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Central Africa Report

Preventing conflict in Central Africa
ECCAS caught between ambitions, challenges and reality

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Summary

The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) has a long way to go in preventing regional crises. Many challenges remain in making the infrastructure (especially the Central African Early Warning Mechanism and the Central African Multinational Force) operational and effective, and there is a gap between ambition and reality. These obstacles and challenges include ECCAS' highly centralised and state-focused structure; a narrow, militaristic approach to security issues; and the wider institutional setting. Matters of responsibility in relation to the African Union also remain unresolved. With regard to the cross-border dimension of security issues and the high number of upcoming elections in the region, ECCAS' participation in maintaining peace appears crucial.

THE ANTICIPATION AND prevention of crises and conflicts – along with their management and resolution – presents a central priority in efforts by the African Union (AU) to promote and maintain peace and security on the continent. With regard to the regional dimension and the dynamics of most security threats and challenges in Africa, regional economic communities (RECs) have been acknowledged as crucial actors for conflict prevention. Their regional structures and mechanisms are regarded as cornerstones of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA).

ECCAS broadens its mandate

Faced with pressure from the numerous conflicts and crises that have plagued Central Africa during the 1990s, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) has substantially revised and broadened what was initially a purely economic mandate. The development of capacities for maintaining peace, security and stability as an essential condition for economic and social development has become one of its new key priorities.

The aim of this report, which is based on expert interviews in Libreville and desk research, is to provide a multi-faceted perspective on ECCAS' capacities in conflict prevention. In

particular, it looks at ECCAS' structures and its approaches to anticipating and deterring the escalation of violence and the outbreak of conflicts. Two elements of ECCAS' peace and security architecture are especially considered: the Central African Early Warning Mechanism (MARAC) and the Central African Multinational Force (FOMAC).

Besides assessing the progress made towards putting these instruments into operation, the report discusses major problems and challenges that currently hamper Central African regional cooperation and limit ECCAS' performance in the field of peace and security.

Refocusing regional cooperation

ECCAS was created in 1983 and launched two years later. Conceived as a pillar of the African Economic Community (AEC),[1] under the Lagos Plan of Action, its initial aim was to promote and strengthen harmonious cooperation among its members. It was also tasked with promoting balanced and self-sustained development in all fields of economic and social activity in Central Africa, with a view to contributing to the progress and development of the African continent.

Member states are Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic (CAR), Chad, the Republic of the Congo, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Rwanda, São Tomé and Príncipe, and Angola, which switched in 1999 from observer status to full membership. Rwanda, one of the founding

Figure 1: ECCAS member states

Member countries: 11
Angola
Burundi
Cameroon
Central African Republic
Chad
Congo
Democratic Republic of Congo
Equatorial Guinea
Gabon
Rwanda
São Tomé and Príncipe
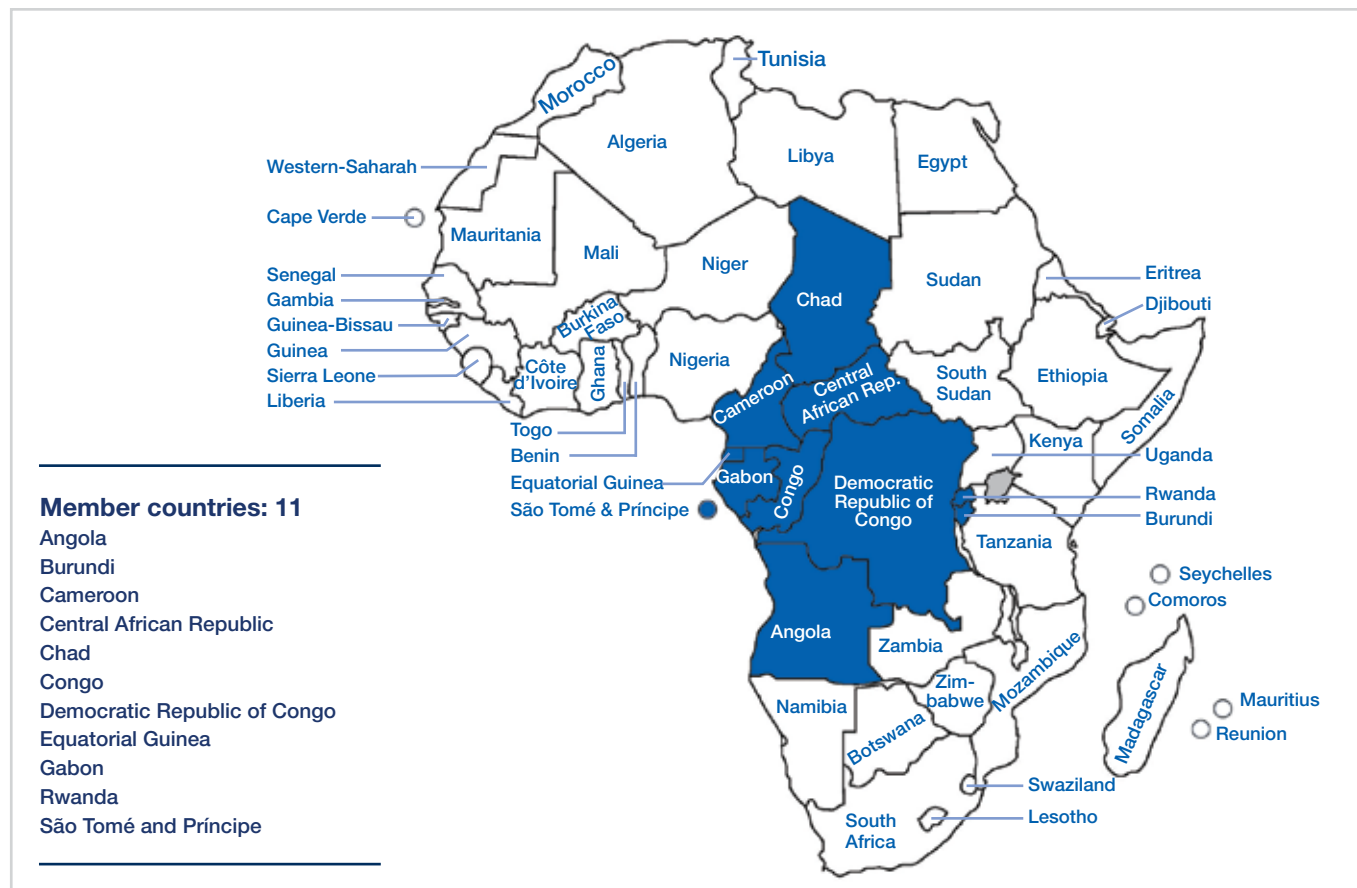
Source: www.uneca.org/oria/pages/eccas-economic-community-central-african-states

members, struggled with its multiple regional memberships and withdrew in 2007 but rejoined the community at the 16th summit on 25 May 2015.

Soon after ECCAS' establishment, the community's performance was severely affected by financial difficulties and the lack of support from its members, resulting in institutional dysfunction and a series of logjams and bottlenecks. During the 1990s, the rise of political instability, crises and conflicts in the majority of Central African countries, as well as the engagement of some member states on opposite sides in the Great Lakes wars, brought an additional challenge to regional cooperation. From 1992 to 1998, the community went through a period of inactivity and paralysis, which is often referred to as ECCAS' hibernation.[2]

The decision to revive ECCAS came at the member states' extraordinary summit in Libreville in February 1998. Acknowledging that economic cooperation requires a context of political stability, the heads of state and government agreed in June 1999 in Malabo to substantially revise the community's mandate.

