects that are difficult to observe. V-Dem’s own team of researchers supplements the expert evaluations. They code some easier-to-observe rules

²²¹ Cohen 2004; Herbert and Idris 2018; Matthews 1972; Macqueen and Baxter 2014

²²² UNCHR 2003; UNCHR 2004; UNCHR 2005; UNHCR 2006; UNCHR 2007

²²³ World Bank 2024c

²²⁴ IDMC 2024a

²²⁵ Example of Mozambique: IDMC 2024b

²²⁶ Example of Mozambique: V-DEM 2023

and laws of the political system, such as whether the legislature has a lower and upper house²²⁷. See above for more details on V-DEM.

4.3. Data selection for visualizations and bivariate analyses

This section specifies details on how data was researched, categorized and what limitations can occur. The bar charts and graphs utilized in the visualizations feature data from the author's dataset.

Region

The 40 analysed missions have been sorted into five regional groups by their geographic proximity. 15 missions and their host countries make up the *Sub-Saharan Africa* group, seven the *MENA* (Middle East and North Africa) group. 10 missions are compiled into the group *Eastern Neighbourhood* (excluding Ukraine due to the distortion caused by Russia's attack on Ukraine) which features Balkan and Eastern European states as well as Georgia. Six missions take place in the *Sahel* and two missions are *Ukrainian*.

Lisbon

The categorization into pre-Lisbon and post-Lisbon was fairly straightforward. Missions that started before the Treaty fall into one category, missions that begun afterwards into the other. Note that the point of distinction is not 2007, when the Lisbon Treaty was signed, but 2009 when it entered into force.

Mission Length

The mission length is indicated in months and has been calculated using the start and end dates or in the case of ongoing missions the same date where conflict data was extracted, which was 27/02/2024.

Budget and Staff Sizes

To find information on the budget and staff sizes, a large number of mission factsheets, official websites, Council decisions with mandates, academic sources and national websites were consulted²²⁸. The budget sizes are indicated in millions, the staff sizes in persons. Finding information on both budget and staff sizes proved challenging at times.

²²⁷ Herre 2022

²²⁸ Glière 2008; Ioannides 2009; Verheyde 2014; Rathje 2007; Mattelaer 2007; EULEX Kosovo Headquarters 2024; BMLV 2013; EUBAM 2014; EEAS 2011; EEAS 2013; EEAS 2014; EEAS 2016; EEAS 2018; EEAS 2020; EEAS 2021a; EEAS 2021b; EEAS 2022; EEAS 2023a; EEAS 2023b; EEAS 2023c; EEAS 2023d; EEAS

A central limitation when researching staff sizes was that, as indicated with an example above, different entities – on the EU, national level or in academia – publish diverging numbers of the staff sizes. The actual staff sizes that have been deployed can furthermore differ from the initially planned or published numbers. The example of EUFOR Concordia shows that while the studies on the EU indicate the staff size at 350, the Austrian government claimed that it was 400²²⁹. For budget size research, it was decided to take a typical or median budget in the case of missions whose mandates were renewed (multiple times) with adjusted budgets for comparability between longer running and shorter missions.

Other Foreign Powers

The attribution problem as discussed above is investigated here. To confirm whether host countries have higher, equal, or lower DSMI scores when other international missions from partners or rivals are around, the number of international missions by International Organizations and sovereign states were accumulated to analyse the total count. This can help shed light on successful cooperations or confusing situations with difficulties concerning cooperation, coordination, and communication. This includes specifically no diplomatic missions or endeavours by private military groups such as the Wagner Group or Africa Corps in Central Africa and the Sahel or the Spear Operations Group in MENA States. Examples include NATO Missions, single-state operations such the Azerbaijani and Armenian undertakings in Nagorno-Karabakh, Russian operations in RCA or UN missions such as MINUSMA in Mali. Missions are counted in full numbers (1, 2, 3, etc.). Uni-, bi- and multilateral undertakings are all counted as one individual mission, regardless of the number of states involved. If a bilateral mission stands alone next to multilateral missions, both are counted. Domestic civil war fractions, organized criminals or transnational terrorists are not included.

Percentage of Christians and Percentage of Muslims

The Pew Research Center (2012) lists the religious compositions of all sovereign states as well as territories such as Palestine²³⁰. This data on religious demographics is used to see if the

2024a; EEAS 2024b; EEAS 2024c; EEAS 2024d; EEAS 2024e; EU Council Secretariat 2005; EU Council Secretariat 2009a; EU Council Secretariat 2009b; EUAM Iraq 2024; Council of the EU 2018; Council of the EU 2004a; Council of the EU 2004b; Council of the EU 2012a; Council of the EU 2012b; Council of the EU 2012c; Council of the EU 2021; Council of the EU 2023; Bundesregierung 2023a; EUROGENDFOR 2024; European Commission 2014; European Commission 2024; EUBAM Libya 2023; Bundeswehr 2024;

²²⁹ BMLV 2013

²³⁰ Pew Research Center 2012

hypothesis that a relation between religious composition and stabilization efforts can be established to approach the cultural hypothesis.

Proportion of Women

Publicly available data on the proportion of women in CSDP missions is limited. SIPRI proved to be the best source of data with one publication assessing women's participation in civilian missions²³¹ and one on military operations²³² as well as one older source from 2018 mapping out trends in various international organisation²³³. While the percentage of women participating in CSDP missions and operations steadily, albeit slowly, rises, there is no mission with more than 40% of the staff being women. Unfortunately, reliable data is only available for 18 of the 40 cases. For the majority of cases, the EU seems to have no interest in sharing the exact gender proportions. The correlations between stabilization and participation are investigated below.

5. Methods, analytical choices, and limitations

This Master's Thesis is based on quantitative methods to answer the research question. This section explains the methodology of the two major steps: First, quantitative data is aggregated and included into the newly created DSMI index. Subsequently 40 selected CSDP missions are ranked following the stabilization of their host-countries to figure out performance trends. In the second step, a series of bivariate analyses is conducted to measure the influence of internal and external influences and other independent variables on the index value. While the first step answers the question if a host country was more, equally, or less stable after the conclusion of its respective CSDP mission, the second step helps in approaching reasons why some missions perform better than others.

