EU-CIVCAP

Preventing and Responding to Conflict: Developing EU CIVilian CAPabilities for a sustainable peace

EU Capabilities for Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding:

A Capabilities-Based Assessment

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Abstract	This paper presents a conceptual and methodological framework to support the implementation of the EU-CIVCAP project, and defines the key concepts of conflict prevention, peacebuilding, resources and capabilities to ensure consistency across different work packages and deliverables.
Keywords	• Capability • Conflict prevention • Peacebuilding • Capability-based assessment • Methodology • Fieldwork • Ethics

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This paper presents a conceptual and methodological framework to support the implementation of the EU-CIVCAP project, and defines the key concepts of conflict prevention, peacebuilding, resources, and capabilities to ensure consistency across different work packages and deliverables. The paper draws on a range of literatures (strategic management, development and military studies, for example) and develops a capabilities-based assessment approach (CBA). This CBA will be used by each WP to identify gaps in capabilities in each of the phases of the conflict cycle. This framework allows for the identification of existing and required capabilities in order for the EU to achieve its goals in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. This framework moves from previous assessments of EU capabilities that have focused on short-term requirements to a more strategic and holistic approach to capability development, by linking goals to capabilities. The paper also summarises the project's methodology and data collection methods, including ethical and risk-related issues to be considered by those conducting empirical fieldwork, especially where that fieldwork is carried out in conflict areas.

1. INTRODUCTION

The EU-CIVCAP proposal states that the key aim of the project is to *"provide a comprehensive, comparative and multidisciplinary analysis of the EU's civilian capabilities in conflict prevention and peacebuilding in order to identify existing shortfall"* (emphasis in original). More specifically, Objective 1 seeks "to assess EU civilian capabilities for external conflict prevention and peacebuilding" covering two key dimensions: firstly, the life cycle of a conflict and secondly, four cross-cutting challenges (the early warning/early response gap, civil-military coordination, short-term vs long-term approaches, and local ownership) (see Annex I, II and DoA).

In order to conduct an assessment of EU capabilities for conflict prevention and peacebuilding, a number of conceptual and methodological clarifications are required to guide empirical research and ensure consistency across the results of the different EU-CIVCAP deliverables (DLs) and work packages (WPs). In other words, we first need to clarify what we mean by capabilities, what capabilities are for and what a capability gap (or shortfall) might be. To that end, this paper will help to develop a framework for the assessment of EU capabilities for conflict prevention and peacebuilding (a Capabilities-Based Assessment or CBA). It will also provide some methodological pointers for the operationalisation of this project. But before doing this, it is important to define the terms of 'conflict prevention' and 'peacebuilding'.

2. KEY CONCEPTS

2.1. CONFLICT PREVENTION AND PEACEBUILDING

There is an extensive literature that has sought to explore in detail the meanings related to conflict prevention and peacebuilding. It is not the purpose of this paper to pursue this line of research; instead we will refer to the definitions used in the EU-CIVCAP proposal. These are broad enough to be applied to the activities of the EU and other international actors examined in this project. **Conflict prevention** is thus defined here as any attempt to reduce tensions and stop the escalation or outbreak of violent and non-violent conflict. Conflict prevention is a multifaceted process, ranging from long-term policy to promote stability (structural conflict prevention) to short-term intensive diplomacy to resolve disputes (operational conflict prevention). Meanwhile, **peacebuilding** can be understood as a range of activities that aim to address the roots of conflict and promote sustainable peace in the medium and long term. These definitions echo those employed by the EU, UN and OECD and the broader literature (Boutros-Ghali 1992; Council of the EU 2011; European Union 2001; OECD 2012; Paris and Sisk 2009; Ramsbothan *et al*. 2011; UN 2001).

In order to achieve the objective of promoting a sustainable peace through conflict prevention and peacebuilding, the EU has a wide set of instruments and tools at its disposal, ranging from humanitarian and development aid; diplomacy (for example, statements, *démarches*, mediation and participation in relevant international fora); political dialogues with third countries and international organisations; restrictive measures (such as sanctions); the employment and deployment of EU Special Representatives; disarmament and non-proliferation activities; security sector reform and civilian and military crisis management missions under the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP).

Conflict prevention and peacebuilding are not isolated initiatives. Rather, they are best conceptualised as a continuum of activities covering various stages of the life cycle of conflict (from rising tensions to the outbreak of conflict to post-crisis stabilisation) and it is for this reason that EU-CIVCAP will examine the entire conflict cycle (see Annex II).

2.2 RESOURCES AND CAPABILITIES

The concept of capabilities requires a more detailed discussion, not least because it has not received much attention in the literature, especially in the area of conflict prevention and peacebuilding studies and in the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and CSDP literature. The latter has been, and remains, focused on the development of Brussels-based institutions, procedures and policies (see Smith 2003; Vanhoonacker *et al.* 2010), but less attention has been paid to the capabilities required to implement the EU's objectives. Where this has been studied, the focus has predominantly been on CSDP rather than on other areas of the EU's external action, with the term 'capabilities' being used as shorthand for military hardware and personnel (see Chivvis, 2010; Giegerich, 2010; Greco *et al.*, 2010; Menon, 2009).

In the area of civilian crisis management, most of the discussions about capabilities also revolve around issues of recruitment, training and deployment of civilian personnel (Korski and Gowan 2009). In fact, it is interesting to note that the use of the term 'civilian capabilities' is very much unique to the EU (see, for instance, the EU Headline Goals), while other international organisations (e.g., UN, AU) or actors (e.g., US, UK) would favour the term 'capacity'[1] or simply 'civilian personnel' or 'expertise' to refer to civilian personnel or staff involved in peace operations. To some extent, this results from the historical and idiosyncratic development of the CSDP. The launch of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) – as it was known at the time – was seen as a way to develop a military role for the EU; the development of a civilian dimension was only an afterthought and a means by which the Nordic countries hoped to prevent the militarisation of the EU. In practice this led

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[1] See for instance the project and online resource: http://www.civcap.info/ [accessed 18 April 2016], which focuses specifically on civilian capacity for peace operations.

to the parallel development of a military and a civilian CSDP – and difficulties integrating these two dimensions that were particularly evident in the early years of the ESDP and CSDP. Civilian CSDP also developed in the shadow of its military counterpart.

