



“From Needs to Solutions: Enhancing the Civilian Crisis Response Capacity of the European Union”

Conference Background Paper

A Changing Global Conflict Map

The global conflict map has changed after the end of the Cold War. The danger of war between great powers or strong states has diminished, giving way to a fragmented chart of internal crises, ethnic and religious conflicts, and widespread anarchy in failed states. These conflicts often involve systematic violations of human rights and of international humanitarian law. In a growing number of conflicts, the warring parties have no clear political or military objectives. They have no easily definable or comprehensible structure; they may well represent economic interests or organised crime; and they ignore international rules.

Contemporary conflicts increasingly engage civilians, both as active participants in hostilities and as direct targets. As a consequence, there has been a huge increase in the number of refugees and Internally Displaced Persons in the 1980s. By 1992, the peak year, the worldwide total of displaced people exceeded 40 million—up from little over 10 million at the end of the 1970s.

The main security threats for Europe do not spring from hostile states, but from terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, regional conflicts, state failure and organised crime.¹ In a globalised world, local conflicts can carry important security policy challenges thousands of kilometers away. State failure is often connected to, if not the source of, conflicts. Failed states provide base areas for international organised crime and trafficking. This threat is, however, far more complex than the linkages between rogue states, terrorists and WMD, as is often portrayed. Underdevelopment, poverty, insecurity and regional destabilisation are causes and consequences of state failure that have far-reaching impacts on local, national and regional populations, as well as the international community.

The *Conflict Barometer* sums up the conflict situation in the world in 2004:

“There are 230 political conflicts in 2004. Three of these are wars and 33 are severe crises. From this follows that a total of 36 conflicts are carried out with a massive amount of violence. 51 conflicts are levelled as crises, meaning violence is used only occasionally. In contrast, there are 143 non-violent conflicts, that can be broken down into 66 manifests and 77 latent conflicts. [...] This year, a total number of 164 internal and of 66 interstate conflicts has been carried out. None of the three wars has taken place between states, all of them being intrastate. Each of the 33 severe crises have been waged within states. This represents the most remarkable finding, none of the conflicts of high intensity being interstate disputes.”²

Conflicts do not end with the signing of a peace agreement. Stability requires fundamental social changes to prevent renewed hostilities. In practice, tensions may flare up again and a fragile peace may relapse into conflict. Therefore, the nexus between conflict prevention, peacekeeping and peace building is fundamental for long-term stability.

Radically Worsened Security on the Ground

The changed nature of conflicts has also changed the way how international community responds. The scale of contemporary crisis management has widened rapidly from peacekeeping to peace enforcement and to

¹ *A Secure Europe in a Better World – European Security Strategy*. Brussels, 12 December 2003.

² *Conflict Barometer 2004 – 13th Annual Conflict Analysis, Revised Edition*. Heidelberg Institute on International Conflict Research, HIIK, p. 3, 5.



large-scale civilian capacity-building operations. The crisis management community consists of many actors: governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations working across different sectors, over an indefinite period of time and with divergent missions and agendas.

At the same time, threats against the safety and security of international aid workers and peacekeeping forces have escalated at an unprecedented pace. Forced to operate in increasingly dangerous environments and in complex emergencies, the mortality and distress rates of field staff have increased dramatically. According to UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) statistics, almost 900 men and women lost their lives during the 1990s while on UN peacekeeping assignments and many more suffered injuries, trauma, and disease.³ Incidents involving hostage taking or kidnapping and reported occurrences of rape, sexual assault, armed robbery, carjacking, and attacks on humanitarian convoys and operations are common in today's field operations. In the beginning of the 21st century, the most worrying trend has been the increase of direct targeting of international aid workers in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere.

An analysis by Dennis King indicates that "more civilian humanitarian aid workers were killed by acts of violence than died [...] in accidents. Among the incidents of intentional violence, 74% of fatalities were local staff, and 26% expatriate. More than half (59%) of these victims worked for or on behalf of non-governmental organizations, while 41% were employed or under contract to UN agencies. The number of local and/or NGO fatalities is probably higher, since these incidents are less likely to be reported in public sources than the deaths of UN and/or expatriate personnel."⁴

King's research also produced a list of the ten countries where the greatest number of non-accidental deaths occurred: Angola (46 deaths), Sudan (26), Rwanda (17), Afghanistan (17), Democratic Republic of Congo (11), Somalia (11), Burundi (6), Bosnia-Herzegovina (5), Indonesia and East Timor (5), and Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, including Kosovo (3). Unsurprisingly, these countries are in conflict, or have recently been so.