5.1. Methodology of the (De-)Stabilization Meta Index DSMI

The *(De-)Stabilization Meta-Index (DSMI)* attributes each mission a specific score in order to rank the percentual change in the host countries' stability throughout the missions. Each mission's score is a combination of the individual scores of ten stability factors. This method helps in realising how the stability of a host country has changed throughout the mission and to answer the question: *Was a specific host country more, equally, or less stable after the conclusion of the respective CSDP mission?*

²³¹ Smit 2023: 22-24

²³² SIPRI 2022: 5

²³³ Smit and Tidblad-Lundholm 2018

DSMI essentially aims to synthesize and aggregate data from multiple indices and raw data to be able to measure how stability changes during the presence of CSDP missions. The underlying theory is built on previous literature on composite indices and meta-analyses. The increasing amount of information in the form of indicators and indices not only “increases the difficulty involved in interpreting complex system[s]”²³⁴, it makes it difficult to operationalize and analyse issues that cover more than one index or indicator. A complex concept, such as stability in this case, is easier to compare with a sole value that encompasses this “plethora of indicators”²³⁵. This value can be achieved by creating a ‘composite index’ or ‘meta-index’.

5.1.1 Weighting and aggregation of DSMI

Composite or synthetic indices are “based on sub-indicators that have no common meaningful unit of measurement and there is no obvious way of weighting these sub-indicators”²³⁶ as a Commission report from the early 2000s states. Other definitions describe that a composite indicator “is formed when individual indicators are compiled into a single index, on the basis of an underlying [...] concept that is being measured”²³⁷. In the case of this study, the underlying concept is stability. To arrive at a comparable measurement of stability between CSDP missions, I have created the De-(Stabilization) Meta Index as a tailormade composite index for this study. Its methodology and analytical choices are explained in this section.

Central to the creation of DSMI were considerations on weighting. According to the OECD’s Handbook on constructing composite indicators²³⁸, weighting has a twofold meaning: On the one hand, weighting refers to the ‘explicit importance’ that every criterion has in a synthetic or composite index relative to other criteria. On the other hand, it displays the ‘implicit importance’ “of the attributes, as this is shown by the ‘trade-of’ between the pairs of criteria in an aggregation process”²³⁹.

The admittedly simple ‘attributes-based weighting system’²⁴⁰ does not distribute any weights to the indicators, which means that “the overall score (index) could simply be the non-weighted arithmetic average of the normalised indicators [or] in the absence of weights, the composite index is equal to the sum of the individual rankings that each unit obtains in each of the sub-

²³⁴ Greco et al. 2019: 62

²³⁵ Saltelli 2007

²³⁶ Saisana and Tarantola 2002: 5

²³⁷ Nardo et al. 2005

²³⁸ OECD 2008: 31-33

²³⁹ Greco et al. 2019: 64

²⁴⁰ Slottje 1991

indicators”²⁴¹. Being the most common scheme in the development of composite indicators²⁴², it is often justified by its “simplicity of construction”²⁴³.

In the case of the development of DSMI a conscious decision in favour of equal weighting was taken to reflect the broad definition of stability. Weighting in favour of conflict measurements would have actively worked against painting a picture of a concept of stability that goes beyond the absence of conflict. Further, in a sense, conflict is reflected in other indicators as well. Refugee or IDP numbers or the states’ coping capacity can be influenced as a consequence of violent conflict. Enhancing these factors could therefore have increased the weight of conflict in the overall score to an unreasonable extent as it is present in these factors already. One could argue, that by choosing equal weighting, DSMI can ensure to both picture the broad variety of factors influencing stability and to give conflict the weight that it deserves being a very central part to stability, inherent in other factors, too. Nonetheless, this reflects some subjective assumptions.

The other focal point in meta-index or composite index creation is aggregation, which can be either linear or geometric, as Greco *et al.* (2019:75) point out: Linear aggregation means summing or averaging the individual values of the indicators without altering their original scale, giving them equal weight in the calculation. Contrarily, Geometric aggregation involves multiplying the individual values of the indicators together and then taking the *n*th root, where *n* is the number of indicators, emphasizing the relative magnitudes of the individual indicators²⁴⁴.

To circumvent this potential limitation, the deliberative choice was made for this study, to create an entirely new scaling system. It is based on percentual changes to create individual scores which will in turn be linearly aggregated for further calculations. Limitations such as missing values, biases or measurement errors could occur but would be corrected for by the number of individual values.

²⁴¹ Greco et al. 2019: 65

²⁴² Bandura 2008; OECD 2008

²⁴³ Greco et al. 2019: 66

²⁴⁴ Greco et al. 2019: 75

5.1.2. Data gathering, classification, and organization

Firstly, the data was gathered, classified, and organized in a database. The data that is used in the calculation of DSMI stems from two crucial points in time. For indicators and raw data about displacement, the values are selected from the year of the beginning of the mission as well as the conclusion of a mission. If a mission is still ongoing, data from the latest date of publication or update of index is used, most of the time this is 2023. If a mission covers a timespan of less than one year and begins in January or February, data from the previous year is selected and if it ends in November or December, data from the following year can be selected. This ensures the visibility of change. For conflict data, a different approach was used. Using raw conflict data, which is updated on a weekly basis, offered the possibility to be as precise as possible. Instead of using data from the year of the missions' start and end dates, the aggregated conflict data from a 12-month period leading up to the beginning and a 12-month period beginning at the conclusion of the mission was selected. For ongoing missions, the last 12 months at the time of data gathering²⁴⁵ were investigated. This way, also the duration of the mission was no obstacle whatsoever.

One limitation to be aware of, is that the quality of mapping of indicators and their values can differ from the beginning of the mission to the end. This can be due to a risen interest in a specific conflict after the beginning of EU engagement or the allocation of more resources to research a conflict. Unfortunately, publishers of indices and raw data are not transparent about it. Currently and luckily, only a very minor error can be expected which surely is controlled by the other variables.

5.1.3. Calculation of percentual change

After the data had been successfully gathered and the dataset created, the percentual changes as basis for the rating system, were calculated. The active decision to use relative/percentual changes was taken to ensure comparability over different indicators and missions. Because both raw data and indices, each with their own logic, were analysed, percentual changes are the most precise way to approach changes in stability. Furthermore, absolute numbers can be misleading. In a host country which has experienced a period of relative stability and low violence, a spike of 500 conflict-related deaths in 12 months can mean an unprecedented escalation, whereas the same number of deaths is not unusual in another conflict. This is definitely not to say, that the tragedy of death is different from one place to the other. But using percentual change allows

²⁴⁵ 27/02/2024

comparability to observe trends towards more or less stability. The determined percentual change is the indicator scale, which will be subsequently rated.

