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978-1-107-03579-9 - The European Union as Crisis Manager: Patterns and Prospects

Arjen Boin, Magnus Ekengren and Mark Rhinard

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The European Union as Crisis Manager

The European Union is increasingly being asked to manage crises inside and outside the Union. From terrorist attacks to financial crises, and natural disasters to international conflicts, many crises today generate pressures to collaborate across geographical and functional boundaries. What capacities does the EU have to manage such crises? Why and how have these capacities evolved? How do they work and are they effective? This book offers a holistic perspective on EU crisis management. It defines the crisis concept broadly and examines EU capacities across policy sectors, institutions, and agencies. The authors describe the full range of EU crisis management capacities that can be used for internal and external crises. Using an institutionalization perspective, they explain how these different capacities evolved and have become institutionalized. This highly accessible volume illuminates a rarely examined and increasingly important area of European cooperation.

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Preface

Why write a book about the European Union as a crisis manager? The response to safety and security threats falls in the traditional domain of the nation state. What role could the EU possibly play when it comes to dealing with floods, electricity breakdowns, epidemics, or terrorist attacks?

Our search for an answer to this question began some ten years ago. In those post-9/11 days, two of the authors met over coffee at Leiden University's Department of Public Administration. One (a crisis management researcher) had been studying how national governments were preparing for the possibility of a smallpox attack (a major worry in those days). He had understood that small countries like the Netherlands could never cope with such an event and would rely on cooperation with its neighbors. Surely, he asked, the European Union would play a dominant role in the response to a smallpox outbreak?

The other author (an EU researcher) found this a silly question. He explained that the EU was never intended or designed to "manage crises." True, the EU did send military and civilian missions to foreign hot spots and there was financial support for humanitarian aid in disaster-stricken countries. But the EU did not manage crises or disasters on the European continent. Yet the question lingered: what role *could* the EU play in response to a large-scale crisis or disaster?

Serendipity brought the third author into the team. A security studies scholar and former diplomat, he had become convinced that traditional security approaches could not account for the EU's expanding crisis management capacities in the foreign domain. A chance meeting in Stockholm gave rise to a joint effort, which has culminated in this book.

Our team combines insights from EU studies, security theory, public administration, and crisis management research. Different intellectual backgrounds, methods of conducting research, ways of writing, and

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styles of working can prove quite frustrating (we have our stories). But we found that different viewpoints also nurture fresh perspectives and lead to new insights.

This has been a fun project. We interviewed scores of policymakers and experts, presented our insights to practitioners and academics, and learned many new things about the EU and its many institutions and policy sectors that harbor crisis management capacity. We discovered that much more was happening than we had imagined. We also learned that it is not easy to align the interests and resources of EU member states with the crisis management capacities spread across the EU's administrative apparatus. Yet, we came away convinced that the EU has a role to play in responding to a host of new threats.

Who might benefit from these findings? We think three academic communities will find this study of interest. Security scholars should find the empirics refreshing and theoretically challenging. Our research helps to understand the EU's shifting security "identity" – a pre-occupying concern of security scholars studying the European Union. EU scholars will learn about pockets of ongoing cooperation in an era when European integration appears to be stalling. Public administration scholars, especially those with an interest in crisis management, will be surprised to learn about the emerging architecture of a crisis management system at the European level.

This research project has been a long and rewarding journey. Along the road, we were fortunate to receive a helping hand from many friends and colleagues. They offered inspiration and direction and saved us from critical errors – those remaining in this manuscript are due to our own shortcomings.

We are especially indebted to Bengt Sundelius, who believed in this project from the very beginning and commented on more manuscripts than we can remember. This book would not have been written without his encouragement, guidance, and support.

We have benefited from the invaluable advice and assistance of academic colleagues across the world, including Chris Ansell, Alyson Bailes, Tom Birkland, Raphael Bossong, Hugo Brady, Malena Britz, Emery Brusset, Fredrik Bynander, Amy Donahue, Simon Duke, Kjell Engelbrekt, Ana Mar Fernandez Pasarin, Rhona Flin, Tuomas Forsberg, Martijn Groenleer, Helga Haftendorn, Paul 't Hart, Timo Hellenberg, Regina Heller, Margaret Hermann, Adrian Hyde-Price, Knud Erik Jørgensen, Emil Kirchner, Patrick Lagadec, Todd LaPorte, Kelley

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The Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency has been instrumental to this research program. It has generously funded our project without imposing the type of micro-managing oversight that has become so commonplace in the world of academic research. We are grateful to Helena Lindberg, the General-Director of the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency, who supported our research and participated in a number of panels and conferences. Anna Halldén, our research contact point at the agency, offered valuable advice and lots of enthusiasm. We salute the agency for its commitment to academic research and hope it will serve as an example to other government agencies.

We have been privileged to enjoy a fruitful partnership with the European Policy Centre, including its director, Hans Martens, and its previous research director, Antonio Missiroli, as our research program unfolded. That partnership proved essential not only in facilitating the collection of data but also in disseminating our results to the EU policy community.

We could not have carried out this project without the help of our research group, which served as the engine that kept the program moving. The invisible force behind our team is Sara Myrdal, who provided us with many case studies, policy briefs, and sharp commentaries. More importantly, her spirited company and astute insights have greatly contributed to this project. In the early years, Sanneke Kuipers, Nina Wilhelmson, and Monica Svantesson did much of the empirical “heavy lifting” that provided a solid basis for ongoing

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