This agreement was driven by the awareness of a changing global context. The growing reluctance of the international community to actively engage in conflict management on the African continent had resulted in a call for more burden sharing and greater responsibility on the part of African states and actors. The United Nations (UN) in particular urged African regional organisations to strengthen their peace and security capacities in line with Chapter VIII of the UN Charter.[3]

Against this background, the development of regional capacities for the maintenance of peace, security and stability as prerequisites for socio-economic development was included in 1999 among ECCAS' four newly defined priority fields.[4] The central pillar of these regional capacities is the Central African Peace and Security Council (COPAX). Adopted in February 2000, the Protocol establishing COPAX received the required number of ratifications and entered into force at the 11th Summit of Heads of State in Brazzaville in January 2004.

According to Article 2 of the Protocol, COPAX is ECCAS' organ for political dialogue on peace and security issues. Meeting both at heads of state and government level and at ministerial level, COPAX is presented as the supreme decision-making body for peace and security issues in the region. COPAX is advised by the Commission on Defence and Security (CDS). CDS's mandate is to evaluate the need and conditions for military operations and to advise COPAX in its decision-making and planning of conflict prevention and management. It is composed of the member states' chiefs of staff, police and gendarmerie chiefs, as well as experts from the ministries of foreign affairs, defence, security and the interior.

COPAX' Protocol foresees the creation and setup of MARAC and FOMAC as the Council's two technical bodies.[5] The standing orders for these organs were adopted at the 10th Summit of Heads of State in Malabo in June 2002.

Major security threats in Central Africa

Central Africa is one of the continent's most fragile and vulnerable regions, having witnessed a large number of all the coups d'état, crises and conflicts that have taken place in Africa since 1990. Although the ECCAS community also includes countries that are relatively stable, without any major political crises since their independence – like Gabon or Cameroon – current security issues, including cross-border crime and terrorism, maritime security, the risk of electoral violence and the still not settled crises in the CAR, cannot be confined by national frontiers and require a holistic and cross-border approach to limit their regional impact.

> Porous borders, limited territorial control and weak state authority have especially threatened border provinces as fragile and vulnerable

Cross-border crime and terrorism

The criminal activities and increasing expansion of Boko Haram pose a direct security threat, especially for Chad and Cameroon, whose territories bordering Nigeria have been attacked by the radical Islamist movement. Indirectly, however, the dynamics of Boko Haram terrorism present a severe security risk for the entire region.

On the one hand, border porosity, limited territorial control, and weak state authority in remote zones beyond the capital have especially threatened border provinces as fragile and vulnerable areas in almost all Central African states. The emergence and activities of centrifugal movements, rebels and armed groups often remain outside the reach of state control. The ability to cross borders easily increases the risk of a spillover of violence across neighbouring countries. In their Yaoundé Declaration, signed at the COPAX summit in February 2015, the representatives of the then 10 ECCAS states clearly acknowledged the 'risk posed by this terrorist group Boko Haram to destabilise the entire Central African Sub-region'.[6] The rise of Boko Haram also presents a challenge at the economic level. Although ECCAS is the REC with the lowest level of intra-regional trade,[7] especially landlocked member

states depend upon connectivity with the infrastructure of their neighbours. They rely on stable transit routes to the nearest harbours for their intercontinental exports. Chad, for instance, uses the pipeline connecting its oil fields in Doba with the port of Kribi in Cameroon. The engagement of Chad in the fight against Boko Haram can thus, to some extent, be explained by the awareness of the threat any further advancement of the group within the whole region poses for the central pillar of the country's economy, especially in the context of a low oil price.

Maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea

Another challenge for the region, and especially its economy, is the rise of insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea over the last few years. Holding 4,5% of the world's oil reserves, the Gulf has become the most important oil-producing region in Africa. The predicted petroleum reserves in the Gulf are estimated at 25 billion barrels and the daily production is of five million barrels – compared to 9,4 million for the whole African continent.[8]

With the recent decline of the world oil price, secure revenues are key for the Central African oil producers. Against this background, rising threats in the Gulf, where today more than one-quarter of all worldwide pirate attacks take place, present a significant challenge.[9] Maritime security has thus become a major issue, calling for closer cooperation within the region, but also at the inter-regional level and with international partners.

The risk of electoral violence

In 2015 and 2016, elections are held or expected to be held in six of the 11 ECCAS member states: In 2015, presidential and parliamentary elections were held in June and July in Burundi, and will probably be organised in the CAR; in 2016, elections are planned in Chad, the Republic of the Congo, the DRC and Gabon. Many of the continent's longest-serving heads of state are in this region. The presidents of Angola, Equatorial Guinea, Cameroon and the Republic of the Congo have been in power for more than 30 years; Chad's president, Idriss Déby, for a quarter-century.

Whereas crises and conflicts in Africa have tended to start, in most cases, after the holding of elections, some observers see in Central Africa a growing security risk in pre-election tensions.[10] Causes may be constitutional changes to allow incumbent presidents to run for another term, or a controversial candidacy, such as in Burundi in April 2015; a postponement of elections; or opposition parties' anticipation of election fraud.

Election-based violence in one state can have various negative impacts on the stability in other countries. One aspect is that it often leads to human displacement. Besides enormous economic and humanitarian costs for host countries, the influx of refugees could potentially trigger tensions which may serve as a catalyst for conflicts. In a similar way, electoral violence is likely to increase the circulation of weapons across borders and thus jeopardise stability in already volatile regions.[11] An election-based political crisis also holds the potential to fuel ethnic tensions which may develop a cross-border dimension. In Central Africa, moreover, where several countries are to hold elections soon, violent electoral contests in one state may also result in imitation effects in others.

MANY OF THE CONTINENT'S LONGEST-SERVING HEADS OF STATE ARE IN THE ECCAS REGION

The crisis in the CAR

Since independence and especially since the end of the 1990s, the CAR has been plunged into a series of violent military-political crises. Profound socio-economic grievances and the state's weakness and incapacity to adequately respond have culminated in recurrent tensions, rebellions and civil unrest.[12]

Between 1997 and today, a dozen different multinational peace operations have been deployed to contribute to the restoration of order, stability and security. ECCAS was present in the CAR from 2008 to 2013 with the Peace Consolidation Mission in the CAR, or MICOPAX. MICOPAX replaced the multinational force FOMUC, which had been led by the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC) since 2002.

With the recent violent escalation of the conflict, following the rebellion of a coalition of armed groups under the name of Séléka, the violent coup d'état against then-president François Bozizé and the emergence of mainly Christian self-defence militia to fight the predominantly Muslim rebels, first the AU and then the UN have taken over from ECCAS. The AU operated an international support mission (MISCA) from December 2013 to September 2014. Since then, the UN mission MINUSCA has been deployed in the CAR, in parallel with the ongoing French Opération Sangaris.

> There is a serious risk of violence and instability spilling over borders and engulfing the region, as long as the security situation in the CAR remains unsettled

The CAR crisis has a clear regional dimension. Due to the limited territorial reach of state authority and lacking control over borders and remote areas, CAR's year-long instability has allowed the country to become a stronghold for ex-soldiers, mercenaries and armed groups from neighbouring conflicts. The country is located and embedded in a regional conflict arc, with Sudan, South Sudan and the DRC among its neighbours. Poorly policed or uncontrolled borders facilitate the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

For neighbouring states, there is a serious risk of violence and instability spilling over borders and engulfing the region, as long as the security situation in the CAR remains unsettled. At the same time, some Central African states, notably Chad, have been heavily implicated in the CAR's crises and have influenced the cycles of instability over the past few years. According to observers, the putsch that brought Bozizé into power in 2003 was massively supported by the Chadian regime, which provided the rebel leader with refuge, arms and mercenaries.[13] Ten years later, Déby has withdrawn his confidence in Bozizé, opening the way for the Séléka rebels who succeeded in toppling the president.[14]

ECCAS' conflict-prevention instruments and mechanisms

Against the background of these immediate and latent security risks, the creation, setup and effective operation of regional early warning and conflict prevention instruments within ECCAS' Peace and Security Architecture (PSA) appear more than key.

