Preparing for the World Risk Society: Towards a New Security Paradigm for the European Union

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The world of crises and disasters is changing rapidly. We are witnessing new types of adversity. In addition, modern societies have become increasingly vulnerable to disruptions, new and old. This new world demands new types of responses, which nation states cannot produce alone. Nation states will have to cooperate to protect their citizens from these threats. This article investigates the role of the European Union in the development of new safety and security arrangements. It identifies conceptual building blocks for a new security paradigm and offers design principles that can facilitate a shared way of thinking and acting in the safety and security domain.

1. Introduction: the need for new safety and security arrangements

The world of crises and disasters is changing rapidly, perhaps faster and in more fundamental ways than we can understand (Posner, 2004; Quarantelli, Lagadec, & Boin, 2006; Perrow, 2007; Boin, 2009; Lagadec, 2009; Wachtendorf, 2009). Beck (2008) speaks of a 'second modernity' – a world characterized by ever-increasing interrelatedness and interdependence. It is a world in which 'transnational corporations and nation-states both compete and collaborate, war has become almost unthinkable [and] both military power and diplomacy have lost their longstanding importance' (Beck, 2008, p. 797). It is also a world that will bring new, transboundary risks and crises. The global financial crisis and the unfolding flu pandemic demonstrate the velocity, instability, and widespread impact of these modern crises.

National governments are discovering that they cannot deal with these crises and disasters alone. Traditional institutional arrangements – marked by intricate coordination arrangements that connect local disaster spots with central authority – do not suffice in the light of transboundary threats that can overwhelm national coping capacity. Nation states will have to collaborate to develop transboundary management capacity. Such a process has been taking place in Europe, where the member states of the European Union (EU) have begun to develop joint safety and security arrangements for this new world of crises and disasters.

In recent years, member states have worked through the EU to deepen collaboration on all types of security-related issues. The total EU regulatory output in the fields of civil protection, health security, and anti-terrorism polices for the period 1992–2007 amounted to 4,126 items, which has led to an increasingly institutionalized 'protection policy space' in the Union (Boin, Ekengren, & Rhinard, 2008).[1] Cooperation in the military realm has increased considerably (Jones, 2007). The EU has formulated a new generation of multilateral responses to other transboundary threats as well, such as pandemics, terrorism, infrastructural breakdowns,

health and environmental hazards, and, most recently, financial crises. Institutional and attitudinal adaptation in the member states may be hesitant, slow, non-binding, and fragmented, but the EU's role has increased inch by inch in broad areas of security and safety.

This newly emerging security role may come as a surprise, as the EU has traditionally served the aim of economic integration between member states. The fall of the Berlin Wall and the Balkan wars demonstrated shortcomings in the security arrangements that had dominated post-World War II Europe (Cottey, 2007). Security was the exclusive domain of nation states, which could elect to cooperate in international organizations such as NATO and the WEU. The US, London, and Madrid terrorist attacks rendered the paradigm more or less obsolete. Its quick demise caused an identity crisis within Europe's security community (McInnes, 1994; Kirchner & Sperling, 2008).

The EU has begun to fill this void, but it is far from ready to adequately deal with transboundary crises and disasters (Boin & Rhinard, 2008). In this article, we explore what the EU requires to meet the challenges posed by transboundary crises. More specifically, we debate whether there is fertile ground for a new European safety and security paradigm that can inform and inspire the construction of a safer, more secure Europe in the World Risk Society.

We begin by offering a brief overview of recent developments in the EU and specify three types of crisis responses that the EU may be expected to deliver. We then explore building blocks for a new security paradigm that could guide the strengthening of the EU's transboundary crisis management capacity. We conclude by offering suggestions for a road map of necessary reforms that will help create a secure Europe.

2. The EU's emergence as a security actor: a brief overview

The European Community – the EU's predecessor – was created to further economic recovery from the ravages of World War II through integration of key industries in Europe. Although cooperation through EU institutions can be, and actually was, also seen as an instrument to enhance European security, the European Community never explicitly pursued security, crisis, or disaster management as a formal policy goal.

