Managing Crises in the EU: Some Reflections of a Non-EU Scholar

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In recent years the EU has been increasingly involved in development and implementation of crisis policy as a component of its development and security policy. This process is seriously complicated by the EU architects, who had never conceived it as a crisis management institute. Therefore they failed to design built-in organisational capacities into the Union to mitigate and respond to crises. In addition, the EU-agreed overarching concept of crisis as such and EU crisis in particular is missing. Both issues remain a primary question on research and policy agendas. Provided below are some of the author's considerations and comments on these issues. It is argued that, despite the existing divergence in crisis interpretations in the EU, coherent conceptualisation is possible and approaches to this are introduced. Practical implications of generic crisis conceptualisation for EU crisis management policy are analysed. Within this context three major lessons from international experience, including that from the USA and Russia, are emphasised. These concern the issues of organisational flexibility, learning from earlier major crises and comprehensive training of crisis decision units critical for efficient crisis management policy.

Introduction

In recent years the EU has been increasingly involved in development and implementation of crisis policy as an intrinsic and specific component of its development and security policy. The task looks even more complicated with the two basic issues. First of all, the EU architects did not conceive it as a crisis management institute and thus neither them nor their followers designed built-in organisational capacities to mitigate and respond to crises. This assumes that framing crisis management organisations into the EU institutional complex and making them work effectively is a challenging task. Secondly, lacking the agreed overarching concept of crisis further exacerbates this task. What is a crisis, in particular an EU crisis, is a primary question on a research and policy agenda. It echoes the enquiry 'what is a disaster' raised in the late 1980s but still keeping multiple perspectives in replies. (See (Perry and Quarantelli, 2005); (Quarantelli, 1998)).

These issues were the focus of discussions held within the exploratory workshop 'Managing Crises in the EU: A First Assessment' organised in St Maxime (France), 24–27 June 2005 under the aegis of the European Science Foundation. It put together international experts from three basic areas: analysts and decision support makers from the EU bodies, political science professors with particular interest in international and European security issues and crisis management scholars. The debates concentrated primarily on the crisis management capacity of the EU as an institution rather than a set of member states. Both the starting point and the 'anvil' of discussions were provided by an extensive draft report prepared jointly by the crisis research teams from the Swedish National Defense College and Leiden University in the Netherlands. (See Boin, Ekengren and Rhinard, 2005; hereafter Report).[1]

Provided below are some reflections on the two key issues above. As a prelude to those we start with the definition of a crisis and address a basic question of what threats should be considered an (EU) crisis? Then we move to the second issue of the EU crisis management capacity in the context of learning lessons from international experience.

A Coherent Crisis Definition: Mission Impossible?

As noted above an agreed version of a concept of crisis is missing. At first glance, this poses a major impediment to EU crisis management: As long as the management goal is blurred or subtle no coherent policy in the area would be possible. However, in practical life this conclusion is misleading given that the notion of crisis (whatever

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EU, US or Russian) has always been a subjective construct and continues to be so. A 'normal' discrepancy between crisis interpretation by practitioners (including policy decision-makers in Brussels and EU members) and academic communities correctly emphasised in the Report will also persist. The former community is and will tend to stick to the *ad hoc* conceptualisation of a crisis, judging mostly on perceived threat to the existing state of affairs and/or decision making routines, which in addition, and sometimes instead of, concerning real hazards involves a lot of manoeuvring and politicking. At the same time, the latter will keep striving to develop a more comprehensive and logically consistent framework or a set of those to comply with the complexity of crisis as a research category.

With this in mind, setting the research agenda implies one important thing. A study oriented to the demands of real world practitioners and seeking the development of more efficient decision support technique – the efficiency criteria will involve the utility and timeliness of such a technique to particular crisis decision-makers – or, otherwise, an academic research study in the crisis area is carried out to provide for the deeper insight of an issue to elaborate more grounded arguments of the theoretical approach. In such a case, its efficiency, or more accurately quality, criteria will imply the basic tenets' consistency within both a given framework and established theories. For a more detailed discussion of the point see Porfiriev (1998: 28–36) and Boin, Ekengren and Rhinard (2005: 12–13).

