

Interregionalism at a Crossroads: African–European Crisis Management in Libya—a Case of Organized Inaction?

by Malte Brosig, University of the Witwatersrand

Since the Africa–EU Summit in 2007, the African Union (AU) and European Union (EU) have crafted a dense, interregional network expressing the hope to solve pertinent security challenges both continents face. However, despite the emergence of an elaborate institutional framework in the form of the Joint Africa–EU Strategy (JAES), both organizations remain without much political clout if put to a hard security test, such as the popular uprising in Libya in 2011. Instead, African–European interregionalism constitutes a state of organized inaction. This article aims at exploring why the AU and EU have been disenfranchised from this conflict, despite Libya touching upon vital security interests of their member states. It will be argued that a lack of problem-solving competence and significantly deviating political perspectives on military interventions for the protection of civilians are key to understand inaction between institutions.

Introduction

Formal trade agreements, such as Yaoundé, Lomé, and Cotonou, have long dominated African–European relations. Only with the AU and EU becoming more prolific in their management of foreign affairs and security policies on their own continent have they provided the preconditions for systematic interinstitutional cooperation. The 2000 Cairo Summit laid the foundations for closer interinstitutional contacts but only during the second Africa–EU summit in 2007 did an extensive joint institutional framework develop in the security domain that this article will focus on. However, despite the existence of these elaborate joint institutional structures, the two organizations, if facing a hard security threat such as the Libyan crisis in 2011, remain without much influence. If contrasting the interinstitutional structures in place with the performed individual/collective output observable, the results are meager. A significant discrepancy between the degree of institutionalization and performance becomes visible, which warrants further analysis. The case of Libya is also astonishing, because it would have constituted an ideal test case for effective interregionalism as the country is geographically located close to Europe, and Gaddafi was one of the founding fathers of the AU. For Europe and Africa, the political consequences of Gaddafi’s removal or a prolonged civil war were manifold, ranging from expected refugee streams, feared Islamist terrorism, loss of investments, and a further destabilization of Sahel countries. If the existence of hard security and political interest is a catalyst for joint, or at least coordinated action, between Africa and Europe, as most foreign policy analysts would claim, then the empirical observation of organized institutional inaction requires more systematic attention.

This article aims at exploring why both organizations have not been engaged in solving the Libyan crisis to an extent that corresponds to their interregional ties, collective/individual ambitions in the security domain, and their vital security interests. The case of Libya was chosen because it constitutes a hard test case in which we can expect both continents to have

a keen interest in engaging and solving the conflict. If interregional institutions have any significant political meaning, this would best be explored in a case of high political stakes such as Libya. Primarily, cases of high political importance reveal the potential and limitations of interregional security arrangements. Considering the relative newness of African–European interregionalism in the area of security cooperation, not many cases appear as suitable study objects. Without a doubt, the Libyan crisis was by far the most serious interregional threat both organizations were facing, which warrants conducting a single case study.

Explaining Organized Inaction: A Theoretical Approach

Explaining institutional inaction has often not been of interest for scholars of international organizations (IOs). In most cases, scholarship strives to explore the underlying logic of action and influence of IOs. A wealth of institutionalist research is testament to this trend. Most research focuses extensively on decision and policy making, the delegation of power to IOs (Tallberg 2002), investigating IOs as norm entrepreneurs (Finnemore 1993), discussing their actorness (Groenleer and van Schaik 2007), or their power to socialize states (Risse and Sikkink 1999), and more recently an interorganizational turn has emerged (Koops 2012). Research is thereby implicitly biased toward exploring what IOs achieve, largely leaving out cases of institutional pathology or inaction, with Barnett and Finnemore (1999) being a prominent exception. It might, however, be equally important to investigate cases in which IOs have been disengaged or are malfunctioning; researching issues of global or regional governance is not exhausted in examining what IOs accomplish but could also usefully look at what they cannot achieve and exploring those conditions that bear responsibility for their inaction.

In principle, theories that have been developed to explain how and why IOs act the way they do can also explain the opposite. For example, we can expect the absence of certain conditions provoking an institutional response to an imminent issue can be an important factor exploring IO inaction. There is no specific need for new theories to be developed. Thus, this article takes recourse to interregional studies and new institutionalism, particularly highlighting rational and sociological institutionalism.

