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Joining Hands in the Training of Peacekeepers – What prospects for EU-India cooperation?¹

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Peacekeeping plays a crucial role in the maintenance of international peace and stability and has remained the most visible multilateral tool of the UN. Over the past decades, peacekeepers are deployed in increasingly complex conflict scenarios. Simultaneously, key financial supporters of UN peacekeeping, such as the United States, have pressed for budget cuts, which successively led to a reduced overall peacekeeping budget. As a response, delegates of many troop-contributing countries have pointed out that in the current scenario peacekeepers are demanded to 'do more with less' (PMI to the UN, 2018).

In such a scenario, there is a pressing need to provide peacekeepers with adequate training to make them prepared for these new challenges. The UN has recognised the centrality of training and has included it as a critical element of the UN Secretary-General's reform agenda *Action for Peacekeeping (A4P)*. Moreover, UN member states have pointed out the need for partnerships in training to enhance the performance of peacekeepers (United Nations, 2018).

The European Union, a significant financial contributor to UN peacekeeping and an important troop-contributor through CSDP missions and operations, has identified India – a key UN troop contributor - as a promising partner for entering such partnership. In a Council conclusion titled *Enhanced EU security cooperation in and with Asia*, as well as in the *EU's Strategy on India* from November 2018, the EU has expressed a keen interest to advance EU-India cooperation on UN peacekeeping training by sharing training expertise and facilitating Indian participation in EU CSDP missions and operations (Council of the European Union, 2018; EEAS, 2018).

Until now, the EU-India training partnership has not moved beyond a nascent stage. In order to advance cooperation, the first step would be to create a better understanding of each other's training architecture among policymakers and trainers through establishing a security dialogue on peacekeeping and crisis management and institutionalising an exchange of trainers. An exchange between academic partner institutes of training centres could help this process. Once better understanding is created, training of third countries could materialise, particularly in common priority areas, such as mainstreaming gender in peacekeeping training.

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INTRODUCTION

For a long time, the UN and other peacekeeping actors had neglected the essential role of training in enhancing the effectiveness of peacekeeping. Today, training has taken centre stage. Major UN reports, such as the *High-level Independent Panel on Peace Operations Report* (2015), the *Santos Cruz Report on Security of UN Peacekeeper* (2017) and the *A4P* initiative launched by UN Secretary-General Guterres in 2018 have pointed out how inadequate pre-deployment training is linked to mission underperformance, i.e. failure to protect civilians, as well as higher fatalities among peacekeeper. Following allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse in the missions, the importance to strengthen conduct and discipline through pre-deployment training has moreover been highlighted (United Nations, 2019a). In order to enable peacekeeper around the globe to meet the evolving challenges of peacekeeping operations, training cooperation and lessons-learned exchanges will be vital.

THE EU AND INDIA'S PEACEKEEPING TRAINING ARCHITECTURES

Peacekeeping training in the EU is directed to personnel participating in UN missions, as well as the EU's own Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions and operations. In this regard the EU's policy on training for CSDP states that its' role is to be 'compatible and complementary (...) with training activities carried out by the UN, OSCE; NATO, African Union and other international organisations or individual partners'. (Council of the European Union, 2017). Most of the peacekeeping training in the EU is conducted by the training centres of the EU's member states. The European Security and Defence College (ESDC) in Brussels acts as the only provider of training at the European level (Dubois, 2017). The ESDC is a network college, connecting over 165 training institutes, i.e. national defence academies, police colleges, peace universities, and diplomatic training institutes (Katsagonous, 2020). The ESDC offers courses focusing on CSDP missions, such as the CSDP orientation course, and courses with a specific issue-area focus, i.e. security sector reform. The courses encourage a mix of participants from civilian, military and police backgrounds (Katsagonous, 2020).