The EU-CIVCAP project introduces three crucial correctives to the literature and the EU's understanding of 'capabilities'. First, this project goes beyond the current focus on CSDP to include other areas of external action such as CFSP more broadly, as well as development and trade. Second, it assesses in a holistic manner the actual and potential contribution of the EU to the prevention and resolution of conflicts by examining EU capabilities through the life cycle of conflict. Third, and more importantly, we move from an understanding of 'capabilities' as a list of resource requirements (and in particular, staffing resources) to linking resources with objectives. To do this, we need to take account of the central conceptual categories that have been developed for investigating and evaluating capabilities in the literature on organisations, strategic management and business, and in military studies. These categories can be summarised as follows:

The first relevant concept here is that of **resources**. Resources are considered to make up the key assets of an organisation, to the point that the resource-based view of the firm (RBV) considers that "simultaneously valuable, rare, inimitable and non-substitutable resources can be a source of superior performance, and may enable the firm to achieve sustained competitive advantage" (Barney cited in Ambrosini *et al*. 2009). For Raphael Amit and Paul Schoemaker (1993) resources are the stocks of tangible and intangible assets that are available to the organisation. As discussed, the EU tends to use the term capabilities essentially as shorthand for resources and, in particular, when referring to 'civilian capabilities', the emphasis is on civilian personnel. This is the case in the EU Headline Goals of 2001, 2008 and 2010, where the EU developed a list of resource requirements, including targets for the required personnel for various civilian crisis management missions.

There are a number of different categorisations of resources and these might include human resources, financial resources, physical resources (such as buildings, equipment, etc.) and organisational resources (procedures, organisational culture, structures, and so on). In military doctrine, resources (also known as 'capability solutions') are usually divided into the following categories (abbreviated as DOTMLPF):

- **Doctrine:** the vision, guiding principles, ways of doing things, and policies.
- **Organisation:** the internal structure and institutions, internal communication practices, and so on.
- **Training:** education and professional development.
- **Material:** equipment, tools and infrastructure (including IT systems and software).

- **Leadership:** the ability to lead a group of people and/or the organisation by setting clear, well-defined objectives.
- **Personnel:** staff (including knowledge and skills).
- **Facilities:** buildings (e.g. headquarters).

To these categories we need to add **Finances**, which refers to the financial resources, programmes and techniques of the organisation. The project will use the resultant set of categorisations (DOTMLPFF) when examining the EU's resources in the area of conflict prevention.

For its part, **capability** can be defined as the ability to combine the abovementioned resources to achieve an objective. This understanding of capability is closer to the colloquial understanding of capability. For instance, the Oxford Dictionary defines a capability as "the power or ability to do something" (Oxford Dictionaries n.d.). It also draws on similar definitions in the strategic management literature and military doctrine. For instance, Amit and Schoemaker (1993) define capabilities as "the capacity to deploy a combination of resources through collective organizational routines to achieve goals." In this and other elements of strategic management literature, organisational capabilities are seen as a valuable source of competitive advantage (Teece *et al*. 1997). The US Army also defines capability as "the ability to achieve a desired effect under specified standards and conditions through combinations of means and ways to perform a set of tasks" or more simply as "the ability to achieve an objective in a military operation" (JCS J-8, 2009: 6).[2]

Another important distinction in the literature is between ordinary and dynamic capabilities. According to David Teece (2016: 204), the former type of capability involves "the performance of administrative, operational, and governance-related functions that are necessary to the execution of current plans." Sydney Winter (2003: 991) also calls these "'zero-level' capabilities which are those that permit a firm to 'make a living' in the short term." By contrast, dynamic capabilities (also known as 'higher-order' capabilities) are "higher-level activities that can enable an enterprise to direct its ordinary activities toward high-demand uses, develop new capabilities, and effectively coordinate (or 'orchestrate') internal and external resources to address… shape shifting business environments" (Teece 2016: 3; see also Winter 2003). However, Winter (2003) distinguishes 'ad hoc problem solving' (when the change is the result of force majeure or an imposition from above) from the dynamic capabilities of an organisation to learn and adapt, which involve patterned and

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[2] The CBA User Manual provides the following example: "you may be assessing integrated air and missile defense, and you are contemplating a typical regional conflict. The overarching objective is to win the war, and a subordinate objective would be to win the ground battle. To win the ground battle, we may choose to deploy ground forces, and those forces have to be protected from enemy air and missile attack at their ports of debarkation. Providing that protection is the capability that you are assessing" (JCS J-8, 2009: 39).

routine activities to deal with potential change (for example a new product development process or a lessons learned system). We should also note that there is no automatic link between the development of dynamic capabilities and increased effectiveness. As Winter (2003: 4) argues:

> That investing in dynamic capabilities (of whatever order) can be a partial hedge against the obsolescence of existing capability, and can sometimes yield relatively sustainable advantage, is obvious from the nature of 'dynamic capability,' as defined here. That this cannot be uniformly or inevitably advantageous is equally obvious […].

Dynamic capabilities are thus intrinsically connected with the ability to learn of an organisation. For instance, Maurizio Zollo and Sydney Winter (2002) suggest that learning is not only at the base of dynamic capabilities, but can also be considered as a dynamic capability itself. As such, they argue that "dynamic capabilities are shaped by the co-evolution of learning mechanisms" (Zollo and Winter, 2002: 339). By studying dynamic capabilities, we seek to better understand whether the EU has the capabilities to learn, sense the environment and adapt to it to more easily and effectively achieve its goals.[3]

3. A CAPABILITY-BASED ASSESSMENT

The definition of capabilities adopted by this paper has the advantage of moving from an understanding of capabilities as resources to closely linking resources to objectives. From a military perspective, for instance, this move seeks to avoid some earlier pitfalls:

> One of the major frustrations of the previous requirements processes was that solutions were introduced to the system without any rationalization in terms of military objectives. The intent was to replace statements such as "we need a more advanced fighter," with "we need the capability to defeat enemy air defenses." The latter statement not only justifies the need, but also allows for competition among solutions (JCS J-8 2009: 5).

