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Filip Ejodus

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“Here is your mission, now own it!” The rhetoric and practice of local ownership in EU interventions

Filip Ejdus 

School of Sociology, Politics and International Studies, University of Bristol, Bristol, UK

ABSTRACT

One of the core principles of EU interventions under the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) has been local ownership. While the EU takes pride in fully respecting this principle, the existing research suggests that the implementation has been far from smooth. However, we still know very little how this principle is conceptualised and operationalised, let alone why its implementation has been so difficult. Drawing on document analysis and 27 in-depth interviews, the article makes 3 arguments. First, ownership is increasingly construed in the EU policy rhetoric as a middle ground between imposition and restraint. Second, in practice, ownership is operationalised as an externally driven, top-down endeavour, resulting in the low degree of local participation. Third, in addition to the obstacles normally faced by other peace-builders, the EU's efforts to implement ownership are constrained by the politics and policy-making of CSDP. The arguments are illustrated in a case study of the European Union Mission on Regional Maritime Capacity Building in the Horn of (EUCAP Nestor).

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Introduction

In June 2016, EU's High Representative Federica Mogherini issued the Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy. In this seminal document, the first in 13 years, the EU took stock of its strategic environment and outlined priorities ahead in the aftermath of Brexit vote. Among other things, the Global Strategy states that the EU will “work through development, diplomacy, and CSDP” on “locally owned” Security Sector Reforms (SSR) in partner countries (EU 2016c, p. 26). This is not the first time that the EU puts premium on the principle of local ownership. In fact, the reference to the local ownership principle has become one of the refrains endlessly repeated across EU external policy statements.

The existing studies, however, show that the implementation of this principle has been far from smooth. Although this body of research is still nascent, most studies have documented serious problems in the implementation of ownership in the context of the

CONTACT Filip Ejdus  filip.ejdus@bristol.ac.uk  School of Sociology, Politics and International Studies, University of Bristol, 11 Priory Rd., Bristol BS8 1TU, UK

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Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) interventions.¹ However, we still know very little on how this principle is being operationalised on the ground and why its implementation has proved to be so difficult. To understand the challenges of establishing local ownership in CSDP interventions, we need to investigate not only how ownership is narrated and conceptualised, but also how it is practised on the ground and why.

This article investigates the EU's record so far on local ownership in CSDP interventions. Based on the analysis of the secondary literature, document analysis, and in-depth interviews with both international and domestic stakeholders in the EU headquarters and in theatres of operation, the article makes three interrelated claims. First, in its policy rhetoric, the EU construes ownership as a middle ground between imposition and restraint, a negotiation between the EU and those on the receiving end of the intervention. Second, in the practice of CSDP interventions, the EU operationalises ownership as an externally driven, top-down endeavour that usually results in a low degree of local participation. Third, apart from the obstacles normally faced by other peace-builders, the efforts of the EU to implement ownership are additionally hampered by the politics and policy-making of CSDP.

Although the article reflects on local ownership in several past and present CSDP interventions, its arguments are illustrated in a case study of the European Union Mission on Regional Maritime Capacity Building in the Horn of Africa (EUCAP Nestor). The mission was chosen as an empirical focus because it shares many characteristics with other EU missions. Out of 36 interventions that the EU has launched so far, 21 of them were civilian, while 15 were military. Moreover, 20 CSDP interventions were in Africa, while the rest was deployed in the Balkans and the Middle East. Of all civilian missions launched so far, only one (EULEX Kosovo) had an executive mandate to temporarily substitute domestic authorities, while all the others had a non-executive mandate, usually to advise, monitor, and mentor local authorities.² Like most of the other CSDP interventions, EUCAP Nestor is also a non-executive, civilian mission in Africa and as such can serve as a good illustration for many common challenges.

Nevertheless, this mission is in many ways a special case in that it was the first mission to have a regional focus and the first one to deal with maritime capacity-building. Therefore, some of the practical challenges faced by this mission have been undoubtedly unique and, therefore, not generalisable. In fact, neither EUCAP Nestor nor any other mission can be treated as fully representative of all CSDP interventions, given a great diversity of challenges in executive and non-executive interventions; those dealing with the rule of law, border security, police reforms, aviation or maritime security capacity-building, or reforms of the entire security sectors; those deployed in the early 2000s and those deployed more recently or those which were deployed for a shorter period as opposed to those that manage to adapt to local situations over many years of engagement. Despite these differences, this article does not use the case of EUCAP Nestor to generalise, but only to illustrate structural obstacles to ownership that are common to most if not all CSDP interventions.

The article draws on three sources of information. First, it builds upon the existing secondary literature on local ownership, peace-building, EU foreign policy, and CSDP. Second, the article analyses not only EU policy documents such as strategies, guidelines, agreements, handbooks, reports, European Commission (EC) communications, European Council conclusions, European Parliament resolutions, and joint staff documents, but also documents issued by states hosting CSDP interventions. Finally, the article draws on 27 in-depth interviews with EU officials and local stakeholders involved in CSDP

interventions and conducted in Brussels, Kosovo, Somalia, and Ethiopia in the period between February and November 2016.³

The article proceeds in the following order: the first section discusses the key scholarly debates on the conceptualisation and implementation of local ownership in international interventions. Drawing on these debates, the second section investigates how the EU conceptualises local ownership in its policy rhetoric and whether CSDP interventions live up to that in practice. In the third section, the challenges of achieving local ownership in CSDP interventions are illustrated in the case study of EUCAP Nestor. The conclusion sums up the key arguments, discusses their wider implications, and provides some ideas for further policy and research developments in this field.

Local ownership in international interventions

Local ownership is a principle of peace- and state-building based on the premise that international interventions can lead to sustainable results only if there is a sufficient degree of local input, participation, and control.⁴ The concept of ownership originated in the field of development during the 1990s (OECD 1995, p. 2). Since the turn of the century, the local ownership principle became a new orthodoxy of international interventionism.⁵ Today, there is almost universal consensus among policy-makers that local ownership is a precondition for a successful international support to peace- and state-building (Dursun-Ozkanca and Crossley-Frolick 2012, p. 251). It became “not something that is merely desirable or politically correct”, but, as one UN document puts it, “an imperative, an absolute essential, if peacebuilding is to take root” (UN 2010, p. 5).

The above-described policy development has been followed by a growing scholarly interest in the study of local ownership. The literature on ownership can be roughly divided into two camps: problem-solving and critical (Lemay-Hébert and Kappler 2016). The former endorses local ownership, with variable levels of enthusiasm, because it contains “a fundamentally important core [...] that is eminently worth retaining” (Donais 2012, p. 140) and because it “remains an important ideal” that all peace- and state-building efforts should aspire to (Bendix and Stanley 2008, p. 102). The critical camp, on the other hand, questions the concept as a “rhetorical cover” (Chandler 2011, p. 87) and “motherhood statement” that is “used to imply varying degrees of local control that are typically not realized” (Chesterman 2007, p. 20).

