Launched in Macedonia in March 2003, Operation Concordia was the first EU military crisis management operation. In accordance with the Berlin Plus arrangements concluded days before its launch, Operation Concordia was conducted using NATO assets. Although these assets were not strictly necessary for a limited operation such as Concordia, the prior conclusion of Berlin Plus was a political necessity for the EU–NATO relationships. Concordia also signified a deepening in the Union’s relationship with the Balkans, where the EU is now the lead international organization, deploying a full range of civilian and military crisis management instruments in support of the Stabilization and Association Process.

Introduction

In 2003 the European Union launched its first two military crisis management operations, Operation Concordia in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Operation Artemis in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Operation Concordia was the first European Union (EU) military operation to make use of assets belonging to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) under the so-called ‘Berlin Plus’ arrangements, while Operation Artemis was the first ‘autonomous’ EU operation. This article will analyse the preparation, launch and conduct of Operation Concordia,¹ and in so doing will address a number of questions about the development of EU crisis management. Specifically, the article will argue that the ‘added value’ of EU crisis management is the Union’s ability to deploy a range of instruments, financial, civilian and military, in a coordinated manner. It will also argue that the Berlin Plus arrangements have enhanced the Union’s crisis management tools but that the success of Berlin Plus is dependent on the relationship between the United States and ‘Europe’ and on the role of the UK in bringing the two together.
Operation Concordia

Operation Concordia represents part of the EU’s ongoing commitment to supporting Macedonia in its implementation of the Ohrid Agreement and in its progress toward EU membership through the Stabilization and Association Process (SAP). Indeed, in August 2001 the EU was instrumental in securing the negotiation of the Ohrid Agreement, which brought an end to several months of conflict between ethnic Albanian militias and the Macedonian security forces that had threatened to plunge the country into a full-scale civil war. The key role played by the EU in the resolution of the 2001 crisis demonstrated how far the Union’s Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) had developed since the early 1990s when it failed to respond decisively to the break-up of the former Yugoslavia.

Between 1990 and 1992, the policy vacuum created by failed EU diplomacy in Macedonia was filled by the UN. From December 1992 until February 1999 a UN peacekeeping force was deployed in Macedonia to monitor the border areas and report any developments that could undermine confidence and stability in the Republic and threaten its territory. Despite the abrupt nature of the UN withdrawal from Macedonia, in February 1999 the UN force was widely regarded as having made a crucial contribution to conflict prevention. Indeed, by the time of the UN withdrawal, the country appeared to have attained a degree of stability that signified a successful transition to multi-ethnic democracy. A system of informal power-sharing, whereby the government of the day always included at least one ethnic Albanian political party, appeared to ensure that the interests of both ethnic groups were represented at the highest level. However, the appearance of coexistence masked deeper tensions within Macedonian society.

Many ethnic Albanians were concerned by their inadequate representation in state institutions, particularly the police, and by the sense that this discrimination was rooted in the structure of the Macedonian state. The fact that the Albanian language was not recognized as an official language of the state added to the sense of marginalization among ethnic Albanians. On the other hand, many ethnic Macedonians feared that the grievances of the ethnic Albanian community masked a separatist agenda and therefore viewed their demands for better treatment with suspicion. Emblematic of these tensions was the long-running dispute over the establishment of a private Albanian-language university in Tetovo, which ethnic Albanians considered fundamental to their demands for equal treatment and which the government viewed as a threat to the integrity of the state. These problems were exacerbated by the strain, both political and financial, placed on the Macedonian state
by the NATO bombing of Kosovo in 1999. The Macedonian government’s support for the NATO campaign was deeply unpopular with ethnic Macedonians, and this discontent was compounded by the arrival of significant numbers of refugees from Kosovo, which the Macedonian state was ill-equipped to receive.

These underlying tensions rose to the surface in January–February 2001 when members of the National Liberation Army (UCK), who represented the armed wing of the ethnic Albanian rebels, attacked police and army units in the area around Tetovo. It seems likely that a significant proportion of the gunmen responsible for these attacks had entered Macedonia from Kosovo, where they had been engaged in sporadic attacks on Serb security forces in the Presevo Valley area. At that time the Presevo Valley fell within a Ground Safety Zone (GSZ) from which the Serbian army (but not the regular police) was excluded. NATO diplomacy (supported by the EU) succeeded in resolving the crisis, negotiating the re-entry of Serb troops into the GSZ and the disbanding of the Albanian militia. However, it is believed that the re-entry of Serb troops into the Presevo Valley pushed many UÇK members across the notoriously porous border into Macedonia. In March the Macedonian security forces responded to the UÇK attacks with a sustained campaign. The EU, working in cooperation with other international organizations and the US, responded with an intense diplomatic effort to persuade the Macedonian government to show restraint and to convince the UÇK that while legitimate Albanian grievances could be addressed through negotiation, separatism would not be condoned under any circumstances.