DECEMBER 2013 –
SEPTEMBER 2014

THE DURATION OF THE AU
INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT
MISSION TO THE CAR

Conflict prevention presents a far more cost- and resource-effective way to ensure peace and security than conflict resolution or management. The relevance of regional cooperation and efforts for anticipating violence and preventing instability and insecurity is particularly evident in Central Africa.

This risk of spillover violence due to often poorly controlled and permeable borders and uncontrolled flow of armed elements and weapons is often increased by the direct or indirect involvement of governments in conflicts in their neighbourhood: by having rebel movements use their poorly policed borderlands as rear bases, by tolerating the presence on their territory of armed groups or insurgents, by financially or logistically supporting one of the belligerent parties, or by sending their own armed forces to influence and take part in the fighting.

Finally, the Great Lake conflicts clearly demonstrate how the flow of refugees can lead to the emergence of new conflict actors, further fuel the cycle of violence and contribute to the regional spreading and expansion of violence across national borders.

> Relations between some member states continue to be strained. Such a context negatively impacts on the willingness to share sensitive data

The regional spillover of conflicts and crises from one state to its neighbours does not only present a threat for the latters' own political stability. The rise of violence and insecurity in one country also has the potential to affect the economic situation and development within a whole region, by challenging existing trade relations, access to regional markets and infrastructure, and the transportation and transit of goods.

Since ECCAS' conflict and crisis-induced hibernation and the subsequent refocusing on peace and security issues, conflict prevention has been defined as a priority of Central Africa's regional cooperation. This focus is reflected at the institutional level. As listed in Article 4 of the COPAX Protocol, the promotion of conflict prevention and confidence building, efforts towards peace consolidation, the facilitation of peaceful conflict settlement and mediation as well as coordinated measures against the illegal movement of people, refugees and ex-fighters are key objectives of COPAX and its two technical bodies, MARAC and FOMAC.

The Central African Early Warning Mechanism – MARAC

MARAC is the Central African early warning mechanism, responsible for conflict and crisis observation, monitoring and prevention.[15] MARAC is part of the Directorate of Political Affairs and MARAC, which is one of the three directorates within ECCAS' Department of Human Integration, Peace, Security and Stability (DIHPSS). MARAC is responsible for the collection and analysis of data, and the preparation of various kinds of reports to inform ECCAS' secretary general, the CDS and other ECCAS officials about peace and security developments in the region, as well as about potential security risks and threats.

Although created by the COPAX Protocol that was adopted in 2000 and entered into force in 2004, MARAC only started to operate in 2007, when it was allocated offices in Libreville.[16] Capacity building was significantly supported through the European Union

2007

THE YEAR THAT THE CENTRAL AFRICAN EARLY WARNING SYSTEM (MARAC) STARTED OPERATING

Figure 2: MARAC's institutional structure
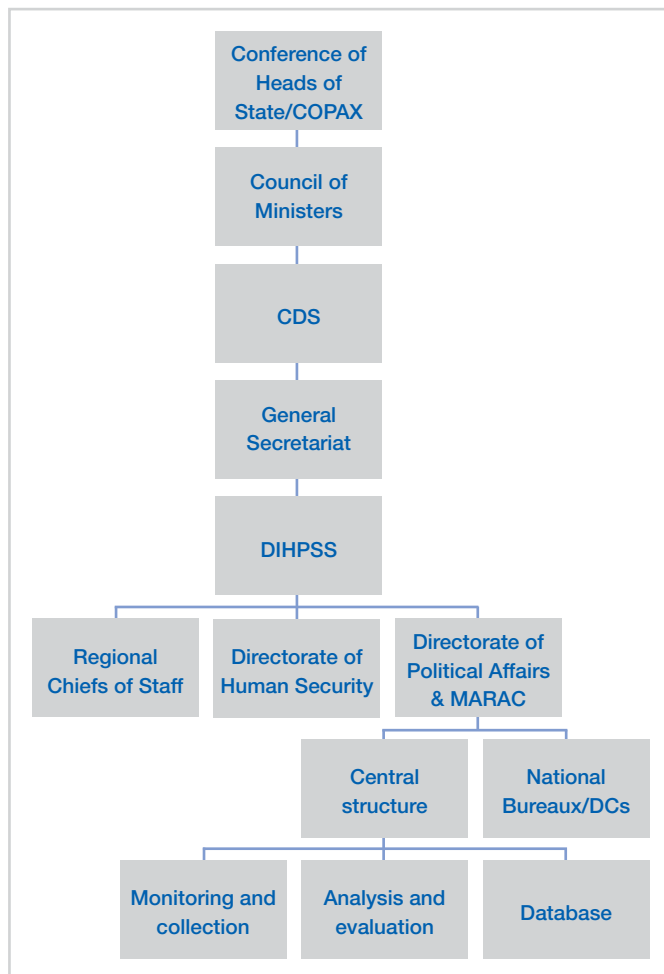
Source: Author's own drawing, based on S Koko, 2013 and field research in Libreville in April 2015.

(EU) support programmes to ECCAS in peace and security (PAPS I from 2007 to 2011 and PAPS II since 2011).

MARAC's standing orders provide that the mechanism should include a national bureau in each member state. These bureaux are to collect and analyse data locally, observe the security situation at the national level and supply the MARAC centre in Libreville with information for the early warning database. Members of these bureaux should be representatives of state institutions, international organisations, non-governmental and civil society organisations, as well as the academic and research sector.

The implementation of MARAC's central and decentralised infrastructure and its proper functioning have encountered a number of obstacles. Whereas a lack of financial and human resources has delayed the whole setup process and still impedes MARAC's activities,[17] the member states' acceptance of any control of and interference into their domestic affairs has been considerably low from the beginning.[18]

Relations between some member states continue to be strained and marked by mutual mistrust. Such a context negatively impacts on the willingness to share sensitive data and information about internal security. Also, at the time of MARAC's institutionalisation, most states had rather poor records of human rights and rule of law, as well as participation and democratic reforms, which would have been additionally emphasised by an effective early warning mechanism.[19]

As a consequence of these obstacles, a stop-gap solution has been opted for and the creation of so-called decentralised correspondents (DCs) who will temporarily carry out the national bureaux' tasks and thereby facilitate their setup at a later stage.[20] DCs are individuals who have been assigned to monitor the security situation in their country and regularly report back to MARAC headquarters, in addition to their regular professional activities. They usually work individually and not as a team, as the idea is to have them located in different parts of each country. Nevertheless, DCs can also jointly report on developments in their country.

The first DCs started to work in Burundi, Cameroon, the CAR, Chad and the DRC in 2007, followed by the other ECCAS member states in 2012. There are three DCs in each member state, except for the DRC, where there are four. Of the three, two are representatives from NGOs working in the field of conflict prevention and selected by the ECCAS secretary general. The third is a national government official nominated by a state institution, in most cases a police officer or a member of the army. Training in data collection techniques and methodologies started in 2010 and is offered on a more or less regular basis.

> The implementation of MARAC's central and decentralised infrastructure and its proper functioning have encountered a number of obstacles

Based on their monitoring and observation, each DC has to prepare a weekly report for the MARAC headquarters. This report consists of a questionnaire to be filled in with the frequency of a number of pre-defined conflict risk indicators, including e.g. protests and manifestations, calls for strike, etc. DCs can join an additional summary of one or two pages to detail specific events, if needed. After being gathered and filled into a database at the headquarters, this information is analysed by the MARAC experts and serves for an assessment of the region's security situation and the production of the MARAC reports.[21]

MARAC is to produce different reports, on a regular basis, including the Daily Monitoring that reviews relevant press articles; the Weekly Security Synthesis that summarizes the Daily reports and the information provided by the DCs at the end of each week; a Monthly Security Report that analyses developments in the previous month and provides guidelines for preventively addressing any salient and imminent threat; and a Geopolitical Review twice a year informing the member states' experts and ministers who form the UN Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa.[22]

In addition to these regular publications, MARAC is to produce a Situation Report or Ad Hoc Analysis in case of any unfolding crisis to provide senior ECCAS officials with the necessary information to decide upon early reactions. In a similar way, the Information Alert presents a short and descriptive report on a specific security threat in one or several countries.[23]

The Central African Standby Force – FOMAC

Created by the COPAX Protocol and endorsed in the Mutual Assistance Pact, both signed in Malabo in February 2000, FOMAC is conceived as ECCAS' multinational non-permanent standby force. Once operational, the force is considered to be multidimensional: comprising 4 800 to 5 000 national military, police and civilian contingents as well as materiel pledged by the member states, it is intended to accomplish peace, security and humanitarian relief missions.

