Royal United Services Institute
for Defence and Security Studies

Workshop Report

The Future of Post-Brexit Germany–UK Security Relations

Sarah Lain

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Workshop Report, September 2016

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ON 11 JULY 2016, RUSI and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) hosted a half-day workshop aimed at bringing together leading German and UK security specialists as well as members of the UK Parliament and German Bundestag to discuss key aspects of European security. This was a timely event, taking place less than three weeks after the UK referendum on membership of the EU, which resulted in an unexpected vote in favour of Brexit. The event included two sessions:

- European Co-ordination on Defence and Security Post-Brexit.
- Threats from the Mediterranean.

Each session began with introductory presentations by experts, followed by comments from political representatives of both the UK and Germany. Group discussion followed.

This report summarises the major conclusions and talking points of the day's discussions and also suggests areas on which policymakers should focus their attention. It has been supplemented by additional desk research where appropriate. The aim is to highlight knowledge gaps and areas of defence and security policy that warrant further research in order to inform more effective policy, particularly in light of Brexit, and the challenges that these present to both the UK and EU governments.

Conclusions and Recommendations

- A general view, particularly from the German side, was that the UK cannot assume it will maintain any influence on the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). The UK must make the case as to where it should cooperate, why, and what resources it will bring. As a non-EU member, the UK will lose its ability to participate in decision-making on CFSP activities.
- The UK government should not underestimate the psychological impact of Brexit and the lack of political will among some EU members to accommodate the UK on CFSP, even where it may be highly logical to do so. The UK must articulate where it wishes its participation to continue, why it should continue to be involved in a particular area based on the value it will add, and what resources it will bring to the CFSP. The UK must set the agenda of these discussions.
- Outside the EU, the UK will continue to be a key security player in Europe, particularly through its membership of NATO and the UN Security Council, as well as its involvement in coalition operations, such as those in Syria. The UK should concentrate on how it can strengthen this role from outside the EU and use this to demonstrate its value as an active participant in the CFSP.
- There could be some benefits from Brexit for the EU. Given the UK's traditional opposition to a more integrated defence and security policy, Brexit could open up opportunities for the EU to move forward on initiatives that were previously blocked by the UK.
- However, the absence of a UK veto could also uncover previously hidden divisions within the EU's thinking on security and defence. The EU should reassess how truly 'united' its voice is on foreign policy threat assessment and what this means for policy effectiveness.

The EU should also examine how the widely differing national interests and security priorities of member states could be channelled to strengthen the substance of the CFSP in certain areas.

- By concentrating too much on how the UK fits into frameworks and regulations, the EU risks depriving itself of a highly useful security partner. Sight of the bigger security picture should not be lost. For example, it would be mutually beneficial for the EU and the UK to find a way to continue cooperation on intelligence and information sharing. Ensuring Brexit negotiations on CFSP are handled in an objective manner will maximise security cooperation.
- Brexit should also trigger EU thinking on how well existing CFSP frameworks and regulations work in addressing the security threats for which they are intended. For example, the Paris and Brussels attacks in 2016 each revealed inadequacies in existing frameworks for the processing and use of intelligence sharing both within the EU and with neighbouring states.
- The discussion highlighted areas where the CFSP has had a sub-standard impact or has been wasteful in resources. The EU's response to the migration crisis is a good example. Again, Brexit should trigger a review of how Brussels can move from a reactive, crisis-management style of CFSP to more 'upstream' conflict prevention by better focusing its resources and capabilities.
- Given the lack of contingency planning, the new UK government will have the task of negotiating Brexit from a standing start. Think tanks can play a significant role in assisting the government to fill knowledge gaps and convene experts to understand the impact of Brexit and the strengths of the UK, particularly in terms of CFSP. This will be necessary for the formulation of a credible UK position in negotiations.

EU Defence and Security

A key issue throughout the day was how European defence and security cooperation would work without the UK as a member of the EU. This discussion was framed in reference to both the CFSP and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP).