Over the years, three conceptual approaches to ownership have crystallised (cf. Donais 2009). The first one is *top-down* as it construes local ownership to be a mere buy-in of domestic elites into externally designed interventions. This approach is often associated with the liberal understanding of peace-building as the globalisation of liberal market democracy from the West to the rest (Paris 2002, p. 638). The second approach is *bottom-up* because it construes ownership as an indigenous authorship of reforms that does not require significant or any international intervention (Chopra and Hohe 2004, Pouligny 2006, MacGinty 2008). This approach draws on communitarianism and its assumption that community, not individuals, should be the ultimate source of moral values and legitimacy (Adler 2005, p. 6–7). From such a vantage point, therefore, if peace-building is to be legitimate and therefore sustainable, it needs to be locally driven.

The third approach is a *middle ground* between the previous two, because it calls for a local–international consensus and combines international and local resources (Barnett and

Zürcher 2009, Donais 2012, Hellmüller 2014). Donais (2012), for instance, criticises both top-down and bottom-up approaches to local ownership as “incomplete strategies for building stable sustainable peace” (p. 13) and calls for a consensus building not only between locals and internationals, but also among the locals (p. 37). Similarly, Barnett and Zürcher contend that successful peace-building requires a compromise between internationals and locals (Barnett and Zürcher 2009). Finally, others have also called for a better balance between Western individualism and liberalism, on the one hand, and collectivism and communitarianism prevalent in more traditional societies, on the other (Hansen and Wiharta 2007, p. 22, Hellmüller 2014).

Most empirical investigations have documented problems in the implementation of ownership. The UN, which pioneered the concept of local ownership, as Sarah von Billerbeck puts it, “has failed to realize local ownership in the broad way in which it is presented in discourse” (Billerbeck 2016, p. 4). Such a poor implementation record is only partly due to a research culture in which “autopsying failure”, as Scheye and Peake note, might be “sexier than diagnosing success” (Scheye and Peake 2005, p. 255). Such a strong record of implementation problems stems from the fact that operationalising local ownership in practice is, as Mark Downes and Rory Keane rightly remarked, “one of the most complex challenges” facing international assistance to peace and security (Keane and Downes 2012, p. 2). Even scholars who defend liberal peace-building admit that “insufficient local ownership” is one of its key challenges (Paris 2010, p. 347).

Why has the implementation of the local ownership principle proved to be so difficult in international interventions? Some studies, like most policy-makers, find the roots of the difficulty in host states and societies. For example, it has been argued that ownership is easier to establish in areas where conflicts ended years or even decades ago than in conflict-affected states where the lack of local capacity requires a degree of international imposition (Chesterman 2007, Hansen 2008). This is compounded by the fact that locals themselves often have competing visions on how to move forward (Thiessen 2013), and, in some cases, even prefer international imposition (Krogstad 2014).

Other studies seek the source of implementation problems in the way interventions are conducted. Some point out that challenges of ownership are greater in executive as opposed to non-executive interventions (Ginsberg and Penksa 2012, p. 112).⁶ Some authors contend that interventions in justice reforms have more difficulties in achieving a local ownership than interventions in support of domestic police reforms (Schröder and Kode 2012, p. 38, cf. Oosterveld and Galand 2012, p. 194). It is also argued that local ownership is often hampered by the intervener’s focus on stability (Billerbeck 2015, 2016), high politics (Leonardsson and Rudd 2015, p. 833), and deep-seated everyday practices (Autesserre 2014, p. 98).

Finally, some studies find the causes of weak ownership in a combination of international and domestic forces. For example, it has been argued that there is a tension between the very idea of local ownership and the principles that underpin international peace-building (Jackson 2011, p. 1809). Similarly, hybrid approaches to peace-building show that during an intervention, clear dividing lines between the locals and the internationals are often blurred inevitably, leading to some form of hybrid ownership (Jarstad and Belloni 2012, Kappler and Lemay-Hébert 2015). Drawing on these debates, the next section turns to the analysis of the conceptualisation and implementation of local ownership in CSDP interventions.

Local ownership in CSDP interventions

To date, what has been the EU's record on local ownership in peace-building and crisis management? To begin with, ownership is one of the least studied aspects of CSDP interventions (Ginsberg and Penksa 2012, p. 108, Zarembko 2017, p. 4). While most of the existing studies documented insufficient ownership, we still know very little about how the EU conceptualises ownership in the policy discourse and how it implements it in practice, what are the concrete obstacles and where they stem from. We do not know why the EU, despite being rhetorically attached to the concept of ownership, struggles to achieve it. Are the challenges that the EU faces similar to or different from those encountered by other peace-builders such as the UN? Do they stem solely from difficult situations in host states and societies, or is the problem at least partly created by the EU? To answer these questions, we need to investigate not only how ownership is narrated and conceptualised by the EU, but also how it is operationalised on the ground and to what effect.

EU policy rhetoric on local ownership

The EU started to integrate the language of ownership into its external policy discourses in the late 1990s (EU 1998, p. 10). It was declared as one of the fundamental principles of the partnership between the EU and African Caribbean and Pacific countries concluded in the Cotonou Agreement (EU 2000). Over the years, ownership has become one of the key principles underpinning all external policies, including development (EU 2006c), enlargement (EU 2002, p. 101), neighbourhood (EU 2015a, p. 2), conflict prevention (EU 2001, p. 10), and crisis management (EU 2005, 2006a, 2006b). One EU document has even described local ownership as a principle “inherent in the European approach to international relations” (EU 2008, p. 3).

The principle of ownership travelled to the EU from the wider international development and peace-building community. However, local ownership has achieved a particularly strong resonance in the policy rhetoric of the EU because it chimed well with how the Union portrays its role in the world. According to the latest Global Strategy, the EU self-defines as a responsible global conflict manager that aims to address the root causes of conflicts, “facilitate locally owned agreements and commit long term” (EU 2016c, 18). On the flip side, a case can be made that the EU became particularly attached to the principle of ownership as a way of avoiding appearing in a neo-imperial light (Rayroux and Wilén 2014, p. 26). As one EU diplomat closely involved in CSDP matters put it: “Behind the local ownership principle there is a fear that the EU is going to be seen as a colonialist power. It gives the EU the shape of support rather than imposing.”⁷

How is the principle of ownership construed in the EU policy rhetoric on CSDP? In the early years of CSDP, ownership was construed in a top-down fashion as a mere local buy-in of local governments into the objectives of interventions. It thus boiled down to an invitation of host governments at the beginning of interventions and a “full local ownership” that “should be the aim and a basis for the exit strategy of the mission [...]” (EU 2003, p. 13). In recent years, a different policy rhetoric has started to emerge in the EU along the lines of the middle ground approach which construes ownership as a process of negotiation that requires a combination of international and local resources.

In the field of development, for example, the EU defines ownership as a shared responsibility and accountability for “joint efforts in partnership” (EU 2006c, p. 14). In the EU Neighbourhood Policy, there is an increased recognition “that not all partners aspire to EU rules and standards” (EU 2015a, p. 4). Hence, the EU insists on “mutual ownership”, “ownership by both sides”, and “co-ownership”. Similarly, the EU’s support to Africa is “guided by the fundamental principles of the unity of Africa, the interdependence between Africa and Europe, ownership and joint responsibility [...]” (EU 2007, p. 2).