Consequently, the EU never set out to build supranational capacity for dealing with threats to safety and security. Member states dealt with man-made and natural disasters using their own national and local organizations. Major disasters might prompt a state to request assistance from friendly nations, but purely on a bilateral basis. For traditional security threats, nations invested in international organizations such as NATO and, to a

lesser extent, the United Nations. For other security threats, such as public health disasters or toxic agents, nation states endowed the World Health Organization, International Atomic Energy Agency, and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. These international organizations were designed for 'old' (yet still relevant) threats; they were clearly not designed for Beck's (2008) new world of crises and disasters.

This new world invites three types of reactions from the EU, based on the level at which the threat plays out and at which a response may be required.

The first type is *assistance to an overwhelmed member state*. When the capacities of a member state no longer suffice to deal with a crisis or a disaster (typically a major natural disaster such as an earthquake, flood, or forest fires), the EU may offer assistance. The EU began to move cautiously into the field of civil protection during the 1980s, when a series of Italian forest fires raised the prospect of resource sharing through supranational mechanisms. Europe's subsequent encounter with major terror attacks and natural disasters gave rise to a 'Solidarity Declaration', in which member states pledge to jointly mobilize civilian and military means to protect the 'civilian population' in the face of an attack or a disaster (European Council, 2004).

The second type is the *response to external threats and disasters*. Following conflagrations in the Balkans, the member states launched several military and civilian initiatives – the EU's 'Petersburg Tasks' (1992), 'Headline Goals' (1999), and the 'Battle Groups' concept (2004) ranking among the most prominent – to facilitate joint military missions to global hotspots.[2] One of the most spectacular developments in the evolution of a shared security agenda is the adoption of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) in 1999.

The EU now routinely deploys civil protection experts, police authorities, judicial advisors, and civil administration officials to stabilize post-conflict or disaster situations abroad (Duke 2002).[3] In recent years, the EU has assisted citizens hit by the Asian tsunami, offered support to US authorities during the Katrina hurricane, coordinated forest-fire fighting efforts in Southern Europe, and assisted flood-stricken towns in Central Europe and Algeria. To be sure, these were rather modest support actions, but they mark the arrival of the EU as an international disaster support actor.

The EU harbours defined ambitions to become a player in the international security arena. The European Defence Agency's 'Long-Term Vision 2025' defines military priorities and objectives aimed at making Member States 'converge towards a more common understanding of military needs in the 21st century'. Its Capability Development Plans show the progress in building joint military capacity. The aim is not, in the words of EU High Representative Javier Solana, 'to replace national defence plans and programmes but to

support national decision making'. Member States agreed in 2008 to strive towards EU targets in areas such as intelligence, computer networks operations, and increased availability of helicopters.

The third type is the *response to transboundary threats*. We speak of a transboundary crisis when the critical infrastructures or life-sustaining systems in multiple member states have come under threat of imminent breakdown (regardless of the cause) (Boin, 2009). The outbreak of 'mad cow' disease and the Mexican Flu pandemic, electricity blackouts in Austria and Germany, waves of illegal immigrants washing up on European shores, and the implosion of the international financial system – these were all threats that required a multinational response.

The EU now has a health strategy that enhances cooperation in the face of cross-border health threats and a rapid alert system for communicable diseases, which functions as a quasi-decision-making platform (Commission, 2007; cf. UK Health Protection Agency 2006). It has a Monitoring and Information Center (MIC), which is on-line seven days a week to scan for and report on emerging threats. It has even begun to build a protection programme for the EU's critical infrastructures, which include transportation, energy, communication, and information networks (Fritzon, Ljungkvist, Boin, & Rhinard, 2007).

The EU has developed capacity in the domain of judicial and police cooperation as well. A long and slow policy history was accelerated considerably by the Madrid train bombings (2004) and the London transport attacks (2005). Member states agreed to a joint arrest warrant, common rules regarding jurisdiction and prosecution, and an anti-terror unit. In addition, the role of Europol and Eurojust was expanded (Monar, 2006; Edwards & Myer, 2008). In light of the traditional reluctance of nation states to grant any type of law enforcement authority to a supranational body, these modest developments mark revolutionary steps in the EU's integration process.

