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Finland Report

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1 | Introduction

Finland has introduced whole-of-government approaches (WGAs) in responding to external conflicts and crises, most notably in the field of crisis management and under the rubric of a comprehensive approach. Mutual coordination and complementarity of military and civilian crisis management, as well as development policy and humanitarian aid, have formed a key narrative and a policy objective for consecutive Finnish governments. Given the objectives of the EU's foreign, security and defence policies, the scope of the comprehensive approach has been steadily broadening in Finland to also include peace-mediation and broader economic relations.

Finland has an extensive track record of participating in United Nations peacekeeping operations since 1956. As an EU member state since 1995, developing and contributing to the EU's crisis-management efforts have constituted an important feature of Finnish foreign and security policy. Finland has also participated in NATO's crisis-management operations in Afghanistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Kosovo. However, as Finland does not belong to NATO or any other military alliances, contributing to international operations has been framed in terms of Finland's aspiration to emerge as a security provider rather than a security consumer. In any case, participating in international operations has also been viewed as contributing to Finland's national security and defence.

Finland's success in introducing WGA into its foreign and security policies also owes something to its specific national characteristics. On the one hand, the country's limited resources have

made it eager to strive for efficacy and impact – i.e. to hit above its weight, so to speak – in its engagement in international operations, and the comprehensive approach has been understood as being beneficial in this regard. It has also opened up new possibilities for different types of contributions by EU member states in the Union's responses to external crises and conflicts.

On the other hand, the relatively small size of Finland's governmental administration has porous bureaucratic and cross-sectoral administrative boundaries. Relatedly, actors in Finland's security sector have a long tradition of collaborating with the government on issues related to comprehensive security thinking in national security doctrines. In the postwar era, the aim has been to bring together all the resources of Finnish society, both civilian and military, in defence of the country in different crisis scenarios.

2 | What policies have been developed to further policy coherence?

Strategic programmes of consecutive Finnish governments, as well as documents related to their implementation, largely set the overall scene for the WGA in the country's central governmental administration, including ministries and agencies. These documents often refer to a comprehensive approach in various forms and policy fields as being a guiding principle of the government's policy planning and decision-making. In this context, the recommendations of the OECD and examples of general administration reforms in close reference group countries (e.g. Sweden) are often noted. While the general administrative landscape for a WGA is seen as being very good in Finland, the role of strong and autonomous ministries is often mentioned as creating some institutional hurdles to cross-sectoral and horizontal collaboration (OECD 2015).

In terms of external conflicts and crises, Finland's WGA policies have been most clearly evident in the field of crisis management under the rubric of a comprehensive approach. Relatedly, it features high in development policy in terms of policy-coherence objectives. In these contexts, direct links have been made to humanitarian aid and human rights policies as well as to those for sustainable development. Broader economic relations (i.e. trade) are also increasingly connected to Finland's aspiration to foster peace and stability via its foreign policy and the EU's external relations.

The comprehensive approach seems to constitute a relatively coherent narrative that runs through key policy documents and impacts the planning and making of policies related to Finland's responses to external conflicts and crises. Importantly, the scope of its comprehensive approach has been enlarging from civil-military cooperation towards a more general aspiration to work with a 'WGA mindset'.

Regarding crisis management, a strategy on comprehensive crisis management was adopted in 2009 (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland 2009) and, five years later, the government revised its strategy on civilian crisis management. The latter states (Prime Minister's Office of Finland 2014: 10): "Finland aims to develop the effectiveness of crisis management, impact assessments and its capacities to participate in crisis management in a comprehensive manner which takes into account Finland's fortes." In addition, Finland underlines the "need for cooperation and coordination between different instruments, such as civilian and military

crisis management, mediation, development cooperation, humanitarian assistance, diplomacy, and economic relations and sanctions” (ibid.).

Pursuing a comprehensive approach has also been underlined by the recently appointed government of Antti Rinne. Its programme states that “Finland will implement and promote a comprehensive approach to crisis management” (Programme of Prime Minister Antti Rinne’s Government 2019). Furthermore, it argues that the main objective in crisis management will be to enhance security and stability in conflict areas and “to boost the competence and capacity of countries affected by conflict” (ibid.). The programme also suggests that achieving tangible results in protracted conflicts requires “good coordination between peacebuilding, humanitarian assistance and development cooperation”, and that the government aims to enhance this “through more flexible funding of humanitarian assistance and development cooperation and by enabling multiannual funding arrangements” (ibid.).