Peacekeeping training in India is conducted by the Centre for United Nations Peacekeeping, Delhi (CUNPK). Training is also organised by the respective security forces, such as the Central Reserve Police Force for police contingents. The CUNPK was set up in 2000, as a brainchild of Lt. Gen. Satish Nambiar, former Force Commander of the UN protection force in former Yugoslavia. The underlying mission of the institute is to act as a 'repository' of India's long-standing peacekeeping experiences (Nambiar, 2014). Through opening its courses for foreign participants, the CUNPK also acts as a platform to share India's best practices and ideas on peacekeeping with other troop-contributing countries (MEA (GOI), 2003). The CUNPK offers international and national courses. The national courses are conceptualised for the Indian military contingents as pre-deployment courses and include, for instance, field training exercises. The CUNPK's international courses are directed to a more senior military and police audience, i.e. military observers. The focus of these courses is on leadership capacities or specific issue areas.

WHY HAS COOPERATION FAILED TO MATERIALISE?

Outlining the training architectures in India and the EU has revealed several obstacles in the way of advancing the partnership.

Most significantly, the EU's training architecture focuses on creating expertise on CSDP missions among European member states and third countries interested - or already participating - in CSDP missions, reflecting the EU's preference to deploy its personnel through CSDP, rather than UN missions (Terkovich and Koops, 2018). India's training centre, on the contrary, prepares exclusively for UN-led missions, reflecting the government's position to not deploy its troops outside the UN framework (Mohan and Rotmann, 2017).

Secondly, the ESDC follows an inclusive approach to training, inviting civilian, police, military and diplomatic staff to its courses to allow an exchange of expertise from different perspectives (Katsagonous, 2020, p. 13). This inclusiveness is also reflected in the diverse professional backgrounds of the permanent staff members and instructors at the ESDC. Among the EU's overall contribution to crisis management, civilian missions have remained larger in scale, both in numbers as well as

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geographical scope (EU Parliament, 2018). India's contribution to UN peacekeeping conversely focuses on military and to a lesser extent police contribution. Consequently, the CUNPK's training predominantly addresses military and police. Most instructors at the CUNPK have a military background and prior experience in UN peacekeeping deployments. Only for specific modules, such as gender and peacekeeping, the CUNPK invites external experts, i.e. from UN Women.

Thirdly, the EU and India both understand their expertise, experience and training approaches to be valuable to third countries and have thus acted in the past as places of knowledge transfer. The EU has, for instance, deployed peacekeeping training missions to Somalia, Mali, Niger and the Central African Republic. At the most recent UN peacekeeping defence ministerial in 2019, the EU pledged support for African peacekeeping training centres and announced more mobile training teams (Tor, 2017; United Nations, 2019b). India's capacity as a trainer has translated into India sending mobile training teams to Vietnam (2017) and Myanmar (2018), offering training to Kazakhstan's first-ever peacekeeping contingent and organising since 2016 an annual training course for African Partners (UNPCAP) together with the United States (MEA (GOI), 2013). Moreover, the Ministry of External Affairs pays fifteen vacancies for foreign participants from the global south for each of India's international training course. As both the EU and India have taken pride in the trajectory of their training institutes and their experience in training third countries, there is an implicit expectation, that in any training cooperation, their institutes will act in a leading role. Initiating an EU-India training partnership, thus requires sensitivity to accommodate these expectations.

Lastly, given that peacekeeping and crisis management has remained the least developed area of the EU-India strategic partnership, there is a lack of understanding about the other sides' training setup and actorness in peacekeeping.² While India does consider the EU a credible actor in peacekeeping, a finding which contradicts many previous assessments of India contesting the EU's actorness in security³, there remain doubts among the Indian training

community and policymaker about the complementarity in approaches and training philosophies. In the Indian reading, the EU is commonly clustered with other Western states portrayed to follow a more robust and offensive peacekeeping approach, explained with the EU member states embeddedness in NATO-security structures. Moreover, the EU is perceived to be complicit in imposing liberal templates to host society in an attempt to export democracy (Allen, 2013; Klossek, 2019). India, on the contrary, understands its own approach as respecting the sovereignty of the host state and sees itself more aligned with other countries from the global south (De Carvalho and De Coning, 2013). Finally, the Indian training community has expressed doubts about the interoperability between CSDP and UN missions.