As set forth in FOMAC's standing orders, besides peace-keeping, peace-building and peace restoration, the force's fields of activities include measures of a preventive character: preventive deployment and observation and monitoring missions, as well as, in a wider sense, the enforcement of sanctions, and policing activities, such as investigations into fraud and organised crime.

The regional planning element (PLANELM) to plan, command and control FOMAC operations was established in Libreville in 2006. In line with the Protocol establishing the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC)[24] that entered into force in December 2003 and the ASF Policy Framework[25] adopted in May 2003, FOMAC has been defined as one of the five regionally pledged brigades that make up the African Standby Force (ASF).

Decisions upon FOMAC's deployment are taken by the Conference of ECCAS Heads of State and Government as COPAX' supreme authority. However, a demand for a mission can come from an ECCAS member state, the UN, or the AU – in accordance with the subsidiary principle underpinning the relationship between the AU and the RECs.[26]

Problems in making MARAC effective and FOMAC operational

With regard to the region's tendency towards conflict and the urgency of preventive measures, MARAC may appear as a key element in ECCAS' PSA. Although some progress has been made and MARAC has been taking up its functions since 2007, a number of problems persist.

A first difficulty is linked to human and financial limitations. At the time of writing, there are only eight executive staff members at MARAC headquarters in Libreville, although 15 are planned. Only three of them are analysts to cover the peace and security situation in the 11 member states. The initial scheme to have one analyst responsible for two countries could thus not be implemented. Being part of the

BESIDES PEACEKEEPING, PEACEBUILDING AND PEACE RESTORATION, FOMAC ACTIVITIES INCLUDE MEASURES OF A PREVENTIVE CHARACTER

Directorate of Political Affairs and within the DIHPSS, MARAC analysts are also involved in political processes and activities other than the production of early warning analyses. This increases their workload and limits the time they can spend on early risk detection and warnings.[27]

MARAC's budget, including salaries, is based on external donors' support. Through its support programmes PAPS I and PAPS II and the African Peace Facility (APF), where funds are redistributed through the AU at the REC level, the EU is the main supporter of ECCAS' capacity building for regional conflict prevention.[28]

This dependence upon external funds with uncertain duration carries a level of precariousness. As a consequence, staff turnover has been quite high over the last few years. The loss of trained experts presents a challenge for MARAC's continuous and efficient functioning.[29]

Regarding the situation at the member states' level, the interim solution is a second matter of concern. DCs are not working full time for MARAC but are pursuing their regular jobs in parallel. Although DCs have now been appointed in each member state to monitor and report on potential security threats, not all of them are carrying out their tasks with the same conscientiousness and regularity. As long as there are no national bureaux to supervise and coordinate the activities at the member state level and to function as a contact point, communication between the MARAC staff and DCs, including those who are less diligent in completing and sending their weekly reports, can be difficult.[30]

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Another problem regards the processing of the data MARAC receives from the DCs. Because of the data's sensitivity, states are rather reluctant to share information within the community and beyond, such as with the AU and the Continental Early Warning Mechanism (CEWS).[31] In addition, in case of any risk or threat identified and reported by the DCs and assessed by the MARAC analysts, the procedure is considerably long and slow.

The Protocol provides that information is immediately sent by MARAC to the ECCAS secretary general in the form of a situation report. The secretary general has to decide whether to pursue the case. The next stage is to inform the acting ECCAS president and to call for a COPAX summit to decide upon the necessary actions. This process is very long and contradicts the logic and advantage of early warning. What is missing is a standing body that is able to immediately meet and take decisions once an alert has been given – similar to the AU's Peace and Security Council (PSC).[32]

Besides, MARAC entirely relies on data and information provided by the DCs as it has no resources to send its own observers or data collectors to any trouble spot.[33]

Being considered as part of the AU-backed ASF, FOMAC is expected to become operational in 2015, in line with the ASF Roadmap III. Whereas the idea to create a Central African standby force was raised as early as February 2000, in the COPAX

2015

THE YEAR THAT FOMAC IS EXPECTED TO BECOME OPERATIONAL, IN LINE WITH THE ASF ROADMAP III

Protocol and the Mutual Assistance Pact, the setup of FOMAC is taking considerably longer, notably when compared to parallel efforts in West, East and Southern Africa.

Deadlines to make FOMAC operational have constantly been postponed. Major challenges have been problems of underfunding and the fact that the region is prone to conflict.[34] However ECCAS has been conducting a series of multinational training exercises since 2003. These so-called validation exercises are intended to test the capacities of national commands for operating within the framework of the regional standby brigade with a view to determining and certifying FOMAC'S full operational capability.[35]

> Deadlines to make FOMAC operational have constantly been postponed. Major challenges have been problems of underfunding and the fact that the region is prone to conflict

Following the exercises 'Biyongho' in Gabon in 2003, 'Sawa' in Cameroon in 2006, 'Barh-El-Gazel' in Chad in 2007 and 'Kwanza' in Angola in 2010, the most recent of these certification exercises was carried out in October 2014 in the Republic of the Congo.[36] Some observers, notably from the AU, consider 'Loango 2014' as successful in reaching the set aims and targets, and FOMAC as making progress towards its operationalisation in 2015.[37]

Nevertheless, a number of questions remain, notably regarding the ability to estimate the capacity of FOMAC as a regional military force on the basis of these exercises. Indeed, the member states' contributions to FOMAC's setup and training has been quite uneven, and progress in making the force operational is so far essentially based on support by individual states. During the 'Loango 2014' exercise, the major support in terms of logistics and resources came from a very few countries, especially from host country Congo, as well as from Angola.[38]

Having the region's largest army, Angola indeed has significantly contributed to the exercise's performance by providing contingents from the Navy, land forces, Air Force and riot police, as well as an IL-76 transportation aircraft and two Tucano reconnaissance aeroplanes.[39] This circumstance indicates that also in case of a deployment, FOMAC will essentially rely on the militarily and economically strong member states' willingness to support and contribute to the operation.

With MICOPAX, ECCAS has already operated a multinational force in one of its member states. Deployed between July 2008 and December 2013, MICOPAX had a mandate to help consolidate a climate of peace and security, assist with the respect of human rights and facilitate access to humanitarian aid. The mission ended in 2013 when it was transformed first into the AU mission MISCA (December 2013- September 2014), followed by the still on-going UN mission MINUSCA.

Two concerns have to be raised regarding the performance and success of MICOPAX and its suitability to estimate FOMAC's effectiveness, notably in terms of conflict prevention. Firstly, MICOPAX was not able to stop the 2012/2013 rebellion in the CAR and thus prevent the current crisis. This failure can certainly be linked to the mission's mandate as a peace support operation (PSO) and its small size of only around 700 troops which were largely outnumbered by the Séléka rebel movement.

CAN THE CAPACITY OF FOMAC AS A REGIONAL MILITARY FORCE BE JUDGED ON THE BASIS OF THE VARIOUS CERTIFICATION EXERCISES?