A WGA is also evident in the recent government documents on sustainable development goals and Finland’s development policy. For example, one description of Finland’s development policy states (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland n.d.): “Many other government ministries also have a role in development policy, because developing countries are affected by many decisions made at national, EU and international level in other fields, e.g. safety and security, trade, agriculture, environment and migration policies. Coherence between the various policy sectors is a key principle in development policy.”

It is broadly accepted that the EU has had a significant impact on Finnish aspirations to advance a comprehensive approach to external conflicts and crises. Yet Finland’s role in promoting the comprehensive approach at the EU level is equally often noted in Helsinki. For example, the government report on Finnish foreign and security policy (Prime Minister’s Office of Finland 2016: 20) states that the EU “must continue to further develop its common preparedness and arrangements for closer defence cooperation”, and that the “foundation for this includes the arrangements created for the implementation of the Common Security and Defence Policy as well as the capacity of the Union to comprehensively combine different policy sectors and instruments” (ibid.). The government has also reconfirmed Finland’s aspiration to participate in the EU’s Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) in crisis management, and it states that it is placing “progressively more emphasis [...] on conflict prevention and pre-emptive action.” The document also notes that “[t]he coherence of the EU’s external policies is improved by, among other things, taking into account the connection of the CFSP to the requirements for sustainable development and the implementation of the [UN’s] 2030 Agenda”, and that the “internal and external action of the EU must better complement each other” (ibid.: 21).

While peace-mediation, humanitarian aid, human rights policies and post-conflict reconstruction are understood to be closely connected to crisis-management operations, the emphasis on preventative action is an interesting development. Fostering stability and preventing conflicts (along with poverty reduction) are also increasingly being viewed as key aims in development policy as well as in broader economic relations and diplomacy, and they have also been directly linked to the management of migration to the EU.

Against this background, Finland appears to share the EU’s aspiration to highlight multi-phased, -dimensional, -level and -lateral responses to external conflicts and crises.

3 | Who are the main actors involved in cooperating in a WGA?

In terms of crisis management, Finland's comprehensive approach has constituted a narrative and a policy objective, which has led to a need to clarify mechanisms of decision-making and coordination. The key actors here are the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA), the Ministry of Defence (MoD), the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Finance, and the Defence Forces. As the president of the republic and the prime minister are key actors at the highest level of decision-making, their offices are included in the coordination. Coordination takes place at various levels in both formal and informal formats. The relatively small size of the general administration, personal links, efficacy and impact requirements, budgetary constraints, and a long tradition of cross-sectoral collaboration in matters related to national security and defence have been seen to constitute a relatively fertile environment for WGA approaches to develop in Finland.

Given the broadening scope of the Finnish comprehensive approach to external conflicts and crises, intra-ministry collaboration has also been highlighted. The MFA, for instance, is responsible for, inter alia, foreign and security policy, development policy and external economic relations, all of which are key policy fields of Finland's comprehensive approach.

In general, the functioning logic (and governance structures) of the ministries are increasingly geared towards internal coordination and cooperation among departments and units. This does not mean that there are not any of the kinds of significant 'silos' or 'bureaucratic power struggles' that tend to negatively impact collaboration and joint policy planning. Yet there seems to be a clear understanding that having swift, effective responses to external crises and conflicts requires a joint effort both within and among ministries and agencies. Moreover, there is a willingness to work around difficulties related to institutional boundaries within and among ministries when rapid responses are needed in different crisis scenarios. Indeed, there is more and more discussion of efficacy and impact, which also underlines coordination and cooperation within and among ministries (also in terms of budgetary restrictions).

In terms of the broader context of the Finnish political system, the role of the parliament in promoting a comprehensive approach is interesting. Furthermore, the role and inclusion of civil society actors should be noted.

To discuss the parliament first, one can note that it has played an active role in Finnish foreign and security policy debates in the post- Cold War context. In the 1990s and 2000s, Finland's participation in EU- and NATO-led crisis-management operations sparked a lively political debate related to changes to legislation on crisis management (Raunio 2018). The parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee has been very active in the policy discussion on comprehensive crisis management, and debates on Finland's engagement have spilled over into the plenary sessions, as well.

