

**NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF PUBLIC SERVICE**  
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**The History of the African Union. Security policy aspects of  
the EU-AU relations**

Review of doctoral (PhD) thesis

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# THE HISTORY OF THE AFRICAN UNION. SECURITY POLICY ASPECTS OF THE EU-AU RELATIONS

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## INTRODUCING THE TOPIC AND ITS ACTUALITY

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Remarkable and spectacular changes have taken place in international security policy since 2000. New security challenges and new actors appeared in the international arena. Although threat of a conventional war has drastically decreased in the European continent, however, on the one hand the continent's security policy exposure to the existing old-fashioned and new type crises and conflicts emerging in Africa is too high, while on the other hand they are now assuming a global character, for Africa's geopolitical importance has been continuously growing. Nowadays, Africa has turned into one the key theatres of conflicts of the political and economic interests among the main geopolitical actors, where EU itself has to take up the cudgel in defence of its own multifaceted "great power" interests.

Similarly to some EU members – like the former colonial power France did it in the course of "its blitzkrieg in Mali" – have already realised that their national interest should be protected overseas also by force of arms even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, EU also has to take up with this idea. Since its power – as a global actor of the world economy – cannot be interpreted, without becoming a global actor of the world policy as well. Amidst the ever faster globalising world, with new and new rivals appearing on the scene, EU must find its own special role and means.

Furthermore, it should be outlined that because of the EU's geographical proximity to Africa, thousands of African inhabitants attempt day by day to get to Europe via the open sea. However, it should be outlined, that Africa has remained a also an intriguing mystery and a great challenge for both the West and East.

In Europe, the African, economic, social and political events manifest themselves in the form of African migrants and refugees, which the European governments and citizens prone to consider as a threatening problem, instead of considering it as a great possibility, if only from the standpoint of our ageing societies and shortage of labour.

As it has been expounded already, Africa – in a much broader sense of the word – is the scene of a global economic and security policy game, where the EU must fight for its own

political and economic interests with such global rivals like China, India, the UAS, Russia, the Arab World, Japan, South Korea or Brazil.

In this race not only the rivals but also the African people and nations must be taken into consideration. Meanwhile the industrially developed countries have been facing for long decades the fact that 99 per cent of the African nations defend their interests not by resorting to obsolete javelins and blowguns, but advanced lethal firearms procured from the industrially developed countries of the West and East. This whole set of problem represents a significant challenge, as the continent is the scene of every day ethnic and religious conflicts, the organised crime and terrorism have been fast spreading, while regular draughts and food crises, shortage of potable water and infectious diseases trigger successive waves of refugees, thus destabilising or disrupting political systems of entire countries and broader regions.

The above threat and challenges – as it is usual in a relentlessly globalising world – assume a transnational character. To efficiently and successfully deal with them, new structures and mechanisms are necessary, as the available ones are not efficient enough already.

The EU, as a community of values and countries, has by now entered in a new phase of its integration, where it realised that the protection of its international interest requires joint foreign policy actions that is unfeasible without elaborating a uniform and single foreign policy structure, a new set of means, methods and capabilities, enabling the EU to launch crisis management and peace support operations in order to take an active part in maintaining international peace and security. It can be stated that ever since this joint policy and structure has been taking shape, the majority of the EU crisis management and peace support operations take place outside the continent and primary in Africa. Since, the African continent seems to remain in the focus of the EU security policy operations, simultaneously and in parallel with our EU competence building efforts, the EU must help the African states – by enabling them to build up their own capabilities – to prevent, and manage risks, threats and conflicts and to eliminate their consequences.

So as to efficiently manage the security threats along with their root causes – emerging in the direct vicinity or sometimes in the close neighbourhood of Europe such as the “Arab Spring” of 2011 – EU should take into account and rely on the African Union as its no. 1 partner in the region.

The current doctoral thesis is meant to draw conclusions from the EU current and future security policy commitments by assessing the available relations and the efficiency of the existing organisational structures between the EU and AU and attempted to draw up the future lines of actions.

In the first half of the thesis, I focus on introducing the EU's current Africa-policies including also the available means and ongoing operations, starting from presenting the general picture from a bird's eye view to the concrete actions (existing agreements and current operations). By doing so, I intended to make a sketch of the foreign policy relations and specify the role and importance of the foreign and security policy. Finally, I have enumerated the EU's African operations, with a view to the regional context.

The second part of the thesis begins with a sketch of the history of the African Union, which is followed by the developing security policy structure of a currently shaping organisation along with the ongoing AU operations in Africa. Besides the AU, I have paid special attention also to the RECs security policy importance and options.

In the closing part of the doctoral thesis, I have taken an effort to give a short assessment on two key crisis and conflict zones in an effort to demonstrate the deep and multifaceted character of the security issues in Africa. This chapter – in contrast to the EU and AU local operations – may give an all-out picture of the ongoing procedures and events in the operational area, along with the political and socio-economic processes in the background.