EU shuttle diplomacy, which saw the High Representative, Javier Solana, making repeated visits to Skopje, was backed by substantial financial assistance from the Community budget in the form of accelerated implementation of the (CARDS) institutional reform programme and the provision of additional funds under a CARDS Emergency Assistance Programme. In addition, the Commission made the first ever use of its Rapid Reaction Mechanism (RRM), adopting two financing decisions to release an eventual €12.8 million for emergency relief. The first of these decisions was taken on 8 May and released €2.5 million to support reconstruction of damaged property and return of displaced populations. The release of funds at this stage in the crisis demonstrated EU commitment to the preservation of the Macedonian state. However, the EU made it clear that further assistance was dependent on the parties finding a peaceful resolution to the conflict. The most important tool available to the EU in this respect was the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA), which Macedonia had been negotiating with the EU since 2000, and which had
been signed in Luxembourg on 9 April 2001. Throughout the crisis, the EU made it clear that Macedonia would only receive the full benefit of the agreement in the event of a peaceful solution to the crisis. The status of ‘potential candidate’ and the financial assistance associated with the signing of the SAA provided a huge incentive for the parties to reach a peaceful settlement. In successfully managing this incentive, the EU ‘linked short-term measures with long-term perspectives in a co-ordinated manner’.17

Moreover, thanks to the ‘remarkably good and close’18 cooperation between the EU and NATO, the EU was able to coordinate its efforts with those of the Alliance in order to maximize the impact of international intervention in the crisis. Acting as unofficial mediators, Javier Solana and the NATO Secretary-General, Lord Robertson, helped to broker the establishment in early May of a government of national unity comprising representatives of all Macedonia’s political parties. However, negotiations faltered in the absence of a lasting ceasefire, which only NATO intervention coupled with sustained EU pressure could secure. On 9 June 2001, 350 UÇK gunmen occupied Aracinovo, a small town just 10 km from the centre of Skopje. From Aracinovo, the UÇK were able to threaten the Macedonian capital and by extension the viability of the Macedonian state. A Macedonian government offensive of 22 June 2001 failed to retake any significant ground and the situation threatened to escalate out of control.19 In response to the crisis, the EU maintained pressure on the Macedonian government by restating its position that Macedonia’s European future depended on the peaceful resolution of the conflict.20 Meanwhile, NATO intervened directly to conduct negotiations with the UÇK, finally securing their agreement to withdraw under NATO supervision on 25 June. The deal was brokered by the NATO Special Representative, Peter Feith, whose success in helping to defuse the Presevo Valley crisis earlier in the year stood him in good stead in his dealings with the UÇK. However, the news that NATO had permitted the UÇK gunmen to withdraw without giving up their weapons enraged many ethnic Macedonians. Protests outside the parliament building drew upwards of 6,000 people, and only President Trajkovski’s firm public support for the Aracinovo operation succeeded in defusing the situation.21

Nevertheless, the Alliance’s handling of the Aracinovo incident was crucial in bringing about a peaceful resolution to the 2001 crisis. It helped to win the trust of the UÇK, enabling NATO to secure UÇK commitment to a lasting ceasefire, creating the climate in which the Ohrid Agreement could be negotiated. At this point the EU and the United States took the initiative by dispatching Special Representatives to Macedonia to facilitate the negotiations. The EU Special Representative
(EUSR), François Leotard, and the US Special Representative, James Pardrew, presented the parties with a framework document on 7 July 2001 and were instrumental in bringing the subsequent talks to a successful conclusion with the signing of the Ohrid Agreement on 13 August 2001. The Agreement, which sought to establish the basis for genuine multi-ethnic democracy in Macedonia, recognized the unitary character of the Macedonian state as inviolable while affirming that the multi-ethnic character of Macedonia’s society must be preserved and reflected in public life. Most importantly, the Agreement identified decentralization as the key to achieving equitable representation and respect for diversity. In terms of concrete actions, the Ohrid Agreement provided for, among other things, the enactment of a law on local self-government, the introduction of measures guaranteeing equal representation of ethnic Albanians within state institutions, particularly the police, and the recognition of Albanian as an official language of state business. It also required municipalities with an Albanian population of more than 20 per cent to recognize Albanian as an official language of municipal business.