It was for this reason that the US Department of Defense (DoD) established the Joint Capabilities Integration and Development System (JCIDS) in 2003, which was responsible for introducing the idea of Capabilities-Based Assessment (CBA). The CBA sought "to link strategic ends to warfighting means. Furthermore, these documents would have to go

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[3] On the concept of learning and its application to EU-CIVCAP, see Smith, M.E. (2017), 'Institutional Learning and Lessons Identified in EU Civilian Conflict Prevention: A Framework for Analysis', *EU-CIVCAP DL 7.4*, May [accessed 10 May 2017], available from: https://eu-civcap.net/portfolio/deliverables/.

beyond doctrine, which are beliefs about the best way to do things with existing resources. The joint concepts would have to challenge existing approaches and provide impetus for improvement" (JCS J-8 2009: 5). The basic methodology for conducting a CBA is as follows:

> The CBA must first synthesize existing guidance to specify the military problems to be studied. The CBA then examines that problem, assesses how well the DoD can address the problem given its current program, and recommends needs the DoD should address. Finally, the CBA considered costs, and presented alternative solution portfolios [or courses of action]. (JCS J-8 2009: 9)

Again, this is not different from the way capability gap assessments are conducted in businesses. First, one would determine the capabilities that are needed for a particular business need (or objective); then the current state of each capability would need to be documented, as well as future projections of these capabilities; finally, one would have to identify what gaps exist between the current and future state. By assessing capability gaps, one can determine whether the enterprise can meet its business needs using existing capabilities and using its existing organisational resources or whether new capabilities need to be developed. In the case of EU conflict prevention and peacebuilding, the methodology for capabilities-based assessments can be summarised by the flowchart below, in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Capabilities-based assessment
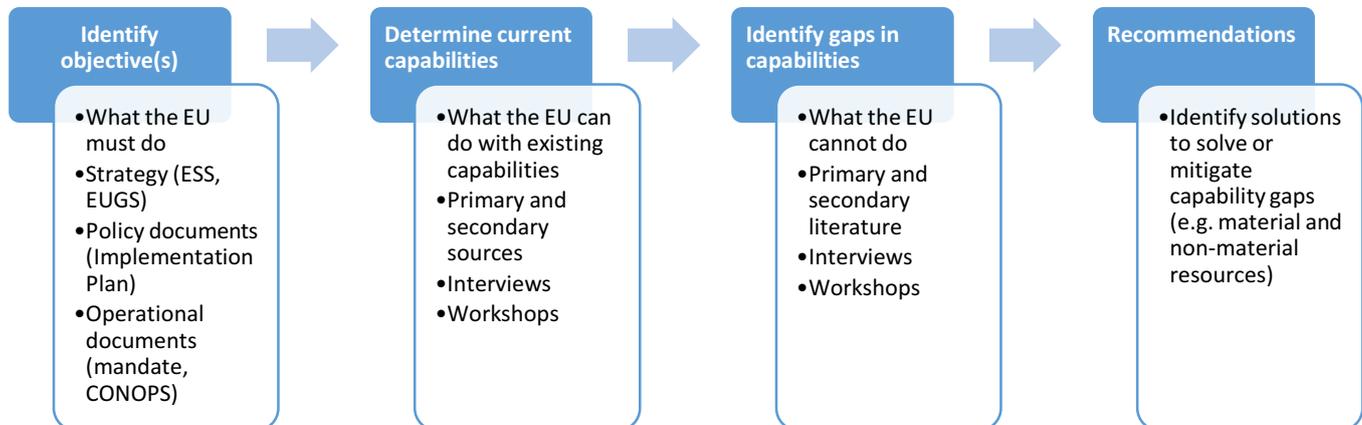
If we examine this model in more detail, the initial stage consists of identifying the EU's objectives as a first step in determining the capabilities required to achieve those objectives. This is not without its problems, however. The EU has traditionally experienced difficulties in defining clear foreign and security policy goals because of disagreements between the member states and diverse strategic cultures. The closest it has come to defining such goals is represented by the European Security Strategy, adopted by the December 2003 European Council. According to Howorth (2007: 202), the ESS "inevitably constitutes something of a compromise between different cultures and approaches among the EU's member states." The document identifies the key threats and challenges facing the EU, namely terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, regional conflicts, state failure and organised

crime. Three strategic objectives were also outlined in the ESS. The first was to tackle these threats and challenges. The second stipulated that the EU should seek to build a secure neighbourhood in Eastern Europe, the Mediterranean and the Middle East. The third objective was to build a global order based on effective multilateralism and the respect of international law. To achieve these objectives, the document notes that "the first line of defence will often be abroad" and stresses the need for a "comprehensive approach" to security, bringing together civilian and military tools, as none of these threats can be tackled by "purely military means." The ESS calls on the EU to be a more active, more coherent and more capable international actor and to develop a "strategic culture that fosters early, rapid, and when necessary, robust intervention."

Although the ESS provides a framework for how the EU does security, it does not rank threats according to priority so it is difficult to allocate resources effectively and to determine how to achieve the goals identified in the ESS. In December 2008, the Council adopted a report on the implementation of the ESS, in which new threats were also identified – cyber security, energy security, climate change and piracy. The new EU Global Strategy (EUGS) (2016) also provides guidance as to what the objectives of the EU in the area of conflict prevention and peacebuilding are. The EUGS identifies the following priorities: protecting the security of the Union; fostering state and societal resilience in the neighbourhood; developing an integrated approach to conflict and crises; investing in cooperative regional orders, and promoting a reformed global governance fit for the 21st century. In order to identify more specific objectives, one will then have to have a look at the relevant policy documents, namely the Implementation Plan on Security and Defence (2016) and other relevant Council Conclusions and declarations, High Representative statements and reports, Commission reports, etc. Finally, other operational documents (for example, in the case of civilian crisis management operations, Council Decision, CONOPS and OPLAN) will also need to be incorporated into the analysis.