This increase reflects a general decline in the level of respect accorded to humanitarian action since the early 1990s. Although humanitarian personnel have been confronted for years by threats associated with crime, banditry, and civil conflict, today's workers are increasingly targeted in their own right, particularly in areas where their presence is perceived to be associated with a party to the conflict.⁵ Reasons for these statistics are the increased international involvement in conflict areas, the fragmented and complex nature of political emergencies, the blurring of the distinction between combatants and civilians, and the privatization of armed force and the increased availability of weapons as the main causes for increased insecurity.⁶

Many organisations, however, fail to acknowledge the changing perceptions of international assistance in some areas of the world and the changing profile of the security threats that endanger not only their operators but the recipient communities as well.⁷ The rapid escalation in security threats has not yet been matched with a similarly rapid development of corresponding strategies to mitigate operational risks.

³ *Handbook on United Nations Multidimensional Peacekeeping Operations*, December 2003

⁴ Dennis King: "Paying the ultimate price: an analysis of aid-worker fatalities" in *Humanitarian Exchange* n:o 21, July 2002. pp. 15-16. The analysis in this article is derived primarily from reports in the ReliefWeb document database for the years 1997-2001.

⁵ Conference Report: "Security - the Common Denominator for Connectivity" Conference on Crisis Management and Information Technology co-organised by Crisis Management Initiative CMI and United States Institute of Peace USIP in Saint Paul De Vence, 3-6 November 2004, p 4-5.

⁶ Claude Bruderlein "Towards a Common Security Framework: Securing Access and Managing Risks in Hazardous Missions." Harvard Program on Humanitarian Policy and Conflict Research, pp. 3-4.

⁷ Claude Bruderlein "Towards a Common Security Framework...", p. 1.



Real Time Crises: New Real Time Tensions

A New Information Environment has emerged in the last 15 years offering new challenges but also new opportunities to contemporary Crisis Responders. First, the multiplication of real time sources of coverage is generating a profound and yet to be fully understood effect on the making of foreign policy⁸

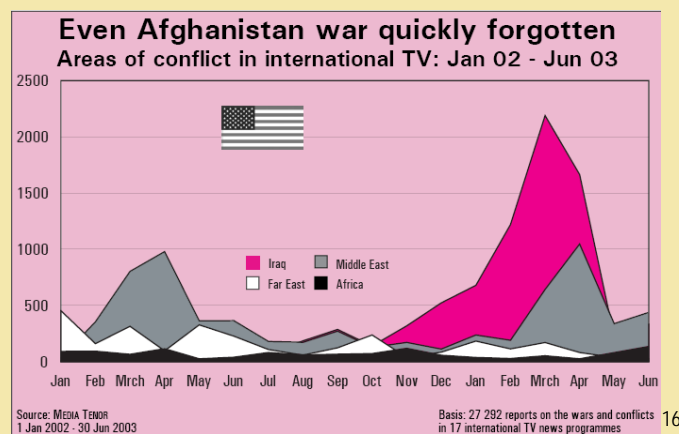
"The "CNN effect" can be, in some instances, an acceleration of policy; in other instances, it can be an impediment to policy. In other instances, it's a dialogue between diplomats taking place instantaneously. At other instances, it's a dialogue between warring parties: The Scud missile crew on the one end, the Patriot missile crew on the other."⁹

Observers often argue that public support for foreign relief activities is directly in proportion to the amount of media coverage given to specific emergencies. These days, few humanitarian crises seem to produce a public response unless they have first attracted the attention of the press and television - the so-called "CNN effect".¹⁰

"Where there is no camera, there is no humanitarian intervention."¹¹

Some researchers have also suggested that in the present, unstable, attention economy the intensive coverage of certain conflicts or crises risks to generate unexpected effects, such as *compassion fatigue*¹²: As stated by Professor Susan Moeller, "Very often, compassion fatigue or donor fatigue is the result of the feeling that, no matter what we do, it is ineffectual. [...] We the public need to connect to stories, and when we do, it helps to circumvent our feelings that we are hopeless."¹³

From the perspective of policy makers and risk analysts in the field of international relations, the multiplication of open sources of information is reinforcing the *structural asymmetry* between *strong signals*¹⁴ and *weak signals*¹⁵. Entire regions of the world risk to virtually disappear from the radar screens of many information brokers because their signal is "covered" by much stronger signals coming from other countries and other critical events.