While the basic formula for percentual change remains the same, the formulas were adapted to each indicator in the following ways. Note that, since Microsoft Excel’s “percentage” format was used, the multiplication by 100 is not part of the formula. For most indicators, including *Democracy*, *Fragility*, *Rule of Law*, *Governance*, *Human Rights*, and *Corruption*, the following formula was used:

$$Score_{Democracy} = \frac{(IndexValue_{Conclusion\ or\ Current} - IndexValue_{Beginning})}{IndexValue_{Beginning}}$$

For the indicator *Freedom*, the formula was adapted because Freedom House measures *Personal Rights* and *Civil Liberties* and therefore two index values need to be included for each moment in time:

$$Score_{Freedom} = \frac{((PR_{End} + CL_{End}) - (PR_{Beginning} + CL_{Beginning}))}{(PR_{Beginning} + CL_{Beginning})}$$

PR stands for Personal Rights and CL stands for Civil Liberties.

For the raw data for the indicators *IDPs* (referring to IDP Population) and *Refugees by country of origin*, no index values are measured, but population data. Therefore, this is the formula for these indicators:

$$Score_{IDPs} = \frac{(IDPs_{Conclusion\ or\ Current} - IDPs_{Beginning})}{IDPs_{Beginning}}$$

Finally, the *Conflict* score is a combination of *Deaths* and *Conflict events*. First, for both of these sub-indicators a score is determined. An average of both scores is then calculated to arrive at the final conflict score for each mission:

$$Score_{Conflict} = \frac{(Score_{Deaths} + Score_{Events})}{2}$$

In other words:

$$Score_{Conflict} = \frac{\left(\frac{Deaths_{After} - Deaths_{Before}}{Deaths_{Before}} + \frac{Events_{After} - Events_{Before}}{Events_{Before}}\right)}{2}$$

These calculations are performed for every indicator of DSMI.

5.1.4. DSMI rating and scale

After all percentages were calculated, the change in stability from the beginning to the end of the mission was rated. This follows an own and new rating system which is tailored to the purpose of this study. The reason for introducing an own rating systems lies in the different nature of different indices' way of coding. Some classifications are working with a 1-10 system, some with 1-100, some with 0.01-1.00 and some with -2.5 to +2.5. Additionally, for conflict and displacement data, no indices are used but raw numbers. To have the best possible comparability, the decision was taken to introduce an own rating system.

For every mission, each indicator is attributed with a score of -10 to 10 building on the percentual changes, as *table 5.1* shows. -10 represents the largest possible deterioration, whereas 10 signifies the largest possible improvement. A score of 0 signifies that virtually no change has occurred in a specific factor. The range of 1 unit in the newly developed DSMI system, for example from -4 to -3, is equivalent to a step of 10%. This in turn means that a change of -25.01% to 35% is attributed with the score of -3, whereas a change of -35.01% to 45% is attributed with the score of -4. An equal step size ensures comparability across missions.

DSMI Value/Score	Percentual Change	Meaning
-10	- 95% and below	Significant deterioration
-9	From -85.01 % to - 95 %	
-8	From -75.01 % to - 85 %	
-7	From -65.01 % to - 75 %	
-6	From -55.01 % to - 65 %	
-5	From -45.01 % to - 55 %	Range
-4	From -35.01 % to - 45 %	of
-3	From -25.01 % to - 35 %	Deteriorations
-2	From -15.01 % to - 25 %	
-1	From -5.01 % to - 15 %	
0	From -5% to +5%	No change
1	From +5.01% to + 15 %	
2	From +15.01% to + 25 %	
3	From +25.01% to + 35 %	Range
4	From +35.01% to + 45 %	Of
5	From +45.01% to + 55 %	Improvements
6	From +55.01% to + 65%	
7	From +65.01% to + 75%	
8	From +75.01% to + 85%	
9	From +85.01% to + 95%	
10	95% and above	Significant improvement

Table 5.1: DSMI Scoring methodology table

At this point, it needs to be pointed out that due to the nature of calculations, some indicators have inverted scaling. Because a +50% change in the DSMI systems signifies a positive

development, a numerically positive change in the V-DEM-based democracy indicator would be attributed with a score of 5. A (numerically positive) 50% increase in conflict events however is an inherently negative development. Therefore, inverted scaling is necessary and would be attributed with the same score as a 50% spike in refugee numbers: -5.

EUFOR Chad/RCA, a real example taken from the DSMI calculations, can be used to exemplify this scoring system: In RCA in 2008, the number of Internally Displaced People (IDPs) stood at 162,000. One year later, in 2009, 192,000 IDPs were counted in RCA. This makes for a change of 19% more IDPs by the conclusion of the mission in RCA. In the DSMI system, the attributed score therefore is -2.

The threshold of -95% and below and 95% and above for the -10 and 10 scores is legitimized by the belief that a change of more than 95% in either direction makes for such a big difference that, when looking at (de-)stabilization, it seems reasonable to assume that the influence on the overall calculation is so significant that both 96% and 130% can be classified with the same score. Further, this allows to rule out statistical outliers in raw and absolute data that could potentially affect the calculation in a way that the statement on stability as defined above (covering many more areas than conflict) would be disturbed.

5.1.5. Aggregation of Data and database creation

After each score is calculated for all ten factors of the 40 selected missions, they are entered into one spreadsheet which shall serve as a global database for this endeavour. This table covers all 400 specific scores as well as details on the missions' durations and classifications. The database serves as fundament for all further calculations.

5.1.6. DSMI calculation and ranking

The final DSMI Score indicates whether a host country has experienced a destabilization or stabilization or if the stability has remained more or less equal throughout the period in which a CSDP mission was active. It displays a correlation between the presence of CSDP mission and a change in stability. No statements on causality are made yet, as *section 6.* deals with analyses and results. The underlying formula for the calculation is as follows. In this decisive step, the DSMI Score is calculated by adding all individual scores and dividing them by the number of scores:

$$DSMI\ Score = (Score_{Conflict} + Score_{Democracy} + Score_{Freedom} + Score_{Coping\ Capacity} + Score_{Rule\ of\ Law} + Score_{Corruption} + Score_{Refugees} + Score_{IDP} + Score_{Governance} + Score_{Human\ Rights}) / Number\ Scores$$

This could also be condensed into this formula:

$$DSMI\ Score = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{10} Score_i}{\# Scores}$$

$Score_i$ represents each individual score component (*Conflict, Democracy, Freedom, Coping Capacity, Rule of Law, Corruption, Refugees, IDP, Governance, Human Rights*) and $\# Scores$ represents the total number of score components which is 10 in the case of the DSMI calculation.

This score is not weighted. The calculations are similar for all missions; therefore, comparability can be ensured. In addition to that the average score of all CSDP missions will be calculated. Considering the diversity of mission context, it could at least help to come closer to evaluating the performance of CSDP missions.