One can say that the civilian component of crisis-management – and its emphasis on pursuing a comprehensive approach – have constituted an important part of these debates and contributed to consensus-building among political parties. What's more, civilian crisis management and the comprehensive approach have also opened up new possibilities for Finland to engage in international operations by other-than-military means.

Against this background, it is noteworthy that the 2009 strategy on comprehensive crisis management (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland 2009) was initiated by the parliament, and that its implementation has been scrutinised by it. Besides legislative powers, parliament also holds the budgetary powers, which further highlights its role.

Turning to civil society actors, the 2009 crisis management strategy also calls for their active involvement in the comprehensive approach. Collaboration with these actors largely takes place within formal collaboration platforms. For example, the Advisory Board on Civilian Crisis Management within the Ministry of the Interior acts as a forum for debate among different administrative branches and civil society, and it aims to contribute to the development of domestic capacity-building (Prime Minister's Office 2014).

Another relevant body for civil society engagement is the government-appointed Development Policy Committee, which has a mandate to monitor and evaluate Finland's development policy. Its members include representatives of parliamentary parties, advocacy organisations, NGOs and universities. A comprehensive approach and policy coherence are constant themes in the committee's meetings. The same holds true for the 20- to 40-member strong Human Rights Delegation appointed by the national Human Rights Centre, which operates under the parliament as the national human rights institution.

Regarding peace-mediation efforts, the work of the Crisis Management Initiative (CMI) should be mentioned. It is an independent Finnish organisation that works to prevent and resolve violent conflicts through informal dialogue and mediation. Martti Ahtisaari, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate and former president of Finland, founded the CMI in 2000. Several other major national NGOs, such as the Finnish Red Cross and Finn Church Aid, are also seen as being important partners for the successful planning and implementation of the country's comprehensive approach.

4 | How does your country operationalise a WGA?

Formal and institutional cooperation that assumes a WGA-like approach is most pronounced in the field of crisis management. However, it is also increasingly evident in development policy, and its link to broader economic relations is often highlighted.

Parliament's propositions to the government to address shortcomings in the planning, coordination and monitoring of Finland's comprehensive crisis-management in 2008 were addressed in the comprehensive crisis management strategy of 2009 (Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland 2009). Its implementation led to the formation of a strategic coordination group for comprehensive crisis management. The group includes representatives from the MFA, the MoD, the Office of the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister's Office, the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Justice, and the Ministry of Finance.

While the establishment of the coordination group has been valuable in many respects, particularly with regard to information-sharing at the higher levels of the ministries and agencies, its role in advancing coordination has been deemed as being somewhat limited (National Audit Office of Finland 2013). Relatedly, even if (as noted above) the official narrative has changed from one of 'aspirations towards' to the 'actual implementation of' the

comprehensive approach, the structural and institutional changes enabling its genuine operationalisation are still lacking despite the stated commitment to this approach (Suonio 2018).

Other interesting institutional innovations in Finland relate to crisis-management expertise, recruitment and training. For example, the Crisis Management Centre Finland was established in 2007 to be “a governmental institution and a centre of expertise in civilian crisis management” (CMC Finland 2019a). Its main duties are training, recruiting and equipping Finnish experts for international missions as well as conducting relevant research and development work. It also acts as the national head office for all seconded Finnish civilian crisis-management professionals.

Furthermore, the Finnish Defence Forces International Centre (FINCENT), founded in 1969, is “a nationally and internationally recognised forerunner, expert and active participant in crisis-management education and training” (FINCENT n.d.). It organises military crisis-management training for command and expert personnel in crisis-management operations led by the UN, NATO, the African Union and the EU, and it has been granted several international quality certificates.

Together, these agencies established the Finnish Centre of Expertise in Comprehensive Crisis Management in 2008, which was joined in 2018 by the Finnish Police University College. The centre “aims at developing common and joint training in crisis management as well as promoting overall understanding of comprehensive crisis management” (CMC Finland 2019b).