Given this, the key concept of a crisis as put in the Report and many other publications (e.g. Congleton, 2005; Rosenthal, 't Hart and Charles, 1989; Rosenthal, Boin and Comfort, 2001; Stern, 1999) needs explicit specification of an addressee. If the 'end user' is a political decision-maker or a group of those then the definition is fine when complying with the above-mentioned efficiency criteria. However, within academic realms the notion of 'urgency' as an intrinsic component of a crisis as provided in the publications mentioned above, seems ambiguous for at least two reasons.

One of these involves certain inconsistency within the crisis framework in the report. The very notion of urgency assumes an instant event. We believe that one cannot talk about an 'urgent process' but only about an 'urgent event or moment'. While an event can be illustrated pictorially by a spot or by a sharp peak on a curve but never by a curve as such, the latter serves as a classic graphic interpretation of the trajectory of a process of development. Meanwhile, the Report considers a crisis 'a long-term process rather than an event that is clearly demarcated in time' (Boin, Ekengren and Rhinard, 2005: 33). We agree and believe the tenet principal in conceptual terms. Indeed, continuity

that is at the core of a process implies its availability for monitoring, which is a key tool for crisis prevention and early warning (as correctly stated in the report) while an event makes possible registration alone.

The other reason of the definition's ambiguity lies in the area of practice. One could easily cite a number of examples showing situations or occasions when core values are (perceived) at stake by policy makers, while no urgency in decision making is involved. One could easily give examples of global warming, projected drop in birth rate and economic recession to provide immediate illustrations of the point.

For instance, global warming is really perceived as a crisis by EU policy makers. Some EU leaders, e.g. the British prime minister elsewhere including the latest G8 summit at Gleneagle in 2005, explicitly show deep concern and even use the words 'urgent action' in their public discourse to give high profile to the issue. However, the real history of signing and even more the ongoing implementation of the Kyoto protocol, which tells about the EU and its member states' understanding of and attitude towards this problem much more then mere rhetoric, show that urgency is missing. This leaves only the US and Russian political officials the bulk of whom also believe global warming a crisis but calling for comprehensive and incremental not immediate (urgent) action (see: Michaelowa, 2004; Porfiriev, 2004a; Portney, 2004).

Such a discrepancy could be easily understood if the generic notion of a crisis is abandoned and one more step from it is made to decompose crises into to basic types, i.e. instant ('fast-burning') and creeping ('slow-burning') crises (see 't Hart and Boin, 2001). We shall revisit these crisis types later. Here it is just crucial to fix again on the fact that the category of a crisis initially does not necessarily imply urgency. However, we would admit that for politicians the factor of urgency is really critically important to attract public and media attention necessary to obtain additional publicity and resources. Therefore labelling an adversity 'urgent', 'burning' or 'hot' whatever it is in reality makes very clear political sense but may have nothing to do with the actual situation.

This observation facilitates answering the question of what threats could be considered an (EU) crisis. First, one should mention that these are real or perceived threats and/or challenges to the core values of the EU as a community, which cannot be efficiently coped with by routine organisational procedures and tools and thus require specific management systems and instruments. The most important thing about these hazards is their perceived horror and real controllability, which are considered key characteristics shaping the risk perception mode (see, for instance,

Slovic, 1987, 1992, 2000; Slovic, Fischhoff and Lichtenstein, 1980, 1985; Renn, 1992; Renn and Rohrmann, 2000) but not the urgency of the threats. Within the factors that contribute most to controllability, Lagadec (1997, 2000) emphasises uncertainty and 'fuzziness' that provide for the crisis decision makers dealing with something that existing culture, mentality, institutional capacity and crisis 'tool box' are not prepared for. In turn this puts a core issue of changing these assets critical to efficient crisis management, which in the EU context transforms into the issue of building a common 'crisis culture'.