The Ohrid Agreement called upon the EU to coordinate the efforts of the international community in facilitating, monitoring and assisting implementation of the Agreement. In effect, this meant that the EUSR became responsible for coordinating all international assistance to Macedonia. Whilst the EUSR coordinated the overall EU (and international) effort, the Commission provided important financial assistance. On 3 October the second RRM funding decision was taken, which released €10.3 million for reconstruction and institution building. Key reconstruction projects included restoring electricity to conflict-affected villages and ensuring safe access to homes by the clearance of mines and unexploded ordinance. Key institution-building programmes included beginning work on police and judicial sector reforms, preparing estimates for the budgetary impact of implementing the Ohrid Agreement, and preparing a draft law on decentralization to local government. RRM projects were managed from a newly established office of the European Agency for Reconstruction (EAR), which opened in Skopje in December 2001. In order to minimize duplication, follow-up projects under CARDS were also managed from this office, and RRM programmes were designed to ‘front-load the package of emergency assistance subsequently delivered under the CARDS programme’. Crucially, the EU provided targeted assistance for the preparation of the draft law on local self-government and for the conduct of the 2002 census, both key elements of the Ohrid Agreement.
Admittedly, securing implementation of the decentralization provisions of the Ohrid Agreement has been difficult and progress has been slow. Although EU assistance helped to secure the passage of the law on local self-government in January 2002, the law did not contain a mechanism or a timetable for implementation, and at October 2003 none of the functions identified in the law for devolution had actually been transferred to local authorities. Similarly, the census, which was due to take place in October 2001, was not held until October 2002 and the results were not published until December 2003, causing delays to the elaboration of the law on municipal boundaries, another key decentralization measure. Nevertheless, EU support for the Ohrid process, both financial and political, has been influential in moving the process of implementation forward, however uncertainly. Community assistance coupled with the ‘European’ perspective opened by the SAP has provided a much-needed context for reform and will continue to do so as the Macedonian government takes forward work on outstanding provisions of the Agreement.

Since the Ohrid Agreement called upon the EU to coordinate international efforts in support of implementation, ‘Europe’ has effectively taken the lead in providing international assistance to Macedonia. This is reflected in the level of EU aid to Macedonia. In 2002 the EU gave €63.50 million in aid to Macedonia, an amount almost equal to the US contribution of $66.5 million. However, EU member states also gave bilateral aid including over £8 million in financial year 2002 from the UK alone. As Peterson observes, the Ohrid Agreement signified a ‘decisive if little-noticed...shift in the balance of power between the USA and the EU in the Balkans’. However, despite growing levels of ‘European’ aid to the region and the leading role played by the EU in civilian crisis management in Macedonia, it was only with the launch of Operation Concordia in March 2003 that the Union became a provider of military assistance to the country.

In August 2001 the Ohrid Agreement called for the disbanding of the UÇK and the reintegration of its members into civilian life. The Agreement promised an amnesty for UÇK members in return for disarmament and named NATO as the international organization tasked with overseeing the disarmament process. In September 2001 the EU was not in a position to deploy a military crisis management operation. Although the Treaty of Nice had established the constitutional basis for the EU to conduct military crisis management operations, the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) was not sufficiently developed to launch a military operation. Moreover, the fact that NATO had already established relations with the UÇK and won their confidence made the Alliance
the natural choice to provide the international military presence in Macedonia. NATO could call on many years of experience managing peace support operations in the Balkans and there was already a significant NATO presence in Macedonia in the form of KFOR Rear. All these factors combined to ensure a clear division of labour between the EU and NATO: NATO provided security whilst the EU concentrated on economic and other assistance designed to support institution-building and internal reform. As Piana observes, ‘NATO was needed in the crisis management process as the military deterrent’.34