Once we have identified what the EU must do, we need to determine whether the EU has the capabilities to achieve these objectives (what the EU can do). A capability is an ability to do something. To identify existing capabilities, we could start at a more abstract level by looking at the EU's international roles. For instance, Christopher Hill has identified the following EU roles: a key actor in the global balance of power; a regional pacifier; global intervenor; a mediator of conflicts; and a bridge between rich and poor and as a joint supervisor of the world economy.[4] These roles or tasks are linked to capabilities that he defines as the EU's "ability to agree, its resources, and the instruments at its disposal" (1992: 315). For Hill, when it comes to capabilities, the important thing is not just resources, but "the ability to take on decisions and hold to them" (1992: 318). In both regards, Hill sees an increasing void between the capabilities of the EU and expectations, the so-called 'capability-expectation gap'. He argues that "the Community does not have the resources or the political structure to be able to respond to the demands […] The consequential gap

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[4] On the EU's international roles, see also Elgström and Smith 2006.

which has opened up between capabilities and expectations is dangerous" (Hill 1992: 315, emphasis in original).

Although Hill's definition of capabilities is different from the one used by EU-CIVCAP, his point about the impact of internal and external demands is an important one as these demands are likely to shape the ambitions and thus, the objectives of the EU. Moreover, the EU's international roles as envisaged by the EU itself are not that different from those identified by Hill a quarter of a century ago. According to the European External Action Service (EEAS), the "EU's many international roles" include the following: contributor to peace; a responsible neighbour; development partner; human rights defender; partner to the United Nations, force for global security; crisis response and humanitarian aid (EEAS n.d.). The official descriptions of these roles (see EEAS n.d.) might suggest that the EU already has capabilities in these areas. The objective of EU-CIVCAP, however, is to provide a critical examination of whether or not the EU does in fact possess these capabilities.

Capabilities can be subdivided into different functional tasks. In the military context, capability is divided into the following functions: command and control, inform, engage, protect, deploy and sustain (see e.g. EDA 2008). More specifically, in the area of civilian crisis management one can refer to the 'list of generic civilian CSDP tasks' of civilian missions that was developed by the Crisis Management and Planning Directorate (CMPD) and the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability (CPCC) in 2015 as a way to support capability development processes (EEAS 2015). In the past the EU viewed the concept of capabilities as synonymous with resources and developed a long list of resource requirements. Instead, the list of generic tasks puts the emphasis on functions and tasks that need to be delivered by civilian CSDP missions, thereby allowing for the identification of capability gaps. According to the list of generic tasks, one of the objectives will be to "identify capability requirements related to planning, conduct and overall support of civilian CSDP missions" (EEAS 2015: 2). The generic civilian tasks are grouped into five 'capability clusters' as follows (see also Figure 2):

- Under command and control fall generic tasks of initiating, conceiving, enabling, monitoring and directing missions across the chain of command.
- The engage and implement cluster encompasses aspects of mandate delivery, and engagement with local authorities and other relevant stakeholders.
- The inform cluster encompasses gathering, analysing and transmitting information for the purpose of being well informed and informing others.
- The set-up and sustain strand contains generic tasks enabling a civilian CSDP mission from a practical point of view, in particular for mission start-up, as well as aiding the sustainability of such efforts during the mission life time.
- Under duty of care there are generic tasks related to security, safety and wellbeing.

Figure 2. Generic civilian CSDP tasks
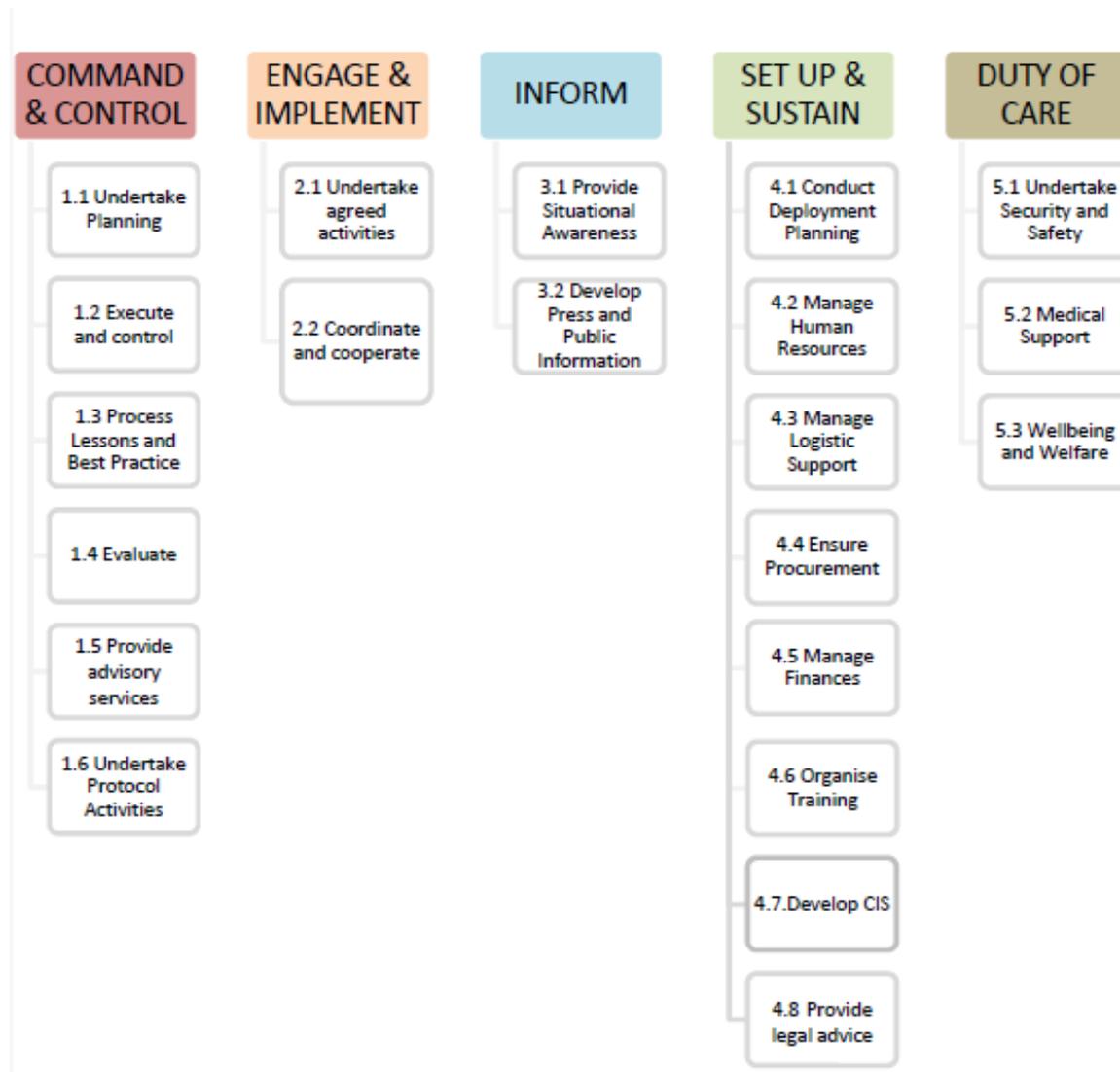
Each of these subtasks is then described in Annex I of the document (see EEAS 2015); capabilities are described in this document as functions or tasks, rather than resources, which is closer to our definition. Not all of these tasks are applicable to all areas of conflict prevention and peacebuilding (duty of care, for example), however, although some could be easily adapted. For this reason, we might want to apply another broader set of categories instead.