The three 'threat-response types' identified here are different in nature. For instance, it would seem that types I and III would have a more direct impact on one or more member states than the type II threat. If this is true, we may expect member states to be less willing to cede crisis management authority to the Union with regard to types I and III. The risk of lost sovereignty and a failed response could cause immense legitimacy losses (imagine a nation that cannot protect its citizens). In contrast, the second ('foreign') crisis type allows the EU to choose in which global crisis it wants to intervene, a condition that increases success chances and, therefore, political feasibility.

2.1. A common outlook on future threats?

The growing European capacity to deal with crises and disasters has been rather spectacular, especially given the strong resistance efforts to further European integration routinely encountered in the member states. It has been accomplished, remarkably perhaps, without a shared vision on the nature of future threats and the role the EU should play.

The closest thing to a shared philosophy may be the European Security Strategy (ESS), adopted in 2003 (and revised in 2008), which describes a role for the EU in enhancing global security (Missiroli, 2008). It declares the EU's commitment to combat a variety of security threats, including failed states, energy security, terrorism, global warming, and disasters. The ESS adopts a comprehensive view, explicitly linking internal and external threats, civilian and military capacities, and natural and man-made disasters. The ESS has not moved much beyond 'paper status', however, and its influence has been limited at best.

It is not surprising, then, that the EU's 'policy space' dealing with crises and disasters displays a high degree of fragmentation (Boin, Ekengren, & Rhinard, 2006; Rhinard & Boin, 2009): there is a wide diversity in thinking and practice when it comes to perceiving core threats to European security and acting upon them. Although interconnections and coherence are emerging at the technical level, security as a strategic objective exists only in specific policy sectors. Legislation is oriented towards known risks in pre-established sectors; overarching programmes that draw together diverse initiatives are eschewed, at worst, or are strictly voluntary, at best.

This degree of fragmentation widens when we take into consideration the national levels: much variety exists in the ways member states (a) organize for security and (b) organize their relations with the EU. The same can be said for rhetorical differences: what constitutes 'security' differs within the EU and within member states (Rhinard, 2007; Kuipers & Matzen, 2008).

Recent years have witnessed a rise in symbolic gestures and rhetorical scripts that invite an enhanced safety and security identity of the EU. References to 'solidarity' and 'common threats' proliferate in new initiatives throughout the EU institutions, while calls to 'speak with one voice' on global security issues permeate practitioners' speeches. In some respects, the endurance of these concepts is familiar to students of the EU: what some observers may criticize as 'empty rhetoric' turns into a powerful force when circumstances change. Progress in EU environmental policy, the single market, and the social charter were all accompanied by 'big ideas' that allowed member states to satisfy their interests while working together for common policy outcomes (see Fligstein & Maria-Drita, 1996). This evolution in official rhetoric therefore cannot be discounted as mere chatter.

But rhetoric alone will not be enough. The rising number of transboundary threats, crises, and disasters

requires coordinated action at the supranational level. Such a response consists of an orchestrated 'surge' of available resources in member states that are directed to deal with the impact of a rapidly evolving threat. The urgency of these threats precludes extensive policy deliberations, prolonged decision-making processes, and implementation hurdles. It rather demands a pre-conceived and shared notion of the role the EU can and should play during transboundary crises.

While a degree of diversity in thinking and practice should be welcomed (Page, 2007), a lack of coherence will undermine the effectiveness of a supranational response system. A system that consists of 27 member states, many policy sectors, and deeply entrenched divides between EU institutions requires 'conceptual glue' to hold the pieces together. This 'conceptual glue' facilitates quick decisions, rapid support, and a coordinated response. It requires, in other words, a shared philosophy that informs the joint preparation for and response to transboundary threats.

2.2. Key questions

A shared philosophy encapsulates a way of thinking that is widely accepted and provides effective answers to hard problems. It does not solve the various paradoxes, disconnects, and inconsistencies that characterize most policy fields. It does identify the deeper, underlying values that should guide the search for answers and action – it draws boundaries ('this is what we don't do around here'), reminds decision makers of time-proven solutions, and stakes out common ground.

