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Civil Society Dialogue Network

European "Security and Justice Sector Support": on the way to better Security Sector Reform

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Background Paper

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Delina Goxho

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Civil Society Dialogue Network

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European "Security and Justice Sector Support": on the way to better Security Sector Reform

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1. Introduction and Methodology

The objective of the background paper is to inform discussion at the upcoming EPLO Civil Society Dialogue Network (CSDN) Policy Meeting in June 2023. It provides a short background of the EU Security Sector Reform (SSR) engagement in four countries (Mali, Niger, Georgia and Iraq), with an eye on complementarity and coherence of the EU presence; presents the main objectives of the EU support to SSR in the four country contexts, main results achieved and perspectives of future EU engagement; and outlines mechanisms of EU engagement with civil society actors in the four countries in the field of SSR support. As this is a background paper, it does not have the ambition to go in depth on any on the above mentioned topics, but rather wishes to offer an eagle-eye view of the European Union on SSR in the 4 specific country contexts, and glance over the work the EU has carried out with regard to the civil society landscape in these areas. It also provides a list of strategic issues and a series of recommendations coming from problematic implementation experiences. The paper was drafted carrying out several interviews with EU policy makers and their partners in Brussels, but the author's views also derive from previous research carried out in Niger and Mali between 2021 and 2023 with European Delegations, CSDP missions EUCAP Niger and EUCAP Mali, EUTM mission to Mali and West African civil society organisations operating in the justice and security sectors.

2. EU Security Sector Reform: Genesis and Definitions

After the Russian invasion of Ukraine, it is now globally clear that the EU is a security actor, with its own strategic framework in the shape of the **2016 Global Strategy and 2022 Strategic Compass**[1] and the **2018 and 2023 Civilian Compact**,[2] coupled with security ambitions represented not just by the EU Military Staff, but also by the European Peace Facility (EPF), European Common and Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions,[3] and European funding in the Security Sector Reform (SSR) domain, some of which came directly from the European Trust Fund. In 2016, after years of non-harmonised efforts in the SSR domain, EU member states' endorsed a new **EU-wide Strategic Framework to support security sector reform**, signalling a collective will which included both member states and the different Directorates of the EU to achieve more coherence in the EU's stabilising and human security engagements in fragile and post-conflict settings, within a framework of good governance.[4] Given its multi-actor perspective and multi-sector scope, SSR is exquisitely an "integrated" effort, which marries well with what the EU expects from an integrated approach, which should include transitional justice.[5]

As clearly outlined in the **EU Security Sector Governance (SSG) Facility** factsheet,[6] "as the EU expands its role in peace and security, it will continue to need partners with the technical capacity, political experience, and operational know-how to support the implementation of the EUs' strategic priorities 2019-2024 and beyond".[7] The main idea driving EU's support to SSR in partner countries seeks to strengthen their provision of effective and accountable security to their citizens, underpinned by respect for human rights, democracy, rule of law, and the principle of good governance […], to support the governance of the security sector; democratic oversight and accountability; gender equality; formal, transitional, traditional, and customary justice; police and penal reform; and defence. Its appeal lies in the

[1] https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/strategic-compass-security-and-defence-1_en; https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-7371-2022-INIT/en/pdf
[2] https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/strategic-compass-security-and-defence-1_en; https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-7371-2022-INIT/en/pdf
[3] https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/eu_csdp-missions-and-operations_2021-10.pdf
[4] https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/imce/ISSAT/EU_SSG_Facility_Factsheet_2021_FINAL_WEB.pdf.pdf
[5] https://gsdrc.org/document-library/transitional-justice-and-security-sector-reform-enabling-sustainable-peace/
[6] https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/imce/ISSAT/EU_SSG_Facility_Factsheet_2021_FINAL_WEB.pdf.pdf
[7] https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/imce/ISSAT/EU_SSG_Facility_Factsheet_2021_FINAL_WEB.pdf.pdf

visionary integration of several objectives under one intellectual roof: the reduction of military expenditures and their redirection to development purposes; security-relevant development; donor activities in conflict prevention and post-conflict situations; arms control agendas; and improvement in the efficiency and effectiveness of governance over those institutions charged with the provision of security (Brzoska 2003).[8] The concept itself is hard to pin down and it is, to some extent, prone to misinterpretation. More will be said regarding this point in chapter X. For now, it suffices to say that SSR should provide the foundations contributing to the establishment of effective democratic control and accountability **of the security** sector and is therefore relevant in all contexts - including stable ones - to improve governance and human security, and throughout the whole conflict cycle. SSR should also be a key component of **conflict prevention** by addressing potential crisis factors, as well as of crisis management and conflict resolution, post-conflict stabilisation, peace-building and state-building by reinstating accountable security institutions and restoring effective security services to the population, thus providing the environment for sustainable development and peace.