In the field of CSDP too, the EU policy rhetoric increasingly construes ownership as a middle ground between top-down imposition and bottom-up self-restraint. The EU Council, for instance, defines ownership as “the appropriation by the local authorities of the commonly agreed objectives and principles” (EU 2005, p. 11). Even the latest Global Strategy explicitly endorses the middle ground approach by promising a CSDP, which will “blend top-down and bottom-up efforts fostering the building blocks of sustainable statehood rooted in local agency” (EU 2016c, p. 31). Similarly, the recent EU-wide Strategic Framework on Support to SSR proposes to operationalise ownership through “non-binding instruments entailing political commitments” such as the memoranda of understanding (EU 2016a, p. 9).⁸

The above-described understanding of ownership, as a middle ground between imposition and restraint, is present not only in EU policy statements, but also in how many policy-makers from the EU member states involved in CSDP talk about this issue. In the words of one national representative in the Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management (CivCom),

it is widely agreed within the EU [...] that local ownership has to be something in-between, meaning first a partnership between the international actors on the one hand, and the host state, the local government and the local counterparts on the other.⁹

Another delegate in the Political Security Committee (PSC) conveys a similar understanding:

Ownership needs to be a product of an elaborate dialogue with the country concerned, trying to establish do we have a shared understanding of what the actual problems are, what the solutions might be and how the EU might contribute to that.

The result of this dialogue, in her/his view, should be “a joint understanding of what trajectory we are going to follow and then we start working on that”.¹⁰

A similar view on ownership seems to be widespread among EU bureaucrats involved in planning and conducting CSDP interventions. In the words of one planner from the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability (CPCC): “We can’t accept that locals don’t do anything because they invite us. We have to do things together [...] a local vision should be balanced with an international support.”¹¹ Many in the European External Action Service (EEAS) are equally concerned with a situation in which the locals say yes to whatever the EU proposes. As one security expert puts it: “Saying yes is not enough. If we disagree, it’s good because we then discuss and this can take time. It takes time for them to understand issues that matter to us, like transparency.”¹² This policy rhetoric on ownership has also trickled down to at least some CSDP missions. Local ownership, in the words of a maritime advisor deployed in Somalia, is like “sitting around a table and doing things on the basis of mutual knowledge”.¹³

This discursive transformation, although far from complete and with questionable effect on practices, seems to be the result of CSDP practitioners' professional socialisation with development experts from the EC. In the words of an SSR expert from the EC who worked together with experts from the EEAS on the Joint Communication on SSR:

one should come out of thinking which was predominant until a few years ago, that ownership is only ticking the box of political and policy dialogue. So that we make a nice meeting with a ministry and it's done, we have ownership secured. I think that this is a biggest issue sometimes with CSDP missions that basically they tend to think this way and we are trying with the Joint Communication to ensure that this is not always the case.¹⁴

In sum, since the turn of the century, ownership has become one of the central principles of the EU external policy rhetoric. In recent years, the EU increasingly narrates ownership neither as a local buy-in nor as a local authorship, but rather as a dialogue that should lead to a joint responsibility of internationals and locals for commonly agreed objectives. It is questionable, however, if such a conceptualisation of ownership has been implemented on the ground.

Implementation of local ownership in CSDP interventions

Previous studies have identified deficient ownership in most CSDP interventions, including those deployed in Bosnia (Merlingen 2007, p. 448, Grevi *et al.* 2009, Merlingen 2011, p. 157, Vandemoortele 2012, p. 207, Tolksdorf 2014), Georgia (Ginsberg and Penksa 2012, p. 116, Freire and Simão 2013, p. 467), Guinea Bissau (Grevi *et al.* 2009, p. 374, Telatin 2011, pp. 131–137), Kosovo (Bossong and Benner 2010, Collantes-Celador and Juncos 2011, Kappler and Lemay-Hébert 2015, Qehaja and Prezelj 2017), Afghanistan (Larivé 2012, p. 194), Congo (Grevi *et al.* 2009, p. 226, Rayroux and Wilén 2014), Somalia (Oksamytna 2011, Gross 2013, p. 19), Mali (DCAF 2016), and Palestine (Bouris 2014). One recently adopted EU document on lessons from past interventions has acknowledged that ownership is one of the key weaknesses of the EU support to SSR (EU 2016a, p. 2).

The empirical record shows that EU interventions have mostly focused on local governments and top echelons in state administration. Instead of a genuine ownership over domestic reforms, the EU approach, as Vandemoortele demonstrates in the case of Bosnia, “was to initiate the reform and to define its parameters and then to delegate the implementation process” (Vandemoortele 2012, 207). Furthermore, the EU has often prioritised stability over a genuine and broad-based ownership (Keukeleire *et al.* 2011, 195). Moreover, CSDP police missions have overwhelmingly adopted the top-down approach and their focus on national institutions, while totally overlooking regional and local level of policing (Moore 2014). Finally, despite the rhetorical attachment to national ownership that goes “beyond a government’s acceptance of international actors” (EU 2016b, p. 7), CSDP interventions have routinely struggled to include civil societies even in countries with a relatively developed civil society such as Bosnia and Herzegovina (Ginsberg and Penksa 2012, p. 116). In the Palestinian Territories, while the degree of ownership by the Palestinian Authority has increased over the years (Schröder 2012, 38), wider societal ownership cannot be expected under the conditions of an authoritarian rule and occupation (Turner 2015, Tartir 2015).

In recent years, the EU has put an effort in translating its new policy rhetoric on ownership as negotiation into concrete practices. Thus, for example, some CSDP missions

started the practice of concluding Joint Action Plans (JAPs) and Compact Agreements with host governments.¹⁵ To oversee the implementation of these joint documents, the EU and host states have established joint bodies such as the Joint Rule of Law Coordination Board in Kosovo (Tamminen 2016, p. 130–131). Although the policy rhetoric construes these instruments as key tools for negotiating mutually agreed objectives and activities, scarce empirical investigations reveal that these bodies often fall short of their intended goals. In Kosovo, for example, as Eckhard puts it: “Coordination Board meetings have lost their relevance [...] this indicates a declining commitment to local ownership” (Eckhard 2016, 106).

Why have CSDP interventions struggled to live up to the EU’s rhetoric on ownership? It is true that part of this problem is universal and stems from challenges that are inherent to international peace-building efforts in general. First, if peace-building is defined as a diffusion of liberal norms and institutions, the rhetoric of ownership will only pay a lip service to externally designed, top-down, and elite-centred projects that struggle to achieve legitimacy and sustainability (Jackson 2011, p. 1809). Moreover, peace-building and crisis management by default take place in difficult contexts where locals have little capacity and no agreement on how to move forward, which makes ownership very difficult (Joseph 2007, Hansen 2008). Finally, achieving ownership is challenging due to everyday habits and practices of imposition that are deeply ingrained in the international peace-building culture (Autesserre 2014, p. 30, 98).