Once a shared philosophy becomes widely institutionalized, to a degree that it informs thinking and acting in a taken for granted way, we may speak of a paradigm. Institutionalization requires a combination of functionality and legitimacy (Stinchcombe, 2001). Legitimate functionality does pose a potential liability: while it effectively herds decision makers in the same direction, it can never guarantee that it is the right direction.[4]

A 'collective philosophy' demonstrates its functionality in answering key questions with regard to the EU's role in the domain of safety and security. We identify five distinct questions that must be answered if the EU is to move in an agreed-upon direction:

1. *What and who should be protected?* The first question aims to arrive at a demarcation of the safety and security domain, which, in principle, could be stretched infinitely. Member states need to agree on what it is (values? citizens? critical infrastructures?) that requires EU protection.
2. *Against what?* There are many potential threats. The many types – environmental, terrorist, crime, climate, financial, etc. – range from mundane to rare, from specific to generic, from immediate to the long

term. Member states must agree which treats fall within the EU's purview.
3. *Which powers should the EU receive to exercise its protective capacity?* The EU comprises a clearly demarcated geographical entity. But the EU is not a federation, with specified powers that can be implemented within its states. The range of the EU is limited by member state sovereignty, both within and outside the geographical borders of the EU. Many questions then arise. For example, is a judicial framework needed that can help balance the more fundamental competence claims of the Union and the member states? Should the EU produce norms and standards? Or would it be sufficient for member states to declare a 'firm commitment' to cooperate with each other in delivering civil protection assistance and reinforcing EU coordination capacities? The member states must agree what powers the EU is to have when it comes to crises and disasters.
4. *What does the EU need in the domain of safety and security?* Once it is decided what the EU should do, and what it is allowed to do, member states must agree on the political, administrative, and logistical resources that will be made available. For instance, does the EU need a full-fledged crisis centre and a crisis organization? Does the Commission need a crisis commissioner? Does the EU need resources (such as planes and emergency supplies)?
5. *When is the EU's capacity activated?* A threat or a crisis is, as social scientists say, in the eyes of the beholder. It matters, then, who or what has the final say in defining a threat or recognizing a crisis. The creation of a transboundary protection system at the supranational level prompts a number of questions. What should be the deciding factor in mobilizing EU instruments? Could a request for help come from EU institutions? When exactly is an attack on one member state an attack on all? Is it possible to envisage the Solidarity Declaration being put into effect if *one* member state considers itself threatened? Could such a state demand mobilization of 'all' EU instruments, as prescribed by the Declaration? The member states will have to agree to a procedure that imposes order on this subjective and often political process.

3. Towards a guiding philosophy: conceptual building blocks

In formulating answers to these questions, the EU does not have to start from scratch.[5] Several conceptual building blocks exist that may provide the seeds for a future paradigm. We identify three, each corresponding to the response types identified above. We then

extract provisional answers to the questions formulated above.

When it comes to the assistance of *overwhelmed member states*, a promising concept that is gaining salience in EU discussions is the notion of 'solidarity' in the face of extreme threats.

In the aftermath of 9/11, the European Future Convention (2002–2003) – in proposing a new EU constitution – sought to develop new ideas for defence that went beyond the outdated territorial paradigm. The Convention considered both non-state actors (the new terrorism) and natural disasters as threats that could provide grounds to invoke EU solidarity and mutual assistance. The Convention's draft was later included as a 'Solidarity Clause' in the Lisbon treaty.[6] The Clause states that:

> 'The Union shall mobilise all the instruments at its disposal, including the military resources made available by the Member States, to:
> Prevent terrorist threats in the territory of the member states.
> Protect democratic institutions and the civilian population from any terrorist attack.
> Assist a member state in its territory, at the request of its political authorities, in the event of a terrorist attack.
> Assist a member state in its territory, at the request of its political authorities, in the event of a natural or man-made disaster'.