The CFSP covers all areas of foreign policy and security questions; it includes the CSDP. The CFSP's diplomatic service, the European External Action Service, acts under the authority of the EU's high representative for foreign affairs and security policy, Federica Mogherini.[1] The EU's foreign and security policy 'is subject to specific rules and procedures', which include:

- The identification of the EU's strategic interests, objectives and the broad thrust of the CFSP at European Council summits, which convene four times a year.
- Voting by the Council of the EU on CFSP issues.[2] Decisions made by the Council require unanimity, although some aspects can be decided by qualified majority voting.

1. EUR-Lex, 'Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP)', <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/summary/glossary/foreign_security_policy.html>, accessed 1 August 2016.
2. EUR-Lex, 'Foreign & Security Policy at EU Level', <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv%3Aai0025>, accessed 1 August 2016.

The CSDP aims to strengthen the EU's ability to act externally, focusing on conflict prevention, peacekeeping operations and crisis management. It stems in part from Franco–British proposals in 1998 and 2004.[3] Operations consist of a mix of civilian and military engagement. Some current missions include the EU Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo; the European Union Advisory Mission Ukraine on civilian security sector reform; a civilian police service reform programme in Afghanistan; and the EU Border Assistance Mission in Libya.[4] The CSDP also covers large-scale maritime operations, such as Operation *Atalanta*, the counter-piracy action off the coast of Somalia, and Operation *Sophia*, which seeks to disrupt people-smuggling networks in the Mediterranean. The CSDP also includes eighteen battlegroups, each containing 1,500 troops. Two of these battlegroups are ready for deployment at all times.[5]

EU Defence and Security Post-Brexit

Much of the RUSI–FES discussion focused on how the security situation might change post-Brexit, and how the UK could remain engaged in European security while sitting outside the EU. It also examined what Brexit means for the EU's own security and defence agenda.

Brexit: What it Means for the UK's Participation in EU Defence and Security Policy

There are areas in which Brexit should not affect the UK's defence and security engagement in Europe. It is possible that the UK will wish to concentrate further on consolidating its influence in other non-EU organisations as a result of its reduced ability to influence the CFSP. For example, although the EU played a key role in the Iran deal, the UK, along with France and Germany, also played a significant individual role as part of the P5+1 group.[6] In addition, the UK would continue to be a significant security actor through its membership of NATO, particularly since it is one of the few member states meeting its 2% GDP defence spending commitment. NATO and the EU are seeking greater cooperation, combining soft and hard military power to deal with threats such as hybrid warfare, which will make it possible for the UK to continue to engage with Brussels on EU-related security matters. The UK has also played a prominent role as part of the US-led coalition combating Daesh (also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, ISIS) in Syria.

There was much debate as to whether the UK could continue to engage with the EU on the CFSP. One participant suggested that the UK could have more of a 'service provider' or 'consultancy' role, while another proposed a form of 'observer status'. Defence and security in some ways works within a more flexible framework compared with other EU policies and the CSDP remains based on intergovernmental decisions rather than a fully integrated EU approach. Unlike trade

3. European Parliament, Directorate-General for External Policies of the Union Directorate B, 'The European Security and Defence Policy: From the Helsinki Headline Goal to the EU Battlegroups', Note, DGExPo/B/PolDep/Note/2006_ 146, 12 September 2016.
4. European External Action Service, 'Ongoing Missions and Operations', July 2016, <http://www.eeas.europa.eu/csdp/missions-and-operations/>, accessed 1 August 2016.
5. Paul Adams, 'UK and the EU: Global Role and Defence', *BBC News*, 31 May 2016.
6. *BBC News*, 'Iran Nuclear Deal: Key Details', 16 January 2016.

and sanctions policy, on matters of defence and security states have the right to pursue their own foreign policy interests in parallel, as demonstrated in the UK's 2015 Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) and the German White Paper of July 2016.[7]

There are cooperative formats in which non-EU states can participate in CSDP missions. Technically, the UK should be able to continue participation in some operations, given that many other non-EU countries, such as Albania and Canada, have done so. However, German participants made it clear that the UK would relinquish its decision-making role in the planning and execution of missions and operations.