However, it also raises questions about the mission's real contribution to restore peace and stability in the country during its five-year deployment. At the time when the rebellion occurred, MICOPAX had just been considered as terminated and troops were about to withdraw. Moreover, the mission had been largely undermined by particular interests from contributing states. According to some observers, this circumstance may also explain the troops' insufficient success in preventing Séléka from toppling a CAR president who had become less and less supported by his regional peers, especially by Idriss Déby.[40]

Secondly, MICOPAX has been funded almost entirely by international partners, mainly under the EU's APF programme.[41] This indeed puts into question ECCAS' real ownership over the operation,[42] as well as whether MICOPAX can be considered an example for FOMAC's operationalisation.

Major challenges to ECCAS' conflict-prevention capacities

The previous assessment of ECCAS' capacities in the area of conflict prevention indicates a gap between ambitions and reality. Whereas ECCAS has set itself quite high targets with the establishment of the Central African regional PSA, progress in implementing bodies and mechanisms has so far been rather slow and challenged by a number of problems and obstacles. These can be seen in three aspects: the institutional structure, the security conception, and the wider institutional setting.

Prioritising intergovernmental cooperation over supranational integration

Similar to the AU and other RECs in Africa, ECCAS' institutional structures and decision-making processes are built around the states, represented by their presidents and heads of governments, as the main authority. Such an intergovernmental approach also applies to regional peace and security cooperation. As has been outlined above, COPAX is the supreme organ, charged with deciding on any reaction following an alert from MARAC and on any FOMAC deployment. Supranational bodies and institutions, in contrast, have only very weak power and limited competencies. The General Secretariat and its directorates are primarily in charge of supporting and executing the decisions taken by the Conference of Heads of State.

In Central Africa, such a centralised approach is problematic for several reasons. By concentrating power within the Conference of Heads of State, any regional action and

activity, as well as any progress of the regionalisation process, depends upon the member states' willingness and commitment. Whereas this is also the case in other African RECs too, ECCAS' history and evolution show that since the community's creation, the states' political will and support for their regional project have been considerably low, or even, during the 1990s, completely absent.

A specific challenge, compared to most other African RECs, is the lack of a legitimate and credible regional lead nation that would be willing and able to play the role of a driver or engine, similar to Nigeria in the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) or South Africa in the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

Although several states have attempted to claim regional leadership, their ambitions have failed. Mainly due to internal problems, mutual mistrust and a lack of recognition, no Central African state seems today in a position to act as a regional driver and hegemon. Long-time pretenders Gabon, Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea have more or less given up their ambitions, as presidents are either too old, considered as not experienced enough, or more interested in the economically oriented community CEMAC.

> ## The question of regional leadership remains unsettled

With regard to its size, economic potential and military power, Angola would be a valid candidate. However, Luanda remains torn between its memberships in SADC and ECCAS.[43] In addition, the strong ties between France and the member states that also belong to CEMAC, as well as the still prevailing influence of the former colonial power within the region, present a challenge for Angola in increasing its role in ECCAS – and not only from a linguistic point of view.[44] For the promotion of regional peace and security, the presence of a regional lead nation is however often seen as 'an important element of successful conflict management and peace-keeping' and a 'fulcrum of regional security co-operation'.[45]

In the most recent security crises in Central Africa, some countries certainly have tried to take the initiative in promoting multinational responses. The president of the Republic of the Congo, Denis Sassou-Nguesso, has been serving as mediator in the conflict in the CAR, following in the footsteps of former Gabonese president Omar Bongo. Chad's head of state, Idriss Déby, currently aims to take the leadership role in the multinational military reaction to Boko Haram.[46]

However, in both cases, regional ambitions are more motivated by particular individual economic and/or strategic interests than by the desire to give impetus to the regional integration process.[47] This, consequently, is likely to conflict with other member states' competing interests instead of promoting more integration and stability within the region.

The unsettled question of leadership illustrates another closely linked problem: that of a weak regional identity.[48] Indeed, Central Africa is a very heterogeneous region, especially in terms of geography, socio-economic development, history, language and culture. It gathers as diverse countries as Chad in the Sahel, Burundi and the DRC in the Great Lakes region and Angola in Southern Africa. The DRC, the CAR and Chad are among the continent's least developed countries, whereas Equatorial Guinea and Gabon have the highest GDPs/capita in Africa.

> The power concentration in the heads of state is contrasted by a considerably weak supranational level

While French prevails as the main working language in the Secretariat, ECCAS' membership includes Anglophone, Francophone, Arabophone, Lusophone and Hispanophone countries. This heterogeneity among member states hampers integration, as well as the ability to reach an agreement on regional security issues and promote peace and security cooperation. It instead fosters disunity and fragmentation among member states as well as the formation of blocs.

The region's numerous conflicts in which states have partly been on opposite sides have further contributed to increased mistrust. Because of the centralised institutional structure and the absence of any lead nation that could act as a driver, regional decision-making has become difficult and is often blocked by a lack of consensus, animosities and competing interests.

Divergent interests among member states as well as an inability to find consensus on some issues has resulted, over the last few years, in forms of boycott rather than in any open expressions of dissent.[49] Presidents or their ministers remain absent from meetings, vacant high positions at the ECCAS General Secretariat are not or only very lately refilled, or financial contributions are made irregularly and with a lot of delay. Although it should be held annually, according to the ECCAS Treaty, the ordinary Conference of Heads of State has frequently been postponed and is finally only taking place every two or three years.[50]

Against this background, a certain paralysis or 'auto-censorship' has emerged, especially regarding sensitive security issues.[51] Heads of state do not want their security problems and concerns to be debated on the regional level, and also refrain from criticising each other for any undemocratic, illegitimate or unconstitutional conduct. The most recent example is ECCAS' silence when the political crisis in Burundi broke out following President Pierre Nkurunziza's declaration to seek a third term in office. Such an approach, however, takes ad absurdum any efforts of regional early warning and conflict prevention.

HEADS OF STATE REFRAIN FROM CRITICISING EACH OTHER FOR ANY UNDEMOCRATIC, ILLEGITIMATE OR UNCONSTITUTIONAL CONDUCT. THE MOST RECENT EXAMPLE IS ECCAS' SILENCE FOLLOWING BURUNDIAN PRESIDENT PIERRE NKURUNZIZA'S DECLARATION TO SEEK A THIRD TERM IN OFFICE

The power concentration in the heads of state is contrasted by a considerably weak supranational level. This weakness is on the one hand due to the state's reluctance to transfer any power and competencies, notably to the General Secretariat. As a purely administrative body, the Secretariat appears as the supporter and executor of orders and decisions from Conference and the Council of Ministers. On the other hand, according to several observers, ECCAS' General Secretariat is hampered by some of its executive staff members' lethargy and frequent absence.

Also, any clear and realistic mid- or long-term work plan or vision is missing that could promote a stronger sense of regional integration.[52] The current Secretary General, Ahmad Allam-mi, has been emphasising the idea of transforming the Secretariat into a commission, following the examples of CEMAC and ECOWAS. However, it is doubtful whether such a transformation will effectively strengthen the supranational level or will only be a simple renaming.

A military concept of security: does the solution fit the cause?

ECCAS' legal texts, the composition of its institutions, as well as the way threats and challenges have been addressed at the regional level so far are guided by a rather classical, narrow conception of security. Security is defined from a predominantly military and state-centric perspective. Non-military dimensions, such as social, economic and environmental issues that are, however, often at the roots of conflicts and crises remain largely neglected. This prioritisation of hard security has been reflected in the refocusing of regional cooperation since 1998.[53]

The increased emphasis on security issues has resulted in the creation of military facilities and organs, including FOMAC and the CDS. The COPAX Protocol makes it clear that the deployment of multinational troops is considered as the principal measure to ensure peace and security within the region. Whereas all peace and security related decisions are exclusively taken by the heads of state gathered in COPAX, their main advisory body is the CDS, whose members are drawn from military and policing ranks. Civilians, such as from ministries, are only represented at the level of experts.[54]

> This predominance of a military, state-centred concept, at the expense of a broader understanding of the concept, limits the range and scope of preventive measures

Over the last few years, there have been some efforts to strengthen the civil dimension in ECCAS' PSA, especially under the EU support programme PAPS II and its predecessor PAPS I. FOMAC is supposed to include a civilian component. But so far, this dimension has only partly been developed and implemented.[55] As described above, two thirds of MARAC's DCs are members of civil society. However, the information they are asked to collect in view of identifying potential security risks mainly reflects a narrow understanding of security. And their influence on the way the information is treated is limited. Heads of states' decision to react to any identified threat is taken upon consultation with the CDS.