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⁸ <http://www.brookings.edu/comm/transcripts/20020123.htm>

⁹ Professor Steve Livingston, who teaches political communications at George Washington University, <http://www.cdi.org/adm/834/transcript.html>

¹⁰ Fred H. Cate, professor of law at the Indiana University School of Law, <http://www.alertnet.org/thefacts/reliefresources/535750.htm>

¹¹ Fred H. Cate, quoting Bernard Kouchner, a former health minister of France and first U.N. governor of Kosovo from June 1999 until January 2001.

¹² Mark Honigsbaum: "Fear of compassion fatigue as agencies plead for cash" in *Guardian*, Wednesday October 12, 2005, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/naturaldisasters/story/0,7369,1589913,00.html>

¹³ Professor Susan Moeller from Brandeis University, author of *Compassion Fatigue: How the Media Sell Disease, Famine, War and Death*.

¹⁴ I.e. when numerous sources produce content on a particular subject, thus reinforcing the signal - in some cases validating it, in others projecting "the image" of a validated signal

¹⁵ I.e. qualitative important signals often perceived as less important due to their lesser quantity is numerical terms

¹⁶ <http://www.agendasetting.com/agenda/sa.pdf>



Even the strongest signals – such as today the situation in Iraq – may generate such an overabundant and redundant signal to *confuse* the analysts. The identification of priorities and the early detection of warning signals are challenged by the new Information Environment in which all crisis response actors – civilians, military, media, private sector risk analysts, intelligence community – are called to operate.

The New Information Environment – generated by the simultaneous emergence of 3 key technologies; Internet, miniaturized camcorders and commercial satellite services - is however also providing new opportunities both for policymakers and practitioners.

Open Source Intelligence (O.S.Int) is rapidly emerging as an increasingly important discipline in contemporary *Crisis Prevention* and *Crisis Response*.

Open source information [...] is *publicly available* information (i.e. any member of the public could *lawfully* obtain the information by request or observation), as well as other unclassified information that has *limited public distribution or access*¹⁷

If adequate technical resources are available *to tame the information overload*, Open Source Intelligence can provide Crisis Responders the ability to send out early warning signals sooner and obtain the in the shortest time frame possible an adequate information picture to take mission critical decisions. "L'interface information/renseignement est la clé du métier. Le fermé se déduit de l'ouvert. Il faut donc connaître l'ouvert, tout l'ouvert, et aussi, en permanence, tout ce qui s'ouvre."¹⁸

In the present security environment, Open Source Intelligence does also provide the opportunity to *share* critical/life saving information on the ground (and at headquarter level) in an operational environment where institutions, international donors, non governmental organisations, local/regional authorities and peacekeeping forces are called to operate in a seamless and coordinated way.

[On the principle of] [...] demonstrated "need to know", [...] this approach assumes it is possible to know, in advance, who will need to use the information. Such a system implicitly assumes that the risk of inadvertent disclosure outweighs the benefits of wider sharing. Those Cold War assumptions are no longer appropriate. The culture of agencies feeling they own the information they gathered at taxpayer expense must be replaced by a culture in which the agencies instead feel they have a duty to the information—to repay the taxpayers' investment by making that information available. [...] But the security concerns need to be weighed against the costs. Current security requirements nurture over-classification and excessive compartmentalisation of information among agencies. Each agency's incentive structure opposes sharing, with risks (criminal, civil, and internal administrative sanctions) but few rewards for sharing information. No one has to pay the long-term costs of over-classifying information, though these costs—even in literal financial terms— are substantial. There are no punishments for not sharing information. Agencies uphold a "need-to-know" culture of information protection rather than promoting a "need-to-share" culture of integration.¹⁹

From a donor's perspective, Open Source Intelligence – through adequate software - can provide a real time monitoring systems capable of providing the widest visibility on other donors' pledges, on projects carried out on the ground and on local needs from a beneficiary perspective.