Another useful framework to assess existing EU capabilities in conflict prevention and peacebuilding is the five core capabilities ('5Cs') framework, which has been used by the development community for the purposes of capacity development (see, for instance, Keijzer et al. 2011). Here, capability or capacity is defined as "the ability of a human system to perform, sustain itself, and self-renew" (Ubels et al. 2010: 4). The 5Cs framework

understands organisational capacity as a combination of five core functional capabilities (IPAT 2015):

1) the capabilities to 'commit and act', i.e. to plan, to take decisions and to act on these decisions collectively;

2) to 'relate and attract': the ability to create and sustain links with external actors and stakeholders;

3) to 'balance diversity and coherence' refers to the ability to achieve coherence between different objectives, activities and actors within the organisation;

4) to 'create results': the ability to deliver on its objectives;

5) to 'adapt and self-renew': the ability of an organisation to learn from external and internal developments and to adjust to these changes. This capability would then link to the concept of 'dynamic capabilities' discussed earlier.

This framework helps to assess the ability of an organisation to deliver on objectives, but also to sustain itself and adapt to challenges. In other words, it understands capabilities not just as static, but also dynamic (see the earlier section of this paper on Capabilities). Moreover, in terms of categories, this is a broader framework than the one applied to EU civilian crisis management missions (see above) and could thus be used to assess other conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities examined by the EU-CIVCAP project. Figure 3 provides a number of indicators that can be used to assess each of these functional capabilities.

Figure 3. The 5Cs Framework: Some Indicators

Core capability	Components
1 Capability to relate.	• Political and social legitimacy. • Integer leadership and staff (upright, incorruptible or undiscussed). • Operational credibility /reliability. • Participation in coalitions. • Adequate alliances with external stakeholders. • ....
2 Capability to commit and act.	• Presence of a work plan, decision taking and acting on these decisions collectively. • Effective resource mobilisation (human, institutional and financial). • Effective monitoring of the work plan. • Inspiring /action oriented leadership. • Acceptance of leadership's integrity by staff. • ....
3 Capability to deliver on development objectives	• Financial resources. • Facilities, equipment and premises. • Human resources. • Access to knowledge resources. • ....
4 Capability to adapt and self-renew.	• Understanding of shifting contexts and relevant trends (external factors). • Confidence to change: leaving room for diversity, flexibility and creativity. • Use of opportunities and incentives, acknowledgment of mistakes that have been made and stimulation of the discipline to learn. • Systematically planned and evaluated learning, including in management. • ....
5 Capability to maintain coherence.	• Clear mandate, vision and strategy, which is known by staff and used by its management to guide its decision-making process. • A well-defined set of operating principles. • Leadership is committed to achieving coherence, balancing stability and change. • Coherence between ambition, vision, strategy and operations. • ....

Source: Keijzer et al. *2011: 61.*

In sum, the previous models/frameworks should provide useful guidance when conducting CBAs in the field of conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Rather than being applied rigidly, each of these is broad enough to allow variation and adaptation, depending on the conflict phase and topics under review.

Once we have established the level of current capabilities, the final step in the Capabilities-Based Assessment would be to determine any gaps in capabilities, in other words what the EU cannot do, by comparing current and required capabilities. The identification of gaps should then lead to recommendations for capability development, including specific resource requirements. In sum, the EU-CIVCAP project starts by identifying objectives and then identifies resource requirements, rather than the other way round.

4. METHODOLOGY AND DATA COLLECTION

This project conducts a comparative study of civilian capabilities in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Problems regarding the development of optimal civilian capabilities for the prevention of and response to conflict are not exclusive to the EU. Since the end of the Cold War, conflict prevention and peacebuilding have risen to prominence on the agendas of governments and international organisations (Boutros-Ghali 1992; OSCE 2011; UN 2001, 2004). These actors have been faced with similar problems regarding the selection, recruitment and deployment of civilian personnel, for instance (see UN 2009, 2011). However, despite efforts to improve and reform existing organisational capabilities and procedures, there has been a multitude of isolated, sometimes competing initiatives, but no attempt to develop common best practice. This project will compare the efforts of the EU, UN and the OSCE in conflict prevention and peacebuilding with a view to identify key lessons learned and common best practices (see WP4). By comparing European and international efforts in this area, the project will be able to gather relevant insights regarding the coherence and effectiveness of these efforts and the potential for strengthening capabilities.

EU-CIVCAP will also draw on the empirical findings from two case studies, comparing the EU's engagement in two key regions: the Western Balkans and the Horn of Africa (see WP5 and WP6). The Western Balkans has been and remains a key area of engagement for the EU since the dissolution of the Yugoslavian Federation in the 1990s (Blockmans 2007; Juncos 2013). It has also become a test-bed for CSDP capabilities and the EU's comprehensive approach. The Horn of Africa has become a focus of activity for the EU more recently, especially given the rise in maritime piracy and terrorism in the region (Germond and Smith 2009; Olsen 2014). By analysing and comparing the EU's implementation of conflict prevention and crisis management activities in these two regions, important insights into the development of civilian capabilities for conflict prevention and peacebuilding, as well as key operational challenges, will be generated.