There are many innovative elements in the Clause. It talks about defence *in* the territory, not *of* the territory, and thus dissolves the strict demarcation between internal and external EU security with regard to tools as well as geographical borders. Moreover, the Clause, for the first time in an EU context, defines the European population (in singular) as an object to be protected by the EU member states. The Clause thus takes the EU a step closer to a form of transnational societal defence, distinct from traditional forms such as military alliance and collective territorial defence (Ekengren, 2006).

The point of departure for thinking about the emerging EU role in the *global security domain* can be found in the academic and political debate about the EU's role in the world. This debate gravitates towards a prescribed role for the EU: the protection of democratic values and human rights (Baldwin, 1995; Duke, 2000; Missiroli, 2002; Van Ham & Medvedev, 2002; Waever & Buzan, 2003; Carlsnaes, Sjursen, & White, 2004; Smith, 2004; Ojanen 2006). It is widely agreed upon (though not universally) that the Union should strive to become a normative or an ethical power in world politics (Manners, 2002; Smith, 2002). This understanding informs its foreign policy stances (however, limited these may be in comparison with other major powers).

A third conceptual building block, which may inform the debate about an EU response to *transboundary crises and disasters*, is the aforementioned ESS. Adopted in 2003, the ESS marks the first attempt to integrate the Union's various efforts and commitments with regard to new security threats (Biscop & Andersson, 2007; Missiroli, 2008). The aim of the ESS was to make the Common Foreign and Security Policy more coherent. It did so by defining common threat perceptions among the Member States. It stated that the EU and the member states should enhance their capacity to deal with such threats as terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, regional conflicts, failed states, and organized crime. It also set common goals for all EU institutions (cross-pillar goals) including neighbourhood security, a strengthened international order, and countering the threats through 'preventive engagement'.

It is widely acknowledged that there is great potential in a more efficient combination of the EU's external and internal crisis management capacities (Duke & Ojanen, 2006). Even though there is widespread agreement that 'internal and external aspects are indissolubly linked' (Council of European Union, 2003, p. 2), the implications are not reflected in policy making, analysis, and institutional arrangements. Consider the protection of Europe's critical infrastructures. It is clear that the boundaries between external and internal threats to, for instance, Internet systems can no longer be drawn (see Van Eeten and Bauer in this special issue). Yet, no real synergies between internal and external capacity have been created as of now. It is precisely in these 'new' protection domains that innovative efficiencies may be expected after the EU moves ahead in creating transboundary crisis management capacity.

Together, these three 'conceptual discussion zones' provide us with a firm summary where the discussion on EU involvement in safety and security matters stands. We will now contemplate the common ground that can be found in these three conceptual building blocks and we will do so in light of the five questions formulated above. These 'answers' should be read as 'working hypotheses' or starting points for a discussion between stakeholders.

3.1. What and who should be protected?

The conceptual building blocks suggest that the objects of EU protection should be defined widely and in non-military terms. It is no longer borders that must be protected, but critical systems and democratic institutions – which sustain the lives of citizens. This is the idea of functional or societal security, which emphasizes

the security of EU citizens and societies over the territorial integrity of one state (Sundelius, 2005). This 'total' conception of EU security is distinct from traditional notions of collective territorial defence. If it takes root, the EU would evolve from a defence alliance into *a defence union*.

Here we must make an important distinction. It is the responsibility of the state to protect its citizens and inhabitants. The EU can only help states perform this crucial task. In a way, we may thus say that the object of protection is member state capacity to protect its citizens. Indirectly, it is thus the legitimacy of the state that is being protected as well.

All this fits closely with the founding idea that the EU should be a force of good, aimed at generating wealth and well-being for its citizens and its partners. The idea of 'societal' security, in other words, fits the defined aim of the EU to enhance its public legitimacy. By defining its safety and security efforts in terms of citizen well-being (rather than national security), the EU can define its added value. This, in turn, may eventually give rise to a shared security identity.

3.2. Protection against what?

The ESS and the Solidarity Clause are rather encompassing in the listing of potential threats to the EU, its member states, and their citizens. Both documents were drafted in a time of new terrorist threats, but their authors also recognized natural disasters as a relevant threat. This adds up to what is commonly known as an 'all hazards approach'. In such an approach, the nature of the threat is less relevant than the potential consequences. Given the size of the territory and the multitude of critical systems, as well as the number of citizens that require protection, the variety of threats that need to be considered is large. Viewed from this perspective, a new security paradigm should address all threats that have the potential to disrupt for significant periods the functioning of critical infrastructures and democratic institutions in the EU. This wide-ranging mission, which implies a substantial role for EU institutions, is clearly delineated by the answers to the next three questions.