The UK is currently a prominent actor in EU foreign policy. The general sentiment, however, was that the country cannot assume that it will enjoy the same levels of influence once outside the EU. Former Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond, giving evidence to the Foreign Affairs Committee on this issue, stated, 'I don't see any reason why we would not want to continue in many areas to discuss with our 27 nearest neighbours whether we can reach a joint position on a matter of foreign or security policy'.[8] Although this appears to be a logical expression of national interest, the UK government should not underestimate the psychological and at times highly emotional impact of Brexit on the political will of individual EU leaders to grant the UK any partner status on foreign policy cooperation without proof that it is prepared to provide additional resources and expertise. The EU is unlikely to accommodate the UK simply for the sake of consistency. While giving evidence, Hammond also said 'the UK has been extraordinarily influential in formulating and shaping EU security and foreign policy. We can't expect to be as influential from outside, but I would hope we would still be significantly influential'.[9] The next step for the UK is to clearly articulate where its added value lies in contributing to the CFSP, if it wishes to continue doing so, and what resources it will be able to offer. The UK should expect a participatory role proportionate to the resources it brings.

Some of this added value is explicit, particularly given current CFSP structures. Highlighting the strengths in the UK's contribution will add weight to the country's negotiating power, should it seek to continue engagement. Although the workshop's participants were wary of overstating the UK's overall contribution to CSDP missions, it is clear that the EU will stand to lose strong UK resource contributions to its military and civilian operations. The UK has provided five heads of mission to civilian CSDP missions and in 2014 was placed seventh out of 28 member states in terms of numbers of seconded staff to civilian CSDP missions.[10] It was heavily involved in the EU Training Mission in Mali for that country's armed forces, providing one of the training companies in conjunction with the Irish defence forces, while the headquarters of the anti-piracy programme, Operation *Atalanta,* are based at Northwood in Middlesex. The UK has also been a strong proponent of sanctions on Russia, prompting Lithuanian Foreign Minister Linas

7. See Sebastian Schulte, 'Germany Unveils New White Paper', *Jane's Defence Weekly*, 14 July 2016.
8. House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, 'Oral Evidence: Foreign Policy Developments July 2016', HC 552, 7 July 2016.
9. *Ibid.*
10. Stabilisation Unit, 'Working in European Union Common Security and Defence Policy Missions', Deployee Guide, October 2014.

Linkevicius to lament that 'the voices of the more principled positions will be weaker' within the EU without the UK.[11]

It was suggested that an over-concentration on deliberately or punitively restricting the UK's future role within EU policy frameworks, influenced by the aforementioned psychological effect of Brexit, risked losing sight of the bigger security picture. For example, one area where it would be in the interests of both sides to continue cooperation is intelligence and information sharing, particularly in the context of counterterrorism. There will, however, be practical challenges to the continuation of this engagement within existing frameworks. For example, the UK would no longer be a member of Europol and would not be part of the European Arrest Warrant, which provides a framework for EU-wide extradition.[12]

The UK possesses strong capabilities in intelligence gathering and analysis. Excluding the UK because it does not fit into an existing EU framework could work to the detriment of both sides. Recognition of this problem should act as a catalyst for assessing more objectively the logic and efficacy of the current system of information sharing within the EU. For example, one UK participant felt that the EU needed to think more strategically about the purpose of cooperation. Without this, information sharing for the sake of it simply produces '28 different interpretations of what is happening on the ground'. The Paris and Brussels attacks have shown deficiencies in the processing of intelligence. There can be a degree of mistrust among EU member states on this issue, particularly those that are still friendly with countries of concern, such as Russia.[13]