Concluding Berlin Plus and Launching Operation Concordia

Nevertheless, it is significant that the NATO disarmament operation, Essential Harvest, was almost an entirely ‘European’ operation. Led by British troops with only logistical support from the United States, Essential Harvest was ‘in essence, an example of “separable but not separate” capabilities envisioned, in the St Malo initiative, for a European operation under the NATO flag’.35 The ‘European’ composition of Essential Harvest and that of its successor operations Amber Fox and Allied Harmony was a logical step on the road toward handing over responsibility for international operations in Macedonia from NATO to the EU. This logic was dictated at least in part by the Bush administration, that, having taken up office in January 2001, favoured a scaling down of US commitments in the Balkans and sought to decrease its contributions to the NATO peacekeeping forces in the region. In December 2000, John Hulsman of the influential Heritage Foundation anticipated ‘a philosophical sea change when Bush is in the White House’, predicting ‘a drawing down of American forces and [that] after four years there will be no American ground troops in the Balkans’.36 Although Colin Powell subsequently attempted to calm European fears of a US withdrawal from the Balkans with his pledge ‘we went in together, we will come out together’,37 it was clear that elements within the administration still favoured a reduced US role in the region. For example, in May 2001, Donald Rumsfeld conceded that he was pushing for a reduction in the number of US troops in Bosnia.38 The events of 11 September 2001 only served to reinforce the US desire to lessen its commitments in the Balkans in order to maximize resources for the War on Terror.39

However, before responsibility for international military operations in Macedonia could be transferred from NATO to the EU, the politics of European defence required the conclusion of an agreement on asset sharing between the two organizations – the Berlin Plus arrangements. The EU and NATO had begun discussing Berlin Plus following the
1999 Cologne European Council. However, Turkish objections to the initial proposals caused negotiations to drag on for more than two years, and agreement in principle was not reached until the Copenhagen European Council in December 2002. In the meantime, the NATO presence in Macedonia had been scaled down. Following the successful completion of Essential Harvest at the end of September 2001, NATO launched Operation Amber Fox, which comprised roughly 800 personnel and was mandated to conduct liaison and monitoring operations in former crisis areas. It also provided advice to the Macedonian government on various security issues. In December 2002, at the request of the Macedonian government, Amber Fox was replaced by Operation Allied Harmony, which consisted of only 400 troops. From an operational point of view, the EU would not have required NATO assets to launch an operation such as Allied Harmony. However, politics dictated that NATO assets and capabilities must be used, delaying a handover to the EU until the breakthrough on Berlin Plus was achieved in December 2002.

That is not to say that there were no operational reasons for making the conclusion of the Berlin Plus agreement a prior condition of an EU operation in Macedonia. Although the EU did not need access to NATO capabilities in order to mount a limited operation in Macedonia, the Union certainly benefited from having access to Alliance experience in planning and conducting operations in the region. Moreover, maintaining an operational link between the EU and NATO made the operation appear more robust in the eyes of the Macedonian public. The NATO operations, which preceded Concordia, had interpreted their mandates robustly, mounting regular patrols in their heavy armoured vehicles to ensure maximum visibility and maximum impact. It is arguable that retaining operational links between NATO and the EU helped to ensure a continuity of approach that was important if Macedonia was to continue to have confidence in the international security presence. For example, because Concordia was implemented under Berlin Plus, NATO was able to identify KFOR Rear as the theatre reserve which Concordia could call on in extremis. The question of which organization would exercise command and control over this reserve in the event that it was needed was reportedly a sensitive one. However, the EU Military Staff (EUMS) believed that it made military sense for KFOR Rear to act as theatre reserve and were confident that had the reserve been needed, command and control would not have been a problem. It would have been a case of ‘NATO deploying and the EU employing’ the reserve, as a member of the EU Military Staff put it. Moreover, concluding Berlin Plus prior to operationalizing ESDP helped to maintain
the fragile transatlantic consensus on the development of European defence policy.

Following the Copenhagen European Council, the EU began preparations for Operation *Concordia* and the final details of the Berlin Plus arrangements were negotiated. On 17 March 2003 Berlin Plus was finally concluded with an exchange of letters between the EU and NATO and on 31 March 2003 Operation *Concordia* was launched. The structure of the operation was designed to create a discrete EU chain of command that nonetheless recognized the operational need for coordination with NATO. The *Concordia* chain of command remained under the political control and strategic direction of the EU. However, close links were maintained with NATO at all levels. At the highest level the EU Political and Security Committee (PSC) maintained regular contact with the North Atlantic Council (NAC) throughout the operation, and the PSC–NAC relationship has become the main conduit for EU–NATO dialogue on *Concordia* and the wider EU–NATO relationship. At the operational level, EU–NATO coordination was built into the structure of *Concordia* by the co-location of headquarters and the ‘double-hatting’ of key personnel, principally the Operation Commander, Admiral Rainer Feist, NATO’s Deputy Supreme Commander Allied Forces Europe (DSACEUR). As Operation Commander, he reported on operational matters to EU bodies only. However, he also continued to discharge his functions as DSACEUR.