Furthermore, a task force set up by the Ministry of the Interior has recently suggested a transition towards a comprehensive operational logic by setting up a new cross-sectoral, comprehensive crisis-management centre into which the current CMC Finland would be merged. The new centre would implement Finland’s comprehensive crisis management. Special attention is supposed to be devoted to collaboration between civilian and military crisis-management bodies as well as to peace-mediation, development policy and humanitarian aid. It is, however, an open question whether this proposal will be acted upon.

When zooming out from crisis management to the broader context of responding to external crises and conflicts, informal mechanisms as well as political steering from the top of the government are often underlined. In addition to formal mechanisms of coordination, informal and ad hoc WGA coordination also takes place on various administrative levels within and among the ministries. This is often highlighted in terms a ‘common’ and ‘everyday’ practice of addressing external conflicts and crises. The particular membership makeup of these various groups depends on the type of crises and the envisaged response(s) needed.

In terms of general administration and policymaking, the Prime Minister’s Office has overall responsibility for making WGA happen, so to speak. It also manages many inter-administrative projects and bodies. Importantly, the WGA is part of the mandate of officials in the Prime Minister’s Office. For example, they are tasked with ensuring that the WGA has been taken into account before policy proposals reach the political level (i.e. that of government decision-making). This also applies to Finland’s responses to external conflicts and crises. Detected shortcomings in policy planning usually result in requests for further coordination activities within and among ministries. The general working method of the government, based on various

permanent ministerial configurations, is also seen as being helpful for the WGA and is credited with providing political leadership and steering for it.

This assessment of Finland's WGA has been rather positive. However, that is not meant to imply that there would not be some difficulties and needs for further enhancement of the WGA to external conflicts and crises. While the civilian and military crisis-management components seem to be operating under clear WGA structures, the next steps – including development, humanitarian aid and human rights policies as well as economic relations – are still somewhat of a work in progress. Bureaucratic power struggles among and within ministries continue to create some obstacles for the WGA. Even if a move towards joint funding and programming instruments has featured in recent discussions on the operationalisation of comprehensive crisis management, the current system based on clarification of responsibilities and allocation of resources in different ministries seems to continue to be firmly in place.

5 | Conclusions

In terms of external conflicts and crises, Finland has successfully implemented a WGA, most notably in the field of crisis management. This has been done under the rubric of a comprehensive approach to crisis management. While the roots of this approach are clearly to be found in civil-military collaboration, it has been expanding to also encompass other policy sectors, most notably development policy, humanitarian aid, peace-mediation and human rights policy. Recently, Finland's external economic relations and diplomacy generally seem to reflect Finland's aspirations to promote peace and stability in the EU's neighbourhoods and beyond.

Against this backdrop, the comprehensive approach constitutes a highly relevant narrative and policy objective shaping Finland's responses to external conflicts and crises. Yet the operationalisation of the WGA still faces some challenges in terms of planning, making and implementing related policies. Granted, the decision-making, coordination structures and financing mechanisms have been largely clarified over the past decade. Nevertheless, this has not led to any major institutional transformations that would enable collaboration and coordination through joint objective-setting and programming. At present, to what extent this would be needed is a somewhat open and under-examined question in Finland.

This analysis suggests that there are some major external and internal enablers of the WGA in Finland's responses to external conflicts and crises. First, Finland's aspiration to emerge as a security provider in the European and international contexts has highlighted its active participation in EU-, NATO- and UN-led crisis-management efforts. Accordingly, Finland has become a strong supporter of the comprehensive approach in regional and international fora. It has also aimed to contribute to developing a comprehensive approach in the EU, such as by providing expertise on the implementation of this approach. Second, Finland's emphasis on a comprehensive approach has opened up possibilities for it to also engage in international operations through civilian means, which has been an important part of the consensus-building on foreign and security policies among the country's political parties. Third, the relatively small size of the general administration, personal links, efficacy and impact requirements, as well as a long tradition of cross-sectoral collaboration in national security and defence have fostered a relatively conducive environment for WGA approaches to develop in.

Finally, there is evidence that Finland's comprehensive approach has spilled over from crisis management to the broader context of foreign and security policy. The EU's aspiration to utilise all the tools available to it in a coherent manner in order to promote peace and stability as well as to address conflicts and crises is very much a shared objective in Helsinki. This means that while innovations on the EU level shape national developments within Finland, the latter also often feed back to the EU level and other relevant actors through expertise and a commitment to further developing comprehensive approaches in general.

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