Mogherini has addressed this problem in the recently launched EU Global Strategy.[14] It was one of the few topics addressed in specific terms, outlining the need to share 'alerts on violent extremism, terrorist networks and foreign terrorist fighters, as well as monitoring and removing unlawful content from the media. Alongside, the EU will support the swift recovery of Member States in the event of attacks through enhanced efforts on security of supply, the protection of critical infrastructure, and strengthening the voluntary framework for cyber crisis management'.[15] The Global Strategy also pledged to cooperate on countering violent extremism and counter-radicalisation.[16] This is an area in which all members would benefit from sustained cooperation with the UK. However, moves towards further integration and the creation of more complex frameworks to engage on these issues would make UK engagement more challenging. As one German participant said, 'if counterterrorism co-operation develops in the way that Mogherini envisaged it in the Global Strategy, [UK cooperation] could be more difficult'. Both the EU and the UK need to determine how important certain areas of security cooperation are in practice in order to overcome these difficulties.

11. *AFP,* 'After Brexit, Lithuania Seeks to Preserve Ally Against Russia', 28 June 2016.
12. House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, 'Implications of the Referendum on EU Membership for the UK's Role in the World', Fifth Report of Session 2015–16, HC 545, April 2016.
13. Jim Brunsden, Anne-Sylvaine Chassany and Sam Jones, 'Europe's Failure to Share Intelligence Hampers Terror Fight', *Financial Times*, 4 April 2016
14. European External Action Service, 'Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe: A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy', June 2016.
15. *Ibid.*
16. *Ibid.*

There is also scope for the UK to reinforce its case for increased participation (should it wish) by demonstrating instances where it may be able to offer new capabilities. For example, EU engagement with the British Army's newly created 77th battalion, which will engage in psychological operations particularly through the use of social media, could be of benefit to assist the EU's strategic communications policy. This would help to increase the UK's bargaining power in negotiations.

Brexit presents an opportunity for the UK to distance itself from aspects of EU security that it does not support. Historically the UK has been reluctant to fully commit to certain aspects of EU defence policy. A UK Foreign Affairs Committee report published in April 2016 that examined the potential implications of Brexit noted that the 'development of an effective EU defence identity is beset by difficulty. The UK has a long-established preference for developing a European identity within NATO and its long-established military interoperability standards. This though competes with a firm view, particularly promoted by Germany, France and Spain, that the EU should acquire a defence dimension'.[17] The UK's 2015 SDSR listed the EU within the Allies, Partners and Global Engagement section, but only after NATO, the US, France and Germany.[18] This highlights the tendency for the UK to cooperate in Europe on defence and security through either NATO or at the bilateral level. One UK participant suggested that the SDSR should be updated to reflect Brexit.

A German participant said that one difficulty for negotiations is that by saying 'there is no plan', the UK is making it difficult to structure an initial conversation. Although this is understandable given that the UK has had to form a new government as a result of Brexit, some participants argued that the UK needs to set an agenda rather than wait for the EU to set one. There needs to be defined prioritisation on CFSP through the Foreign Office and the new UK ministerial portfolios that have been created to negotiate Brexit. One UK parliamentary participant mentioned the important role that think tanks such as FES and RUSI could have in assisting the government in research and analysis on this issue and in planning for the UK's future position in the world.

Brexit: What it Means for EU Defence and Security Policy

Discussions also included consideration of the implications of Brexit for existing EU defence and security policy and expanded to examine potentially positive outcomes arising from Brexit in this area.