3.3. Which powers should the EU receive to exercise its protective capacity?

The conceptual building blocks introduced above suggest a clear but dual answer to this question: the EU should receive no powers to operate within, or infringe upon, member states' safety and security domains; at the same time, the EU should receive more extended powers to operate 'abroad'.

The Solidarity Clause clearly limits the EU's role to coordinating the efforts of other member states to assist an overwhelmed member state. This fits with the entrenched philosophy of subsidiarity, which prescribes that the EU can only play a role when and where member states cannot accomplish a certain goal by itself. The domain of safety and security undisputedly falls within the area of national sovereignty.

The ESS, in discussing stability in the EU neighbourhood, suggests that the potential of the EU security apparatus should be viewed from the perspective of a wider Europe stretching towards the Middle East and North Africa. There is no agreement on the extent of the geographical ambition level of EU crisis management capacity: some see the EU take its capacity to the crisis (wherever it may be), and others advocate a territorially defined approach, sticking close to home (the 'neighbourhood'). These differing views rest on different approaches: the former seeks to create long-term peace structures, whereas the latter is aimed a creating a defence periphery. A compromise between these two seemingly opposite approaches may be found in dissolving the largely artificial boundaries between internal and external EU security (as the ESS advocates).

3.4. What does the EU need?

The essence of an EU role in the domain of safety and security is found in the coordination of national capacities, which should result in a quick and effective channelling of required means to specified geographical areas. Extensive horizontal, cross-sectoral coordination will thus be needed. Moreover, it will require a co-ordinative node that connects all member states.

To some extent, this can probably be achieved through traditional forms of EU cooperation (a recognized strength of the EU). One could envision a system in which the member states, through the EU MIC for civil protection, can not only notify each other of immediate terrorist threats or natural disasters, but can also cooperate closely during a transboundary contingency. A member state or an international partner should be able to request assistance from EU member states. Member states should be able to use this system to share know-how and best practices.

A more contentious issue is the creation of resources that operate independently from the member states.[7] For instance, first steps have been taken towards a permanent, standby EU civil protection force.[8] One could envision EU disaster supply chains or even a central crisis management unit. The conceptual building blocks offer very little ground for such a discussion at this point in time.

3.5. When is the EU's capacity activated?

The challenge of designing 'triggers' for the EU's crisis management capacity is mirrored in tensions between the perceived need for common action, the predominance of national sovereignty concerns, and sector-specific needs. It is helpful to distinguish here between the three response types identified above. It is clear that the EU can only assist an overwhelmed member state when the Union is invited to do so. It is also clear that the EU's crisis management capacity would not be engaged in responses to external threats or peace-keeping missions (type two) without unanimity voting in the EU decision making, as existing ESDP procedures already prescribe a strong consensus among member states. In the case of a transboundary threat (third type) to shared critical infrastructures, more room for a supranational procedure is probably needed. To avoid paralysis, a certain number of member states would have to jointly request EU action.

4. Towards a new paradigm: principles for design

If the EU is to further develop capacity to deal with major crises and disasters, it will need a shared philosophy that will help answer two essential questions. First, it needs to describe the characteristics of the political-administrative capacity that the EU should have available. It should explain what resources, policies, legal instruments, procedures, playbooks, and infrastructures are needed to effectively deal with emerging threats and unfolding crises. Second, it should prescribe a division of labour between member states and EU institutions that will enable an effective, efficient, and legitimate use of that capacity.

The first issue is really *terra incognita* for institutional designers, as crisis management capacity at the supranational level does not exist anywhere as of now. Institutional arrangements must be designed that encompass and facilitate a variety of sector-specific 'EU crisis management coordination' tools. The various EU instruments must be as compatible as possible with member state competences.