In addition to universal obstacles to ownership faced by all (or most) international peace-builders, crisis management interventions of the EU are additionally hampered by the politics and policy-making of CSDP. To begin with, the intergovernmental nature of CSDP and a firm grip that member states have over every intervention are huge obstacles to the implementation of the local ownership principle. Unlike other entities that deploy peace support operations, within the EU the member states need to approve unanimously each step of an intervention. This means that all member states need to agree about all planning documents, from the strategic ones such as Policy Frameworks for Crisis Approach and Crisis Management Concepts (CMC) to the more operational ones such as the Concepts of Operation (CONOPS) and Operational Plans (OPLAN).¹⁶

Furthermore, EU interventions are usually launched without a sufficient local input into the planning phase (DCAF 2016, p. 47). Fact-finding and technical assessment missions are too short and rarely consider the local views beyond the top layer of governmental elites. Based on the limited understanding, and usually under a political pressure from one or a few member states to deploy as quickly as possible, the member state delegates in the PSC negotiate and decide internally how the mission should look like. Then the EU deploys and returns to the locals, in the words of one PSC delegate, with the following request: “here is your mission, now please have some ownership”.¹⁷

From a political point of view, the firm grip by member states over every step of the way might make sense. From an operational point of view, however, it is less reasonable as it results in the lengthy decision-making process and insufficient flexibility. Once an intervention is deployed, the member states, and especially those with a strong interest in interventions at hand, often exert control over operational matters. As one EU official put it bleakly:

centralization of decision-making in Brussels does hamper operational autonomy of missions on the ground and by extension also local ownership. However, this will not change. Member states will not give more autonomy to operations. They want to be in control.¹⁸

Indeed, member states will probably continue to insist on having a direct authority over CSDP interventions as long as they provide resources for them (Spence and Bátorá 2015, p. 328).

This micro-management of interventions through Brussels has proven to be an obstacle for local ownership in many CSDP interventions; for example, slow decision-making in Brussels and no feedback-loop curbed operational autonomy in EUPOL Afghanistan (Dursun-Ozkanca and Vandemoortele 2012, p. 148). This has also hampered the flexibility of EU interventions in the Balkans (Bulut *et al.* 2009, p. 56). EULEX Kosovo is probably the most blatant case in point, as member states have managed to keep under their tight control this largest and politically very sensitive mission. In the words of one mission member, "EULEX is not led by its leadership on the ground but by Brussels which provides the guidance [...] Brussels micromanages everything, especially the portfolio for the North."¹⁹

Member states' direct control over the recruitment process also creates challenges for local ownership. It results in a supply-driven secondment of staff that is not always the most qualified one. In EULEX Kosovo, for example, member states have been reluctant to send enough qualified judges which are in short supply there, while providing way more policemen than locally needed. Those judges and prosecutors who were seconded have often had limited professional experience and little (if any) contextual knowledge.²⁰ In Kosovo and elsewhere, this problem is compounded by a high turnover of staff, who often need to quickly return to their national systems. The problem is further aggravated due to often substandard pre-deployment training, which remains firmly in the hands of member states.²¹ Once they are deployed, member states' secondees are "eyes and ears" that "report back to capitals".²² Very often, the secondees are accountable only to their member states and the mission leadership is powerless if they do not pull their weight on the ground.²³

Finally, EU policy incoherencies have also hampered the implementation of the local ownership principle in CSDP interventions. In Bosnia, for example, the leadership of the European Union Police Mission complained that the executive approach of the European Union Military Operation (EUFOR Althea) undermined their efforts to achieve national ownership (Grevi *et al.* 2009, p. 164). In the background of this was a structural rivalry between the Council and the Commission, which often creates similar obstacles on other theatres of operation as well (Tolksdorf 2014). In addition to this horizontal incoherence, ownership has also been hindered by incoherence among member states. In Kosovo for instance, the inability of member states to reach a common position on the final status of the former Serbian province slowed down the transfer of responsibility to Kosovar institutions (KFOS 2015, p. 19). Five member states that have not recognised the independence of Kosovo insist relentlessly not only on extending the mission mandate, but also on keeping the executive elements in.²⁴

In sum, despite its rhetorical endorsement of the local ownership principle, the EU has been struggling to achieve more local participation in its CSDP interventions. In addition to obstacles to ownership faced by other intervenors such as peace-builders' culture and

challenging situations in host states, ownership in EU interventions has been further hampered by the politics and policy-making of CSDP. The next section illustrates some of the practical challenges to ownership in the case study of EUCAP Nestor.

Local ownership in EUCAP Nestor

The previous sections have shown that although the EU narrates ownership as a middle ground between imposition and restraint, in the practice of CSDP interventions, ownership has been operationalised as an externally driven and a top-down endeavour. Moreover, so far it has been demonstrated that the reasons why the rhetoric/practice gap is particularly deep in the case of the EU interventions are to be sought in the politics and policy-making of CSDP. The goal of this section is to illustrate these arguments in a detailed case study of EUCAP Nestor.

The case study presented below shows that EUCAP Nestor struggled to achieve ownership because it implemented ownership as an externally driven, top-down endeavour. Instead of negotiating with the locals on “the commonly agreed objectives and principles”, the EU designed the mission according to its own needs, interests, and resources and then tried to sell it to its local counterparts. As a result, the overall degree of local ownership has been low, while the impact on the local and regional capacity to fight piracy has been either negligible or unsustainable. Before getting into the heart of the matter on ownership in the mission, a short background is in order.

The collapse of the Somali state in the early 1990s and the civil war that ensued raised the spectre of piracy in the Horn of Africa. The incidence of pirate attacks against merchant ships passing through the Gulf of Aden sharply increased after the intensification of the armed conflict in Somalia in 2006. While in 2000, there were only 22 Somali attacks in the Arabian Sea, the number rose to 108 in 2008, with annual costs estimated to 7–12 billion US dollars (Percy and Shortland 2013, p. 2). As a reaction to this unprecedented rise in pirate attacks and following a request for help by the Somali Transitional Federal Government, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1816 in June 2008. The resolution authorised third states to enter the territorial waters of Somalia and use all necessary means to repress acts of piracy (UN 2008). As one EU official from the CPCC put it, “the EU was under pressure by industries to do something. The piracy was very costly for the EU and its member states [...] so this was the starting point”.²⁵ Consequently, the EU launched its first naval counter-piracy operation off the coast of Somalia (EUNAFOR Atalanta) in December 2008.

Soon thereafter, however, it became clear that the naval mission alone could not tackle the root causes of piracy, which were not on the sea but ashore. In the words of another CivCom delegate, “There was no point to simply catch the guys in the sea and then what? EUCAP Nestor was launched in order to solve the problem from A to Z.”²⁶ Drawing on the EU Strategic Framework for the Horn of Africa (EU 2011), which called for a regional approach, the EU launched EUCAP Nestor in July 2012 (EU 2012). The mission was the first of its kind both in terms of its regional approach and its maritime security focus. It had an initial mandate of two years to “assist the development in the Horn of Africa and the Western Indian Ocean States of a self-sustainable capacity for continued enhancement of their maritime security including counter-piracy, and maritime governance”

(EU 2012, p. 40). The HQ was set up in Djibouti, and soon the mission also opened offices in the Seychelles, Kenya, and Somaliland.