Ranking and visualization

Thereafter, the different missions will be ranked to establish a basis to determine the success of the diverse set of missions. The best scores, as close as possible to 10, will be scored by the missions, whose host countries have experienced a stabilization during the mission. In contrast, the worst scores, as close as possible to -10, will be scored by the missions whose host countries were less stable by the end of the mission compared to its beginning.

Having established this basis, it can then be analysed. In the following step, which features the bivariate analyses, conclusions on explanatory factors of stabilization can be drawn. Among many others, it will be investigated, which mission type was observed having the highest correlation with stabilization – e.g. *are states more stable at the end of border assistance missions than police missions?* –, if there are regional differences – e.g. *are missions in the Eastern Neighbourhood contributing more to state stabilization than those in the Sahel?* – or if there is a difference in duration – e.g. *do longer missions correlate positively with stabilization?*

5.1.7. Limitations

This method has some limitations: It is important to note at this point, that the first step maps out correlations and makes no statement on causalities. Further, it only takes into account what

the situation before and after the mission is or was. It does not take into account what exactly happened during the mission. The positive part to this is that it allows comparability over a large number of missions, even if their specific characteristics might differ. On the other hand, it does not take into account that sometimes missions seem very successful in the first months, even if the host country is destabilized by the end of a mission. Another limitation is that this step does not yet distinguish between different types of missions such as military training missions, civilian capacity building missions or rule of law missions. Additionally, it is worth noting, that in the first step, environmental influences cannot be taken into account: Other international or multilateral missions that are occurring at the same time are not part of the calculation just as climate-related events or EU-internal ambivalences in the decision-making process. This paper is written in the hope that with this relatively large sample, overall trends in the performance of CSDP missions can be observed. Thus, environmental influences causing statistical outliers could be balanced out by the fact that every eligible mission is part of the calculation. Lastly, it should be clearly pointed out that some missions have not been taken into account for this analysis. The reasoning behind this decision was explained in 4.1.

5.2. Testing explanatory factors and correlations

After analysing the data that DSMI provides by itself, a correlation analysis will be conducted. Using IBM SPSS Statistics, a second dataset covering all missions and potentially explanatory variables was created. These variables cover a range of data used to examine some of the claims that were synthesized from the academic debate. These variables are potential explanatory inherent/internal or external factors assumed to have an impact on mission performance in stabilizing host countries. This includes six claims for which individual bivariate correlation analyses will be conducted. Their properties are testable, given that the data is on a metrical scale. Further, three of the claims were analysed using visualization and graphing tools because they are on a nominal scale which prevents them for bivariate correlation testability.

5.2.1. Bivariate correlation analysis

The goal of statistical analysis is to study the association between the variable *DSMI score*, which in the model of this study represents stability, and variables that could potentially explain it. This section explains the underlying mechanisms. “There is an association between two variables if one variable tends to display specific values when the other one changes”²⁴⁶. The analysis of the association between two variables is referred to as bivariate analysis²⁴⁷. For this

²⁴⁶ Bertani et al. 2018: 1133

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

analysis, “one variable is defined as the “Outcome variable” and its different values are compared based on the different values displayed by the other variable, which is defined as the “Explanatory variable””.²⁴⁸

In this study, the specific type of analysis is a dependence analysis which can describe “how the outcome variable changes when the independent or explanatory variable changes”²⁴⁹ displaying a unidirectional bond and showing either a logic dependence or independence²⁵⁰. Logic dependence shows a cause-and-effect relationship between two or more variables, whereas independence shows that there is no cause-and-effect relationship between the variables. Searching for causal explanations, the “existence of a bond between two events, so that the occurrence of one specific event is the consequence of the occurrence of another event (or a group of events)”²⁵¹ would make up this relationship. But it is necessary to point out that co-variation and a simple empirical relationship do not necessarily mean causation which “means that the hypothesis that the variation of X is determining a variation of Y is true”²⁵².

For quantitative variables, the “the most relevant technique for bivariate analysis is correlation analysis”²⁵³. The important step in conducting a bivariate correlation analysis is “is measuring the strength of the linear association bond between the variables, by using the correlation analysis”²⁵⁴. A value between -1 and +1 shows “if the values of the two variables tend to increase or decrease simultaneously (positive correlation) or if one increases and the other decreases (negative correlation)”²⁵⁵.

The *six* variables tested using bivariate correlation analyses are the *Budget Size* of respective missions, the *mission lengths*, their *staff size*, the *presence of other foreign powers* and their missions, the *proportion of women* participating in CSDP missions, and the *percentage of Muslims and Christians* of the host countries’ populations.

Before the linear relationship will be examined, the significance value or p-value must be below 0.05 to be considered significant. Only significant correlations will be examined.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ Ibid.

²⁵⁰ Bertani et al. 2018: 1134

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ Bertani et al. 2018: 1135

²⁵⁴ Ibid.

²⁵⁵ Bertani et al. 2018: 1136

The correlation analysis measures the linear relationship between two continuous variables. Used here is Pearson's correlation coefficient r , whose formula is:

$$r = \frac{\sum((X_i - \bar{X})(Y_i - \bar{Y}))}{\sqrt{\sum(X_i - \bar{X})^2 \sum(Y_i - \bar{Y})^2}}$$

X_i and Y_i are individual data points and \bar{X} and \bar{Y} are the respective means of the variables X and Y. By computing the covariance of the two variables divided by the product of their standard deviations, the correlation coefficient ranging from -1 to 1 is calculated. -1 indicates a perfect negative relationship, 0 indicates no linear relationship and 1 indicates an entirely positive relationship.

5.2.2. Visualization of correlations

A visualization using bar charts is conducted for the *three* variables potentially answering if a mission took place *pre-/post-Lisbon Treaty*, if some *mission types* are more successful than others, and if there are some *regions* where missions are more or less successful hinting at the proximity to the EU.

6. Results and Analysis

The analysis was conducted thusly: First, the claims and hypotheses that can be investigated using only DSMI or DSMI combined with nominal data were investigated. Second, the effects on stability as reflected in DSMI, were investigated by conducting bivariate correlation analyses using IBM SPSS Statistics.

6.1. (De-)Stabilizing Europe's Neighbourhood?

The (De-)Stabilization Meta Index analyses how a host country's stability has changed in the time period between the beginning and the conclusion of an EU CSDP mission. For ongoing missions, the current situation is used as preliminary conclusion or to see developments so far. This sub-section explores the findings that DSMI provides by analysing global averages, regional averages, and country specific DSMI scores. Thereby, it aims to answer the claims that were postulated above in 3.1. without necessarily over-interpreting the data at this stage.

CSDP has little to no effect on stability in the host country

Many researchers claimed that CSDP missions have little to no effect on stability in the host country, whereas others saw certain positive or negative effects with some tending towards an overall negative assessment of CSDP so far.