The second issue, on the other hand, captures much more familiar questions of governance. The designers of the EU have always wrestled with the division of competences and the challenges of collective action (getting people and organizations to cooperate). In fact, we may conclude that the designers have been quite successful in negotiating these challenges. New forms of cooperation have been developed that avoid an unacceptable degree of centralization and build on long-term mutual respect and understanding between the EU and its member states. The EU has a proud tradition of designing new ways of thinking and acting that effectively address long-standing problems.

Conceptual building blocks that feature prominently in contemporary EU policy debates may thus provide the foundation for the construction of a new paradigm. New paradigms do not, of course, emerge in a 'flash'. They gradually replace old paradigms, which fade away when their underlying assumptions and values can no longer reconcile empirical paradoxes; at that point, a paradigm's hold over thought and practice quickly declines (Kuhn, 1962). As old ideas and practices lose relevance in the light of new challenges, new ideas gradually accumulate until a tipping point is reached, at which point an entire community switches to the new paradigm. A cadre of supporters must use the new paradigm, advertise the paradigm, demonstrate its results as a way to interpret events, and gain further supporters until the tipping point is reached.

A 'muddled evolution' approach, however, is not enough to produce a way of thinking and acting that leads to a high level of safety and security in Europe. Political leadership is needed to identify and promote the EU's fundamental values and to guide organizational adaptation towards supranational crisis management capacity. The EU has quite a history when it comes to visionary leadership. In the formative years of the EU, political leaders of the founding member states played a crucial role in the creation of shared ideas. Today's threat picture and the question of how to guarantee safety and security in the Union constitutes a challenge to the EU and its member states similar to those faced 50 years ago (cf. Allen & Smith, 1998; Lenzi, 1998; Ginsberg, 2001; Carlsnaes et al., 2004; Sjursen, 2006).

The scope and reach of EU crisis management capacity ultimately relies on the willingness, readiness, and 'know-how' of the member states to pool resources and assist each other. Because of sovereignty and subsidiarity concerns in most EU member states, national security and safety policies reflect no formal obligation to implement EU crisis decisions and capacity goals (Wagner, 2003).

Furthermore, for a crisis management paradigm to emerge not only do boundaries between the EU's political areas need to be broken down but also those between internal and external security, aid and trade policy, civilian and military resources. This, in turn, may require member states to break up or redefine corresponding barriers on the home front: between internal vulnerability and external security, defence, and police forces, military and civilian intelligence agencies; between defence, justice and foreign ministries; between defence policy, emergency planning, and rescue agencies; and between national, regional, and local levels.

Any effort to create a new philosophy underlying security cooperation in and through the EU will thus

likely run into classical questions about the architecture of the Union. History has taught us that quick production of full-blown paradigms is not something that can be expected from a supranational organization such as the EU (or any other large-scale organization for that matter), which has to operate through time-tested and consensus-oriented procedures in a highly politicized environment.

The Open Method of Coordination (OMC) offers a potential way to engage in a calmly paced and deliberate design process (Borrás & Jacobsson, 2004; Ekengren, 2006). It is widely accepted that EU objectives should leave sufficient implementation room so as to allow for national diversity and flexibility. The OMC essentially provides the 'glue' that prevents this freedom from dissolving into fragmentation. It does so by prescribing a system of quantitative and qualitative indicators that allows for comparison, bench marking, learning from best practices, and, if necessary, naming and shaming.

Member states translate *EU guidelines* into *National Action Plans*. The regular peer reviews function as the only sanction (there are no legal sanctions). The EU has to compensate for this through strict monitoring. An almost constant Union influence on the interpretation of common objectives and national instruments appears to work, judging by policy fields where the method has been applied.[9] Member states may thus grow comfortable with a system that works towards a mixture of closer cooperation on common goals and resources, peer pressure, policy recommendations, and mutual trust. This, in turn, may give rise to norm and standard setting networks.