In its 2016 Conclusions, the **European Council** calls on all EU actors for a swift implementation of the EU SSR framework, in particular:

a. **applying the principles** of the EU SSR Framework whenever planning and carrying out CSDP missions and operations and when programming and implementing SSR activities;
b. better **understanding** the security sector of a given country in its wider context, including through strengthened analysis and improved cooperation of all EU actors present in the field;

c. **developing EU "coordination matrices"** where they can provide added value. These should reflect the common understanding of priorities and respective roles of the different EU actors, and enable them to identify common objectives and appropriate links and sequencing between political/policy dialogue, cooperation activities and possible CSDP missions/operations;

d. **coordinating with the UN** and other relevant international and regional partners who are active in a given country or region in the field of SSR and promoting a comprehensive international engagement;

[8] https://berghof-foundation.org/files/publications/wulf_handbookII.pdf

e. **developing guidelines for robust joint monitoring and evaluation** as well as a risk management methodology;

f. **ensuring SSR expertise**, including through relevant training and through the establishment of an effective EU informal interservice SSR task force.[9]

The Executive Academic Board on SSR (EAB SSR), in its role as 'overseer' for EU SSR training, produced an **SSR Training Requirements Analysis (TRA) report and recommendations**, with the support and assistance of DCAF-ISSAT and the Folke Bernadotte Academy. The Training guideline process was terminated in July 2022, in a European External Action Service Working Document.[10] The SSR TRA consisted of several activities including a research phase, involving the collection of information from personnel working within ten of the eleven civilian CSDP Missions, representatives of Member States, SSR experts working in EEAS and EU Directorates in Brussels, SSR training alumni and EU training providers. Findings were analysed and needs mapped against existing training provision. The final phase involved drafting the report and the development of recommendations and high-level civilian training and learning outcomes (CTALO) for SSR.[11]

As for the above-mentioned **EU SSG Facility**, funded by the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP), it provides a customised service to all EU actors and partner countries engaged in SSR processes. The idea is that SSR key experts sitting in Brussels would bring flexible expertise to address emerging needs, analyse gaps, support strategic policy planning, and coordination of dialogue on SSR in partner countries should they need support. It is in other words an ad hoc service provider, supported by a team drawn from the Geneva Centre for Security Sector Governance DCAF and a few other members of the consortium, for EU missions worldwide in the SSR domain. The Facility's purpose is to work at the politico-strategic level with partner presidencies, relevant ministries, and parliaments, as well as at the

[9] Loosely quoting 2016 Council Conclusions https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/11/14/conclusions-security-sector-reform/

[10] https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-11437-2022-INIT/en/pdf

[11] https://issat.dcaf.ch/download/159576/3341293 From October 2019 to July 2020, DCAF-ISSAT conducted a "Training Requirements Analysis" (TRA) for the European Union "Civilian Common Security and Defense Policy" (CSDP) missions in partnership with the Swedish Folke Bernadotte Academy and on behalf of the European Security and Defence College (ESDC) Executive Academic Board on SSR (EAB-SSR)".

more technical and operational levels with security forces, justice actors, and civil society organisations. On paper, the facility is an ideal instrument, but, as reported by a few European officials, in most cases EU missions do not know they can make use of this instrument: “we sit in Brussels, and we want to support our delegations, but it rarely happens that they even know they can use us as SSR experts”.[12]

European **member states** have a relevant role to play as well, as they have prime responsibility for selecting, training and deploying personnel to European CSDP missions worldwide and they have been charged with, inter alias, the establishment of more coherent national structures and human resource planning, including staff training and development, to ensure existing and future civilian CSDP staffing needs are met. The EEAS, on the other side, is responsible for the development of policies, tools, coordination, management and operational conduct of CSDP missions.

Now despite the fact that the 2016 EU SSR Framework was considered at the time a true success, as it had the endorsement of the EEAS, Directorate General (DG) INTPA (formerly DEVCO) and DG NEAR, but also of CSDP missions abroad and, most importantly, member states, it currently does not look like SSR is improving things, given **failures in several contexts** where the EU is applying an SSR framework, such as Mali. What went wrong?