Since the outset, the EU insisted on the respect of the local ownership principle in EUCAP Nestor, rhetorically at least. In its Strategic Framework for the Horn of Africa, the EU announced how “its response will be underpinned by the principles of regional ownership and mutual responsibility” (EU 2011, p. 13). Drawing on that, the Joint Staff Working Document on Somalia from 2013 declares “Somali ownership and responsibility” as one of three core parameters for EU action (EU 2013, p. 1). This is also how EU decision-makers talk about their approach to Somalia. In the words of one mission representative: “We try as much as possible to have the Somali opinion before having any interaction. It is based on what they say they need and based on their opinion. We are not going to impose anything.”²⁷ A similar assessment is often shared in Brussels. For example, one advisor from the CPCC argues that “local ownership has always been respected by EUCAP Nestor”.²⁸

Despite these declarative efforts, the low degree of local ownership has been the soft spot of the mission from the beginning. For example, according to a report by the UK House of Commons, “EUCAP Nestor failed to make any discernible impact, and suffered particularly from a lack of partner ‘buy-in’” (House of Commons 2014, p. 89). The only place where there was a genuine will to engage was the Seychelles, while the mission achieved some local traction in Djibouti.²⁹ In Tanzania and Kenya, there was a lack of interest, as those two countries did not see piracy as their problem and had unrealistic expectations from the mission.³⁰ The EU never deployed to Yemen because of the outbreak of war.

Most importantly, during the first two years, due to security considerations, the mission did not have any presence in Somalia, where the root causes of piracy lied.³¹ Somali authorities formally did invite the EU to deploy EUCAP Nestor, but they did not (and still do not) see piracy as their most pressing maritime concern. In the view of many Somalis, piracy is a legitimate reaction to illegal fishing (Kerins 2016). They are also concerned about arms smuggling, human trafficking, and illegal waste dumping, but have little interest in piracy, which they see as a problem of the international community.³² Given all these, it is little surprising that in the first two years “the mission has not had a significant impact on the ability of Somali authorities to improve policing and rule of law” (EU 2014, p. 13).

While the EU decision-makers often deplore the low degree of local ownership, they tend to attribute it to the specificities of the local context. Thus, for example, the absence of the local buy-in, as one EU official put it, was “not due to Nestor but due to local authorities”.³³ One maritime advisor deployed in Somalia shares a similar sentiment: “Sometimes it’s not fair to expect from the locals to assume a certain degree of ownership, because they miss the capacity to do it, or they don’t have the necessary knowledge.”³⁴ In short, as the story goes, the EU did everything in its power to ensure ownership; it was the locals who failed to assume responsibility.

A closer look reveals a more complex picture. No matter how poor the local capacities were, a much more fundamental obstacle to ownership has been the fact that the EU designed the mission based on its own interests and resources without properly taking into consideration local realities. The EU launched the mission, in the words of one EU diplomat:

[...] because of our interests, particularly the peace and security interests. Not because it makes us feel good or because it saves lives or because of EUCAP Nestor. We are doing it because it became too expensive to send ships through the Somali Basin and the Gulf of Aden and that's it.³⁵

The fact-finding mission, conducted by the Crisis Management Planning Directorate in September 2011 under a strong political pressure to deploy as quickly as possible, was short and incomplete. This is how one advisor in the CPCC describes this problem: "Even if you have the best experts who want to do that well, you need time to understand many things [...] to find all these things in one week is difficult if you are under a political pressure to launch a mission."³⁶ Another challenge is that the local interlocutors, who are supposed to articulate local needs and commitments, were not and could not be informed about the EU's intent to launch a civilian CSDP mission. "So, it's really a catch 22", in the words of one EU delegation representative, "because they weren't sure that this was something that will eventually be delivered".³⁷

Based on "the facts" thus established, the EU Council had approved the CMC in December 2011 and the PSC tasked the CPCC to develop the first CONOPS. To that end, in February 2012 the CPCC dispatched a month-long technical assessment mission with the aim of assessing technical needs and anchoring the mission politically in the host states (Tejpar and Zetterlund 2013, p. 13–14). However, this mission was not done properly either³⁸ and failed to objectively assess needs and expectations even in the countries where the EU had a permanent presence, let alone in Somalia.³⁹ As one EU diplomat summarised, "Nestor was spectacularly ill-conceived. It was everything that I sketched that was wrong with the planning process in a regular mission but then squared."⁴⁰

As a result, EUCAP Nestor was deployed in a region half the size of the EU and mired in conflict, poverty, and fragility. Five countries where the EU eventually decided to deploy did not match any of the existing regional frameworks and showed no clear commitment that they wanted what Nestor had to offer. The initial mandate was far too ambitious not only for the financial resources pledged, but also judging by the human resources that the EU was just ready to deploy. At the beginning, EUCAP Nestor had a projected size of only 137 international staff and 39 local staff and an initial annual budget of just 22.8 million Euros per year (Tejpar and Zetterlund 2013, p. 27). Even this limited capacity was never fully reached, as member states continuously understaffed the mission with seconded personnel. They particularly fell short of seconding enough maritime advisors who were of critical importance for the overall success of the mission. In the words of one PSC delegate, "You don't reform, restructure and rebuild everything from scratch with just a couple of guys."⁴¹

An important impediment to ownership has also been the tendency to micro-manage the mission from Brussels. To begin with, very often the mission could not deliver in time because of a lack of flexibility in the rigid procurement procedures of the EU.⁴² Some projects are stuck in Brussels for over a year and during this time, very often the locals find a different donor or lose interest.⁴³ This lowered the local trust and overwhelmed the mission with the red tape. In the words of one mission member: "EUCAP Nestor is micro-managed from the member states 100%. They are into everything. Brussels asks for a huge amount of paperwork. I spend 95% of the time justifying being here and only 5% on actual operations."⁴⁴ Member states, on the other hand, which are supposed to provide the political control and strategic directions of the mission, do not always have a proper

understanding of local dynamics. Their unrealistic ambitions are then delegated through the PSC and the CivCom to the CPCC, who plans and conducts the mission. Deploring the lack of flexibility in decision-making, one mission member remarks with resignation that: “We are here lower in the food chain and we are only doing what we are asked for.”⁴⁵

Efforts to achieve ownership have also been impeded by short-termism of CSDP interventions. To begin with, mandates are renewed every two years and budgets are approved yearly, and the member states expect quick results. Developing tangible maritime security capacities from scratch, especially in a failed state with an active armed conflict such as Somalia, probably requires decades. Constrained with a short mandate, on the one hand, and an expectation to deliver, on the other, the mission is pushed to opt for a low-hanging fruit instead of laying the foundation for a long-term impact.⁴⁶

The problem is compounded by a high staff turnover rate in the mission. On average, the seconded staff, including the advisors, stays in the mission for a year and a half, which is too short. As soon as they settle down, familiarise with the context, and their projects get off the ground, it is time for them to leave.⁴⁷ What is worse, there is often a long gap before the new person fills up the vacant position and then there is no proper handover of duties.⁴⁸ This negatively affects the local trust and interest to participate. In the words of one representative of the Somaliland’s Attorney General Office who works closely with EUCAP Nestor: “By the time they get the local context, they have to leave the mission. When the new person comes, it takes again a lot of time to understand. That’s a big challenge because there is no continuity.”⁴⁹