As to specific security risks and hazards its worth adding two more to those of modernisation mentioned elsewhere. These are:

- *Complex or systemic threats* that combine a set of (perceived) hazard agents, e.g. man-made and natural, those that contribute to both creeping and instant crises, etc. In terms of the existing EU 'pillar' framework this implies both a challenge to and issue of inter-pillar (inter-directorate) concern.

- *Threats associated with transition (or transitional state of society and/or economy)* of the EU newcomers and applicants as a particular manifestation of such systemic crisis. We believe the process of transition as such a creeping crisis, which exacerbates the complications of these nations' joining the EU and makes this process a protracted or 'slow-burning' crisis. Within the existing EU framework this issue should be of especial concern to the Commission Directorate-General for Enlargement with the other 'pillars' also being involved. Examples to illustrate the point abound. For the sake of brevity here we only enumerate institutional erosion, under-institutionalisation, institutional over-strain and stalemate risks typical for transitional societies revealed in detail in Stern and Hansen (2000: 7–28) and Porfiriev and Svedin (2002: 22–29).

Second, coherent conceptualisation of a crisis is not only possible, as experience of a common EU notion of terrorism proves; it is also a must to avoid the Babel effect not only between the EU member states but also between the EU and other international bodies. This should be particularly stressed given, for instance, implementation of the Hague program (2005–2010) that, besides other issues, includes joint crisis management activities of the EU members. No less important is consideration of the EU-NATO strategic partnership in crisis management and the EU-United Nations cooperation in carrying out the existing UN conventions against terrorism.

As an example of such a definition one could cite that developed by the Crisis States Research Centre of the London School of Economics that uses the term 'crisis'

> ''to signify a situation where the political or economic system is confronted with challenges with which existing institutions and organisations are potentially unable to cope'' (Introduction, 2005).

It also mentions that

> ''crisis in this sense is a condition of disruption severe enough to threaten the continued existence of established systems'' (Introduction, 2005).

Otherwise, the version of the Report definition that waives the word 'urgent' could be considered applicable. In any case, the broader academic approach towards a crisis definition that incorporates both instant and creeping crises, provides the room for political and corporate officials' perception of a crisis as hotbed. This makes the prospects of a dual-use definition of crisis quite optimistic.

Lessons for the EU Crisis Management Policy

The above-mentioned observations on crisis conceptualisation are not a mere play upon words but rather 'mind games' that have important practical implications. In particular, they pinpoint the complexity of the hazards and threats involved and thus imply comprehensiveness of crisis institutional policy. Should or should not the EU as a specific institution actively orchestrate or rather complement the efforts of the national governments and responsible agencies while carrying out this policy is a very complex issue going beyond the reach of our analytical lens. (For the discussion of this important issue see for instance, Duke (2002) and Larsson, Olsson and Ramberg, (2005)).

Here worth emphasizing is that the EU institutes (legislation and implementation or enforcement organizations) should consider both instant and creeping crises and their combination as equally important to the EU as an entity (polity). No one can foresee where, when and what crisis type comes to the fore and for this reason a multi-hazard and systems approach to crisis management should be applied. In addition, the existing EU capacity is mostly prepared for and focuses on short-term rather than long-term goals of crisis policy. For this reason a multi-hazard and systems approach to crisis management should be applied.

Such an approach should provide for interconnection of the EU institutes' policy measures that focused on specific kinds of crises. It implies

the efficient combination of the national and EU crisis capacities for handling both instant and creeping crises, where 'and' means value added by this combination and measured primarily in terms of human health, economic damage, and social and political tension either prevented or mitigated at the maximum. In this respect the organisation of the Rapid Response Mechanism in 2004, which adds to the EU established and emerging policy sectors including DG Environment's Community mechanism and human health, common foreign and security policy, justice and home affairs should be positively stressed. However, organisation and facilitation of interaction between these two sets of institutional components is no less paramount to make the Solidarity Clause a new type of crisis management system within the efficiently working EU. In particular, it would make an institutional framework for monitoring the potential crisis development path. This could involve either tracking crisis forerunners including near misses in the form of early signals of the future crisis, or detection of the indicators of the instant crisis turning into a creeping one and vice versa.