3. Brief outline of SSR efforts and CSOs in Mali, Niger, Iraq and Georgia

Despite presenting extremely different characteristics, and in the case of Georgia, being managed by different entities (DG NEAR instead of DG INTPA), there are **several similarities** between European missions in the 4 countries at hand, both in terms of the challenges the EU as an SSR actor has been facing, and their relationship to local civil society organisations.

The EU SSR Matrix in **Mali** encompasses a joint analysis of the state of the security sector, a logic of EU engagement, and an action plan for European actors in Mali, who are not just CSDP missions EUCAP

[12] Interview, May 2023

Sahel Mali and Niger and the Training mission EUTM Mali, but also all other SSR activities the EU promotes in the two countries. To advance security interests through collaboration with ad-hoc, regional security coalitions (and in the case of the Sahel, strongly prompted by France) the EU has supported the creation of organisms such as the G5 Sahel Joint Force (and subsequent OHCHR Human rights Compliance Framework) through African Peace Facility resources. This, which initially was a welcome development, has quickly descended into a nightmare, as Mali has suffered two ***military coups d'état*** and is having the EU strongly reconsider its entire mandate there. As for **Niger**, the Bazoum government is a comparatively stable one in the region and the EU is increasing its level of support by launching a new military mission, EUMPM, which will be financed through the European Peace Facility, a new EU financing stream. However, EU financing to Malian and Nigerien CSOs working on peace and security is extremely limited and often **carried out by intermediaries** such as larger international organisations, who then retain most of the budget and set the agenda.[13]

In **Iraq**, the involvement of civil society organisations (CSOs) in **SSR and DDR processes in Iraq is extremely limited** and there is a lack of information and transparency about government strategies or the actors who are implementing them. There is a perceived lack of justice and presence of double standards within the Iraqi judicial system. Iraqi judicial institutions do not seem to take the necessary actions to prosecute human rights violators and other criminals even in cases in which the evidence presented is derived from international reports.[14] Despite these and other challenges, such as the extremely complex Iraqi political landscape, the EU mission in Iraq EUAM is devoting many of its activities to SSR. Recently activities were organized in Baghdad and elsewhere on human rights principles in policing, building trust amongst citizens, civil society representatives and security forces, building the capacity of Ministry of Interior officials. In the case of the previous mission, EULEX-Iraq (which ran from 2005-13) there were evident governance deficits, ethnic, religious, social, and economic fragmentation, and embeddedness in regional instability and power struggles, combined with poorly managed borders and cross-border

[13] https://www.saferworld.org.uk/resources/publications/1421-donor-dilemmas-in-the-sahel
[14] Civil Society Dialogue Network Discussion Paper No. 12, Civil society peacebuilding actors in Iraq, EPLO 2017

interventions. Moreover, that particular CSDP mission occurred in parallel to multiple international interventions, hence rendering coordination a huge challenge.[15]

Georgia is a very different example, mainly because there is a strong interest in the part of the Georgian civil society and citizens in maintaining good relations with the EU and following up on reforms. Thus, even though SSR is not even mentioned in the CSDP mission to Georgia, until 2018 EU-supported SRR was an exemplary case in the country. Its implementation, which included 36 institutional entities, was facilitated by SSR Facility experts through planning workshops to foster Georgian ownership and to identify the expected future outcomes and respective indicators for each component of the EU-funded programme.[16] More in general, a previous evaluation of EU SSR support in the enlargement and neighbourhood countries showed that the EU managed to **strengthen institutional capacities of security institutions**, while room for improvement remained in realising ambitions on human rights, democracy, good governance and the rule of law (Penska et al. 2018).

The EU conducted an internal review on the Georgia case. The SAFE programme (Safety, Accountability and Fight Against Crime in Georgia),[17] stemming directly from the 2018 SSR matrix, is believed to have been very successful, also because all institutional branches of the EU concerned with the country worked together. However no more progress on SSR was made since then for two distinct reasons: first, **changes in the Georgian political landscape** as of 2018 did not allow for this to occur (more below), but also because the Delegation in Georgia and the CSDP mission already have their own strategies and were no longer pressured by Brussels to change their strategy following the matrix.[18] Both Georgian leadership and the Georgian judicial sector now appear to blatantly favour the Russian regime and anti-European political discourse: reform in the security sector is stalling, not because there is no support from citizenship, the media and civil society organisations, but because **government is blocking all progress.** European presence currently appears focused on avoiding backsliding and simply keeping the population alert, without much ground for improvement in the SSR programming: “Our CSDP mission is

