

**THE COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH AND THE EUROPEAN UNION:  
a case study of the Horn of Africa**

*Under the supervision of Major General Maurice de LANGLOIS*

**Major General Maurice de LANGLOIS** is a graduate of the land branch of Saint Cyr Military Academy. His military career has brought him to Germany, Africa and France. He played a major role in NATO operations in the Former Yugoslavia. Having held several Army staff positions in Paris, he went on to join the team that would set up the European Defence Agency in Brussels, followed by an appointment as Deputy French Military Representative to the European Union Military Committee. In September 2012, he was appointed department head for Comparative Defence Policy at the Institute for Strategic Research, Ecole Militaire.

Using a cross-sectional study of the conceptual approaches of the main organisations as a starting point, this paper aims to study the comprehensive approach in practice, namely the European Union's initiative in the Horn of Africa, and more specifically in Somalia.

The comprehensive approach is a term often used by organisations, in particular the European Union, in an attempt to provide coherence to the initiatives undertaken for a country or region in crisis in order to restore peace, democracy and prosperity.

While support for the comprehensive approach is unanimous, it must be conceptualised and given greater formal structure if it is to be a truly efficient lever. However, the many challenges, actors and interests render its implementation extremely complex.

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The definition of the Horn of Africa is extensive: it encompasses Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia and Somalia as well as all peripheral countries and the vast maritime areas from the Gulf of Aden to the shores of the Indian continent to the east, and the entrance of the Mozambique Channel to the south. It is one of the most unstable and conflict-stricken regions in the world, due to both its tragic history and the current situation, hit with episodes of political instability and piracy at sea. The political situation in this region was mainly caused by the parcelling out of Somalia.

This is why the definition and implementation of a comprehensive approach to assist the area are particularly suited. As a global actor that wishes to ensure its security and international stability, the European Union is particularly well equipped to effectively intervene in the Horn of Africa through the combined action of its economic, diplomatic and military instruments.

This paper seeks to show that while the European Union has all the necessary tools, the analysis of their implementation continues to pose problems, despite the improvements made possible by the Lisbon Treaty and mentioned at the last European Council in December 2013. The relative success of the European Union in the Horn of Africa, and particularly in Somalia, serves here as a textbook case: there has been visible progression from what was initially a European Union approach that had long been empirical and pragmatic to today's overall strategy, which has become coherent and is more effective.

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After comparing the conceptual approaches of different organisations, describing the actions implemented and the involvement of the actors, the paper outlines a number of recommendations, mainly at the coordination and governance level in the European Union.