This predominance of a military, state-centred concept, at the expense of a broader understanding of the concept, limits the range and scope of preventive measures.

IN ECCAS' APPROACHES, TEXTS AND INSTITUTIONS, SECURITY IS DEFINED FROM A PREDOMINANTLY MILITARY AND STATE-CENTRIC PERSPECTIVE

In Central Africa, crises and conflicts are most often generated and nourished by socio-economic problems, poverty and unemployment, as well as by the failure of the state to provide basic services and exercise control over the entire national territory.[56]

Emphasising the military dimension of security and approaching crises primarily through military means is first and foremost reacting to the manifestations of insecurity. Underlying structural causes that are of a non-military nature and anchored in the political, social, or economic context are in contrast widely neglected.[57] As exemplified by the crises in the CAR, deploying multinational troops, such as in the FOMUC and MICOPAX operations, may be a way of ad hoc reacting to tensions and rebellions and temporarily stop violence. It does not, however, also address the deeper causes for destabilisation at the political, social and economic level or provide any long-term solution and thus prevent any new outbreak of violence.

> Central African states appear reluctant to address, on the regional level, internal problems of bad governance, and to acknowledge the link between poor leadership and worse socio-economic conditions

A similar concern can be raised regarding the approach of Central African states, notably Chad and Cameroon, to contain terrorism and especially the Boko Haram insurgency in the region. Research, such as the studies carried out by Martin Ewi and Anneli Botha from the ISS, indicates that political frustration, deep-rooted grievances and marginalisation are major drivers of people joining radical groups and terrorist movements such as Boko Haram.[58] In this perspective, effective long-term solutions to prevent terrorism from taking root need to go beyond purely military actions and address deep-seated socio-economic problems.

However, Central African states appear reluctant to address, on the regional level, internal problems of bad governance, and to acknowledge the link between poor leadership and worse socio-economic conditions, poverty and the rise of instability and insecurity.[59] Instead, regional security cooperation is considered as a way to protect their regime against rebellions and centrifugal movements.

In addition, it is not only easier but also more prestigious for African states to engage militarily in conflict management and resolution rather than in preventive actions at the political level. Whereas the efficiency of preventive measures is usually difficult to assess, sending troops to open conflicts provides much more visibility – especially towards international partners and donors who financially support the operation.[60]

Relations with the AU and other RECs

In line with the Protocol relating to the establishment of the AU PSC that entered into force in December 2003, Africa's regional peace and security mechanisms are considered as the building blocks or pillars of APSA. In a 2008 signed Memorandum of Understanding, the AU and the RECs, including ECCAS, agreed to institutionalise and strengthen their partnership and cooperation for the promotion and maintenance of peace and security on the continent.[61]

In practice, however, the relationship between the AU and ECCAS in the field of peace and security is controversial. Especially among ECCAS officials, there is a divide

THE EFFICIENCY OF PREVENTIVE MEASURES IS USUALLY DIFFICULT TO ASSESS. SENDING TROOPS TO OPEN CONFLICTS PROVIDES MUCH MORE VISIBILITY

between those who acknowledge the Central African peace and security organs and mechanisms to be elements of APSA, and those who emphasize that the COPAX Protocol was adopted in 2000, and thus before the launch of the AU in 2002 and the entry into force of the PSC Protocol in 2003.[62] Several events have moreover contributed towards worsening this relationship and to raise the so far unclear question of responsibility and subsidiarity. Most recently, the fact that MISCA, an AU-led mission, replaced the ECCAS-led peace support operation MICOPAX in the CAR in 2013 has been seen by ECCAS member states and officials as a disavowal. Some would have preferred the UN to directly take over.[63]

To ensure a stronger alignment and coordination between the continental and the Central African regional level, a reform of COPAX and its institutional and legal instruments has recently been initiated.[64] In particular, what is missing in the Central African PSA is an equivalent to the PSC as a permanent decision-making organ.

Also, compared to APSA and the peace and security architecture of other RECs, there is no Panel of the Wise for conflict mediation. Several ideas have been raised in this regard, including the creation of a panel composed of 10 renowned men and women, the setup of a database of mediators from each member state or the establishment of a pool of special envoys, made up of former politicians and diplomats lending their good offices for conflict resolution.[65] The implementation of the COPAX reform is however a long and slow undertaking, especially if it implies any transfer of power from the intergovernmental to the supranational level.

> Multiple memberships may be an advantage when it comes to addressing the trans-border and trans-regional dimension of insecurity. In Central Africa, this potential is however largely neglected

Moreover, previous attempts to introduce any new organs have brought little improvement so far. Created at the Heads of State Conference in 2007, the Committee of Ambassadors was supposed to be a link and mediator between the regional and the national level, gathering the diplomatic representatives of the ECCAS member states in Gabon under the chairmanship of the ambassador from the country that holds the rotating ECCAS presidency. The Committee has met only a few times and has been more or less dormant, as Chad, which had the ECCAS presidency from October 2009 to May 2015, has no ambassador in Libreville.[66] Mediation efforts are thus rather carried out by individual presidents, although their engagement as 'neutral' actors may easily be compromised by their own countries' indirect involvement in the conflict at stake.

Another challenge is the issue of inter-regional relationships, and closely linked hereto the problem of overlapping memberships with other RECs and regional organisations. ECCAS is formed by states that are also members of CEMAC, SADC, the East African Community (EAC), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC/CBLT) and the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD).

OCTOBER 2009 –
MAY 2015
THE DURATION OF CHAD'S
PRESIDENCY OF ECCAS

Figure 3: Overlapping memberships in Central Africa
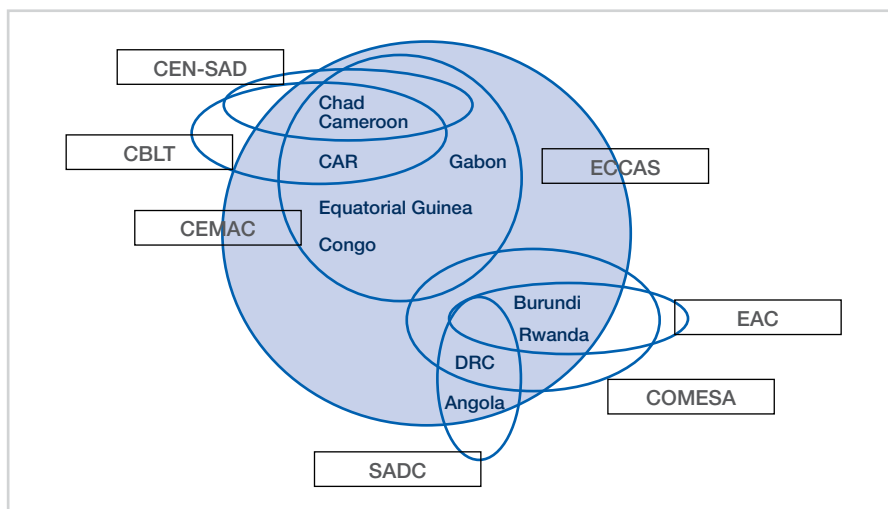
Source: Author's own drawing

Multiple memberships may be an advantage when it comes to addressing the trans-border and trans-regional dimension of insecurity. In Central Africa, this potential is however largely neglected. The membership of some states in other communities is resulting in inner fragmentation. The CEMAC states have in some instances formed a bloc against the rest, and Rwanda left ECCAS in 2007 as its economic interests were more oriented towards East Africa and its community EAC. Consequently, cooperation and exchange with other RECs remain limited to a few cases.