One UK participant felt that Brexit might allow the EU to develop the latent potential for security cooperation that Britain has previously blocked as a member, saying 'this will force the European partners to get their act together'. UK opposition to an integrated EU defence policy led to London exercising blocking proposals in 2011 for a permanent EU military headquarters to coordinate EU military and civilian missions. The UK government feared that such a move would undermine NATO and 'permanently disassociate[s] EU planning from NATO planning'.[19] Although the UK raises some

17. House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee, 'Implications of the Referendum on EU Membership for the UK's Role in the World'.
18. HM Government, *National Security Strategy and Strategic Defence and Security Review 2015: A Secure and Prosperous United Kingdom*, Cm 9161 (London: The Stationery Office, 2015).
19. Bruno Waterfield, 'Britain Blocks EU Plans for "Operational Military Headquarters"', *Daily Telegraph*, 18 July 2011.

valid questions about the practicalities of EU defence and security policy implementation, if the EU's aim is really to progress integration in this area, an EU without the UK may allow this to happen.

This raised further questions about how Brexit could expose weaknesses in EU security policy. The discussion touched on whether the EU, as it stands, shares a common threat assessment as is often claimed. EU member states certainly agree on what the key security threats facing Europe consist of, the key ones being instability caused by Russia, the migration crisis emanating from the south, and terrorism. However, one UK participant noted that this does not necessarily translate into agreement on any coordinated response to the threats.

There have been clear examples of this disunity within pronouncements on EU foreign policy. The EU debate around sanctions on Russia has revealed a lack of cohesion: for example, the Cyprus parliament's recent adoption of a resolution calling for sanctions on Russia to be lifted, shortly after the EU had decided to roll them over in June 2016.[20] Mixed messaging has emerged from politicians within the EU regarding aspects of European security policy towards Eastern partners in light of Russian aggression in Ukraine. Negative comments by German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier over what he described as NATO's 'saber-rattling' against Russia, confused what might otherwise have been a united message aimed at deterring Moscow.[21]

A paper by the Centre for European Reform has reinforced this point, saying that in defence terms Brexit may actually reveal 'deep cleavages'; member states have been 'able to hide behind Britain's blanket veto'.[22] For example, Paris and Berlin have different visions of EU defence. France is interested in particular in counterterrorism cooperation and aligning missions abroad with its own national interests, namely in Africa. Germany is more interested in harmonising defence policy and coordinating capabilities.[23] The creation of a European army is a good example of a divisive, albeit unclear, concept within the EU. It seems likely that Brexit will spark internal debates within the Union about its own defence and security challenges.

Although Brexit presents huge challenges for the UK government in terms of negotiating sustained engagement with the EU's foreign and security policy, the bloc itself will also be forced to re-examine how it adapts to life without the UK. Understanding in detail where each side can find mutually beneficial arrangements should form the basis of discussions, but Brexit should also spark useful discussion within the EU that could lead to policy reform that may be reinforced by UK participation or abstention.

20. Eric Maurice, 'Cypriot MPs Call to Lift Russian Sanctions', *EU Observer*, 8 July 2016.
21. *Reuters*, 'German Minister Warns NATO of "Saber-Rattling" Against Russia', 18 June 2016.
22. Ian Bond et al., 'Europe After Brexit: Unleashed or Undone?', Policy Brief, Centre for European Reform, April 2016.
23. *Ibid*.

Case Study: Threats from the South

The second part of the day's discussion was dedicated to analysing the migration crisis facing Europe from the south. The discussion concentrated more on assessing how the EU has dealt with the challenge itself, rather than on the implications of Brexit for this issue.

The movement of refugees and migrants across the Mediterranean is not a new phenomenon. As one expert speaker pointed out, Italy, Spain and Malta have dealt with migrants and refugees from across the Mediterranean for many years. It is the current numbers of migrants that are unprecedented and clearly unmanageable. Before the issue can be effectively tackled it is important for those states involved to understand that it is not just about examining Syria. The current phenomenon of mass migration is the result of conflict in Afghanistan, Egypt, Libya and Eritrea, among other places.