The modernization of Crisis Response activities – notably from an information perspective – can indeed contribute effectively to addressing the coordination and sustainability issues, which continue to emerge from the ground. Abstracts from the BBC online article Tsunami relief effort 'chaotic'²⁰ give recent examples of the needs in operations:

¹⁷ <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/dcid212.htm>

¹⁸ Claude Silberzahn, former Head of DGSE, in *Au cœur du secret*, Fayard 1995

¹⁹ The 9-11 Commission Report: *Final Report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States, Official Government Edition*, <http://www.gpoaccess.gov/911/>

²⁰ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/asia-pacific/4310558.stm>



Rivalries between hundreds of groups led to a duplication and in some places a delay in aid reaching those affected, the Red Cross said in a report. [...] The international director of the British Red Cross told the BBC that 300 to 500 charities had arrived in Sri Lanka following the disaster, some of which had little or no experience. "It is simply very complex and chaotic when a disaster like this strikes," Matthias Schmale said. [...] Correspondents say the scale of aid raised was partly to blame for a lack of co-ordination between agencies. Mr Schmale said the UK agencies involved were established groups, like Oxfam, Save the Children and the Red Cross. "In remote places [...] and in some cases, new charities were set up which simply showed up on the scene and tried to help," he said. [...] The report also said that scientists monitoring the Indian Ocean detected the giant earthquake off the coast of Indonesia, but had no way to alert people. "Early warning is the most obvious way in which accurate, timely information alone can save lives," the organisation's Secretary General, Markku Niskala, wrote in the introduction to the report. The report contrasted the lack of co-ordinated information about the impending tsunami disaster with the efficient warning systems in place when four strong hurricanes swept through the Caribbean during 2004. A string of countries in the region issued evacuation orders and advised citizens on how to ride out hurricanes, minimising death tolls. The report also focused on Niger, where warnings over poor harvests were not heeded by the international community.

The EU and Civilian Response to Crisis

The European Union as an increasingly global security actor has a responsibility to contribute to solving of conflicts and assisting war-torn countries in the process of becoming stable democracies. Furthermore, due to the significant increase in activities related to the maintenance of international peace and security, regional organisations are being called upon to shoulder a greater share of the burden.

All evidence from the field points to the need to approach any form of 'treatment' of conflict – prevention, containment, management or conclusion and re-building – in a holistic, multi-dimensional and multi-functional way.²¹ The European Security Strategy (ESS) from December 2003 makes an important step in this direction by providing a conceptual framework, which can serve as a common point of reference for crisis management.

The realization of the need to develop rapid reaction capabilities for "short-term" crisis management was one of the principal motives behind the establishment of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) in 1999. The European Union has identified police, the rule of law, civilian administration and civilian protection as priority areas in civilian capabilities.²² Specific capacities in these four areas may be used either in the context of independent missions managed by the EU or in the context of operations run by other lead organisations in crisis management, such as the United Nations.

In accordance with the Action Plan for the Civilian Aspects of ESDP endorsed by the European Council in June 2004, the EU has engaged in a comprehensive review of its civilian capabilities. The subsequent agreement of a Civilian Headline Goal with a target date of 2008 (CHG 2008) establishes the framework for these discussions and represents the first attempt by the EU to tailor its capabilities to local needs for a third-party civilian intervention.

The European Union has achieved its initial operational capacity quite rapidly. Launched on 1 January 2003, the *European Union Police Mission* (EUPM) in Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH) represents the first-ever EU civilian crisis management operation under ESDP. So far the EU has completed two military operations, *Concordia* in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) and *Artemis* in the Democratic Republic of Congo, and one civilian rule of law operation *Eujust Themis* in Georgia. Currently it has a military operation *EUFOR-Althea* in Bosnia-Herzegovina and five ongoing civilian operations: rule of law mission for Iraq (*Eujust Lex*), as well as police missions in FYROM (*Proxima*), BiH (EUPM) and Kinshasa (*EUPOL "Kinshasa"*)²³. In addition, the EU

²¹ Bayles, Alyson J.K. & Wiharta, Sharon (6.2.2005) "Armed Conflicts and International Security: A Factual and Analytical Review". Real Instituto Elcano Working Paper (WP) 7/2005, p. 37.