In accordance with Berlin Plus, *Concordia* Operation Headquarters was located within Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) in Brussels, while Force HQ was co-located with NATO HQ Skopje, which commanded the residual NATO presence in Macedonia. Acting as a link between Operation HQ and Force HQ, an EU Command Element (EUCE) was located at Allied Forces South (AFSOUTH) in Naples, the NATO Joint Force Command for Balkan operations. Key *Concordia* personnel in Naples were also ‘double-hatted’. The Chief of Staff of AFSOUTH was appointed Chief of Staff of the EU Command Element and this dual NATO–EU appointment allowed the EUCE Chief of Staff to be represented within the Joint Force Command for the coordination of all EU–NATO military issues in theatre. This enabled Operation *Concordia* to benefit from the Alliance’s considerable experience in mounting Peace Support Operations in the Balkans. Within the EU there were divergent opinions about the operation: one EU official has argued that the creation of the EUCE in Naples added another layer to the chain of command and consequently ‘did not respect the political control of the PSC’. Another, a member of the EUMS, indicated that the chain of command was operating well from a military perspective and
that it is simply a question of the EU getting used to having another layer (at EUCOE/AFSOUTH level) in the command chain.\textsuperscript{48}

The aim of Concordia was to ‘further contribute to a stable, secure environment, to allow the Macedonian Government to implement the Ohrid Framework Agreement’. In this it differed little from its predecessor, Operation Allied Harmony which, like Concordia, operated on the basis of Field Liaison Teams that provided support to international monitors in former crisis areas.\textsuperscript{49} On the ground, cooperation between the two organizations was largely good. However, disagreements over responsibility for assisting the Macedonian government in developing its capacity to manage the country’s borders demonstrated that the relationship could also be competitive. NATO regarded border management as a military issue, which fell within the policy remit of its advisors at the Macedonian Ministry of Defence, while the EU argued that border management should be a matter for the civilian authorities. Consequently, although overall cooperation was good, it is claimed that the two organizations sometimes gave contrary messages to the Macedonian government.\textsuperscript{50}

Following up on Operation Concordia

In July 2003 Operation Concordia was extended for three months, and despite an upsurge in violent incidents in autumn 2003 the Operation concluded as planned on 15 December 2003.\textsuperscript{51} At the Macedonian government’s request, the EU agreed to follow Operation Concordia with an EU police mission (EUPOL), also known as Proxima, which deployed on 15 December 2003 for an initial period of one year. EUPOL aims to enable the Macedonian authorities to consolidate law and order, including the fight against organized crime, to enact comprehensive reform of the Ministry of the Interior, establish a border police, build confidence with local populations and enhance cooperation with neighbouring states.\textsuperscript{52} Like the EU Police Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUPM), EUPOL will be a non-executive police mission; EU officers will provide support to the Macedonian police in the exercise of their duties but will not themselves be directly involved in policing. EUPOL will assist the Macedonian police through a combination of monitoring and mentoring.\textsuperscript{53} As in Bosnia, where EUPM followed on from the UN International Police Task Force (IPTF), EUPOL will build on the work already completed by another international organization, in this case the OSCE.
Berlin Plus: The EU–NATO Relationship

The launch of Operations *Concordia* and *Artemis* demonstrates that the EU is now capable of conducting small-scale military operations in support of its CFSP objectives both with and without recourse to NATO assets. The key to these developments was the conclusion of the Berlin Plus arrangements in March 2003. As noted above, the need to conclude Berlin Plus prior to the launch of an EU operation in Macedonia had both a political and an operational rationale. Quite simply, Berlin Plus had to come first. The conclusion of Berlin Plus therefore represented a significant development in the EU–NATO relationship. This was reflected in the publication of the EU–NATO Concerted Approach for the Western Balkans on 27 July 2003. The document identifies several core areas in which the EU and NATO should work together to support reform and commits the two organizations to consulting ‘closely on the situation in the Western Balkans and, when crises develop, … work[ing] together to resolve the situation and restore stability’. It also raises the possibility of concerted visits to the region by the EU High Representative and NATO Secretary-General and the issuing of joint EU–NATO statements on current security developments. The next substantive example of EU–NATO cooperation in the region is likely to be a handover of international military operations in Bosnia from NATO to the EU. By the end of 2004 or early 2005 the EU was due to lead a military operation in Bosnia, which will follow on from the NATO Stabilization Force (SFOR) that has been deployed in Bosnia since 1996. At its meeting on 12–13 December 2003, the European Council confirmed its readiness for an ESDP mission in Bosnia, including a military component based on Berlin Plus and noted NATO’s ‘readiness to start consultations on the issue’. A handover to the EU of military operations in Bosnia would certainly signify a deepening of EU–NATO cooperation in the region.