WHAT IS THE WAY FORWARD?

The first step to establish a functioning training partnership would be to create a better understanding of each other's training philosophies and peacekeeping approaches among policymakers and the broader training community. It would involve the EU conveying to the Indian side that it shares a common understanding of crisis management with the UN, with many CSDP missions operating in support of UN missions, in order to debunk the idea that there is no interoperability (Tardy, 2019). This can only be achieved through regular interaction between the EU and India, e.g. in the form of a joint working group on crisis management. Once this understanding is created, it could eventually facilitate Indian participation in CSDP missions. India's position not to deploy outside the UN framework is not set in stone and has been shown by India's escort of a World Food Programme vessel, in support of EU NAVFOR Operation Atalanta in 2018 (EEAS, 2019).

Moreover, in order to facilitate an exchange of trainers among the EU and India, it is essential to acknowledge that the majority of India's contribution to UN peacekeeping is in the form of troop contingents, meaning that the CUNPK will remain a military-focused institution. Exchange of trainers might thus be most feasible if it takes places between the CUNPK and one of the ESDC's partner

² The assessment in the following section are based on interviews with the peacekeeping training community in India and the EU conducted between November 2018 and February 2019.

³ see for instance Howorth (2016); Lai et al. (2019).

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institutes with a military focus, such as national defence academies. What might play a positive role is that the EU plans to post a security advisor to Delhi to facilitate military-to-military interactions. This will help to initiate the dialogue on cooperation in crisis management (EEAS, 2018).

Finally, the fact that both the EU and India's training institutes have in the past acted as places of knowledge transfer can be used as an asset, rather than an obstacle if it is channelled into training cooperation assisting third countries. Here, it is crucial not to replicate existing formats, such as the US-Indian cooperation on training African peacekeepers, but to tap on specific priority areas and expertise of the EU and India, such as the implementation of gender mainstreaming in peacekeeping training.

In the end, both actors have shown that they are committed to enhancing peacekeeping performance through the means of training. With a well-designed initiative, training cooperation between India and the EU could be achieved at relatively low costs and could contribute to deepening their strategic partnership.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Establish a security dialogue on crisis management, peacekeeping and peacebuilding, mirroring existing dialogues in the fields of counterterrorism, cybersecurity, non-proliferation, disarmament and maritime security. Consider inviting military experts to these dialogues.
2. Institutionalise – through formal agreements - a regular exchange of peacekeeping trainers between the CUNPK and the ESDC, respectively ESDC's partner institutes within the EU member states which in their institutional setup resemble more closely the one of the CUNPK
3. Invite military, police, and civilian personnel from India to training at the ESDC to create an

understanding of CSDP missions and operations among the Indian side

4. Consider training cooperation of third countries, for instance, by deploying Mobile Training Teams (MTTs)
5. Focus on issue areas in training, which are singled out as priority areas for both actors. Here particularly, the issue of gender and the role of women in peacekeeping should be considered. There exists a possibility to build on earlier cooperation, such as the financing of a female military officers' course (FMOC) at the CUNPK by EU member states⁴
6. Take advantage of the annual conference of the International Association of Peacekeeping Training Centres (IAPTC), where both India and the EU are represented, for informal exchange among trainers
7. Given that both the ESDC and the CUNPK have academic partner institutes, a possible exchange between these institutes could create expertise and joint research on the issue of training

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⁴ Embassy of the Netherlands, 2018. 'The Netherlands encourages the participation of women in peacekeeping Missions', <https://www.netherlandsworldwide.nl/binaries/ennederlandwereldwijd/>

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