Interregionalism as a single field of IO studies has so far only been a niche topic. It is, however, important to set into context the extension of regional organizations into areas of global governance. The evolving literature on interregionalism, IO interplay, and regime complexes commonly analyze boundary spanning institutions that cannot always be clearly delimited from each other (Raustiala and Victor 2004: 277–78). For the analysis of African–European interregional relations, this means that “although interregionalism should be seen as a distinct phenomenon, it cannot be understood in total isolation from regionalism” (Söderbaum and Van Langenhove 2006: 254). Interregional relations encompass individual as well as joint action or a mix of both. At the heart of interregional studies is the analysis of governance systems, which are “multilateral, transnational, global, continental, regional, interregional, national, and subregional levels which are overlapping interrelated and interconnected (. . .)” (Roloff 2006: 18, 24). In other words, the institutional external space in which IOs operate is becoming increasingly dense. Furthermore, regional IOs have started to transcend their traditional fields of action, internal integration, and are expanding beyond their region (Söderbaum and Van Langenhove 2006: 256–57). Increasingly, we can observe overlapping and intersecting IOs as an issue, which is of particular relevance for Africa with its dozens of Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and its dependence on international donor support (Brosig 2011). This also means states may choose between various institutions and select those that appear as more favorable for them. It opens up opportunities for forum shopping in which IOs are placed in a competitive situation. It is important to inquire why some institutions have been preferred over others. While the literature on interregionalism has not produced a parsimonious theory in its own right (Hänggi, Roloff, and Rüländ 2006: 10), it has contributed significantly to our understanding about how and why interregional

institutional ties come about and are maintained. Quite a number of these conditions are connected to rational and sociological institutionalism.

Traditionally, rational institutionalism explains the existence and importance of IOs through their problem-solving competence. IOs are functionally useful for those who set them up, and states will only delegate authority to IOs if they can expect to profit from them. In principle, we can expect the same logic to be applicable to interregional relations. Rationalism inherently applies an individualistic approach. The rational school of thought assumes that actors follow a logic of consequences in which action is deliberate and purposeful resulting from the individual calculation of cost and benefit. Often IOs are understood as a form of aggregation of state decision making reflecting their interests (Shepsle 2006: 26). Institutions and action are sustained as long as their member states perceive them as profitable. Underlying this theoretical thinking is the idea that institutions are there for a purpose, to solve a collective problem or to follow a specific goal.

Based on the rational logic of interaction, we can draw a connection between expected interinstitutional gains versus cooperative costs. In the case of inactive interregional relations, we should assume cooperative gains are disproportionately low compared to individual costs. However, such an equation would certainly oversimplify interregional relation. Therefore, Doidge (2007) has identified IO actorness as a key variable. He argues that meaningful interregional relations are facilitated by a symmetrical power/capacity distribution. Accordingly, an asymmetrical relationship would dilute effective cooperation, because the partner organization might lack power/capacity to implement joint policies effectively, and the stronger partner can dictate decisions because of its supreme capabilities. Doidge predicts, "The dialogue within these institutions will remain constrained by the capacity of the regional actors involved, but the creation of the structures themselves is a simple way for partners to give the impression that the interregional process is producing results (Doidge 2007: 243). In other words, strongly asymmetrical relations are very likely to support the proliferation of interregional institutions at the cost of truly joint programs. What remains are capacity-building initiatives supporting the weaker partner (*Ibid.*, 242). Thus, under certain circumstances we can expect interregionalism to take the form of organized inaction. One may add that organized inaction may also result from both organizations lacking crucial resources and capabilities to execute common policies. If incapacities are jointly shared, institutions will find it difficult to act but might not disappear easily either and, thus, leave institutional structures behind without them achieving very much.

Repeatedly, interregional studies have tried to set dyadic or bi-regional relations in context with broader global governance structures. AU–EU relations are no exception. In the security policy field, both organizations are confronted with a number of potential competitors, such as the UN, NATO, and RECs. From a rational institutionalist perspective, we may ask which of these institutions is best satisfying member states' needs? Dyadic interregionalism becomes less attractive if states can follow their interests more effectively elsewhere. A comparative element cannot be ignored. We can assume that when African–European relations have not contributed much to the solution of the Libyan crisis it is because they failed to provide the necessary conflict-solution capabilities to tackle the crisis in comparison to alternative IOs. The value added by activating and using the cooperative structures in place between the AU and EU has not been sufficient, and thus, other IOs which better satisfy the interest of AU and EU member states are preferred.

The rational institutionalist school has been challenged by both historical and sociological institutionalism. Perceiving IOs as servants to states that completely reflect member state interests has rightly received criticism (March and Olson 2006: 4). At the forefront of developing a sociological institutionalist approach are Finnemore and Barnett. They have shown that IOs are not always efficient output maximizers and are not important only for what they do (output). The sociological school grants IOs importance for what they represent and

stand for normatively and the social purpose they occupy (Barnett and Finnemore 1999: 703). Indeed even rationalists have admitted the rational logic of cost-benefit calculations needs a substantive normative theory to give meaning to rational action (Snidal 2002:74).