In what way such interaction should be organised is a question that needs thorough conceptual and practical elaboration, which is beyond the scope of this paper. However, what we would argue here is the need and salience for the EU to provide integrity to its crisis management policy. This could be achieved via organisational flexibility, learning from earlier major crises and comprehensive training of crisis decision units and decision-makers, respectively.

Organisational flexibility of crisis policy implies both elasticity of organisation structure, personnel mobility and funding sources heterogeneity and complementarity. Within a broader context of this issue that reflects policy being based on both values and interests a key is relationship between centralisation and decentralisation models of crisis management associated and 'echoed' with that between Machiavellian and Kantian conceptualisations of power and ethics. Given that consideration of and learning lessons from the recent Russian and US experience of reforming national crisis management systems, are especially valid for the EU. Both nations are comparable with the EU in terms of population (the key asset of civil protection). In addition, Russia's crisis policy implies close integration with the former Soviet republics, now members of the CIS, who strive to pave the way to a consistent policy to approach the EU model in the distant future. While in many other respects these efforts fail or are ineffective in the area of coordinated (if not integrated) civil protection policy, these are much more successful.

The vast data prove the Russian crisis policy's major shift in the 1990s and further into the early 2000s from exclusively centralised crisis planning and crisis response to a more decentralised and flexible model embodied in the national Unified System for Emergency and Disaster Mitigation and Response. This is oriented on crisis mitigation and timely response and opens the way for more non-state (public, private and mixed) initiatives and solutions. It manifests drifting from over-dominant orientation towards wartime threats with the civil defence as the organic element of the Ministry of Defense being a key crisis actor to peacetime preparations with civic or quasi-civilian institutions prevailing on the crisis management scene and the Ministry for Emergency Situations (EMERCOM) at the top.

From 2001 to 2004 a counter-tendency within the above-mentioned Unified System developed, following both impact of the major terrorist attacks in the USA in 2001 and Russia in 2002 and the permutations within EMERCOM. The latter include: (a) moving of the fire service from the Ministry of Interior to EMERCOM in 2002, which increased an order of magnitude the latter's personnel and response capacity; (b) adding responsibility for recovery from disasters, primarily but no only in terms of reconstruction's coordination and supervision to the existing powers of EMERCOM. The experience of the flood disasters in 2001 and 2002 can serve as evidence of this.

These changes could imply the backward trend to centralisation of civil crisis management in Russia in the hands of EMERCOM. Meanwhile, the role of the other agencies, including those providing urgent response services (e.g. the Ministry of Interior), diminished in relative terms at least. Finally, since late 2004/early 2005 following the major administrative reform the responsibility for economic development and civil protection policies is shifting towards the regional level. Such a trend is similar to that in Germany, where since 1997 a new model replaced the shared responsibility between federal, regional (Lander) and local levels of crisis policy. This model moved such responsibility for civil defence to the *Landers* and that for crisis planning and medical and technical assistance during crisis to municipalities with the special national emergency agency (like EMERCOM) missing. As to Russia the above trends imply the decentralisation model in the mid 2000s is coming back. The near future will show how sustainable this renaissance of decentralisation is, noting in particular that the ongoing shift of functions and responsibilities is loosely supported by the respective change in funding pattern.

By the way, with this issue comes to the fore a tricky problem of shifting responsibility, which involves a serious component of manoeuvring and politicking, too. One could immediately recollect the electricity blackout in Moscow and

adjacent regions in May 2005. As an aftermath of that major outage some two million people were affected and economic damage worth US$ 1700 million incurred accompanied by the firing of the boss of the Moscow region electricity grid directly by the president of Russia. A few years earlier one could assume that the chief of the national electricity supply system (RAO 'EES') should be sacked given the mode of sharing responsibility within the existed centralisation model of crisis management. However, many experts believe that this did not happen in May 2005 not only because of the above-mentioned drift to decentralisation of crisis decision making but rather for political motives. As they said, mostly because Mr. Chubais, portrayed a 'devil' of the Yeltsin era reforms and currently the CEO of RAO 'EES', is politically important for the president's administration, which did not want to sacrifice him in sake of 'good' political image, at least at that time.