²² As defined by the Feira European Council in June 2000.

²³ EU also supports Palestinian civil police and law enforcement capacity in Gaza with its *European Union Co-ordinating Office for Palestinian Police Support* (EU COPPS), established in April 2005.



has a security sector reform mission in Democratic Republic of Congo (*EUSEC DR Congo*). It supports the work of the African Union in Darfur (*EU Support to AMIS II*) and monitors the implementation of the memorandum of understanding between the Free Aceh Movement and the Indonesian government (*Aceh Monitoring Mission AMM*).²⁴

The European Commission has been engaged in stabilisation and development assistance, humanitarian assistance and structural conflict prevention for a long time and has a wide range of instruments at its disposal for such activities. The European Commission is active through its external assistance programmes in all phases of the crisis cycle: preventive strategies, mainstream assistance programmes including institution building, post-crisis rehabilitation and reconstruction. It currently manages substantial resources devoted to countries in political crisis (examples: Afghanistan, Iraq, West Bank, Haiti, African countries in crisis) through its country programmes as well as through specific instruments (Rapid Reaction Mechanism, African Peace Facility). EC programmes are also supporting the efforts of partner countries or organizations in domains such as Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) of combatants, democratic policing and security sector reform. On the basis of its experience with managing projects in crisis situations, the European Commission has put forward a proposal for a Stability Instrument to be effective as of 2007 (in the framework of the Financial Perspectives 2007-13). The European Commission advocates optimal complementarity between EC policies and instruments and ESDP actions. EC (RRM) funding of President Ahtisaari's successful mediation as well the ongoing reintegration programme of combatants and detainees in Aceh which dovetails with the work of the EU/ASEAN Aceh Monitoring Mission offer tangible evidence of the importance the European Commission attaches to a coherent EU approach.

The EU has also placed emphasis on preventing regional crises. The EU conflict prevention tools are applied in many and they include political dialogue, technical assistance, development co-operation and external assistance, trade policy instruments, humanitarian aid, social and environmental policies and co-operation with international partners and NGOs. To coordinate crisis response more efficiently, the Commission has systematized information received from its Delegations around the world to create a "Country Conflict Assessment" for more than 120 countries.

The EU is well placed to develop effective crisis management capacity, drawing on its wealth of capabilities, mechanisms and instruments. Integrating these and synergising different means into one coherent response constitutes one of the greatest challenges for the EU as a global actor. There is little doubt that the civilian dimension will become increasingly important in the near future.

Coherence: In order to successfully make use of its potential, the EU needs to be able to act in a more coherent and unified manner. The EU Institutions were built with their main aim the internal construction of Europe. From its very beginning the European Union had a security vision. In time and through European Political Cooperation in the 70's and 80's throughout to the Maastricht treaty, which established CFSP, the EU has strived to streamline, synergise and pool instruments in a coherent manner to act globally. A coherent EU response to crises necessitates rapid civilian capacity and seamless transition from short-term crisis management to sustainable long-term development and reconstruction programmes.

In implementing crisis response the EU has to consider how to address the challenges created by the complex security environment. Operations on the ground in crisis or post conflict areas are neither easy nor risk free: indeed, they are often costly and high risk.

²⁴ See '*ESDP Operations*' on EU Council website http://ue.eu.int/cms3_fo/showPage.asp?id=268&lang=EN&mode=g



Conference objectives

The Conference "From Needs to Solutions: Enhancing Civilian Crisis Response Capacity of the European Union" in Brussels on 14-15 November 2005 aims to discuss the following questions:

(1) How can the EU more efficiently synergise, modernise and pool resources and instruments inter-institutionally and intra institutionally to respond more effectively? What are the lessons learned? How can the cooperation with the NGO sector in crisis response be improved?

(2) What are the needs in the field emanating from a complex security environment and what measures can be proposed to address them?

- What are the requirements arising from the multitude of responding organisations?
- How the use of Information and communication technology (ICT) can help to achieve the political mandates of international crisis management community?

(3) How to interconnect (and therefore increase) the financial means available – both in the field of external relations, industrial development and research - to respond to crises in a more effective way?

(4) What could be the strategy to promote a more consistent inter-pillar approach to civilian crisis management by the EU?