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### AIM OF THE RESEARCH

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In my doctoral thesis, I have attempted to describe security policy aspect of the EU–AU relations based on a detailed introduction of the complex system of foreign relations. Relevant fields of EU-AU cooperation, African peace support operations of both sides and the three regional assessments representing the current main security challenges throw lights on what tasks should be done to manage the crises.

At the same time, I destined a whole chapter to present the AU institutional structure along with its developing security policy in an effort give an all-out picture – as deep and complex as possible – on the essence of the issue. I do hope that this summary of all the above knowledge and information will be appropriate and also competent enough to confirm my below hypotheses.

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## A SCIENTIFIC PROBLEM

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Interpreting the *European security* in a broader sense requires intensifying EU commitment – ranging from prevention to reconstruction – to managing the security threats and conflicts in a much broader framework than the European Collective Defence.

Broader interpretation of *security challenges* in the context of new crises and conflicts requires the EU to extend its actions both in the physical and geographical meaning of the word, chiefly in Africa.

African countries, in the last decade, started building up their own continental institution, the African Union, as a main actor of settling the current, but chiefly the future conflicts in the continent.

Since the EU also attaches great importance to the AU as an actor in the African conflict management, therefore the multi-level cooperation of the two organisations and their member-states must be further developed in the light of the complex challenges of globalisation. The security aspect of the EU-AU cooperation is of key importance considering the global peace and security of the entire world.

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## HYPOTHESES OF THE RESEARCH

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1. In an effort to defend its economic-political interest and strengthen its positions as a world power, EU intensifies its presence in Africa.
2. So as to find a reassuring settlement to its current foreign and security policy challenges the EU maintains close relations with the AU to guarantee European security.
3. In the interest of an efficient security policy activity, the EU may need to revise its foreign policy relations and means of influence regarding the African continent.
4. EU mission efforts aimed at stabilising the western democratic values are inefficient because of the very different social and political structures and civilisation patterns dominating in Africa.
5. EU still opts for choosing a passive strategy focusing chiefly on peacekeeping in order to find a solution to the security challenges of the African continent.

## RESEARCH METHODS APPLIED

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To verify and confirm my hypotheses drawn up in the present doctoral thesis, I have attempted to present the EU foreign policy relations regarding the individual African countries and the AU itself.

In the framework of this effort, I studied the relevant domestic and foreign scientific literature, primary the relevant chapter of the EU basic treaties and the relevant legal sources of the EU institutions, including also the international conventions, in which both the EU and AU are signatory parties.

Publications and essays of the domestic and international scientific literature represent the primary and secondary legal sources of my doctoral thesis. (It should be noted, that while there is an ample domestic scientific literature available on the relevant EU foreign and security policy means and methods – proving how popular is the topic among the Hungarian researchers – the number of domestic scientific publications on the African Union is very limited, which forced me to rely on the ample international sources when formulating my own personal position on the issue.

Apart from, the EU and international law, as well as the relevant fields of the security policy, it was certain key documents of the diplomacy, political sciences and sociology that helped me enlarging and extending my knowledge on the issue.

## NEW SCIENTIFIC RESULTS

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As a result of my studies and research activity in the framework of the doctoral education I have managed to present and analyse the EU-AU relations, with the security policy aspects in the focus.

I have summarised all the available knowledge and information on the emergence and development of the African Union, including its institutional structure, capabilities and efforts. I demonstrated and assessed practical implementation of the APSA system components through the operations launched under AU aegis and some examples of RECs.

In line of my objectives, I have elaborated an essay summarising the currently available knowledge and information, in a way to serve as a useful contribution to the scientific life in such a field that is at the moment only peripheral, even despite the fact that the number of domestic scientific researchers and publications has been continuously growing.

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## PROPOSALS

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What might further deepen the assessment of the EU-AU relations would require a broader assessment of the international environment by taking into account the interests of all the possible actors (other international organisations, great powers, any third country interested in the region), which can be only shortly mentioned in the framework of this doctoral thesis. It would be useful for the EU to set the EU security policy ambitions against those of its member states. I'm convinced that Africa is one of the keys to the EU's future and it's worth being assessed from Hungarian standpoint as well.

The challenges of the third millennium in Africa resulted in the reorganisation of the existing institutional structure on a brand new base (with the coming to existence of NEPAD, AU and RECs). In the new global international arena, only the AU can be the EU's efficient partner representing every citizen of the continent. Owing to this new level of relations, the two organisations have already managed to build up a real partnership starting from the EU's Africa policy up to elaborating a joint EU-AU joint Africa strategy implementing a multitude of partnership projects in various fields of cooperation.