Likewise, the literature on interregionalism has conceptualized the social side of IO interaction. In particular, a connection has been drawn between the need for regional identities to be expressed in interregional relations. As Rüländ stated, “Regional identities are strengthened if interregional interaction sharpens differences between the regional self and regional other(s), generating and internalizing a repository of shared norms and beliefs and thus enhancing regional cohesion” (2010: 1278). Consequently, most of the literature exploring the EU as an external actor highlights the importance of expressing its own values and identities vis-à-vis other regional partners (Söderbaum, Stålgren, and Van Langenhove 2005: 372–73). Research on the normative or civilian power of the EU is moving in a similar direction. The social purpose of interregional relations rests with its ability to create and legitimize regional actors in international relations (*Ibid.*, 373). Thus, even if interregional institutions appear as only semi-functional or inactive, they might still be relevant in terms of their capacity to solidify regional values and provide for political symbolism of collective cooperation. In fact, in situations of high complexity and ambiguous or even erratic actors, as we will find them in fairly large regional organizations, the attempt and expectation to craft jointly shared political solutions for a certain crisis is rather ambitious. Practically speaking, what is left are often symbolic acts. Olsen (2006:199–214) has argued that African–European relations are specifically rich in symbolic action due to the absence of effective functional output.

From the normative perspective, we can assume that effective and output-oriented interregional relations also require a common normative basis. Thus, the social function of interregionalism does not exhaust itself in processes of delimitation to reassure regional distinctiveness. At least highly institutionalized relations provide the chance of developing common positions. As a result, we can expect the functional output and problem-solving capacity of interregional relations not only being a phenomenon *sui generis* but also being related to the absence of substantive, common normative grounds. If there is no visible common normative framework to provide the necessary social purpose, joint structures will remain relatively empty.

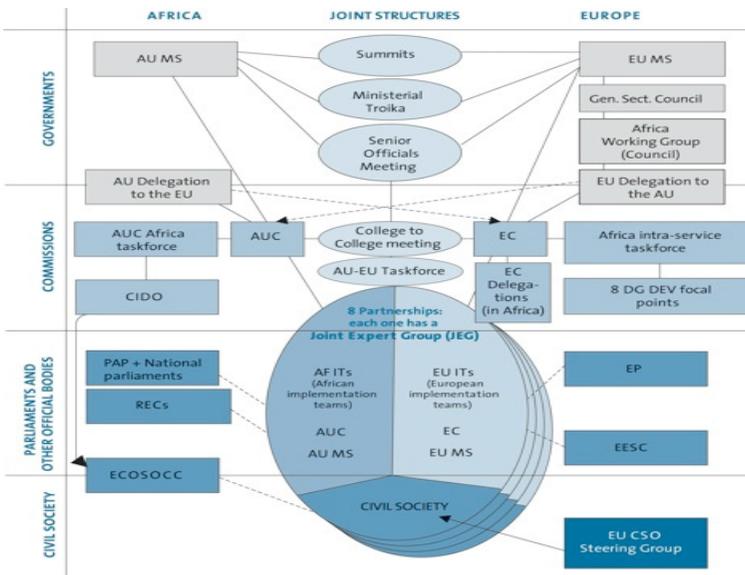
In conjunction with sociological institutionalism, the constructivist school has explored IOs as vehicles for processes of norm creation. The latest constructivist literature views norms not as static objective facts but as being in a constant development process (Brosig 2012). Norms, in order to be meaningful, have to undergo a validation process that can be defined as social recognition and acceptance of a norm (Wiener and Puetter 2009). Acceptance may only be reached if a norm is not only translated into any kind of legally or politically binding agreements “but into culturally understandable and acceptable” context (Zwingel 2012: 125). For the case of African–European interregionalism, interinstitutional relations may be understood as a forum for joint norm creation and validation. At least interinstitutional relations have the potential to function as cultural bridges and mediation hubs between two very diverse continents and two fairly large and heterogeneous regional IOs. Thus, we may assume institutional inaction is related to the ability of interregional institutions to create, mediate, and transfer potential common or conflicting norms and values into an interregional context that finds mutual recognition (validation).

This article proceeds in the following steps: The subsequent section provides an overview of the extensive interregional framework that developed between the AU and EU since 2007. The second section explores the sociological institutionalist assumption that IOs, to be effective performers, must connect to a normative framework that commits their member states to truly shared norms. Section three analyzes to what extent the existing institutional framework is capable of solving a security crisis such as the one in Libya. The emphasis will be on the conflict-management capabilities of the two organizations within the framework of JAES.