During the first two years, apart from settling down, most mission activities consisted of training. This was conducted without proper mapping, legal framework, follow-up, and monitoring.⁵⁰ In such an environment, it was impossible to make a proper impact assessment and expect sustainability. Moreover, the training and the knowledge transfer were not accompanied by an equivalent hard capacity-building. As one EUCAP Nestor official put it: “When you train somebody they pass it on to others in their organisations. If there are no buildings, no operation centres, no schools, there is nothing to maintain this knowledge.”⁵¹ Training people without providing them resources was described by one official from the Somaliland’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) as “useless” because “after the training, people return to empty offices and to projects that have to be implemented in which the resources are not there.”⁵² While the locals sometimes express satisfaction with the training, many point out their repetitiveness, redundancy, and disconnect from the local context. One local expert who was involved in numerous EU trainings said that “Somalis are fed up with being invited to numerous workshops and training where they are fed up with Samosas and cakes.”⁵³

If there was one place in Somalia where a degree of local buy-in was reportedly achieved, it was Somaliland. According to the Strategic Review from March 2015, the field office in Hargeisa opened in March 2014 “have started to pick up pace”. The key to that was allegedly a JAP negotiated with the local authorities. This was seen “as a model for the Missions future support to other Somali services involved in coastal and maritime law enforcement” (EU 2015c, p. 12). One of the key aims of the JAP was the achievement of the “Limited Initial Operational Capability” by the end of 2016 (EU 2014, p. 1). The JAP, agreed between the Republic of Somaliland and EUCAP Nestor, states that it followed a “bottom-up” approach and was “aligned with Somaliland’s Vision” and “National Development plans across multiple – maritime related – sectors” (EU 2014).

As a matter of fact, the EU was firmly in control of the entire process. One representative of the Somaliland MFA summarised the relationship in the following words: “In the process of drafting the JAP, EUCAP Nestor was in the driving seat. It was based on how they wanted to assist us. It was basically a plan of their activities.”⁵⁴ An EUCAP Nestor representative closely involved in the process confirmed this. He recalls that when the locals were presented:

the draft and the methodology behind the document, they were more than happy with that. They were themselves not able to make additions, not only because of limitations in their command of English language but also due to their inability to master the intricacies of maritime security.⁵⁵

It is thus little wonder why there was little local ownership over the JAP. As one advisor in the Somaliland Coast Guard (SLCG) put it, “the plan was made for a big country like Holland. Here people don’t speak English, especially not the maritime English, so they didn’t understand it”.⁵⁶ The mission tried to build the local capacity by training and mentoring a group of younger officers who spoke English and who, once ready, could take the responsibility.⁵⁷ In addition to training, they were given laptops and radios, with a view, as one former EUCAP Nestor staff member put it, “to buy their loyalty and shape their ideas and mentality”.⁵⁸

This, unfortunately, did not go down well with the local authorities, especially with the old guard who feared that the empowerment of the younger officers had the potential to sideline them and even leave them jobless.⁵⁹ In early 2016, the Ministry of Interior criticised the Head of Field Office, for “imposing” agendas and views on the Coast Guard, “underestimating” the local knowledge, and “lecturing [...] rather than being a partner who is here to help the SLCG attain a certain degree of development”.⁶⁰ As a result, the Head of Office who was the driver behind the JAP had to leave the Field Office, and the project of achieving the Limited Initial Operational Capability came to a halt.⁶¹

Following the Strategic Review, the mission started to address some of the above-mentioned problems. To begin with, the mission phased out of activities in Djibouti, Seychelles, Tanzania, and Kenya and focused solely on Somalia where the problem of piracy originated.⁶² Moreover, the mission stopped the training and adopted a three-phased approach, which consists of the establishment of the legal and policy framework, supporting entities in charge of law enforcement in coastal areas, and evaluating and monitoring the trainees (EU 2015c). In December 2016, the Council of the European Union extended the mandate of the mission until December 2018 and decided to rename it into EUCAP Somalia with the aim “to assist Somalia in strengthening its maritime security capacity in order to enable it to enforce maritime law more effectively” (EU 2016d, p. 18).

For the first time since the start of the mission, the Federal Government of Somalia was finally consulted about their needs in the process of creating the new OPLAN for EUCAP Somalia.⁶³ As a result, the new OPLAN does not treat piracy as a crime in isolation and reflects better the local concerns. Instead of solely focusing on the fight against piracy, the new OPLAN aims to support the governance of maritime civilian law enforcement authorities, institutional development of maritime civilian law enforcement structure, and development of operational capabilities.⁶⁴ It, therefore, took five years for the EU to basically accomplish the task that was supposed to be done by the fact-finding and

technical assessment missions: understand the local context and start talking to Somalis about the maritime issues that are relevant to them.⁶⁵

Whether this will translate into more ownership in the future remains to be seen. Most EU decision-makers in Brussels and in Somalia claim that due to these changes, the degree of local buy-in in EUCAP Nestor has increased. However, this has yet to translate into concrete results. As one EUCAP representative put it: “we report that we had meetings with this or that minister and discussed laws, but this is irrelevant. The question is whether this meeting is changing something on the ground”. The problem, according to him, is that the locals do not need strategic advice but equipment. “Give them one radio”, he suggests “and they will be your friends forever. But we can’t do that because our mandate is limited”.⁶⁶

The best illustration of the persistent lack of the local buy-in is the continued reluctance of local authorities to adopt the Coast Guard bills, whose drafting was supported by EUCAP Nestor a long time ago. In Somaliland, the problem seems to be not only a lack of genuine interest, but also concerns of local powerbrokers that the law would create a force with police powers operationally autonomous from the Ministry of Interior.⁶⁷ In Mogadishu, some people in the government dislike the bill as it foresees a civilian Coast Guard, which is in line with the European best practice. Instead, they would prefer to build the future Coast Guard of Somalia as part of the Ministry of Defence and a nucleus of their future Navy.⁶⁸

Although the mission has recently recalibrated its focus in line with the local context, many structural obstacles to ownership remain. Micro-management from Brussels and the intergovernmental grip over the mission are both here to stay. Member states continue to be reluctant to devote the necessary resources and to second high-quality staff to EUCAP Nestor. In February 2017, for example, the mission still employed around 60 international staff, including 9 advisors, only 3 of whom are maritime advisors.⁶⁹ Also, due to strict rules and limited yearly budget, EUCAP Nestor can only provide a fraction of desperately needed equipment to the local partners.⁷⁰ As the mission refocus away from piracy, there is a danger that the EU will become even less interested in the local impact of the mission. One EUCAP official described the lack of readiness among the member states to fill up the posts: “They use us simply to keep the flag in the sand. They are absolutely not interested in the local impact, only in the EU’s image in the world. This is just a show. If you want to make a real and tangible change you need to invest much more time and resources.”⁷¹

Finally, the new mandate is better suited for Somalia, but it nevertheless has created some new problems as well. On numerous occasions, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Somaliland warned the EU that the mission would not be able to operate in the country under the new name.⁷² Somaliland declared independence in 1991, and although no country has recognised this, Hargeisa treats this issue as non-negotiable. The government in Hargeisa rejected to sign an agreement with the EU that includes the name Somalia. As one of Somaliland’s ministers pointed out to the EU: “to do so would compromise our sovereignty”.⁷³ While one of the proposed solutions to this problem has been the deletion of the suffix Somalia from the mission’s name, no agreement has been reached at the time of writing this article.