One German participant noted that the EU's inability to deal with the migrant crisis effectively has in part been because of the absence of necessary accompanying structures. When the EU created the Schengen Area, it should have created a joint European border patrol. Frontex is inadequate to fulfil this role, as it simply supports and coordinates member states' border forces. The migration crisis has highlighted this deficiency in full. This was echoed by one migration expert, who commented, 'there is little competency on border control, particularly maritime'.

The EU's Response to the Migration Crisis

Although seemingly unmanageable, EU member states and the EU collectively have made significant attempts to tackle the issue.

Operation *Mare Nostrum* was established in October 2013. Run by the Italian navy, with some financial support from the EU Commission, it focused on the search and rescue of migrants travelling to Italy. It was terminated in October 2014, as the costs of running the programme became unsustainable at €9 million a month.

Generally, the UK has argued against search-and-rescue missions as a solution to the migration crisis. Although *Mare Nostrum* was not an EU-led operation, the UK's vocal opposition to such crisis management operations again demonstrated a lack of unity within the EU on analysis of the threat. The UK argued that such search operations provide 'an unintended "pull factor"' for migrants, which in the long term increases the numbers attempting to cross and consequent death tolls.[24] As a result, the UK has declined to contribute to future operations of this kind.[25] It argues that the most effective way to prevent refugees and migrants attempting the dangerous crossing is to 'focus our attention on countries of origin and transit, as well as taking steps to fight the people smugglers who wilfully put lives at risk by packing migrants into unseaworthy boats'.[26] The EU may now have the

24. Alan Travis, 'UK Axes Support for Mediterranean Migrant Rescue Operation', *The Guardian,* 27 October 2014.
25. *Ibid.*
26. *Ibid.*

opportunity to launch its own search-and-rescue operation (should it wish to do so) unencumbered by UK resistance.

As *Mare Nostrum* concluded, Frontex launched Operation *Triton* in November 2014. This concentrated more on border surveillance than search and rescue, and operated significantly closer to the Italian coast. Its monthly budget was initially estimated at €2.9 million, almost a third of that of *Mare Nostrum*.[27] Frontex stressed that this was not an operation to replace *Mare Nostrum*, but had a different purpose, adding: 'Frontex is not a coordinating body for search and rescue operations. The responsibility of member states to ensure search and rescue operations and maritime security on this is not substituted for – or suspended by – a border surveillance operation'.[28] The UK initially seconded one immigration officer to Operation *Triton*, increasing this to five in April 2015.[29]

Another initiative that was more in line with the UK's approach to the migration issue came in the form of Operation *Sophia*, established in May 2015. This is aimed at disrupting the human smuggling and trafficking networks underpinning the dangerous crossings made by migrants and refugees from Libya. It involves boarding, searching, seizing and destroying boats and apprehending smugglers. This initiative was in part a result of pressure to react after 800 people died in April 2015 attempting to cross the Mediterranean. Nonetheless it is a key operation of the EU's CSDP. The UK has contributed assets, including a frigate, helicopter, UAV and Royal Marines boarding party. It also offered HMS *Bulwark* as a search-and-rescue asset, as well as naval officers, in advance of the operational stage of the mission.[30]

A House of Lords report was highly critical of the operation, saying that it has not 'in any meaningful way' deterred the flow of migrants, disrupted the smugglers' networks, or impeded the business of people smuggling on the central Mediterranean route. The report said that '*Operation Sophia* does not, and we argue, cannot, deliver its mandate. It responds to symptoms, not causes'.[31] RUSI's Peter Roberts claims the operation is not fit for purpose, citing in particular the supply of too few aerial resources to cover the area of operations. He also referred to a lack of consistency in force design, as the vessels at the mission's disposal were contingent on the political needs of the individual nations. He noted that the assets being used were 'too sophisticated' for the mission and that aircraft designed to hunt nuclear submarines in the North Atlantic were being used to hunt 'small rubber dinghies', implying wasteful use of resources.[32] Another challenge facing the operation resulted from an assumption, or hope, that the expedition would be authorised to conduct military operations