The observations alike are applicable enough to the US with the notable fluctuations in national crisis policy. After a long time of decentralised crisis policy that replaced that of the civil defence prioritised till late 1970s, the latter came back in late 2001 with the set of laws led by the Patriotic Act and organisation of the huge Homeland Security Department, as a reaction to 9/11 events. This manifested a major change both in the national security and civil protection policies with much more centralisation and less flexibility. Although many believe that this model still persists 'intact' some minor but notable changes hint to the re-consideration of the centralisation and etatist crisis policy model, for instance partial replacement of the TSA personnel by that of private companies, revival of role of FEMA.

The hurricane Katrina disaster in Fall 2005 turned out to be the world's costliest calamity ever. It brought one more big yet controversial lesson in terms of what crisis policy model is the best. Timely warning and early evacuation of the bulk of the New Orleans and adjacent communities organised by respective federal and state agencies are evidence for an exemplary balance between centralisation and decentralisation or shared governance at the onset of a major crisis. Meanwhile, failure in response to the hurricane impact vested by the public and media primarily on the federal government (acknowledged by the president personally), calls for a significant improvement and strengthening of crisis decision making at the top policy level. This assumes increasing centralisation of both preparedness and response to disaster.

However needed and crucial this trend should not blur two important things. First, the revival of the role and strength of FEMA after Katrina looks indisputable and implies less concentration of power in the hands of Department for Homeland Security. Second, such important issues as hospitals, sheltering (e.g. the Superdome stadium in New Orleans) and some others evidenced the fiasco of preparedness and response to a major disaster (for details, see, for instance, Chan and Harris, 2005) are and should keep being a prerogative of state authorities. It means that their responsibility and capacity require at least no less strengthening than those at the federal level require and thus would impede centralisation development trends in the future national crisis policy.

The experiences of these two big nations highlight the problem of matching civil defence-like and civil protection models having to consider both commonalities and national peculiarities. And these experiences might be believed to be the right lesson to learn from. Albeit necessary caution should be applied, while adapting these and other experiences to EU conditions, e.g. when considering setting up an EU Security Council. Some experts believe it is expedient for this new organisation and composition to combine elements of the UN Security Council, where some countries are recognised as ''more equal'' than others, and that of the USA, where all relevant agencies of the executive are represented. This idea is in tune with the political compromise to set up a modest military headquarters for EU-led operations, a deal first agreed by the 'Big Three' (Britain, France and Germany) and later accepted by all EU member states. (For more details see Everts and Missiroli (2004)).

As far as *learning from major crises* is concerned, one more lesson worth EU consideration is also associated with the USA and Russia. This particularly concerns learning from disaster management to reduce the risk of the major terrorist attack. The issue originates from the above-mentioned tragedies that manifested the dramatic increase of international terrorism as a critical factor that changed the concept and reshaped the pattern of both national and international security including that of the EU.

Russia can serve particular corroboration of the point providing the horrendous examples of the massive terrorist attacks in Moscow in October 2002 (''theatre crisis'') and Beslan in September 2004 (''school seizure crisis''). These two attacks alone resulted in over 460 people killed with children and young people making up a considerable percentge. Whatever grave physical and moral consequences, the political implications of these acts of terrorism have been much more serious. These provide important lessons for learning to cope with this plague of the 21st century more effectively, including those of selecting and using the proper tools and methods of crisis management, the stance endlessly stressed by all G8 leaders at the latest jubilee UN session in September 2005.

The search for such tools will deal with the basic characteristics of a terrorist attack as a hazard. These involve high uncertainty about the target, location and means of attack, insufficient knowledge and understanding of the deep and direct causes of a particular event or terrorism as a national and/or international phenomenon. In addition, one may cite politicians' reluctance to explore these causes for the sake of politicking on a tragic event. All these contribute to the horror and low degree of controllability of a terrorist attack.