The State of Interinstitutional Relations

Following the 2007 second EU–Africa Summit, which established the Joint Africa–EU Strategy (JAES), a sophisticated institutional framework between the two organizations developed. According to the Lisbon Declaration, JAES is built on the idea of “partnership of equals” and “building on common values and goals.” Of all the bilateral relationships the EU has crafted, the relationship with the AU is one of the most institutionalized, reaching from parliamentary meetings between the EU and Pan-African Parliament to AU–EU Summits of Heads of State (see Figure 1) (Brosig 2013). At the center of this institutionalized cooperation is JAES, composed of eight pillars, of which “Peace and Security” forms one section. The first action plan (2008–2010) has identified three priority areas: First, enhancing political dialogue between the AU and the EU on security matters; second, providing EU support for the full operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA); and third, providing for predictable funding for AU peace operations. The last AU–EU Summit in November 2010 reinforced the importance of these three areas.

Figure 1: Institutional Linkages between the AU and the EU



Source: <http://europafrika.net/jointstrategy/diagram-on-the-jaes/>

Political dialogue is facilitated through a number of institutional joint meetings and initiatives. In the area of peace and security and under the framework of JAES, the most essential institutional fora enabling political dialogue are the joint meetings between the AU Peace and Security Council (AU/PSC) and the EU Political and Security Committee (EU/PSC), which take place once a year, the annual College-to-College meetings of the EU and AU Commissions, the EU–AU Joint Expert Group on Peace and Security, the Joint Africa–EU Task Force (JTF), and the six monthly ministerial troika meetings. In 2011, members of the AU Military Staff Committee (MSC) and EU Military Committee (EUMC) planned to meet for the first time and establish a regular exchange. In summary, multiple institutional channels exist that allow for a frequent exchange of positions. According to JAES, African–European political dialogue seeks to “reach common positions and implement common approaches” in security matters on the basis of the principle of African solutions for African problems (JAES 2nd Action Plan).

However, this does not mean interregional institutions cannot be used to coordinate, deliberate, and reinforce individual or collective action. Quite the contrary, interregional institutions should be expected to do exactly this. Joint institutional structures such as AU/PSC and EU/PSC meetings, which are equipped with considerable decision-making powers, would be the first organs for developing and coordinating political leadership, yet they have not delivered joint solutions, as will be demonstrated in the Libyan case.

Are AU–EU Relations a Politically Empty Vessel?

From the constructivist and sociological institutionalist perspective, interregional institutions are important because they can perform two functions: First, they can be places for common norm creation and joint norm validation translating and mediating between culturally and politically diverse organizations. Second, alternatively, they can be places in which existing differences in political preferences and viewpoints are reiterated and strengthened. In this context, organizational inaction may be explained by an absence of truly shared political norms and the inability to mediate between conflicting African–European perspectives. This section explores the political ambivalence of African–European relations by analyzing existing differences in political viewpoints and argues that interregional institutions will remain of secondary importance politically in fostering organized inaction, because they fail to mediate between contradictory positions and are, consequently, not capable of crafting common positions.

In November 2010, AU and EU heads of state met in Tripoli Libya for the third Africa–EU summit. In the concluding declaration, the heads of state “attach[ed] utmost importance to all efforts of conflict prevention, reconciliation, justice and post conflict reconstruction and development for the sake of people undergoing conflict . . .” and reiterated that “our cooperation will continue to build on our common values and goals in pursuit of good governance, democracy and the rule of law” (Tripoli Declaration 2010). What followed in the coming months, however, is an example of division and noncooperation between the two continents and a series of missed opportunities to search for common solutions.

For Europe, Gaddafi’s rule conveniently provided security from uncontrolled migration and opened investment opportunities in Libya’s oil and gas industry. After Gaddafi’s retreat from state-sponsored terrorism, his dictatorial government style appeared useful in suppressing potential radical Islamist movements. In fact, neither Africans nor Europeans seemed to have bothered too much about the autocrat and his suppressive regime until spring 2011, despite reiterating the importance of allegedly common values, such as human rights and democracy. We might ask, why should there suddenly be a substantial normative basis for cooperation if neither Europeans nor Africans have truly lived up to their rhetorical declarations of the past?