In order to collect robust evidence, EU-CIVCAP's empirical research will simultaneously make use of various methods of data collection. First, documentary analysis will provide a basis to determine existing capabilities and recent changes introduced with the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty. The documentary materials will consist of primary documents, secondary literature and other documentary sources. Regarding primary sources, the documents will include EU official documents (EU Treaties, Council Declarations, Council Conclusions, etc.) and legislative and official documents from other international organisations and EU member states (e.g. resolutions, statements and debates). All of these documents are publicly accessible on the webpages of the relevant institutions. In the case of data not publicly available, the relevant authorisations will be obtained and provided to the Research Executive Agency prior to the use of confidential data (see DL 1.6). Secondary literature will include academic books, articles, newspaper articles, media reports, think tanks and NGO publications.

EU-CIVCAP's documentary analysis will be supplemented by semi-structured interviews with a selected number of actors involved in conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities. The aim of the qualitative interviews will be to contextualise the documentary material and to provide an in-depth insight into the processes of capability development, existing shortfalls and best practices in this area. The semi-structured nature of these interviews means that a list of open-ended questions will be prepared before the interviews, but their sequence may vary and other questions might be asked in response to interviewees' replies (Bryman 2008). When preparing the interviews, researchers will pay particular attention to issues of access and the safety of both the interviewee and the researcher (see Ethics Requirement 14), consent, and anonymity (see the next section on ethical issues and interviews).

In parallel with these activities, the project team will hold a series of workshops and seminars comprising a range of stakeholders from the public and institutional sector as well as from local communities, the private and business sector, the aim of which is to facilitate discussion and scrutiny of our emergent research findings by the conflict prevention and peacebuilding community itself. Where relevant, the insights gained at these meetings will then be incorporated into the final versions of the deliverables.

4.1 FIELDWORK: ETHICAL ISSUES AND RISKS

There are a number of ethical issues that arise from conducting fieldwork in an environment where there is conflict at any level, and where accusations of injustice are ongoing.[5] Firstly, by speaking with us and making certain claims, some interviewees naturally put themselves at a certain level of risk. While it is our responsibility to minimise this risk, it cannot be completely eliminated (British Sociological Association 2004: 4; ESRC 2015: 27), and the necessity of obtaining the informed consent of these individuals is compounded by this

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[5] This section on ethical issues and risks related to fieldwork is adapted from Gilberto Algar-Faria's PhD thesis.

ever-present element of risk.[6] As a result, we will brief interviewees fully regarding the nature of the study and the risks involved in their participation, allowing them time to consider how they feel about taking part and to ask us any questions that wish about our study.

While some interviewees may decline to participate in the study as a result of learning more about it (as predicted by Rose Wiles and her colleagues (2005a)), it is our belief that it is more important that all participating candidates are fully aware of these risks. However, there are multiple issues associated with gaining genuine consent, some of which are summarised below by Wiles and colleagues:

> It is … difficult to assess whether consent is 'really' informed. Dilemmas include: the value of signed consent forms; how to assess the ability (or 'competence') of individuals to give informed consent, especially for groups characterised as 'vulnerable'; how to recognise that people want to withdraw from their involvement in a research study; how to avoid gatekeepers denying consent for people to participate or include people who have not truly consented; and whether consent should be restricted to data collection or include the ways that data are interpreted and presented. (Wiles et al. 2005a)

The above list seems a reasonably good benchmark against which to assess one's precautions. Most interviewees in the regions covered by EU-CIVCAP, being from the NGO sphere or another profession that brings them into frequent contact with researchers, are likely to understand the value and implications of signing a consent form. In fact, in some cases we may have to ensure that the most internationally engaged individuals are not complacent when reading through the information sheet and consent form. Conversely, some interviewees may express concerns about various aspects of the study and/or the consent form before deciding either to consent or to decline.

Whenever we conduct participatory research, it will be made clear to the interviewees that they do not have to sign a form, and that in that case we would not use any of the information they may or may not choose to provide. According to their preferences, some individuals may be emailed a copy of the information sheet and consent form before the interview while others will be presented a paper copy at the beginning of the interview. Some of these individuals may be happy to sign but first have questions about the form.

Some individuals require more explanation of the consent procedure than others. As some interviewers will be working within cultures quite unlike their own, we will pay particular attention to ensuring a consistent understanding of the consent process (see Marshall and Batten 2004). Where a prospective participant does not speak the required level of English, it will be necessary to have the form orally translated for and explained to them in their native language by a friend or colleague they nominate, for example. On the other hand,

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[6] These are contained within the EU-CIVCAP Grant Agreement on Ethical requirements and the EU-CIVCAP Consent Form.

some individuals may be overly confident in their ability to avoid retribution for their comments (or are willing to bear whatever consequences their comments might have). In such cases, our own judgement about their ability to give consent will be required and we may accept their signed consent forms, but omit elements of the interview that we deem overly risky to transcribe and/or publish (this decision will be based on our awareness of the types of information that the majority of interviewees in a given context are not willing to divulge).

We will do everything we can to protect the information that interviewees provide to us. Informants will be made aware of the ways in which they can withdraw from the research study either during the interview or afterwards, prior to giving final consent in writing. We will anonymise all data collected and try to ensure that our participants perceive anonymity in the same way as we do. Data collected will be anonymous from the note-taking or recording stage. We will omit any names of people, organisations, programmes or events that could reveal the identity of the individuals we meet. This system will be explained to the interviewees prior to each interview.

There is an inherent tension for every researcher between the imperative of attaining useful research findings and the requirement for informants to be protected. We are aware, however, that we have the responsibility to remove participants from the study where we believe that they do not understand the implications of their involvement, where they are in danger, where we do not believe that they consented properly or where they appear uncomfortable or have withdrawn their consent. This situation can be avoided by building up trust and consent with interviewees over an extended period of time rather than requiring them to sign a form the first time we meet. This is not always possible, however. Although there will always be situations where consent cannot be obtained (Spicker 2007: 3), under no circumstances would we ever conduct covert research, which would betray the trust of our participants (Wiles et al. 2005b). Individuals will always be fully aware of when they are being interviewed and we will always try to avoid making them feel uncomfortable when speaking to us.