The results of the DSMI calculations suggests that H0 (CSDP has little to no effect on stability in the host country) is correct, when taking the average/mean score of all 40 analysed missions. Considering the scoring methodology as laid out in *table 5.1*, the average host country experienced a minimally negative change in stability of less than -5%. Putting aside the attribution problem and the idea that it is impossible to know or predict how the stability would have changed, had there been no EU intervention or CSDP mission, this finding suggests that CSDP missions and operations on average have little to no effect on host countries’ stability. What this proves with clarity, however, is that host countries’ stabilities’ experience no change after CSDP missions on average. In other words: A state is neither better off nor worse off after a mission is concluded. This is the central finding of this study as *table 6.1* shows.

Average DSMI Score:	-0.29
Sub-Saharan Africa:	-0.278
Eastern Neighbourhood:	1.013
MENA	-1.012
Sahel:	-1.555
Ukraine:	-0.614

Table 6.1: Average DSMI score and regional scores

Nevertheless, this finding needs to be refined in several different ways. The following pages investigate how different mission types perform differently, how missions have different DSMIs in different regions and if missions are better since ESDP turned into CSDP with the Lisbon Treaty. The following *section 6.2*. looks at internal and external factors affecting mission outcomes.

Glancing at *table 6.2*, no direct pattern emerges except for the fact that the top 4 missions all took place in the Eastern Neighbourhood, which is why further refinement concerning regional differences is conducted below. What becomes clear, however, is that there is no mission which has stabilized or destabilized a host country by more than 45%. The most “successful” mission is EUFOR Althea, which has on numerous occasions been praised as one of the prime examples of stabilization missions in the past. This mission, together with other international endeavours, did in fact contribute to sustainable conflict management and stabilization in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Its DSMI Score is 3.5. It is probably no surprise that the mission with the most

negative score is EUPOL COPPS in Palestine with -4.8. The explanation for this is that since its beginning in 2006, the conflict situation has dramatically deteriorated leading to almost immeasurably increased numbers of refugees and IDPs, too. In both indicators, it scored -10, the most negative score possible. Another finding in table 6.2 is that 19 missions score between 1 and -1. This means that around half the host countries' stability score has changed between -5% and +5% percent, signalling virtually no change. 29 missions finish between 2 and -2, indicating that three quarters of missions have correlated with a change of stability in the range of 15% to -15%, signalling marginal positive or negative changes. The lowest scoring missions are, with the exception of South Sudan, all in the Sahel or Palestine.

Mission Abbreviation	Ranking	DSMI Score
EUFOR BiH / Althea	1	3.5
EUBAM Moldova and Ukraine	2	2.6
EUFOR Concordia	3	2.1
EULEX Kosovo	4	2.0
EUNAVFOR Med Irini	5	2.0
EUAM Iraq	6	1.8
EUFOR Tchad/RCA in Chad	7	1.2
AMIS EU Supporting Action	8	1.0
EUMA	9	1.0
EUJUST Themis	10	0.9
EUPOL Kinshasa	11	0.9
EUTM Mozambique	12	0.9
EUMAM RCA	13	0.8
EUFOR RCA	14	0.7
EUMAM Ukraine	15	0.6
EUSSR Guinea-Bissau	16	0.5
EUPM Moldova	17	0.4
EUFOR RD Congo	18	0.4
EUMPM Niger	19	0.1
EUPOL PROXIMA (FYROM)	20	0.1
EUJUST LEX Iraq	21	0.0
EUPAT	22	-0.3
EUTM RCA	23	-0.3
EUFOR Tchad/RCA in RCA	24	-0.6
EUPOL RD Congo	25	-0.7
EUCAP Somalia	26	-0.8
EUPAT Armenia	27	-0.8
EUFOR Artemis	28	-1.1
EUNAVFOR Atalanta	29	-1.1
EUPOL Afghanistan	30	-1.3
EUTM Somalia	31	-1.5
EUBAM Libya	32	-1.7
EUAM Ukraine	33	-1.8
EUTM Mali	34	-2.6
EUCAP Sahel Niger	35	-2.8
MATF Gazelle (part of EUTM)	36	-2.9
EUBAM Rafah	37	-3.0
EUCAP Sahel Mali	38	-3.3
EUAVSEC South Sudan	39	-3.8
EUPOL COPPS	40	-4.8

Table 6.2: DSMI Ranking

Underperformance in Conflict and Migration Scores

Examining *table 6.3*, the average scores of *Conflict*, *IDP Population* and *Refugees* immediately catch the observer’s attention. Reaching -1.95, -3 and -2.26, these seem to be indicators where CSDP missions underperform. Given that Art. 42(1) TEU defines “*conflict prevention and peace-keeping tasks, [...] peace-making and post-conflict stabilisation*” as key elements of CSDP missions and operations, the underperformance in the *Conflict Incidence* indicator is especially striking, just as the humanitarian crises in host countries exemplified by the IDP and Refugee numbers, that increase by up to 35% on average.

Indicator	Avg. scores
Conflict aggr.	-1.95
Democracy	0.13
Freedom	0.39
State Fragility	0.37
Rule of Law	1.21
Corruption	0.63
IDPs	-3.00
Refugees	-2.26
Governance	0.76
Human Rights	0.09

Table 6.3: Average indicator scores

In seven host countries/territories, namely Ukraine, Palestine, South Sudan, Sudan, Mali, Niger, and Somalia, the IDP or Refugee scores were -10. Analysing the numbers on *Human Rights*, the score of 0.09 suggests that the hypothesis that human rights are neglected during training and formation, could be true, given that a majority of the host countries started out with extremely low scores on human rights to begin with and showed virtually no improvement. A positive is that the Rule of Law situation seems to improve across the board, albeit slowly as the score of 1.21 signifies an improvement of less than 20% on average. It can be argued, nonetheless, that CSDP, as conducted at the current stage, fails to address the key elements of conflict prevention, peacekeeping or -making, and stabilisation. A crisis management actor that does not achieve measurable success in stabilizing the states it is active in, must rethink its approach.

Stabilizing the Eastern Neighbourhood, destabilizing MENA States and the Sahel

There are considerable differences between different regions of CSDP deployment, as *figure 6.4* indicates. While missions in Eastern Europe and Georgia score more than 1 on average, signifying a modest improvement in stability as defined above, all other regions are showing a destabilization to some extent. This could prove the hypothesis that missions “closer to home” perform better than missions further away. It could even be used as a proxy to show how CSDP

missions, their operatives’ understandings and teaching methods or combat tactics are better applicable to “culturally similar” host countries. However, it is emphatically pointed out that this is merely a speculation that cannot be proven or disproven with the available data alone.