In sum, the case study has shown that despite the rhetorical shift within the EU towards a conceptualisation of ownership that strikes a middle ground between imposition and

self-restraint, the practice of CSDP interventions is still stuck in the top-down and externally driven operationalisation of ownership. Instead of working towards a genuine local/international consensus on the goals and means of CSDP interventions, the EU still designs its crises management interventions based on its own needs and interests and then tries to sell the interventions to the locals. It is little surprising that the result is usually a low degree of genuine enthusiasm and will on the side of the locals to actively take part in the reforms that are not of their own making.

Conclusion

In many respects, the EU has been the vanguard of peace-building. Its unique combination of diplomatic clout, economic strength, military prowess, and commitment to peace has put the EU at the forefront of international efforts to support peace in fragile states. One of the key principles of EU foreign policy and of its CSDP interventions has been local ownership. While the growing body of knowledge on local ownership have not dealt systematically with CSDP interventions, the sizeable literature on CSDP has only in the passing noticed the recurrent challenges of ownership. To fill these gaps, this article investigated how the principle of ownership has been conceptualised in EU discourse, to what extent it has been implemented in CSDP interventions, and the reasons behind the rhetoric practice gap.

Drawing on the document analysis and in-depth interviews with EU policy-makers and local stakeholders involved in CSDP interventions, the article made three arguments. First, the EU policy discourse conceptualises the local ownership principle as a middle ground between imposition and restraint that requires a combination of international and local resources. Second, the article showed that the practice of ownership across the CSDP interventions has not matched the EU's policy rhetoric. Third, the article has demonstrated that in addition to the challenges to ownership that other intervenors also face, the EU particularly struggles to achieve more local participation due to the politics and policy-making of CSDP.

These are all valuable insights for our understanding of the EU as a global crisis manager and an important contribution to bottom-up perspectives in the literature on CSDP. They show that despite the strong rhetorical commitment to ownership, the EU continues the old-style top-down posture that tilts between an impulse to export cookie-cutter liberal solutions and an egoistic self-interested action. Moreover, these insights expose that important challenges for the operationalisation of ownership in EU interventions stem from the fact that they are stuck in between structural constraints of CSDP, on the one hand, and requirements of the local context, on the other. As a result, time and again, CSDP interventions have punched below their weight.

If the EU plans to walk the walk of local ownership in CSDP interventions, it must start taking its own principles seriously. Some structural constraints such as the intergovernmental nature of CSDP are probably here to stay for a long time to come. The EU, however, could better acknowledge tensions that exist between different principles of EU external action. For example, the EU cannot hope to both insist on high standards of democratic security sector governance and secure full local ownership at the same time. This is so because the locals usually have priorities other than principles so dear to the EU such as transparency, democratic governance, or gender balance. Instead of focusing

solely on local governments, the EU should engage more with local communities and informal governance structures.

Finally, the EU has so far been concentrating its efforts to achieve ownership in advanced stages of an intervention, as part of the exit strategy. In the future, the EU should include local ownership into its “entry strategy”. Conducting more thorough and more inclusive fact-finding and technical assessment missions would be an important element of that. Also, CSDP interventions should become more demand-driven in terms of the capabilities deployed. The EU and its member states should address the problem of high turnover rates by making necessary legal changes and allowing longer secondment of its experts. Finally, the EU and its member states should stop micromanaging interventions if they expect to achieve a more flexible, context-sensitive, and locally owned crisis management.

In Somalia, if the EU wants to make a discernible impact on domestic maritime security capacities, it should take the local needs more seriously. The mission should put a stronger focus on building local capacities to deal with maritime crimes other than piracy, such as illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing; illegal maritime dumping of waste; and trafficking of arms and humans. EU member states should also work to second advisors to meet the projected capacities, requirements, and responsibilities of the mission. Doing otherwise risks damaging credibility in the region. Furthermore, EUCAP Somalia should strike a better balance between the soft capacity-building that it currently focuses on and the provision of hardware that the local authorities lack. Lastly, the EU should consider the rebranding of the mission to better reflect local sensitivities around the future status of Somalia, Puntland, and Somaliland.

These insights raise at least two potential avenues for further research and both lead away from the traditional preoccupation with EU institutions. The first one is directed towards a better understanding of the role of member states in CSDP interventions. Why do the EU member states tend to micro-manage interventions more than the other peace-building actors such as the UN and what can be done about it? Also, potentially rewarding would be to conduct a comparative legal and policy analysis of various impediments to longer secondments across different EU member states and ways to overcome them. Moreover, it would be interesting to investigate to what extent the EU’s self-identity narrative of being a normative power hampers its post-colonial impulse to avoid appearing in a neo-imperial light by fostering local ownership. Finally, it would be rewarding to probe into the very political rationality behind the local ownership principle not only in CSDP interventions, but also in international peace-building more broadly.

Another potential avenue of further research lies in better understanding the local aspect of CSDP interventions. This could, for example, entail not only analyses of formal institutions of the local security sectors (which are usually abundant), but also studies of informal actors and traditional institutions. We also know very little what different local stakeholders make of the local ownership principle, if they are aware of it at all. Most of the extant empirical research focuses on the EU side of the equation, while very little work has been done to unearth local discourses and practices. From this, we could glean how the locals render, co-opt, adapt, or resist the local ownership principle within different types of interventions or in different regions of the world. This bottom-up approach to CSDP would be not only intellectually rewarding in charting a rather unexplored ground, but also very

useful for EU policy-makers in helping them to better contextualise crisis management interventions, thus making them more legitimate and sustainable.