The design process would benefit from lessons drawn from federal states such as the United States, Germany, Canada, and Australia. In the United States, the relations between Washington, DC and the states (which exercise near sovereignty in the domain of crises and disasters) have been explored through a coordinative process (see the National Response Framework documents). The German cooperative model, based on a strong representation of the state executives at the federal level, resembles the multilevel governance nature of the Union, 'where material sovereignty (or action capacities) are shared in networks across and between the various levels' (Börzel & Risse, 2000, p. 16).[10] The Australian system is also one of shared competences (Painter, 1998). These comparisons would identify best practices that enhance mutual respect and understanding between the EU and member state level.

5. Conclusion

The EU has produced many stunning if sometimes unappreciated successes; it has also underdelivered in light of promises made. The prospect of future crises and disasters, which will be increasingly transboundary in nature, requires another policy success. The EU needs to build capacity to help nation-states work together in the quest of enhancing societal security across the continent.

There is much work ahead. Legislation varies widely across the 27 countries. Moreover, the EU's safety and security domain is fragmented at best. Today there are no less than 25–30 systems led by the Commission and Council Secretariat in Brussels for information, early warning, rapid reaction, coordination, and mutual support covering rescue services, the spread of infectious diseases, natural catastrophes, and preventive measures in unstable regions (Boin et al., 2006). The member states are not always eager to cede authority in a domain that is considered a core national responsibility. The EU's Counter-Terrorism Coordinator has had great difficulties in getting member states to keep up with the rapidly increasing legal cooperation and the joint efforts against organized crime and terrorism (where many EU proposals have already been made, but have only been implemented to a limited extent).

The EU's crisis management capacity will be tested sooner or later. The question that will arise is: what responsibility does the EU actually have, or should have, in light of these new threats? This is a debate that, for reasons of effectiveness and democracy, should be taken up now – before a truly devastating crisis unfolds. A key to success will be the establishment of a relationship between the EU and the member states that can assure effectiveness and accountability, while strengthening the joint preparedness for the demanding tasks that lay ahead.

The formulation and adoption of an underlying and guiding philosophy would help the EU build post-national security systems and communities. It would indicate that the Union is able to think about transboundary threats and solutions in a way that is difficult if not impossible for nation states. A new paradigm would help create the organizational and human EU infrastructure needed for innovative strategies and the provision of adequate and sufficient transboundary disaster management capacities – capacities that could serve as a vehicle towards a more secure European community.

Acknowledgement

Notes

1. This output includes regulations, directives, decisions, 'other acts', commission proposals, and communications divided in the following way: civil protection (1857), health security (1566), and anti-terrorism (703). For more information, see Boin, Ekengren, and Rhinard (2008).
2. At the time of writing (May 2009), around 20 military and civilian European Security and Defence Policy missions had been or were being carried out around the globe, ranging from border control in Gaza and police training programmes in Kosovo and Afghanistan, to peacekeeping missions in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Aceh, and the protection of refugees in Chad.
3. The EU is also one of the world's largest donors of aid to developing and war-torn countries.
4. A minimal degree of variety in thinking, with a slight recalcitrance, is therefore required to avoid blind following of dominant paradigms (cf. Page, 2007).
5. Institutional design never starts from scratch (Goodin, 1996). We will have more to say about the road towards a shared paradigm later in this article.
6. To preempt the implementation of the Lisbon treaty, the Solidarity Clause was adopted as a 'Solidarity Declaration' – with the same wording as the Clause – after the Madrid bombings in March 2004.
7. The new Treaty (Article 176C §2) gives the Union the right to establish 'coordinating, complementary, and supporting measures' in civil protection.
8. An interesting question then would be how such 'complementary European resources', prescribed in recent Council decisions (e.g., 8 November 2007), will avoid duplication with existing national capacities.
9. For example in EU employment and environmental cooperation.
10. Potential competence disputes are avoided thanks to the principle of *bundesfreundliches Verhalten*, whereby each of the two levels is obliged to strive as far as possible to avoid any unnecessary interference in each other's constitutional prerogatives (Scharpf, 1996, pp. 361–373). For this system to work, a powerful central authority (such as the German Constitutional Court) is required to achieve a balance between the competence claims of the two levels. Scharpf's idea of a 'bipolar' EU constitution (1999), which sets out the objectives of the EU and member states together, may be of interest in the design process discussed in this section.

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