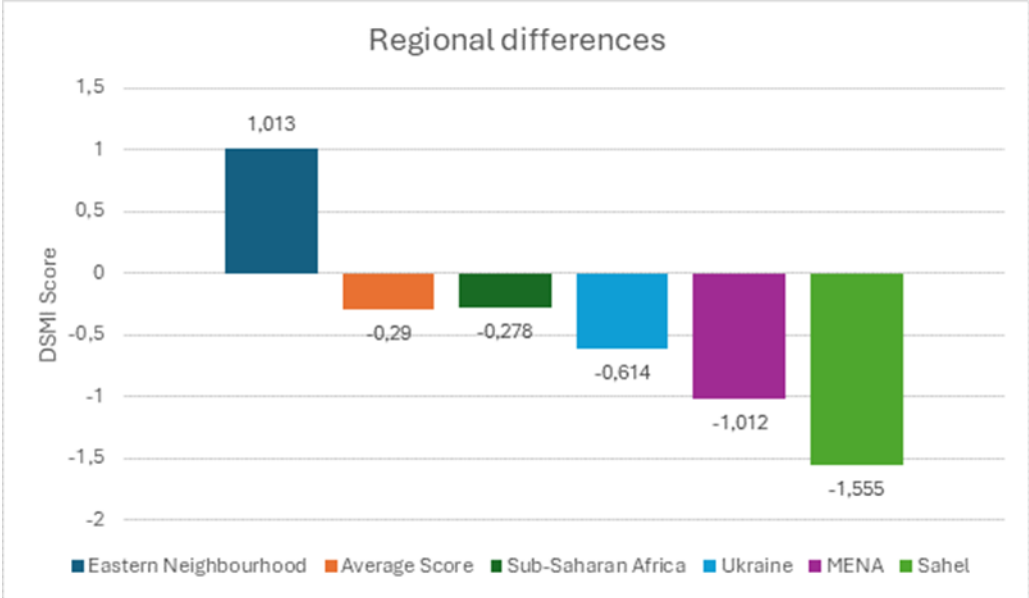


Figure 6.4: Regional differences in average DSMI scores

What the data shows, however, is that missions in MENA states and the Sahel have a notably lower mean score. The seven missions with the lowest scores, all of them below -2,5 and one of them reaching -4.8, are all set in host countries that are either MENA states or located in the Sahel. The critique in the academic debate that labelled the outcomes of CSDP missions in the Sahel as ‘disastrous’ is grounded in numbers. There are only two missions set in these two regions whose host countries experienced a stabilization of more than 5%, a meagre number. Only one of them took place in the Sahel.

On the contrary, there is only one mission in the Eastern Neighbourhood, excluding Ukraine of course, that has a negative DSMI value. The four best performing missions are all set in the Eastern Neighbourhood which supports the claims above.

Serious underperformance in Capacity Building Missions

It has been postulated that some mission types perform better than others. Specifically, the Sahelian EUTM and EUCAP as well as EUAVSEC based in South Sudan missions were subject to a lot of criticism. Figure 6.5 picks up on that, indicating that their mission types *Civilian Capacity Building* and *Military/Training* perform at the lowest average. Particularly when compared to other mission types, the underperformance of *Civilian Capacity Building* seems

spectacular. The critics are confirmed in their claims. This is especially concerning, given that CSDP has in recent years undergone a shift towards more Civilian missions. If these perform with such low scores, either this decision needs to be revised or the mission type must be reorganized entirely. Currently, the destabilization is alarming.

Rule of Law is not only an indicator that performs modestly well across the board, even the missions specifically aimed at improving the rule of law situation in their host countries have the best average DSMI score, albeit a relatively low positive one. Military operations have a slightly positive average score which, nevertheless, remains below 1.

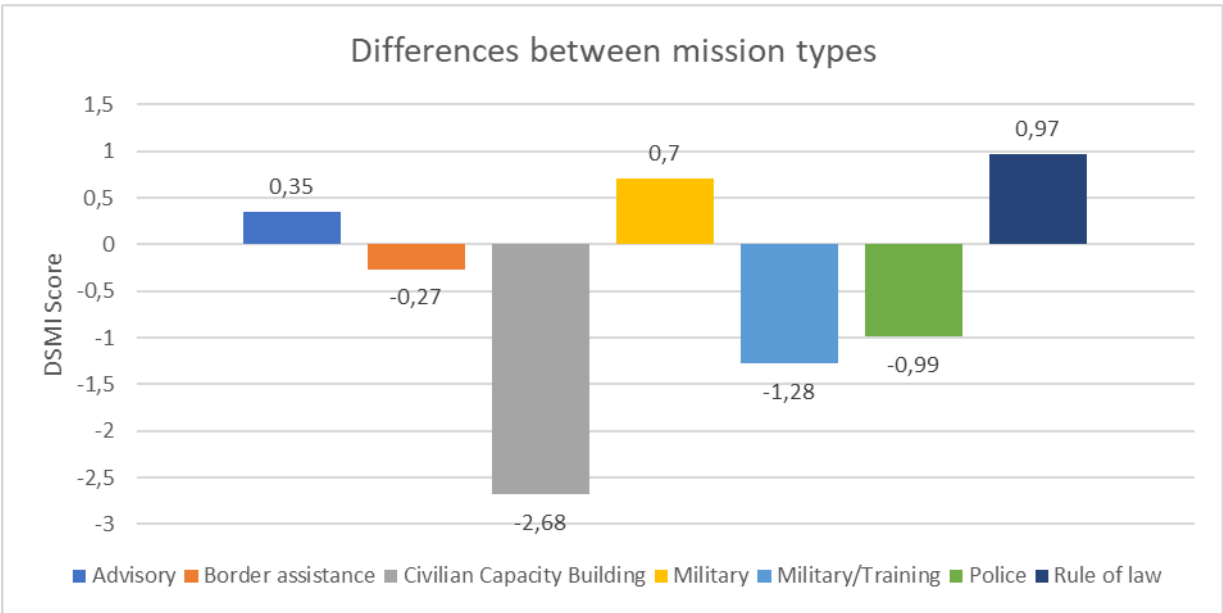


Figure 6.5: Mission types and their average DSMI scores

If it were not for two EUFOR missions, all military operations would have positive scores, some even to a considerable extent such as EUFOR Althea or EUFOR Concordia which seem to have contributed to a real stabilization of their respective host countries. It can further be argued that EUNAVFOR Atalanta effectively succeeded in fulfilling its mandate even though Somalia experienced a slight destabilization during the mission. This is because of Atalanta’s unique task of combatting piracy on the Horn of Africa. Piracy events have decreased significantly from 150 to 200 yearly events between 2008 and 2012 to almost none in the past four years²⁵⁶. Still, the problem of piracy in Sub-Saharan waters is not resolved as an even bloodier spree of attacks and hostage situations by more aggressive pirates in the Gulf of

²⁵⁶ EUNAVFOR 2024

Guinea²⁵⁷ currently occurs. Whereas piracy on the horn Africa was attributed by experts to state collapse, in the Gulf of Guinea it is caused by institutional corruption involving executive elites²⁵⁸, also in the states that will be supported with the new EUSDI GoG mission.