There are issues involved in conducting fieldwork – not only with the nature of consent and the risks arising from the informants' association with us and our research project, but beyond that, there is also the risk of upsetting or damaging participants through retraumatisation during the interviews. Retraumatisation can occur when a person is reminded of a traumatic event in their lives. In order to minimise the chance of this happening, we will avoid mentioning potentially upsetting events relevant to the interviewee's given context, and from each individual's past, and will be considerate and relaxed in our interview styles and structures, prioritising their wellbeing above the imperative to obtain information. Those who give information that could be upsetting for them may do so of their own free will, unprompted. We are also aware, of course, that we must be careful not to (re)traumatise ourselves in the course of our fieldwork. Such risks, taken together, add to the overall limitations of this study.

As far as safety issues are concerned, the measures are detailed in the Ethics Requirement 14. As part of the University of Bristol, the project is required to comply with the Faculty of Social Science and Law and University policies for health and safety in research. These demand that the appropriate fieldwork and travel risk assessment documentation is completed prior to the commencement of fieldwork by the Principal Investigator and researchers, and that appropriate insurance cover has been arranged for all researchers on the project.

For the purposes of EU-CIVCAP fieldwork research, risk assessments will be conducted to understand and mitigate risks, and to ensure the safety of the researchers undertaking interviews and conducting workshops in the field. This will entail, where required, that respective institutional Lone Worker policies are followed, providing guidance on safety for researchers working alone. This entails the establishment of procedures for checking-in on departure and return, regular check-ins whilst away, plus the agreement of emergency procedures, including those to engage in cases of non-contact. Where fieldwork is to be conducted in spaces with a heightened security risk, such as Cambodia or the Horn of Africa, pre-departure security checks of the conditions on the ground will be conducted in conjunction with the respective foreign office of the country in which that researcher is based (for example the Foreign and Commonwealth Office for UK researchers). In instances where fieldwork is conducted abroad, researchers will need to establish procedures for evacuation in case of a breakdown in civil order, or for personal health or security reasons. Insurance will also be required, and specialist cover may be needed (this is assessed on a case-by-case basis). These procedures will be held with the Consortium Coordinator at the University of Bristol, and with the relevant researchers at their own institution.

5. CONCLUDING REMARKS

This paper has presented a conceptual and methodological framework to support the implementation of the EU-CIVCAP project and defined the key concepts of conflict prevention, peacebuilding, resources and capabilities to ensure consistency across different work packages and deliverables. The paper has drawn on a range of literatures (strategic management, development and military studies, for example) and developed a capabilities-based assessment approach. The CBA will be used by the WPs to identify gaps in capabilities in different phases of the conflict cycle. This framework allows for the identification of existing and required capabilities in order for the EU to achieve its goals in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. This framework moves from previous assessments of EU capabilities which have focused on short-term requirements to a more strategic and holistic approach to capability development by linking goals to capabilities. The paper also summarises the project's methodology and data collection methods, including ethical and risk-related issues, to be considered by those conducting empirical fieldwork, especially where that fieldwork is carried out in conflict areas.

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ANNEX I. EU-CIVCAP OBJECTIVES

(1) <u>To assess EU civilian capabilities for external conflict prevention and peacebuilding</u>

EU-CIVCAP will analyse and synthesise existing research in order to generate a clear assessment of EU capabilities for civilian conflict prevention and peacebuilding. The analysis will cover two key dimensions:

i.   EU-CIVCAP will examine EU conflict prevention and peacebuilding throughout the 'life cycle of conflict'. Work Packages (WPs) 3 to 6 will carry out a capabilities-based analysis in different phases of the EU's engagement in conflict areas: from early warning and conflict analysis to early response, the execution of EU civilian and military missions and support for local capacity-building. By doing so, EU-CIVCAP will not only include short-term stabilisation and conflict prevention initiatives, but also long-term peacebuilding measures, in accordance with the scope of this call.

ii.   WPs 2 to 6 will focus on the following cross-cutting challenges in EU conflict prevention and peacebuilding: filling the early warning/response gap; combining short-term vs long-term approaches to conflict prevention and peacebuilding; enhancing civil-military coordination in conflict prevention and peacebuilding; and ensuring local ownership.

To achieve this objective, the project will apply a comprehensive, comparative and multidisciplinary approach to EU conflict prevention and peacebuilding. From a comparative perspective, EU-CIVCAP will evaluate the EU's record to date and compare it to that of other international actors (the UN and the OSCE, for example). Moreover, by evaluating the EU's engagement in two key regions (the Western Balkans and the Horn of Africa), EU-CIVCAP will generate significant insights into operational challenges.

(2) <u>To identify and document lessons learned and best practices in EU conflict prevention and peacebuilding</u>

Drawing on the assessment of the EU's past and ongoing civilian and military efforts (**Objective 1**), this project will identify and document empirically grounded lessons, best practices and solutions to better address key challenges in EU conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Lessons learned gathered by WPs 2 to 6 will be compiled by WP7 into a catalogue of lessons learned and best practices reports. Lessons learned and best practices gathered by EU-CIVCAP will address the following issues:

- Taking into account the fact that 'conflicts cannot be overcome solely by military or civilian means alone', this project will address the question of how civilian and military

instruments can be better coordinated and integrated. The focus will be on how civil-military synergies can be better exploited to develop enhanced capabilities, new and dual-use technologies, and solutions to prevent and respond to international conflicts.

- Lessons learned and best practices will also be gathered regarding the potential for the pooling and sharing of capabilities and technologies for civilian conflict prevention and peacebuilding.
- The comparative analysis between the EU, the UN and the OSCE will also feed into the enhancement of EU civilian conflict prevention and peacebuilding capabilities.
- The comparative analysis of the EU's role in the Western Balkans and the Horn of Africa will make available valuable lessons on the implementation of conflict prevention and peacebuilding to policymakers and experts in the field.

