

Contribution by the Secretary General of the Council on the procedures for crisis management (30 November 2000)

Caption: In a contribution dated 30 November 2000, the Secretary-General of the Council/High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) identifies the main actors in crisis management, in particular the various Council bodies. He emphasises the key role of the Political and Security Committee (PSC) which provides permanent coordination and strategic direction.

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http://www.cvce.eu/obj/contribution_by_the_secretary_general_of_the_council_on_the_procedures_for_crisis_management_30_november_2000-en-674c9dec-24b2-4120-a35a-c7e5af72d6f9.html

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Cover note from the Secretariat to the Council (30 November 2000) European security and defence policy - Contribution by the Secretary General/High Representative: reference framework for crisis management

Delegations will find herewith the text of the contribution by the Secretary-General/High Representative providing a reference framework for the procedures for comprehensive, coherent crisis management. The Council is invited to take note with interest of this contribution which, at this stage, does not take into account all the comments made by delegations.

Contribution by the Secretary-General/High Representative Procedures for comprehensive, coherent crisis management: reference framework

1. The European Union intends to manage crises in a comprehensive and coherent manner using civil and military means. This implies that a political will exists to that end; that the Union has the requisite civilian and military capacities and that satisfactory procedures are put into effect. With regard to those procedures, a coherent framework needs to be defined within which instruments coming under the various pillars and the competence of different institutions and bodies are implemented in synergy.

Inevitably, this is a complex task. Its complexity is due on the one hand to the existence of decision-making mechanisms peculiar to each pillar, and on the other hand to the fact that the institutions and their various subordinate bodies have distinct (and occasionally exclusive) powers and prerogatives under the Treaties.

This document aims to define, in compliance with the Treaty, a reference framework for a comprehensive, coherent management procedure for any crises which the Union might have to face.

2. Two key factors should be regarded as the basis of this document:

- The main aim of a crisis management procedure must be to ensure that the Union responds effectively and coherently. There is a clear requirement for results, without which the added value of acting in common as well as the credibility of the Union itself, would be called into question.
- The Union is a Community governed by law. This means that, even in the context of crisis management, there will be no derogation from the provisions governing the attributions and powers of its institutions and bodies. This applies in particular to the Commission's right of initiative and the implementation of the instruments which fall within its competence.

These two principles are not incompatible provided that the interaction between different sectors, bodies and decision-making processes is governed by a desire to ensure effectiveness in institutional coherence. Obviously, this means that political will must always be present at all levels and within all the bodies involved in crisis management.

3. In order to ensure consistency between the instruments available to the Union, it is essential that a single body should have access to all the information, proposals and initiatives relating to the crisis involved in order to make a global assessment; following the conclusions of the Helsinki European Council, this role would fall to the Political and Security Committee. This is without prejudice either to institutional prerogatives or to the decision-making mechanisms peculiar to each pillar.

4. It is also essential that all the civilian and military means available should be capable of being mobilised as required by each individual crisis. Without a permanent central co-ordination body and strategic supervision, there can be no guarantee that our collective efforts will be brought together in the desired time sequence. However, the actual ability of such a body to carry out its task of co-ordinating a comprehensive crisis response will ultimately depend on the establishment of simple, rapid and effective procedures in the context of the definition of permanent bodies.

5. The Council decision identifying the civil and military instruments which the Union must implement in

response to a crisis could, where appropriate, take the form of a Joint Action in full respect of the single institutional framework. This Joint Action will define the conditions under which the SG/HR, with the assent of the PSC, will be responsible for implementing its political and military aspects. This will give the military leadership a clear and continuous point of reference, and will help to ensure consistency of the Union's representation in contacts with third countries, international organisations and any other interested party.

6. The Secretary-General/High Representative, assisting the Presidency of the Union or acting as Chairman of the PSC as the case may be, will contribute with his suggestions to the strategic direction of the response to the crisis. He will remain in close contact with the Commission at all times. He will likewise ensure that the resources of the Council Secretariat, including the European Union's Situation Centre, are properly mobilised.

7. Throughout the crisis, the Chairman of the Military Committee will take part in the PSC; the other members of the Military Committee will be encouraged to do likewise. The Chairman of the Military Committee will also be the channel for conveying politico-military guidelines to the operational commander. On military matters, the Secretary General/High Representative will receive advice from the Chairman of the Military Committee and be assisted by the Director General of the EU Military Staff.

8. In order that full use can be made of all instruments available to the Union, it is vital to ensure the consistency not only of the work of the various Council bodies but also of the Council's decisions in its various configurations (Ecofin, Justice and Home Affairs, etc.) and of the actions of the Member States, the Community and the Commission. In addition to the role of the Council and the Commission as laid down in Article 3 of the TEU, this consistency will be guaranteed by Coreper, the GAC and, at the highest level, by the European Council. Its conclusions will therefore be an invaluable element, which should be used to the full. All those involved in crisis management must also be equipped with mechanisms and procedures which are flexible enough to allow decisions to be taken and consultations to be held in sufficient time.

9. Delegations have already been sent more detailed suggestions for procedures, which are in principle appropriate for governing crisis management in the Union framework effectively. They should be studied in detail and evaluated by civilian and military experts. In any event, such procedures should not be validated until they have been tested, in exercises which will be carried out shortly. In this context, the detailed document on the subject, which has already been distributed by the Secretariat, and the guidelines set out above, form an evolving whole, which will be reviewed and updated in the light of experience.