Notes

1. This article uses the term interventions to denote all CSDP missions and operations. In the EU terminology, civilian CSDP interventions are always called 'missions', regardless of whether they have an executive or a non-executive mandate. Military interventions can either have an executive mandate, in which case they are called 'operations', or a non-executive mandate, in which case they are called 'missions'.
2. More information about CSDP missions and operations can be found here: https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/military-and-civilian-missions-and-operations/430/military-and-civilian-missions-and-operations_en
3. These interviews are part of a larger pool of 116 interviews that I conducted for the same project and which all indirectly shaped the arguments presented in this article. Most interviews were conducted in person during my fieldwork, while a minority was made over Skype. All interviews were anonymous, semi-structured, and lasted between 60 and 90 minutes, on average.
4. While most organisations use the term 'local ownership', other terms which are also sometimes used are 'country ownership' and 'national ownership'. Although these semantic differences could reflect important nuances, these different terms are often used interchangeably. Unless it quotes from other sources, this article will only use the term 'local ownership' to denote a degree of domestic (i.e. national or subnational, state or non-state) control over objectives, means, and results of international interventions.
5. The claim that ownership leads to sustainability is rarely questioned, if ever. Some authors argue that external imposition can also lead to sustainable peace and democracy, as was the case for example in Japan after the Second World War (Joseph 2007).
6. While in executive interventions, international intervenors carry out the functions of the government, in non-executive ones this is not the case and the intervenors only support host governments.
7. Personal interview (No. 11.) CPCC representative, Brussels, July 2016.
8. This proposal builds on the Dutch experience of supporting SSR in Burundi, where the conclusion of an 8-year-long Memorandum of Understanding proved instrumental for the overall success of the intervention. Source: Personal interview (No. 42) EU diplomat, Skype, August 2016.
9. Personal interview (No. 42) EU diplomat, Skype, August 2016.
10. Personal interview (No. 25) EU diplomat, Brussels, June 2016.
11. Personal interview (No. 11) CPCC official, Brussels, July 2016.
12. Personal interview (No. 12) EEAS official, Brussels, June 2016.
13. Personal interview (No. 96) EUCAP Nestor representative, Skype, November 2016.
14. Personal interview (No. 21) EC (DG DEVCO) representative, Brussels, June 2016.
15. Nevertheless, in most interventions, the only agreement that was formally concluded between the EU and host governments was an agreement that regulates the diplomatic status of missions (SOMA) or operations (SOFA) (DCAF 2016, p. 13). In rare cases, CSDP interventions operate even without these agreements.
16. Personal interview (No. 36) EU diplomat, Skype, June 2016.
17. Personal interview (No. 25) EU diplomat, Brussels, June 2016.
18. Personal interview (No. 11) CPCC official, Brussels, July 2016.
19. Personal interview (No. 1) EULEX representative, Mitrovica, February 2016.
20. Personal interview (No. 9) Security Expert, Pristina, February 2016.
21. Personal interview (No. 19) ESDC representative, Brussels, June 2016.
22. Personal interview (No.15) CMPD representative, Brussels, June 2016.
23. Personal interview (No. 96), EUCAP Nestor representative, Skype, November 2016.

24. Personal interview (No. 14) EEAS representative, Brussels, June 2016.
25. Personal interview (No. 33) CPCC representative, Brussels, June 2016.
26. Personal interview (No. 36) EU diplomat, Brussels, June 2016.
27. Personal interview (No. 89) EUCAP Nestor representative, Skype, November 2016.
28. Personal interview (No. 17) CPCC representative, Brussels, June 2016.
29. Personal interview (No. 25) EU diplomat, Brussels, June 2016.
30. Tanzania allegedly expected to get a ship from the EU. Personal interview (No. 33) CPCC representative, June 2016.
31. In March 2014, a field office was opened in Hargeisa (Somaliland). In October 2015, the mission HQ was moved from Djibouti to Mogadishu International Airport. Finally, in March 2017, a field office was also opened in Garowe (Puntland)
32. Personal interview (No. 74) EUCAP Nestor representative, Skype, November 2016.
33. Personal interview (No. 17) CPCC representative, Brussels, June 2016.
34. Personal interview (No. 96) EUCAP Nestor representative, Skype, November 2016.
35. Personal interview (No. 109) EU Delegation representative, Addis Ababa, December 2016.
36. Personal interview (No. 33) CPCC representative, Brussels, June 2016.
37. Personal interview (No. 109) EU Delegation representative, Addis Ababa, December 2016.
38. Personal interview (No. 81) EUCAP Nestor representative, Skype, November 2016.
39. Personal interview (No. 17) CPCC official, Brussels, 6/6/16. The mission never visited Mogadishu, but only Puntland and Somaliland (Tejpar and Zetterlund 2013, p. 21).
40. Personal interview (No. 25) EU diplomat, Brussels, June 2016.
41. Personal interview (No. 42) EU diplomat, Skype, August 2016.
42. Personal interview (No. 17) CPCC official, Brussels, June 2016.
43. Personal interview (No. 88) EUCAP Nestor representative, Hargeisa, November 2016.
44. Personal interview (No. 74) EUCAP Nestor representative, Skype, November 2016.
45. Personal interview (No. 88) EUCAP Nestor representative, Hargeisa, November 2016.
46. Personal interview (No. 74) EUCAP Nestor representative, Skype, November 2016.
47. Personal interview (No. 88) EUCAP Nestor representative, Hargeisa, November 2016.
48. Personal interview (No. 104) EUCAP Nestor representative, Skype, December 2016.
49. Personal interview (No. 90) Somaliland's Attorney General representative, Hargeisa, November 2016.
50. Personal interview (No. 81) EUCAP Nestor official, Skype, November 2016.
51. Personal interview (No. 74) EUCAP Nestor representative, Skype, November 2016.
52. Personal interview (No. 95) Somaliland's MFA representative, Hargeisa, November 2016.
53. Personal interview (No. 84) Local security expert, Hargeisa, November 2016.
54. Personal interview (No. 95) Somaliland's MFA representative, Hargeisa, November 2016.
55. Personal interview (No. 96) EUCAP Nestor representative, Skype, November 2016.
56. Personal interview (No. 78) Somaliland Coast Guard representative, Hargeisa, November 2016.
57. Personal interview (No. 96) EUCAP Nestor representative, Skype, November 2016.
58. Personal interview (No. 99) EUCAP Nestor representative, Hargeisa, November 2016.
59. In a country without a pension system, this could be an existential threat. Personal interview (No. 91) Local security expert, Hargeisa, November 2016.
60. Letter from the Republic of Somaliland's Vice minister for Regional Administration to the Head of Field Office, date 29/2/16. Some interlocutors argue that the true reasons behind the letter were concerns that the new generation of Coast Guard officers, trained by the EU, might impinge on the interests in maintaining illicit activities in the port of Berbera, allegedly directly linked to the president Silanyo.
61. Personal interview (No. 96) EUCAP Nestor representative, Skype, November 2016.
62. Moreover, the HQ was moved from Djibouti to Mogadishu International Airport; the office in Nairobi continued to logistically back up the HQ, while a field office was opened in Garowe (Puntland).
63. Personal interview (No. 33) CPCC representative, Brussels, June 2016.
64. Email correspondence with an official from EUCAP Somalia, February 2017.
65. Personal interview (No. 25) EU diplomat, Brussels, June 2016.

66. Personal interview (No. 94) EUCAP Nestor representative, Hargeisa, November 2016.
67. Personal interview (No. 95) Somaliland's MFA representative, Hargeisa, November 2016.
68. Personal interview (No. 17) CPCC representative, Brussels, June 2016
69. Email correspondence with EUCAP Nestor representative, February 2016.
70. This might change in the future, thanks to the Capacity Building in Support for Security and Development initiative to extend the EU's assistance to build the capacity of the security sector including the military actors under exceptional circumstances (EU 2015b).
71. Personal interview (No. 104) EUCAP Nestor representative, Skype, December 2016.
72. Personal interview (No. 95) Somaliland's MFA representative, Hargeisa, November 2016.
73. Talking point of the Minister of Foreign Affairs & International Cooperation H.E. Saad Ali Shire to EU Head of Delegation & EU Head of Mission. Source: Email correspondence with the representative of the Somaliland MFA. February 2017.

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Notes on contributor

Filip Ejodus is a Marie Curie Scholar at the School of Sociology, Politics and International Studies, University of Bristol and an Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Political Sciences, University of Belgrade.

ORCID

Filip Ejodus  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-7443-1661>

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