The joint approach with ECOWAS in promoting maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea is most often mentioned as a promising example.[67] This cooperation has however primarily been encouraged by international partners and donors such as the EU and the United States wishing to protect their economic interests against the increasing threat of piracy. In the fight with Boko Haram, the collaboration between Central and West African states is mainly challenged by the problematic relationship between Nigeria and its eastern neighbours Cameroon and Chad[68] as well as by the reluctance of the former Nigerian president, Goodluck Jonathan, to have any foreign troops enter the country. The decision to have the multinational task force operate under the authority of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) may, in this perspective, be seen as some kind of contingency plan with regard to the need to give institutional framing to the task force for the sake of foreign support.[69]

Conclusion: a need for a realistic vision

With the creation of a Central African PSA, ECCAS has set itself ambitious targets. The weak unity within the community as well as the lack of a dynamic and common vision that could move the regionalisation process forward in a consistent and continuous way challenge the realisation of these targets significantly.[70] So also does the remaining mistrust among some member states, as well as mutual interference into internal affairs. Particular strategic and economic interests thus undermine efforts towards strengthening regional cooperation and promoting security and stability. Chad's influence on the political situation and stability in its neighbour the CAR has, for instance, considerably overshadowed ECCAS and CEMAC's peace operations in the country as well as regional engagement in the settlement of the crisis.

THE JOINT APPROACH WITH ECOWAS IN PROMOTING MARITIME SECURITY IN THE GULF OF GUINEA IS A PROMISING EXAMPLE OF COOPERATION WITH OTHER RECs

Against this background, progress towards putting the regional peace and security architecture into operation is mainly driven on an ad hoc basis by single states or groups of states within the community. These efforts thus result from particular political, economic or strategic concerns rather than from a shared regional vision.

Moreover, progress is significantly backed by the international community, especially through support programmes from the EU. This raises the question about the real ownership of Central Africa of its regionalisation process, as well as how to ensure the continuity of any progress once external support ends.[71] So far, it seems that there has been no real appropriation of the progress of regionalisation,[72] and thus no commitment to move from regional cooperation to regional integration.[73]

The weakness in terms of appropriation and regional identity can also be linked to the limited involvement of civil society. Although civil society representatives participate in MARAC's activities as DCs, their function is limited to data collection. They are neither engaged in the processing of this information nor can they influence in any form the related decision-making process. A stronger cooperation with civil society would however be crucial to place more emphasis on human security concerns, counterbalance the current militaristic and state-based conception of security and eventually promote a more integrative approach to regional peace and security cooperation.

> The recent crisis in the CAR illustrated that the relationship between the AU level and the regional level is marked by competition rather than complementarity

Finally, a clearer understanding is needed regarding the responsibilities in peace and security of AU and RECs, the way how best to handle the issue of overlapping memberships, as well as cooperation between neighbouring RECs with regard to trans-border insecurity. The recent crisis in the CAR has once again illustrated that the relationship between the AU level and the regional level is marked by a logic of competition and ambiguity rather than by one of complementarity.

Also the exchange between ECCAS and ECOWAS to jointly address the incursion of Boko Haram has not led to any significant collaboration yet, despite the urgency of the issue. Against this background, the principle of subsidiarity, complementarity and comparative advantage that is supposed to guide the relationship between the AU and the RECs, according to the 2008 Memorandum of Understanding, needs to be addressed with a view to better emphasising and using the specific strengths of each level.

Thirty years after ECCAS' launch, the gap between ambitions and reality is still important. In particular, it is due to a combination of a lack of political will, interplay of particular interests, dependence on external support, a sclerotic supranational level and the missed opportunity to build upon the various advantages that a better coordination with other actors may bring. As long as ECCAS and its member states do not develop a joint realistic vision, especially in the field of peace and security, and prove the commitment to implement it, the potential of regional cooperation for conflict prevention in Central Africa will largely remain unexploited.

Notes

1   Due to ECCAS' inactivity between 1992 and 1998, formal contact with AEC could only be established in 1999. In October 1999, ECCAS signed the Protocol on Relations between the AEC and the Regional Economic Communities.

2   A Meyer, Regional integration and security in Central Africa - Assessment and perspectives 10 years after the revival. Egmont Paper, n°25, December 2008.

3   In 1992, the United Nations' Agenda for Peace emphasised, by referring to Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, that regional arrangements or agencies in many cases possess a potential that should be utilised in serving the functions covered in this report: preventive diplomacy, peace-keeping, peacemaking and post-conflict peace-building. (...) Today a new sense exists that they have contributions to make. B Boutros-Ghali, *An agenda for peace: Preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, and peace-keeping: Report of the Secretary-General* pursuant to the statement adopted by the summit meeting of the Security Council on 31 January 1992, New York: United Nations, 1992. This point was taken up again three years later by Boutros-Ghali: 'It is increasingly apparent that the United Nations cannot address every potential and actual conflict troubling the world. Regional or subregional organisations sometimes have a comparative advantage in taking the lead role in the prevention and settlement of conflicts and to assist the United Nations in containing them.' United Nations, *Improving Preparedness for Conflict Prevention and Peace-keeping in Africa: Report of the Secretary General,* UN Doc. A/50/711-S/1995/911, 01.11.1995 www.un.org/documents/ga/docs/50/plenary/a50-711.htm.

4   The three other priorities are physical, economic and monetary integration; a culture of human integration; and the setup of an autonomous financing mechanism for ECCAS.

5   Abbreviations refer to the bodies' French names: Mécanisme d'alerte rapide de l'Afrique centrale (MARAC), and Force multinationale de l'Afrique centrale (FOMAC).

6   *Declaration of Yaoundé by Member States of the Council for Peace and Security of Central Africa (COPAX) on the fight against the terrorist group Boko Haram,* Yaoundé 16 February 2015 (6).

7   UNCTAD, *Economic Development in Africa. Intra-African Trade: Unlocking Private Sector Dynamism,* New York, 2013.

8   M Luntumbue, *Piraterie et insécurité dans le golfe de Guinée : défis et enjeux d'une gouvernance maritime régionale,* Note d'analyses, Bruxelles, GRIP, 2011.

9   Extensive research on maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea has been conducted by the International Crisis Group (ICG), http://blog.crisisgroup.org/africa/2014/09/04/gulf-of-guinea-a-regional-solution-to-piracy/

10 Interview with ECCAS official in Libreville, 20 April 2015.

11 E V Adolfo, M Söderberg Kovacs, D Nyström, M Utas, *Electoral based violence,* NAI Policy Notes (3), Uppsala: Nordic Africa Institute, 2012.

12 A Meyer, Regional Security Cooperation in Central Africa: What Perspectives after Ten Years of Peace and Security Operations? In: J J Hentz (ed.), *Handbook of African Security,* Routledge, 2013, 229-242.

13 International Crisis Group (ICG), Central African Republic: Anatomy of a Phantom State, *Africa Report* 136, 13 December 2007.

14 There are several explanations for the worsening of the relations between Idriss Déby and François Bozizé, such as the setup of economic ties and contracts with China and South Africa, including oil concessions, and the CAR government's incapacity to restrain rebel movements hostile to Déby's regime in the borderland close to Chadian oil exploitation sites. Who Wants to Overthrow Central African Republic President François Bozizé? *Global Voices,* 30 December 2012; M Luntumbue, S Massock, *Afrique centrale: risques et envers de la pax tchadiana,* Notes d'analyse, GRIP, Bruxelles, 2014.

15 Unless otherwise specified, facts about MARAC and its implementation are based on interviews with ECCAS officials in Libreville on 20 April 2015 and 23 April 2015.

16 Interview with ECCAS officials in Libreville, 20 and 23 April 2015.

17 C Elowson and C Hull Wiklund, ECCAS Capabilities in Peace and Security. A scoping study on progress and challenges, *FOI User Report* 3244, September 2011.