(3) <u>To enhance future policy practice and research on EU conflict prevention and peacebuilding</u>

Based on the assessment of EU activities (**Objective 1**) and the identification of lessons learned and best practices in this area (**Objective 2**), the project will provide research-based policy recommendations to guide the EU's future priorities and research in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. This objective will be addressed by WPs 7 and 8. More specifically:

- The findings of EU-CIVCAP will enhance policy-relevant knowledge and practice in the area of EU civilian conflict prevention and peacebuilding. The consortium will produce a set of policy recommendations for the improvement and development of civilian capabilities. The project will identify: the best civilian capabilities to ensure sustainable peace in conflict-affected zones; key shortfalls in EU civilian capabilities and technologies and how to address them; recommendations for pooling and sharing of capabilities; and, finally, a set of policy priorities for the exploitation of civilian-military synergies.
- The findings of this project will contribute to the identification of key priorities for future H2020 calls in the area of civilian conflict prevention and peacebuilding. In particular, by identifying key conceptual, theoretical and empirical gaps in the understanding of EU conflict prevention capabilities, EU-CIVCAP will provide the basis for the development of future research priorities for H2020 calls.

ANNEX II. THE LIFE CYCLE OF CONFLICT

EU-CIVCAP adopts an innovative conceptual framework. There are two dimensions to this. The first is temporal or longitudinal. This is the **life cycle of a conflict**, or what it is also known as the 'conflict cycle'. Individual work packages link to different stages of the conflict cycle to provide a comprehensive analysis of EU civilian capabilities for conflict prevention and peacebuilding (see Figure 4). The second dimension is a horizontal one. Each work package examines a number of **cross-cutting issues**, which have been identified in the literature as critical to civilian capabilities (see Annex III). Before turning to these two dimensions, however, it is important to define the key terms.
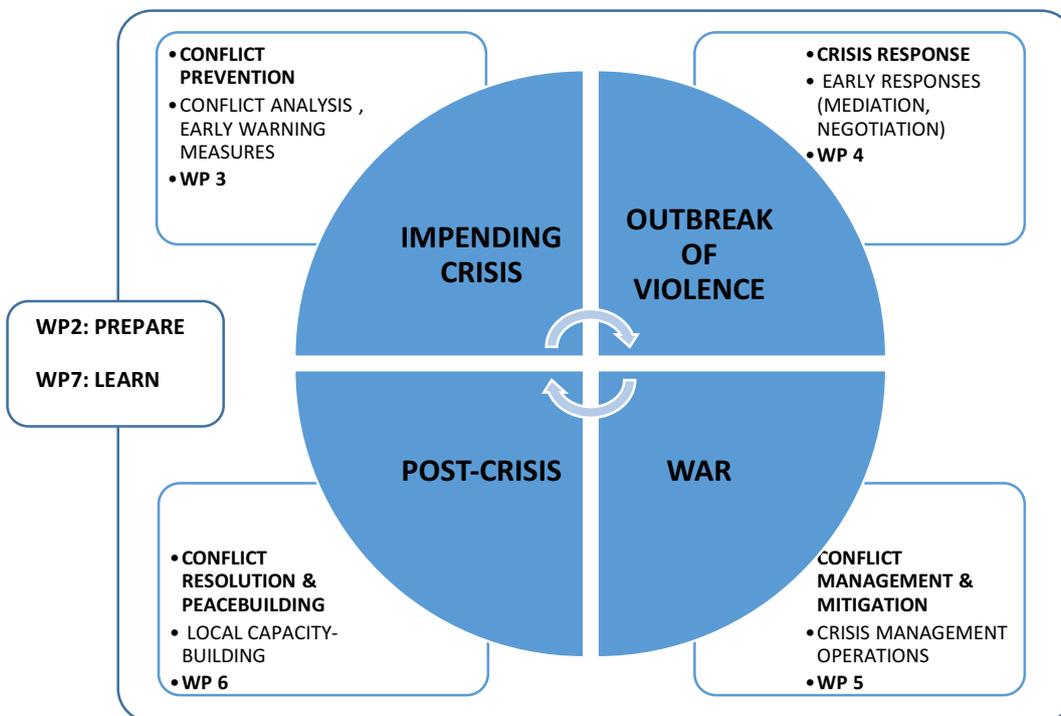
Conflict prevention and peacebuilding are not isolated initiatives. Rather, they are best conceptualised as a continuum of activities covering various stages of the life cycle of conflict (from rising tensions to the outbreak of conflict to post-crisis stabilisation). Thus, *EU-CIVCAP will examine conflict prevention and peacebuilding through the entire conflict cycle in order to provide a holistic assessment of existing capabilities and potential capability shortfalls* (see Figure 4).

More specifically, the project will examine the following phases:

• *Conflict prevention:* This includes preventative measures such as conflict analysis, early warning, conflict sensitive development programming (CSDP), political dialogue and mediation activities. These policies extend beyond the scope of the CSDP to other policy areas, including trade and development. These activities, including the integration of gender in conflict prevention initiatives, will be the focus of WP3.

• *Early response:* This phase includes those measures launched by international actors in response to the outbreak of violence, including shuttle diplomacy and mediation between conflict parties. WP4 places particular emphasis on how the EU, its member states, the UN and the OSCE react to the outbreak of violence and how they coordinate (or do not coordinate) their efforts during this phase.

• *Execution of civilian and military missions:* This refers to the implementation of measures aimed at stopping violence and preventing the recurrence of future conflict. WP5 will examine the execution of civilian and military missions, with a specific emphasis on the implementation of the comprehensive approach and the potential synergies between civilian and military instruments in specific conflict areas.

• *Support for local capacity-building:* This entails supporting the emergence of institutions and practices within the target society to support peaceful conflict resolution. Local capacity building can be effectively divided into two sets of policy. The first set

encompasses measures to improve the capacity of the state in conflict management and resolution. These efforts include security sector reform, democratisation, training in legislation, and professional training for bureaucrats. The second set is aimed at the grassroots of society, emphasising the empowerment of local communities over the importance of the state. This has entailed the implementation of measures to support the development of a robust civil society, which in turn is assumed to provide the basis for a sustainable democratic government. WP6 will examine both sets of policies in order to identify capability shortfalls in capacity-building activities.

Figure 4: Life cycle of conflict and work packages

For its part, WP2 provides an overview of the EU and member state capabilities in conflict prevention and peacebuilding, focusing specifically on the technology, personnel and procedures available. Finally, WP7 will gather the empirical findings from all of the other work packages to compile a catalogue of lessons learned and best practices reports.