However, work on a NATO–EU handover in Bosnia might have begun sooner had transatlantic tensions over the war in Iraq and the future of ESDP not intervened. The EU first publicly stated its willingness to conduct a follow-on mission in Bosnia at the Copenhagen European Council in December 2002. However, the United States responded by letting it be known that they did not believe the time was yet right for such a take-over. Throughout the following months the EU continued periodically to state its readiness and the United States continued to keep silent, while in the meantime the debate on the future development of ESDP played out in Europe. On 29 April 2003, Belgium hosted a summit attended by France, Germany and Luxembourg to explore the
potential for further cooperation in defence matters. Among the ideas generated by the ‘Summit of Four’ was a proposal to establish a collective planning capability to be made available to the EU for autonomous crisis management. Although the summit communiqué was very careful to avoid using the word ‘headquarters’ to describe the proposed capability, the aim of the proposal was clear. The response from the United States and UK was unfavourable, as both countries considered that establishing a separate EU headquarters would unnecessarily duplicate member state capabilities and threaten the EU link with NATO. The UK then produced its own ‘food for thought paper’, which proposed the establishment of a permanent EU planning cell at SHAPE. According to the UK model, this EU cell would manage Berlin Plus operations, while member state headquarters would continue to provide the capabilities for autonomous operations, as the French had done for Operation Artemis. This disagreement over the need for an independent EU headquarters reflected a deeper debate about how closely the EU should associate its approach to crisis management with NATO.

In the autumn of 2003, the UK, France and Germany negotiated a key compromise on operational planning. Their trilateral paper formed the basis for the Presidency document, European Defence: NATO/EU Consultation, Planning and Operations, that the European Council endorsed at its 12–13 December meeting. This paper identifies NATO as ‘the forum for discussion and the natural choice for an operation involving the European and American allies’. It further states that in a crisis ‘contacts and meetings will be intensified so that EU and NATO can discuss their assessments of the crisis and clarify their intentions regarding possible engagements’. This form of words is carefully balanced to accommodate both the US and the ‘European’ view of the EU–NATO relationship. It suggests the primacy of NATO without explicitly stating that the Alliance has a ‘right of first refusal’ over operations.

The Presidency paper endorses the British proposal to establish a permanent EU cell at SHAPE to improve the preparation of Berlin Plus operations and ensure ‘full transparency’ in the EU–NATO relationship. By stating that the main option for the conduct of autonomous operations will be national headquarters, the paper effectively puts an end to the ‘Summit of Four’ proposals for an independent EU headquarters. However, the potential for an independent EU planning capability was not entirely ruled out. The paper states that ‘in certain circumstances, the Council may decide … to draw on the collective capacity of the EUMS [EU Military Staff], in particular where … no national HQ is identified’. It further provides that ‘once such a decision has been taken, the civilian/military cell in the EUMS would have responsibility
for generating the capacity to plan and run the operation. This would not be a standing HQ. Rather it would be a capacity rapidly to set up an operations centre for a particular operation’. With member states holding different views about the role of the centre, it is unclear under which circumstances the Council, which must act unanimously in this case, would take such a decision. However, some fear that this concession represents the ‘foot in the door’ of an EU HQ that France has been seeking. This compromise on planning (coupled with confirmation that any EU military operation in Bosnia would be conducted under Berlin Plus) opened the way for the EU to begin negotiating with NATO on a handover.\textsuperscript{60}

However, the issue of planning is not definitively resolved. While the outgoing NATO Secretary-General George Robertson welcomed the Presidency paper,\textsuperscript{61} US reaction was more cautious. In a press briefing on 12 December 2003 State Department spokesman Richard Boucher noted, ‘They say explicitly this would not be a standing headquarters. So we’re looking at all that, but we’ll also look at how they implement these arrangements’.\textsuperscript{62} His words underlined the fact that the proof of this deal will be in its implementation.