The Lisbon Treaty did not improve CSDP stabilization rates

Next, *figure 6.6* disproves the theory that missions perform better post-Lisbon Treaty as the old ESDP missions have a better average score. Nonetheless, ‘better’ in this case is so close to zero that this might not necessarily equal success. Note that the reason for this does not necessarily need to be that CSDP missions are worse than ESDP missions, it might also be due to significantly instable international security environment and the ever-faster emergence of security threats and conflicts in what some describe as a “multi-crisis”²⁵⁹ environment.

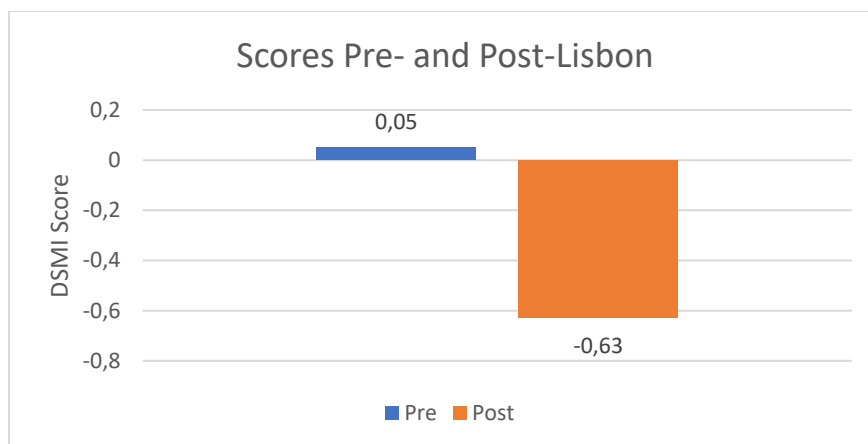


Figure 6.6: Average DSMI scores pre- and post-Lisbon Treaty -0,63 and 0,05

6.2 Internal and external effects affecting CSDP performance

This section features a series of bivariate correlation analyses to investigate internal and external effects and their relationship to DSMI. The tested hypotheses are extracted from claims that researchers previously made on CSDP.

Significance Test

Figure 6.7 shows that the results of the correlation analyses are varying in quality between the different hypotheses. Before discussing the correlation values, it first needs to be pointed out that the significance values / p-values are diverging, too, ranging from significant to very

²⁵⁷ Teixeira and Pinto 2022

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ Juncker 2016

insignificant. The threshold for significance lies at 0.05. *Staff size* (p-value of 0.024) and *Percentage of Christians* (0.033) are indicators where the correlation is in the significant area and definitely qualify for further discussion. For the sake of the argument *Percentage of Muslims* (0.054) will be taken into consideration, too, although its p-value is minimally higher than the threshold. The *Percentage of Women* (0.084) does not clear the bar for significance but due to the surprising results, it will be discussed.

The indicators *Mission Length* (p-value of 0.46), *Budget Size* (0.287) and *Presence of other international missions* (0.766) all exhibit p-values that deem them insignificant. Therefore, their correlation values will not be further examined and the hypotheses that longer missions and more money spent mean better results can be rejected for now. As no clear and significant correlation can be established, these potentially explaining factors will no longer be discussed.

		DSMI	Percentage of Women	Mission Length	Budget Size	Staff Size	Presence of foreign missions	Percentage of Christians	Percentage of Muslims
DSMI	Pearson Correlation	1	-.418	-.120	.183	.365*	.048	.338*	-.308
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.084	.460	.287	.024	.766	.033	.053
	N	40	18	40	36	38	40	40	40

Figure 6.7: Results of bivariate correlation analysis

Staff Size

The highest significance value can be attributed to the size of staff. With a positive correlation of 0,365, it is still far from a perfect linear relationship but there is a reason to assume that a higher staff size correlates with a higher DSMI score. Considering that the most successful mission DSMI-wise (EUFOR Althea) had a staff size of around 7.000 and the least successful one (EUPOL COPPS) only 18 personnel deployed, the extremes are working towards proving this point. A look at the data reveals that while many of the lower scoring missions are in the centre of the staff size spectrum, the majority of the successful ones are in the half of the larger staff. This moderate positive correlation is in line with the argument that a higher staff size can contribute to better results in stabilization and could serve to support this hypothesis.

Religious demographics

The variables for Christian and Muslim percentages of the host populations serve to investigate the claim that due to different cultural or religious customs and habits, diverging beliefs and worldviews and demographic reasons, CSDP missions perform better in majority Christian states than those with a majority Muslim population. This is not to speculate about the reasons but could technically be used as a proxy to demonstrate the lack in country-specific expertise and analytical capacity or even interest in local customs on the part of CSDP officials. Adding

to this might be a lack of interests in the host countries' ruling class and militaries to adapt to Western standards and ideals. Therefore, it could support the call for a better preparation and give indications towards the ad-hoc nature of missions that was previously postulated.

After rounding to the second decimal, both correlations meet the criteria for significance. Majority Christian states have a low positive correlation (0.338) with DSMI and majority Muslim states display a low negative correlation (-0.308). This supports the abovementioned claim and suggests that the religious demographics and culture do indeed have some influence on mission outcomes. One should nonetheless not draw the conclusion that the EU should stop conducting missions in states with different cultural compositions. Rather, the leadership, organizational, and executive staff should prepare better to understand local contexts and partners' objectives to enhance the missions' results.

Women's Participation in CSDP

Studies have proven on multiple occasions that UN peace-making efforts are yielding more sustainable, better results, when women participate in peace negotiations. All the more surprising it is that the relationship between women's participation in missions and DSMI is negative. While the relationship does not meet the standards for significance, the negative relationship gives a reason to wonder about the EU's ambitious to have parity, at least in Civilian missions, and its mission management. The EU is still far from its goal with only one mission actually achieving 40% women's participation and only four missions with at least a quarter of women in the staff. But out of the missions with more than 20% women in the staff, there is only one which does not have a negative DSMI value. Regardless of this finding, it is concerning that there is still such a gender imbalance given that the EU has promised repeatedly to increase the number of women in the staff, like in the Women, Peace, and Security Agenda.