15 https://refubium.fu-berlin.de/bitstream/handle/fub188/37251/Peters%2c%20Ferhatovic%2c%20Heinemann%2c%20Sturm%20%282022%29%20Lessons%20learned_final%20manuscript.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

16 https://www.dcaf.ch/sites/default/files/imce/ISSAT/EU_SSG_Facility_Factsheet_2021_FINAL_WEB.pdf.pdf

17 https://eu4georgia.eu/projects/eu-project-page/?id=763

18 Interview, Brussels, May 2023

focused on administrative structures, it is becoming increasingly difficult for some of our member states to justify the fact that we are supporting such a government. At the same time, we do not want to penalise the population by leaving…", one European official mentioned.[19] On Georgia, the European leadership has a very different position compared to the other countries analysed here: while in Mali and Niger for example, CSDP missions, but also the EU Delegations, resort to a "technical approach" focused on professionalisation and capacity building of security forces, SSR in Georgia is perceived as a space for political work, which is what SSR is: "We are not just technical actors, accountability is fundamental and gives the right signalling to the population".[20]

4. Critical Evolutions with European SSR

As **the 2016 EU SSR policy is now being reviewed by ISP 1**, it is time to collectively rethink what has happened in the past 8 years and observe more closely what the implementation challenges were in the 4 countries under observation and how to improve the work of the EU in the SSR domain, with specific attention to its engagement with civil society organisations. This will be a review process rather than an altogether novel strategy, but some fundamental elements will need to be accounted for as the European SSR landscape evolves.

In terms of recent evolutions at the European level, policy makers working on SSR both at the EEAS and INTPA are realising that documents produced and concluded in Brussels, even when endorsed by Council members, **do not reflect realities in the field**, including for the four countries on which this briefing focuses. In addition to this, changes such as the creation of the **European Peace Facility**, which will provide military equipment (including lethal equipment) to partner countries strongly suggests that a rethink of the European SSR agenda will need to be taken into account by all European actors, including member states. Thirdly, since the creation of the policy in 2016 **the international scenario itself has evolved**, with radically different outlooks onto the role of the Russian regime (which is especially important in the Georgian context, but also marginally in the Sahel), developments in Iraq and mounting

[19] Interview, Brussels, May 2023
[20] Interview, Brussels, May 2023

insecurity in Mali and Niger. Moreover, European policy makers, both in Delegations and in Brussels have noted that their **coordination up to this point has been insufficient**. Delegations are unaware of the support Brussels can provide and Brussels on the other hand struggles to fully grasp the concept of SSR, resulting in an inability to provide the necessary strategic direction or oversight. And finally, the elephant in the room, especially in the cases of Iraq, Mali and Niger, is the **lack of involvement of European CSDP missions on the more political dimensions of SSR** such as accountability and ownership. CSDP missions are perceived in those contexts as purely technical and Delegations, which are tasked with overseeing the political dimensions of SSR and engagement with civil society working on SSR or more generally the judiciary and the security sector, leave SSR to CSDP missions entirely, which do not have a clear political mandate: "when they think of SSR, our colleagues think of the police or the military…they do not think that SSR also involves the judicial sector, and very many other state administration structures, which are only marginally concerned with hard security", one EU official clarified.[21] This also depends on the fact that accountability of the trained forces (and administrative officials) is extremely hard to achieve and extremely hard to measure, so there is reticence both on the part of trainers and on the part of trainees to focus on accountability, which ends up being neglected by SSR programming, monitoring and evaluations. "It's hard because it implies a change in behaviour, it's a change at the roots if you will, and nobody wants to be drastically changed, and we certainly should not want to drastically change our partners…" one EU official interviewee clarified.[22]To conclude, SSR is viewed as capacity building, leaving out the more political and accountability dimensions of it, which however are described as crucial for SSR to be successful.

To go more in depth on these strategic deficiencies, a breakdown of all these different elements needs to be carried out, with specific reference to the countries under scrutiny.