Conclusion

As \textit{Concordia} has shown, EU–NATO cooperation is dependent on the relationship between the United States and ‘Europe’ and on the role of the UK in bringing the two together. When this relationship is good the EU and NATO have much to offer by cooperating to provide flexible crisis management tools, demonstrating that the Berlin Plus arrangements have enhanced the security architecture of the Euro-Atlantic area.

The Macedonian experience has also shown that the EU approach to crisis management is partly but not fully confined to its relationship with NATO. In Macedonia the EU demonstrated that it could deploy a range of civilian crisis management instruments in a coordinated manner and in order further to improve these capabilities, the EU is seeking to develop its cooperation with other international organizations in crisis management. The recent Commission Communication, \textit{The European Union and the United Nations: The Choice of Multilateralism}, identifies the provision of ‘active and early support to UN-mandated or UN-led operations’ as a ‘clear track for the progressive framing and deployment of EU security and defence policy and capabilities’.\textsuperscript{63} Moreover, the EU and the UN have recently signed a Joint Declaration on EU–UN Cooperation in Crisis Management which commits the two organizations to establish a joint consultative mechanism to examine ways of enhancing
mutual cooperation in planning, training, communication and the exchange of best practice.

Operation Concordia demonstrates that the EU is capable of conducting small-scale military crisis management operations in support of its CFSP objectives and that the Berlin Plus arrangements for EU access to NATO assets are functioning well at the operational level. However, the nature of the relationship between the EU and NATO remains contested at the political level, as the debate over the wisdom of establishing a separate EU military headquarters illustrates. The challenge for the Union in each future crisis management operation will be to work with other concerned international organizations – the UN, NATO or the OSCE – to select the most appropriate tools for the job.

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NOTES

1. For an analysis of Operation Artemis, see Ulriksen et al. in this volume.
2. SAP was launched in 1999 to provide a new framework for the EU’s relations with the countries of the western Balkans. It encompasses Albania, Bosnia, Croatia, Macedonia, and Serbia and Montenegro. The SAP offers the countries of the western Balkans a ‘membership perspective’, which explicitly recognizes that the future of the region lies with the EU. See Lykke Friis and Anna Murphy, ‘Turbo-charged Negotiations: The EU and the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe’, Journal of European Public Policy, Vol.7, No.5, Dec. 2000, pp.767–86.
7. The Macedonian economy suffered indirectly from the sanctions imposed on the former Yugoslavia during the Milosevic regime and from the economic blockade imposed on Macedonia by Greece between 1994 and 1995.
8. The dispute began in 1994 with the founding of a private Albanian-language university, which was declared illegal by the government. The dispute seemed to be resolved in 2000 with an agreement to establish a trilingual (Albanian, Macedonian and English) University of Southeast Europe in Tetovo under the auspices of the OSCE.
However, the issue resurfaced in 2003 with a government proposal to legalize the original ‘illegal’ Albanian University in Tetovo.


10. Suggestions that some of the gunmen originated not from Kosovo but from Macedonia have proved controversial within Macedonia. However, the idea that the UÇK comprised ethnic Albanians from both Kosovo and Macedonia is gaining ground. See Biljana Vankovska, Current Perspectives on Macedonia: The Struggle for Peace, Democracy and Security, Heinrich Boll Foundation, Dec. 2002, accessed at www.boell.de/index.html?www.boell.de/en/05_world/1733.html.


12. The CARDS programme (Community Action for Reconstruction and Development) was established in December 2000 to support the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process by providing funds for reconstruction and return, institution building, sustainable economic and social development, and regional cooperation.

13. The RRM had been established in February 2001 to enable the Commission to release Community funds quickly in emergency situations. See www.europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/see/rrm/index.htm.


15. Planning for the second RRM financing decision did not begin until after the Ohrid Agreement was signed, and the decision to release the funds was not taken until 3 October 2001. European Commission (see n.14), p.2.

16. The Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) was designed as the principal instrument of the SAP to structure a signatory state’s progress toward EU membership. Whereas the SAP was designed to encourage regional cohesion, the SAA was designed to allow for differentiation between potential candidates. See Friis and Murphy (n.2 above), pp.767–86.

17. Schneckener (n.5 above), p.36.


20. The General Affairs and External Relations Council of 25 June made clear that the SAA was in doubt if the crisis were not resolved peacefully. 2362 Council Meeting, General Affairs and External Relations, 10228/01 (Presse 250), Luxembourg, 25 June 2001.