In this respect the risk of terrorist attack has much in common with that of major natural disasters although the difference between them is no less pronounced. This precipitates the commonalities and peculiarities of research, training and management tools used in these two kinds of crisis. Stressing the similarities in the origin and development of disasters and terrorist attacks a number of experts in the USA in 2002 (Demuth, 2002) then followed by European colleagues (see Pine, 2004) argue that using disaster management tools to cope with terrorist attacks is feasible, expedient and promising.

We share this opinion and believe that such a combined approach should contribute to the implementation of Strategic Objectives for the Revised EU Plan of Action to Combat Terrorism approved in March 2004. In particular, enhance the capacity of the EU member states to deal with the consequences of a terrorist attack given that current EU policy considers threats posed by major disasters and terrorist attack within the single framework of civil protection (Europe and Counterterrorism, 2005). Moreover, we reckon the process of increasing application and adaptation of organisational (soft) and engineering (hard or structural) means of disaster risk reduction in combating international terrorism representing both a specific form of a feedback technology transfer and a new area of using the so-called dual technologies. This could constitute one of the intriguing issues of the EU cross-policy agenda that marries crisis and technological policies.

Last but not least, many lessons can be learned by the EU in the area of *training of the crisis decision units and decision-makers and negotiations of crisis issues*. Training is a must, otherwise intellectual input developed to add value to existing knowledge and experience will fail to transform into practical tools and results, and be lost. This leaves alone an open mindset obtained and/or developed by both crisis trainers and trainees as a positive externality of exercises and drills targeted primarily for putting watches together (the same is true in crisis negotiations) and coaching *per se*.

The existing primers and teaching courses in crisis management at both public and corporate levels focus on instant crises with creeping or systems crises overlooked or underestimated. In addition, most of the simulation games, field exercises and contingency planning revolve around different scenarios of development of expected events and suggest a set of in-advance measures to either prevent or mitigate the future crisis. Intended as an answer to ''what if?'' questions, such models comply with the classical anticipation concept of crisis management and are naturally always proactive in their essence. Of course, there is good reason for a proactive attitude, given that prevention tends to be more efficient than response measures.

However, two problems appear here. One of these is associated with the stance of the Report that we agree with that 'a crisis for which we are prepared is, paradoxically, is – almost by definition – no longer a crisis ' (Report, 2005: 25). Another issue concerns creeping and compound or systemic types of crisis that cannot be forecast or prepared for beforehand. This implies that the anticipation model is no longer valid and one has to switch to a perpetual crisis concept and the accompanying resilience model of crisis management. In turn, these call for a different approach to decision making on handling ''standing-in-the-middle-of-the-road'' situations. However, the relevant measures are lacking in the existing crisis management portfolio.

This does not automatically mean that a set of contingency plans and tools used for managing instant crises have no chance of being employed in preparing for and responding to creeping crises. The point is that practitioners should consider both slow-burning and fast-burning crises and their combination as a compound crisis. Consequently, planning and management strategy for a creeping and compound crisis should marry pro-activity and resilience with increasing coping capacity. Within this approach preparedness and improvisation should serve 'twin pillars' of future crisis management (Kreps, 2001). In turn, this assumes a significant paradigm shift, which requires future academic research to provide a more specific and detailed knowledge base. This should reflect the full possible range of risks and hazards to societies given that the existing theoretical foundations have been defined in broad but sketchy profiles (Drabek, 2005).

An integrated approach combining risk assessment with normative policy based on MPL characteristics may serve an illustration of such tools for decision support in the area of EU environmental policy. This can help decision-makers set environmental policy priorities and developing a fitting crisis management strategy. It is worth stressing that uncertainty precipitated by a limited or even minimal scientific knowledge about new, poorly understood subjects makes it diffi-

culty to comprehend (see Lagadec, 1997). In addition, given the complexity and costliness of collecting and processing of the data a decision-maker can quite rarely obtain a quantitative risk assessment ready for use in advance, which makes efficient crisis preparation more problematic. At the same time, one should not overlook the opportunities provided by modern analytic tools like risk for more advanced and substantiated setting of crisis policy priorities.