27. European Commission, 'Frontex Joint Operation "Triton" – Concerted Efforts to Manage Migration in the Central Mediterranean', Memo, MEMO/14/566, 7 October 2014.
28. Lizzy Davies and Arthur Neslen, 'Italy: End of Ongoing Sea Rescue Mission "Puts Thousands at Risk"', *The Guardian,* 31 October 2014.
29. Alan Travis, 'Mediterranean Migrant Deaths: UK Sends Just Five Workers to Assist EU', *The Guardian,* 20 April 2015.
30. House of Lords European Union Committee, 'Operation Sophia, the EU's Naval Mission in the Mediterranean: An Impossible Challenge', 14th Report of Session 2015–16, HL Paper 144, May 2016.
31. *Ibid.*
32. *Ibid.*

ashore in Libya.[33] One UK participant at the workshop highlighted that until there is a more stable Libyan government there is unlikely to be any political appetite in the country to enable this.

The complexities of orchestrating a coherent response to the challenge of migrants crossing the Mediterranean highlight fundamental flaws in the EU's ability to plan and implement certain operations. They also highlight the opportunities presented by Brexit for the reassessment of policy and its implementation within the EU. This may mean a push for fuller integration and higher contribution demand, which Brexit could facilitate given the UK's traditional opposition to both these initiatives. The EU should also consider how to achieve greater flexibility in its approach to crises, and recognise the difficulties of uniting what is likely to be 27 countries behind a common objective. Examining a division of labour between states, based on prioritised foreign policy interests, appropriate resource provision and perceived security threats, could be a more impactful way of determining this. CSDP missions can be promoted or curtailed due to the interests of member states, rather than the overarching interests of the EU.

At times, this need to be seen to be dealing with crises has led to unrealistic approaches, particularly in relation to the migration crisis. This was highlighted by one expert in relation to the EU's Migration Partnership Framework, which aims to manage migration by working with third countries of origin and transit.[34] The expert's verdict was that it was 'not a bad idea, but it's just an idea', arguing that the project would have limited impact, as it comes too late and has been poorly thought out. The main criticism was that it assumes too much capacity on the part of transit countries to implement policies with the EU. For example, Niger is not in a position to implement border controls in the way that the project outlines. The expert believed the initiative was being funded in part simply to show that the EU was 'doing something'.

Although collective action often has much higher impact than unilateral action, Brexit may prompt the EU to reconsider the breadth and substance of some of its crisis management operations and its often overly reactive responses. The EU has been criticised in the past for being too technocratic in its management of foreign policy programmes. Indeed, an over-concentration on frameworks, programmes and processes on security may seem to ensure a united response, but it can equally undermine the impact the EU has in practice. It risks missing the point of security cooperation overall. A re-examination of current security and foreign policy in light of Brexit, and in conjunction with Mogherini's new global strategy, could result in a more flexible and impactful EU security and foreign policy that involves the UK in well-defined areas.

33. Peter Roberts, 'Militarising the EU Migration Plan: A Flawed Approach', *RUSI Newsbrief* (Vol. 35, No. 4, July 2015).
34. European Commission, 'Commission Announces New Migration Partnership Framework: Reinforced Cooperation With Third countries to Better Manage Migration', press release, 7 June 2016, <http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-2072_en.htm>, accessed 2 August 2016.

About the Author

Sarah Lain is a Research Fellow at RUSI. Her research focuses on the post-Soviet space, in particular Russia and Central Asia.

Sarah is currently completing a large project looking at China's growing influence in Central Asia, and how this impacts Russia's role in the region. She has written and commented on Russia's foreign policy, particularly in relation to Ukraine and Syria. Sarah also has a particular interest in financial crime and corruption, with a focus on how the UK facilitates illicit financial flows originating from former Soviet countries. In 2016 she was appointed specialist adviser to the UK Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee, assisting on their enquiry into UK–Russia bilateral relations.