



Bertelsmann Stiftung (ed.)

Europe's Coherence Gap in External Crisis and Conflict Management

Political Rhetoric and Institutional Practices in the EU and Its Member States

1. edition 2020, 412 pp (E-Book / PDF)

ISBN 978-3-86793-912-6

23,99 €

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External interventions to mitigate crises or end conflicts have rarely succeeded. The EU and its member states, in particular, have repeatedly run up against their limits in the civil wars in Afghanistan, the Congo, Libya, Syria, the Sahel region and Yemen. However, the EU – if not the entire international community – have learned one lesson from their faltering peacebuilding

efforts: If they are to have any chance of making a meaningful and lasting difference, they must develop and use comprehensive strategies that combine and coordinate the various tools available to diplomacy, development cooperation and security.

The 29 reports presented in this book – one for each EU member state as well as one on the EU as a whole – examine how steep the learning curve has been and, accordingly, how successful these bodies have been at forming new linkages among the various actors involved in external crisis and conflict management as well as within and between their institutions and organisations.

While the EU clearly still has a long way to go before it can live up to its rhetoric and become a distinct and effective actor on the foreign policy stage, small and incremental steps in reorganising institutional practise may help in narrowing the gap between words and deeds.

This volume provides examples of how the EU and its member states have found new organisational structures and procedures – specifically at the headquarters level – to better organise the necessary combination and coordination of the many tools available for crisis and conflict management. These ways are then juxtaposed in a ‘big picture’ chapter, which also identifies best practices for successful WGA implementation.

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