The final comment within the given context revisits the key issue of uncertainty and complexity as core characteristics of a crisis but within the international negotiation context. (For more details see: 't Hart, Stern and Sundelius, 1997; Porfiriev, 2004b). The point is that these metrics of crisis provide for a unique opportunity for political manoeuvring, in particular negotiations within the EU. Driven by specific preferences a party or parties exploit the uncertainty associated with the crisis situation to place responsibility on their opponent. Such politicking is particularly tough in near-election and/or early-election times, as examples of the floods in Germany in 2002 and the terrorist attack in Madrid in Spain in 2004 show. At the same time the above-mentioned uncertainty could be and has been used by a specific party or official to protract negotiations and thus involve the second-order risk of making negotiations as such a creeping crisis.

To some extent this problem could be mitigated by the bureaucratic type of organisations dominant at the negotiation table on crises, in particular at the intergovernmental level of the EU. The organisations of this type normally tend to reduce or are averse to the risks associated with crises by focusing on rules and procedures in compliance with existing international standards or developing such standards. However, excessive sticking to procedural tuning involves the second-order risk of loosing flexibility and creativity, which are essential for handling the uncertainty and complexity of crises.

This puts to the fore two more requirements for negotiation on crisis issues. One of these refers to the organisation of the talks, in particular development of realistic criteria for reaching acceptable and timely agreement. A possible but in no way unique solution here could imply deliberate establishment of a low number threshold for agreement ratification. The approval procedure for the Basel Convention on the Control of Trans-boundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal in 1989 could serve a good example. This implied the treaty's entering into force with only 20 ratifications approved by the 35 signing nations. Such a decision making tool could have been helpful in speeding up ratification of the Kyoto protocol first negotiated and signed as early as 1997 but came into force only seven years later after the Russia break-through decision.

The other requirement to negotiation on risk issues concerns the party's teams, both decision-makers and their advisors. The available experience and data prove that these should be trained or experienced to a greater extent in applying heuristic tools in addition to routine procedures, than those involved in the routine issues' talks. This implies much more creativity of negotiators per se, their advisors' going 'outside the box' of existing scenarios of crisis development and tools to handle them and expanding those to 'impossible' events and comprehensive crisis management portfolios, respectively. Within this change more social science experts should be involved in the small decision support group when crises issues are at the EU negotiation table.

Concluding Remarks

To what level the EU should be and is prepared to become an efficient crisis management institution will remain an open question, at least in the near future. Whatever and whenever the answer comes out increasing involvement of the EU in crises goes without saying. To cope with them the EU should do two things.

As a key part of its domestic policy it should double efforts to consolidate itself into an efficient coordinator or system integrator, in particular preventing the problem with adoption of the EU Constitution escalating into a major crisis. This should go hand in hand with strengthening of the institutional framework despite the existing tensions between the partners. In this connotation it is worth recollecting Winston Churchill's stance referring to World War II but ever-true and valid nowadays: ''The problem with allies is that sometimes they have ideas of their own; the only thing worse than fighting a war with allies is trying to fight a war without allies''.

At the same time, as a part of its exterior policy the EU should increasingly learn from and build upon the rich international experience of crisis management. This is both feasible and expedient given that some parts of the world community become or may become EU members while the role of the other as EU partners and/or competitors increase under the conditions of increasing globalisation.

Note

1. On 16 November 2005 the revised concise version of this report entitled ''*Shocks without frontiers. Transnational breakdowns and critical incidents: What role for the EU? A Green Paper*'' was published by the European Policy Center as the EPC Issue Paper No 42 (Eds. Boin, A. and Rhinard, M.). However, as stated above, this paper considers the extensive draft report alone.

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