The **political element**, which was constantly mentioned in all interviews both in Brussels and in Mali, Niger, Iraq and Georgia, appears to be crucial: it is a fine balance, to be dealt with differently in each of these 4 contexts and beyond. On the one hand, European support on SSR should be a partnership and not an imposition, on the other there seem to be very few strings attached and very limited understanding

[21] Interview, Brussels, May 2023
[22] Interview, Brussels, May 2023

of the political and social dynamics of these 4 countries on the part of CSDP missions, so that when a *coup d'état* takes place (and another coup after that, as is the case for Mali), the EU finds itself at a loss for words and actions. Conditionality means very little if the EU does not choose already-agreed-upon retaliation measures when indicators are not respected. For example, promising more trainings (and equipment) to the Nigerien MoD without having any political leverage of what has happened with embezzlement within that same ministry only reinforces the idea that the EU is simply a bureaucratic / technical provider, certainly a difficult one to deal with in terms of procedures, but an easy one to deal with diplomatically and politically.

Additionally, the **lack of senior level expertise in CSDP missions** linking the political elements to operational functions and driving the mandate forward, has resulted in what some described as a lack of coherence and technical activities being delivered in isolation.[23] Member states are also responsible for some of the observed staff deficiencies: the mapping of the existing SSR training provision showed only a small number of MS currently invest in SSR specific training.[24] But this lack of expertise is also reflected elsewhere: there is little political expertise of the context itself, especially on the part of CSDP missions, but in some cases, also the Delegations. European actors are perceived as operating in isolation from the political and social reality of the country at hand: in Mali and Niger, but also in Iraq, violence occurs on a sectarian or community basis. How do CSDP missions and SSR programmes account for contextual expertise in the way they deliver training to security forces? Civil society organisations, which hold a certain amount of arguably independent understanding of the political landscape are rarely consulted. Thus the portfolio of interlocutors for European actors, especially in Mali, Niger and Iraq, is not varied enough. In some cases, European Delegations do not even have the capacity (and sometimes the interest) to have CSOs involved, which evidently showcases that engaging with CSOs would be even harder on more sensitive topics. Diversifying the portfolio of interlocutors, to put it this way, may be particularly beneficial to European diplomatic interests, in countries where governments hold dubious legitimacy, or is flat-out a military junta, as is the case with Mali. And keeping the channel of communication open with European-friendly civil society is key to being able to support the citizens (or

[23] TRA Report Main Conclusions https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-11437-2022-INIT/en/pdf
[24] Ibid.

some state administrations) of a specific country where political power and needs of the population are clashing, as is the case of Georgia.

There also is an issue of flat-out **misunderstanding of the local context** on the part of European representatives. In the Agadez region of Niger, currently known for several criminal activities tied to banditism, and for having been the theatre of two rebellions in the past few decades, the regional government (Conseil Regional AagadeZ, or CRAZ) is particularly active in peacebuilding initiatives such as *caravane de paix*, where former Tuareg rebels travel across the region and organise dialogue and community cohesion programmes. Back in November 2021, the EU CSDP mission Antenna representative in Agadez came to the biggest *Atelier de la Paix* (a Forum where non-violent solutions to grievances are discussed) for the region visibly armed (despite having personal guards outside). This is the type of out of context situations where European missions do not appear to be aware of circumstances in the host country. This unawareness does not just display a problematic lack of understanding or compromise but sends a specific signal to local peacebuilding and DDR initiatives.[25] But this is not just an issue with the missions in-country: European experts in charge of SSR in Brussels rarely have the budget or capacity to visit such contexts, especially those working on the more political side of things and when they do, visits last a couple of days, without having the time to meet for example the vivacious CSO landscape in the country at hand. More high-level visits do take place (the EU Special Representative for the Sahel for example is often in the region), but this does not seem to show progress on EU programming at the EEAS or Council levels. This isolation from the context means that easy to swerve in the direction dictated by political (and often military) forces without any other interlocutor to add to the picture – less capable of making autonomous decision that are at the same time informed by the context. In the case of Iraq the EU might be more dependent on partner indications (i.e. USA), but in Mali and Niger the EU should strictly avoid being lumped in with France and thus build its own context awareness.

[25] In addition, the EU is sadly known in Agadez for vouching for a migration law that is visibly ad odds with European values, where migrants from sub-Saharan Africa are left stranded in the city and free movement is restricted, which shows deep inter-policy incoherence.