18 S Koko, Warning whom, for which response? Appraisal of the early warning and early response mechanism of the Economic Community of Central African States, *African Affairs Review,* 22:2, 2013, 54-67.

19 S Koko, Warning whom, for which response? Appraisal of the early warning and early response mechanism of the Economic Community of Central African States, *African Affairs Review,* 22:2, 2013, 54-67

20 S Koko, Warning whom, for which response? Appraisal of the early warning and early response mechanism of the Economic Community of Central African States, *African Affairs Review,* 22:2, 2013, 54-67

21 Interview with ECCAS officials in Libreville, 20 and 23 April 2015.

22 The United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa was created in 1992 by the UN Secretary General, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 46/37 B of 6 December 1991. Its aim is to promote confidence-building measures, ease regional tensions and further disarmament, non-proliferation and development in the region. The Committee meets at least twice a year, or more often if needed, first at expert level, with senior military and civilians officials from the ECCAS member states, and then at the ministerial level, gathering ministers of defense and/or foreign affairs.

23 S Koko, Warning whom, for which response? Appraisal of the early warning and early response mechanism of the Economic Community of Central African States, *African Affairs Review,* 22:2, 2013, 54-67.

24 African Union, *Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union,* First Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union, Durban, South Africa, adopted July 2002, entered into force 26 December 2003.

25 African Union, *Policy Framework for the Establishment of the African Standby Force and Military Staff Committee,* adopted by the 3rd meeting of the African chiefs of staff, Addis Ababa, adopted 12-14 May, 2003.

26 Article 26 of the Protocol establishing COPAX. As the Protocol was agreed in February 2000, it still refers to the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). The principle of subsidiarity between the AU and the RECs is set out in the Memorandum of Understanding in the Area of Peace and Security between the AU and the RECs, agreed in 2007.

27 Interview with ECCAS official in Libreville, 23 April 2015.

28 Interview with ECCAS international partner in Libreville, 27 April 2015; interviews with ECCAS officials in Libreville, 23 and 29 April 2015. The budget of PAPS I was four million Euros, that of PAPS II is 15 million Euros. C Guicherd, L'investissement de l'UE dans la sécurité collective en Afrique centrale: un pari risqué, European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS), *Occasional Paper* 95, May 2012. For the distribution of APF among RECs, see the annual reports on the Africa-EU Partnership website: www.africa-eu-partnership.org/key-documents.

29 Interview with ECCAS official in Libreville, 20 April 2015.

30 Interview with ECCAS official in Libreville, 23 April 2015.

31 Interview with diplomat from ECCAS member state in Libreville, 22 April 2015; Interview with ECCAS official in Libreville, 23 April 2015.

32 As the AU's standing decision-making body responsible for the maintenance of continental peace and security, the AU PSC meets a minimum of twice a month at ambassadorial level with 15 rotating members. See more at: www.peaceau.org/en/page38-peace-and-security-council.

33 C Elowson and C Hull Wiklund, ECCAS Capabilities in Peace and Security. A scoping study on progress and challenges, *FOI User Report* 3244, September 2011.

34 W Kinzel, The African Standby Force of the African Union: Ambitious Plans, Wide Regional Disparities – An Intermediate Appraisal, *SWP Research Paper* 8, November 2008.

35 J Cilliers, The African Standby Force: An update on progress. *ISS Paper* 160, Institute for Security Studies, March 2008.

36 The Loango exercise took place from 13 to 23 October 2014 in the region of Pointe Noire in the Republic of the Congo. It was carried out by more than 2 500 troops from the then ten ECCAS member states, except the CAR and São Tomé and Príncipe. The exercise included terrestrial, air and maritime manoeuvres.

37 Interview with ECCAS international partner in Libreville, 29 April 2015.

38 Interview with ECCAS international partner in Libreville, 29 April 2015.

39 See *ANGOP Agência Angola Press,* Defence minister attends closing of Loango-2014 Military Exercises, 29 October 2014. www.portalangop. co.ao/angola/en_us/noticias/politica/2014/9/44/Defence-minister-attends-closing-Loango-2014-Military-Exercises,8fc2afb1-65bb-4b2c-877d-68578d579c5d.html.

40 R Marchal, Idriss Déby a officieusement aidé les rebelles de la Seleka, *L'Humanité,* 13 November 2013. Major reasons for the worsening of relations between Bozizé and Déby include the Chadian president's dissatisfaction over the prevailing instability in the CAR's borderlands close to the oil fields in the Doba basin, as well as economic agreements between the CAR and South Africa and China.

41 Interview with ECCAS international partner in Libreville, 30 April 2015.

42 Interview with ECCAS international partner in Libreville, 27 April 2015.

43 C Guicherd, L'investissement de l'UE dans la sécurité collective en Afrique centrale: un pari risqué, European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS), *Occasional Paper* 95, May 2012.

44 Interview with ECCAS official in Libreville, 23 April 2015.

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46 On the role of Chad: M Luntumbe and S Massock, *Afrique centrale : risques et envers de la pax tchadiana,* GRIP, Note d'analyses, Bruxelles, 2014.

47 Interview with ECCAS international partners in Libreville, 21 April 2015.

48 C Guicherd, L'investissement de l'UE dans la sécurité collective en Afrique centrale: un pari risqué, European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS), *Occasional Paper* 95, May 2012, as well as A Meyer, Regional Security Cooperation in Central Africa : what Perspectives after Ten Years of Peace and Security Operations? In: J J Hentz (ed.), *Handbook of African Security,* Routledge, 2013, 229-242.

49 Interview with ECCAS international partner in Libreville, 29 April 2015; Interview with ECCAS official in Libreville, 23 April 2015.

50 The last Conferences of Heads of State took place in June 2005 (13th summit), in October 2007 (14th summit), and in January 2012 (15th summit). The 16th summit was initially planned for November 2014 and has been postponed several times. It was held in May 2015.

51 C Guicherd, L'investissement de l'UE dans la sécurité collective en Afrique centrale: un pari risqué, European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS), *Occasional Paper* 95, May 2012.

52 Interview with ECCAS official in Libreville, 23 April 2015; Interview with ECCAS international partner in Libreville, 27 April 2015; Telephone interview with ECCAS international partner, 7 May 2015.

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54 C Guicherd, L'investissement de l'UE dans la sécurité collective en Afrique centrale: un pari risqué, European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS), *Occasional Paper* 95, May 2012.

55 Telephone interview with ECCAS international partner, 7 May 2015.

56 A Meyer, Regional Conflict Management in Central Africa: From FOMUC to MICOPAX, *African Security,* 2:2, 2009, 158 – 174.

57 A Meyer, Regional Conflict Management in Central Africa: From FOMUC to MICOPAX, *African Security*, 2:2, 2009, 158 – 174.

58 L Louw-Vaudran, No quick fix to get rid of Boko Haram, *ISS Today*, 16 February 2015.

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62 Interview with ECCAS international partner in Libreville, 29 April 2015.

63 Interview with ECCAS international partners in Libreville, 21 April 2015; Interview with diplomat from ECCAS member state in Libreville, 29 April 2015.

64 Interview with ECCAS official in Libreville, 20 April 2015; Interview with ECCAS international partner in Libreville, 27 April 2015.

65 Interview with ECCAS official in Libreville, 23 April 2015.

66 Interview with diplomat from ECCAS member state in Libreville, 29 April 2015.

67 Interview with ECCAS international partners in Libreville, 21 April 2015

68 Interview with ECCAS official in Libreville, 29 April 2015.

69 Interview with ECCAS international partner in Libreville, 30 April 2015.

70 Interview with ECCAS international partner in Libreville, 27 April 2015.

71 Interview with ECCAS official in Libreville, 20 April 2015; Interview with ECCAS international partners in Libreville, 21 April 2015; Interview with ECCAS international partner in Libreville, 27 April 2015.

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ISS | CENTRAL AFRICA REPORT

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