Through workshops the conference will concentrate in two specific issues: Security and Communications in the Field and Early warning and conflict prevention utilizing open-source intelligence. The workshops aim to identify recommendations on how to maximize the Commission's contribution in these specific fields.

Workshop 1 Security and Communications in the Field

The most clearly expressed need in the field is the sharing of security information during crisis situations. Effective communication to gather and share information is a basic prerequisite for security management. While new information and communications technologies make it possible for crisis response organisations to establish new and more effective security mechanisms, those organisations also face challenges to successfully apply those technologies.

In early 2004, seven major NGOs commissioned a review of their emergency capacities. The report identified the need for rapid, reliable, flexible, multi-media communications as one of the most significant gaps. The impact of not having trained operators and Information and communication technology (ICT) equipment caused gaps in the timeliness and quality of humanitarian response in many areas of operation such as staff safety and security, coordination and collaboration in the ground, organisational learning, sharing of best practices, and lessons learned, just to name a few examples.²⁵

Proper management of information and the resulting analysis of crisis situations are crucial for informed decision-making and the effective use of resources. Improving co-operation amongst agencies requires efficient sharing of information as well as access to new data and databases, such as images, maps and geographical, building and infrastructure information.

The emerging questions in the issue area of this workshop could be:

²⁵ Braun, Spee: "Report on Emergency Capacity – Analysis for the Interagency Working Group on Emergency Capacity." July 2004. Members of the working Group are CARE USA, Catholic Relief Services, International Rescue Committee, Mercy Corps, Oxfam GB, Save the Children US, and World Vision International.



- What are the *security management* needs in the field concerning protection of the expatriate and local personnel?
- How can more effective inter-agency communications and exchange of security related information within responding organisations and between them strengthen security and safety of personnel?
- How does greater connectivity and increased security management affect timely and rapid response, access and sustainability of operations and therefore the successful achievement of mandates?
- How can the use of ICT facilitate the processes of information exchange, and communications and security management in the field?
- How are increased connectivity and exchange of information related to planning, conflict sensitivity and long term policy coherence?
- In what ways could security management and connectivity enabled by ICT be instrumentalised within the present policy and operational framework of the EU?
- How could the EU, in particular the European Commission, which possesses a wealth of experience, lead the process in providing cooperative policy frameworks, and methodologies for improving present practices in using information technology? Could internationally accepted standards (or between the EU and the UN) in ICT be agreed upon and employed?
- How should the EU research and development programs and financial instruments react to the needs of security and connectivity in the field?
- What would be the concrete recommendations for the EU, its Council and Commission?

Workshop 2 Open Source Intelligence for early warning, crisis response and post-conflict rehabilitation

Effective mechanisms of information extraction and distribution contribute to a more coherent and reliable situational awareness, which then in turn supports the successful accomplishment of the mission. The early warning capacity is integral to efficient crisis response and conflict prevention. Open source intelligence can also give information to ensure timely and effective reconstruction assistance.

In the last 15 years several new technologies have emerged providing an unprecedented access to open information. It is virtually possible to tens of investigative TV/Radio programs, thousands of TV and radio feeds from more than 40 satellites, 14.000 different pay-per view databases, billions of web pages, 20.2 million blogs providing uncensored, continuously updated content, and finally thousands of free maps and satellite images from the best commercial satellite sensors.

Institutions, Donors, NGOs, Security Agencies and Military Commands face both the challenge and the opportunity brought up by Open Source Intelligence. The modernisation of crisis prevention, crisis response and relief support/reconstruction is possible, but at which costs?

The emerging questions in the issue area of this workshop could be:

- What is the impact of real time news coverage on foreign policy?
- Can these tools be used to support peacebuilding activities?
- What sort of performance boost could OSINT provide to relief organisation and donors when reacting to crisis?
- What sort of open source intelligence can be obtained by exploiting audiovisual sources?
- How many political conflicts are currently active and where? Is the changed conflict environment adequately portrayed by analysts, media and policy makers?
- Can the OSINT change be introduced in "chewable bites"? Is open Source Intelligence a source of controversy and for whom?
- What are the current State of the Art OSINT tools available?



- What kind of solutions have been developed within the Commission to promote a mission critical usage of open sources?
- How can we tame the information overload and the most common conceptual fallacies in risk analysis?
- What methodologies can help produce sound and scientific judgement in assessing risk worldwide?