Already in 2015, the EPLO Civil society dialogue network (CSDN) noted that it is important to **develop indicators** to assess the implementation and impact of SSR processes, including in terms of tangible benefits for the local population and community service delivery.[26] In 2021 the EU somewhat addressed this shortcoming through its Results and Indicators for Development in SSR document, but this does not appear to account for the political dimensions of SSR. But it is hard to change the "culture" in Brussels. "Within INTPA we should now think in terms of outcomes and not outputs…At the end of the day we still measure success on how many trainings were provided and how much equipment was donated, despite all calls for respecting the results and indicators for development".[27] Some of this resistance can be explained with the type of body that INTPA, which holds the budget, is: more of a technical Directorate than a political one, thus a place where staff "do not focus on the bigger picture, but rather on having all indicators measured", as one interviewee explained. In addition, indicators of perception of CSDP missions in the host country would be enlightening. A 2021 Mediapart article ("Au Niger, la faillite d'une mission de « stabilisation » financée par l'UE")[28] clearly points fingers at the EUCAP Niger, the EU CSDP mission in Niamey, accusing it of being completely isolated from the population in Niamey. Another EPLO meeting rec from that 2015 CSDN was for the EU to have a **bridging role between the government and its CSOs.**[29] This does not appear to have been done in Iraq, Niger and Mali, and since the situation in Georgia deteriorated as of 2018, is currently rendered problematic is Georgia as well. As an example, SSR could be the space where local CSOs, based in areas where the violence occurs, may interact with security officials in Niamey, Baghdad or Bamako on the best way to train their civilian and military personnel (such as the gendarmerie).

In a 2020 commentary piece,[30] Alex Thurston, an expert on the Sahel region addressed a huge problem in most Sahel countries, calling out international donors to the **"hollowness of governance talk"** in

26 https://eplo.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/CSDN_Policy-Meeting_EU-wide-Strategic-Framework-for-Security-Sector-Reform_Key-Recommendations.pdf

27 Security Sector Reform, Results and Indicators for Development, DEVCO 2021. This **guidance for action design** has been developed by DEVCO Unit 04 "Evaluation and Results" jointly with DEVCO Thematic Units.
It is **addressed** to all colleagues involved in the preparation of action documents and project documents and offers a handy tool to develop solid logical framework matrices. It identifies clear and measurable results statements that are in line with DEVCO policy priorities, as well as with the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), along with a range of good indicators to monitor progress.

28 Zandonini G., "Au Niger la faillite d'une mission de stabilisation financée par l'UE », Médiapart, November 2021

29 Ibid.

30 https://www.ispionline.it/en/publication/hollowness-governance-talk-and-about-sahel-30026

countries where state administrations are just not enough in both numbers and distribution to be able to account for the needs of citizens. This remains true for Niger and Mali: how can the EU support an effective and inclusive SSR process if state administrators are simply not enough or not present in several regions? And this applies to European officials also, and to the European integrated approach as a whole: to have "stabilisation" you need to have several people engaged in stabilisation work. And yet, European Delegation officials in Niamey lament the workload they are exposed to, which prevents other types of engagements, namely in civil society or SSR. "We seem to be building empty shells of a bureaucratic structure, official after official without true expertise or a portfolio, just a role within the organigram of their ministry".[31]

The learning approach on SSR also matters: the already mentioned DCAF Civilian Coordination for Training in SSR 2021 document, focused on training requirement analysis (TRA), mentions that training would be more effective "if providers moved away from theoretical based training courses **towards a more participative and experiential learning approach**, including discussions on SSR implementation and good practices from the field".[32] In addition, it is unclear at this point how monitoring works: most European missions do not accompany their partners in combat or policing missions, so it is hard to evaluate whether trainings worked. How can such a shortcoming be avoided?

And finally, there is the issue of **Member States**: despite the 2016 SSR strategy being a document that was endorsed by EU Member States, it is hard to know whether they are "truly committed and truly aware of the principles of SSR".[33] Some interviewees mentioned that Member states do not appear "aware that these principles should apply not just to CSDP missions, but all EU funding on security, justice and governance".[34]

[31] Interview, Niamey, January 2023
[32] Interview, Niamey, January 2023
[33] Interview, Niamey, January 2023
[34] Interviews, Brussels, May 2023

5. Concluding remarks

According to several European officials and SSR experts, even terms are misleading: a collective rethink of what SSR is today may have an impact in the way SSR is interpreted by those who seek to implement it. The terms *reform* implies a structural change, a redesigning of the security sector of a specific partner country entirely. Politically, but also practically, that is a hard concept to digest. "Security Sector Support" would be more appropriate. But even in that case, the definition does not entirely explain what SSR entails in terms of principles, as it should include accountability, ownership and capacity building. The justice sector for example is one fundamental component of SSR and yet is not included in the definition. Justice and Security Support may thus be a more appropriate definition.