The data is also somewhat disturbed by the fact that availability on the gender proportions is limited. Only roughly half of the cases have published information regarding gender, as the EU seems to have no interest in sharing the exact proportions. Further, the mission with the highest number of women, EUPOL COPPS in the Palestinian Territories, must be regarded as an outlier. The extraordinary destabilization of the Palestinian Territories, especially conflict deaths and refugee or IDP numbers can hardly be attributed to CSDP efforts and much less to the gender proportions. It is not unlikely that in a future where the proportions reach a level of

equity, the effect of a more durable peace when women are involved, will be observable, as outlined by the above-mentioned UN study.

7. Conclusion and Outlook on ways forward for CSDP

The DSMI and its analysis indicate that after the conclusion of a CSDP mission, the average host country has not experienced a significant change in stability. CSDP missions seemingly do not affect host countries' stabilities all too much, as around half the missions DSMI scores has not changed by more than 5% in either direction. Moreover, this study showed that CSDP underperforms in key aspects of CSDP's ambitions such as Conflict prevention, crisis management and displacement. On average, only missions in the Eastern Neighbourhood occurred simultaneously to a stabilization of their host countries. Especially, in the Sahel, the destabilization was evident. This could well be in line with the findings on religious demographics, suggesting that missions that are geographically and culturally "closer to home" in fact perform better than those further away.

One could argue that it is alarming to see, that the civilian capacity building missions are dramatically underperforming, given the trend towards a more civilian CSDP in recent years. DSMI further showed that many assumptions in the academic debate, especially those that are anecdotal, cannot be proven. Missions post-Lisbon performed worse than those before the Treaty. However, a larger staff size seems to contribute to better performance. These findings are relevant to policy makers and academia discussing CSDP and intervention policy because they clearly map out shortcomings of the current conduct of EU crisis management. Additionally, they helped investigate some misconceptions and claims about CSDP, contributing to a broader understanding of stabilization policy. Identifying rooms for improvement is especially necessary considering the lack of evaluation of CSDP missions.

Concerning challenges, at several points during the research for this paper, the lack of good communication among Member States and EU bodies but also to the wider public became evident. The EU needs to address this to enhance its capabilities. A limitation of this paper is that it did not discuss the geopolitical or reputational aspect of CSDP. It can be held that besides the motivation of actually managing crises or enabling partners, the EU pursues the aim of presenting itself as a mighty global player in line with the EUGS of 2016. This study did not investigate the effect that CSDP missions have on other global players and their perceptions of the EU and its capabilities, especially concerning the ambition to deter potential enemies. The findings, nonetheless, do not really evoke the feeling that the EU is in a great position for

deterrence. Problems inherent to the EU's intervention regime such as bad communication, a lack of adequate lesson-learning or evaluation, resource insufficiencies and diverging ambitions and priorities can surely be adapted to its defence capabilities, too.

This paper is an invitation for to investigate whether DSMI and its findings can be used for further research in this field. A refined DSMI model could potentially include an operationalization of claims such as 'A lack of understanding of local contexts and country-specific expertise causes missions to be less successful'. The DSMI methodology can be used to assess other international missions, conducted by single states or international organization like NATO or the UN peacekeepers. This would serve to test the quality of the method and simultaneously provide a basis for cooperation between CSDP and other types of international crisis management. Thus, conclusions can be drawn on how to improve effectiveness and develop synergies. Additionally, the hypothesis that CSDP does not perform less effectively than other organisations' crisis management could be tested. It would further be interesting to control if the type of underlying conflict or threat – war, civil war or terrorism – affects DSMI.

Future research could also build on DSMI findings when looking at the trajectory ahead of CSDP. Facing a polycrisis, the EU stands vis-à-vis a variety of dilemmata. Will future CSDP continue its trend towards more civilian missions? In this case, DSMI analysis suggests an overhaul of existing methods given their underperformance. Or will CSDP move towards a more military type of engagement? In this case, how will it deal with the issue of interoperability of systems and improvable cooperation? The European Sky Shield Initiative²⁶⁰, an initiative to develop a common air defence research and procurement scheme proposed by Chancellor Scholz could be a contribution to homologated defence research. With 21 states already onboard, 2 crucial European powers for security are still against the initiative: France and Italy. This again goes to show that there is a lack of coordination due to national egoisms and industrial-political ambitions. How will the EU face hybrid and cyber threats or terrorist activities? What is the future of transatlantic relations?

DSMI cannot answer these questions, but it provided a comprehensive assessment of the current state of affairs of the Union's crisis management and stabilization policy abroad. And it showed that there is vast room for improvement, potentially even the need for re-orientation and a general overhaul of some pillars of CSDP. Whatever lies ahead, the EU should not forget its

²⁶⁰ Dausend et al. 2024: 4-5

values and norms in the field of security and defense, including principles such as multilateralism, human rights, and the rule of law, when intervening abroad.

The findings of this study could help in defining potential ways forward for CSDP. Looking at the underperformance in civilian capacity building, police and training missions, the findings suggest the need for an overhaul of the way these missions are conducted. Hybrid or multidimensional approaches do make sense, but they need to be conducted in a way that addresses its obstacles more successfully. Properly assessing the needs of those whose capacities are to be enhanced, emphasizing human rights protection, ensuring local ownership and participation, providing monitoring and mentoring and strengthening the local institutions are a non-exhaustive list of elements that could contribute to better civilian missions. Particularly important is to prioritize the long-term sustainability of civilian CSDP and its specific undertakings.

The result of the correlation analysis on staff size could be interpreted in a way that would propose to conduct less missions but with a higher staff size. Additional human power could help in distributing specialized tasks and having a more efficient and hierarchical structure of command yielding more stabilizing results.

Building on the findings on religion and culture, this study recommends fostering a better understanding of local mission contexts on the European actors' parts before the missions' starts. This could be implemented by conducting comprehensive feasibility studies and seeking the exchange with local actors to understand their often times divergent perspectives. Both (or more) sides to a conflict should be heard for the European side to be mindful of the concerns and goals of the involved conflict parties and the affected populations. Further, this serves as a preparatory task to evade eventual surprises in the field. It seems short-sighted to try to impose the goals of the EU or its Member States unquestioningly.

During the mission, EU actors and their partners would be well-advised to improve internal coordination. Creating a supranational entity such as a European army instead of diverse national militaries, officials, and development staff with diverging objectives could provide remedy. This would, nonetheless, require national actors to hand over the power to this entity which at the current point still seems slightly far-fetched.

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