22. The Ohrid Agreement can be read in full at www.president.gov.mk/eng/info/dogovor.htm

23. The establishment of a 20 per cent threshold as the trigger for the introduction of Albanian as an official language at municipality level added extra importance to the results of the population census, which the Ohrid Agreement set for October 2001. Due to the politically sensitive nature of the task, the census was postponed until November 2002 and publication of the results was delayed until 1 December 2003.

24. On 10 December 2002 the Council passed a Joint Action in which the mandate of the EUSR was amended to read: ‘The EUSR will ensure close co-ordination of the international community’s efforts to help in the implementation and sustainability of the provisions of the Framework Agreement’. Council Joint Action (2002/963/CFSP), Official Journal of the European Communities, L 334, 11/12/2002, pp.7–8

26. Although the EU has been involved in several rule-of-law projects, the OSCE has played the major role in police training, particularly of minority officers. To minimize duplication, the EC and the OSCE concluded a Memorandum of Understanding. The Commission seconded staff to the OSCE and the Director of the OSCE Police Unit was selected as the first EUPOL Commissioner in January 2003.


33. Peterson (n.11 above), p.4.


39. Early US desire to pull out of the region was later tempered by the perception that the region could be an important front line in the War on Terror. International Crisis Group, Courting Disaster: The Misrule of Law in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sarajevo/Brussels: Balkans Report No.127, 25 March 2002, pp.22–3.

40. See article by Catriona Gourlay in this volume.

41. This advisory function continued after the handover from Allied Harmony to Concordia as NATO retained, by agreement with the Macedonian government, its advisors within the Macedonian Ministry of Defence.


43. Author’s interview with member of the EU Military Staff, Norwich, UK, 15 Sept. 2003.


45. Earlier on 14 March 2003 the EU and NATO had signed an Agreement on the Security of Information leading to Lord Robertson’s announcement on 17 March that the Berlin Plus arrangements had been finalized.

46. Council Joint Action (n.44 above).


48. Author’s interview with member of EU Military Staff, Norwich, UK, 15 Sept. 2003.

49. Concordia had 22 light and eight heavy field liaison teams grouped under three Regional Headquarters (RHQs) at Skopje, Kumanovo and Tetovo. These regional headquarters report to the Force Headquarters (FHQ) in Skopje.


51. A series of incidents in early September, including the kidnapping of a policeman, have been linked to the Albanian National Army, a guerrilla group previously active in Kosovo and southern Serbia. Macedonian security forces have been involved in a stand-off with gunmen in two northern villages where police have been searching for the self-proclaimed UÇK commander thought to be responsible for recent incidents.

53. EUPOL faces considerable challenges. The proportion of victims of crime seeking police assistance remains very low at just 10.5 per cent. This reluctance to seek assistance can partly be explained by continued mistrust of the police, particularly amongst ethnic Albanians, 19.1 per cent of whom continue to view the police as a threat rather than a protector. See UNDP, Early Warning Report: FYR Macedonia, No.1, 2003, accessed at www.undp.org.mk/governance/mapping.htm.

54. Author’s interview with member of the EU Military Staff, Sept. 2003.

55. These are: conflict prevention and crisis management, defence and security sector reform, strengthening the rule of law, countering the threat of terrorism, border security and management, arms control and removal of small arms.


58. The European Council also endorsed a Declaration on Transatlantic Relations, in which the Council affirmed that the EU–NATO relationship is an important expression of the transatlantic partnership.

59. The US and the UK have always insisted that the Berlin Plus arrangements give NATO the ‘right of first refusal’ over prospective crisis management operations. However, France has refrained from explicitly acknowledging such a right, preferring to talk instead of the ‘primacy’ of NATO. Practice to date appears to confirm NATO’s right to be consulted on EU plans for autonomous operations, although some commentators have suggested that NATO did not receive as much advanced notice of Operation Artemis as it would have liked.

60. In light of the improving security situation in the country, at their meeting in Brussels on 1 and 2 December, NATO Ministers of Defence decided to reduce the force from approximately 11,900 to a deterrent force of around 7,000. NATO will also examine options for a possible termination of the mission and handover to the EU by the end of 2004. See ‘SFOR plans future force structure’, NATO Update, 12 Dec. 2003 at www.nato.int/docu/update/2003/12-december/e1217b.htm.

61. ‘These proposals... make clear that there will be no duplication of NATO’s standing operational planning capabilities.’ Press Statement from NATO Secretary-General, Press Release (2003) 154, 11 Dec. 2003, accessed at www.nato.int/docu/pr/2003/p03-154e.htm.