Considering the present rivalry in Africa – with traditional and brand new actors appearing on the scene – the issue to be decided is whether this rivalry is conducting to the African development and helps reducing poverty and the number of conflicts or not. China, India, Japan and a number of regional powers have appeared recently in Africa, realising significant trade turnover, implementing numerous investment projects or giving different financial assistance funds. The many different development projects, launched by the International Community –with the EU in the focus – in the last two decades since the turn of the second and third millennium, aimed chiefly to eliminate poverty, could only partly handle the occurring problems. In this context, security policy can also offer the necessary solutions to the emerging problems and challenges. As I have mentioned it already, there are numerous

security risks, emergency situations and conflicts in Africa, also traditional ones with decade long histories, and those recently occurred.

To help settle or at least manage the above threats and conflicts, the EU has to continuously assess its own efforts, and those of the rival actors in a cost-efficiency context, amidst a permanently changing environment. The EU has to define the successful foreign and security policy trends and goals with the available and necessary means, re-evaluating at the same time the components of the broader system in compliance with its priorities.

EU supports and encourages its African partners at all costs, in the field of crisis and conflict prevention and management, while in the framework of a division of labour among the EU members it works out efficient methods of crisis prevention ranging from preventive diplomacy to economic reconstruction projects and reforms requiring various civil capabilities.

It should be noted that the EU members – especially former colonial powers – have significant politico-economic interest at stake on the African continent, and they have been striving even nowadays after not only protecting but also further strengthening their economic interests and influence.



## PUBLICATIONS

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1. Zsifkó Mariann: A terrorista profilja. biztonságpolitika.hu, 2005.
2. Bálint Tamás - Zsifkó Mariann: A Magyar Honvédség katonai képességeinek változása a jelenlegi biztonságpolitikai helyzet tükrében, különös tekintettel a terrorizmusra. Tanulmány, 2006. NKE Könyvtár
3. Bálint Tamás - Zsifkó Mariann: Karrier I. A háttér. Felderítő Szemle XI. évf. 3-4. szám
4. Bálint Tamás - Zsifkó Mariann: Karrier II. Felderítő Szemle /megjelenés alatt
5. Bálint Tamás - Zsifkó Mariann: Horn of Africa. The major factors in regional (in)security. AARMS 2013. I/2012.
6. Bálint Tamás - Zsifkó Mariann: Egyiptom. Felderítő Szemle. 2013. XII. évf. 1. szám
7. Bálint Tamás - Zsifkó Mariann: Szudán és térsége. Szakmai Szemle/megjelenés alatt
8. Zsifkó Mariann: Az afrikai biztonsághoz speciálisan kapcsolódó intézmények: a nemzetközi büntetőbíróságok. Hadtudományi Szemle, 2013. 6. évf. 2. szám.
9. Bálint Tamás - Zsifkó Mariann: A 2012-es mali konfliktus és előzményei. Hadtudományi Szemle, 2013. 6. évf. 3. szám.
10. Zsifkó Mariann: Az EU fejlesztési politikája. A Cotonoui Megállapodás. biztonságpolitika.hu, 2013.
11. Zsifkó Mariann: Az EU és Afrika kapcsolatrendszerének formálódása az Afrikai Unió létrejöttével. Hadtudományi Szemle, 2013. 6. évfolyam/megjelenés alatt
12. Zsifkó Mariann: Brief History of the African Unity. The Road to African Union biztonságpolitika.hu, 2013.
13. Zsifkó Mariann: Az Afrikai Unió intézményrendszere biztonságpolitika.hu, 2013.

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## CURRICULUM VITAE

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## EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

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*Dec 2012* **HDF 93. Petőfi Sándor NBC Defence Battalion, Székesfehérvár**  
Legal Department  
*Chief of dept: legal tasks*

*May 2006-2009* **MINISTRY OF DEFENCE, Budapest**  
Planning and Coordination Department  
*Senior Officer: legal coordination and codification*

*July 2005* **HDF 25/88. Light Cavalry Battalion, Szolnok**  
Legal Department  
*Legal Officer, deputy chief of dept: legal tasks*

*June 2004* **HUN NSE, MSU, SFOR/EUFOR, Sarajevo**  
*Legad*

*Jan 2003* **HDF 1<sup>st</sup> Light Cavalry Regiment, Szolnok**  
Legal Department  
*Disciplinary Officer: criminal and disciplinary law cases*

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## EDUCATION

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*2007-2008* *Bar examination*

*Sept 2005-* **Zrínyi Miklós National Defence University, Budapest**  
Doctoral School of Military Sciences,  
*PhD*

*2003-2005* **Pázmány Péter Catholic University, Budapest**  
*MA in European Law*

*25-31 Oct, 2003* *NATO Legal Course, Oberammergau*

*1997-2002* **Pázmány Péter Catholic University, Budapest**  
*Faculty of Law and Political Sciences*  
*Lawyer (cum laude)*

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## LANGUAGES

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*English:* STANAG 3.3.3.3. (2004)  
*Spanish:* intermediate (2011)