Despite the many institutional linkages, the political substance on which JAES is built is astonishingly thin. In the documents these joint meetings produce, one hardly finds more than rather flowery declarations making reference to supposed common values, such as democracy and human rights, and reference to rather broad mutual interests (Joint Declaration College-to-College meeting 1 June 2011). A common strategic view underpinning truly common projects based on a shared normative perspective in conflict resolution is largely missing. At the moment, institutional relationships between the AU and EU largely focus on establishing “structural and systematic linkages between decision-making organs” (2nd JAES Action Plan 2011–2013) but have not yielded to the draft of a shared political agenda.

Assuming on both continents governments are true believers in those norms expressed in JAES, which is clearly not the case in some countries, is a bold move. Democracy is a case in point. Whereas all EU member states may be considered consolidated democracies, the same cannot be said about all AU member states. This led to some conceptual tension in the AU’s Constitutive Act (Art. 4(p)), which is banning unconstitutional regime changes but is not, per se, sanctioning undemocratic regimes. Furthermore, Article 4p can potentially

cover and protect undemocratically sustained governments by discrediting democratic or popular revolutions, such as those during the Arab Spring. “The problem [. . .] is that constitutional democracy is seldom firmly in place prior to the “unconstitutional change” (Sturman 2011: 2). Additionally, the Constitutive Act does not explicitly clarify that the ban of unconstitutional changes of government only refers to democratic systems (Ibid. 3). For Omorogbe (2012: 155–159), this has fostered the AU’s tendency to prefer incumbent rulers over opposition movements with Libya fitting into this scheme.

More importantly, these general norms are not operationalized into a more specific strategy expressing a shared strategic view of European and African security concepts. In the absence of a solid codex that could be used in crisis situations, which very often require a rapid and decisive answer in order to tame a looming conflict from spreading, states do not feel bound to the existing institutional structures.

A good example is the concept of the responsibility to protect, which has been invoked in the Libyan context. It has been adopted in 2005 and introduced in the UN World Summit Outcome Document equally agreed upon by African and European countries. The document makes explicit reference to the obligation of states to protect their populations against mass atrocities, such as genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity. If a state does not follow this obligation and peaceful means appear as “inadequate,” the international community is “prepared to take collective action, in a timely and decisive manner” (World Summit Outcome Document 2008, para. 139). Without being explicit on what enforcement measures might be adopted under which conditions, it remains largely unclear how the concept of responsibility to protect is operationalized. Although the AU has acknowledged it in its Constitutive Act article 4(h) and the EU endorsed it, this does not mean Europe and Africa agree on how the concept is utilized in practice.

As Barnett and Finnemore have argued, IOs are important for what they represent and not exclusively for how useful they can be. In the case of AU–EU relations, this is exactly the problem. It is difficult to extrapolate what this elaborate interregional framework stands for—which norms and values is it truly representing beyond their declaratory and symbolic value? While the African–European interregional structures do not represent very much besides some general declarations, both the AU and EU find it difficult to coordinate their policies, and states do not feel the need to cooperate through the existing institutional structures. The vagueness of the concept of responsibility to protect is leaving further room for contestation. As a consequence, the lack of a common normative framework provides space for political divisions that declaratory statements and expressions of political harmony at summit meetings cannot conceal.

Protecting Civilians vs. Regime Change: The Military Intervention in Libya

In February 2011, the Arab Spring led to the expulsion of long-standing autocrats Ben Ali in Tunisia and Hosni Mubarak in Egypt, while in Libya, Gaddafi started to smash the protest movement against his regime by applying ruthless violence and threatening to exterminate the protestors, labeling them “cockroaches” (BBC, 23 Feb. 2011), an epithet used during the genocide in Rwanda. As the security situation in Libya deteriorated further, the protests continued, and Gaddafi was willing to forcefully put an end to them; international condemnation was initially fairly united. On 23 February, the AU the AU/PSC (216th meeting 23 Feb 2011) condemned “the indiscriminate and excessive use of force against peaceful protesters, in violation of human rights (. . .)” and “call[ed] on the Libyan authorities to ensure the protection and security of its citizens (. . .)” On the same day, the EU warned Gaddafi “that those responsible for the brutal aggression and violence against civilians will be held to account” (Ashton 23 Feb 2011), also calling for an end of violence, “including through national dialogue” (EU 28 Feb 2011). The AU’s and EU’s positions early in the conflict both condemn the use of force against civilians and reiterated the responsibility

of the government to protect its citizens. However, differences between the two continents started early, too. The EU threatened Gaddafi with legal prosecution and sanctions that the AU did not.

Only a few days later, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1970 unanimously. Thus, all African and European members consented to its wording, imposing sanctions against Libya. The EU imposed an arms embargo only a few days later and froze personal assets of the Gaddafi family (EU Council Decision 2011/137CSDP). While the UN suspended Libya from its Human Rights Council and the Arab League (AL) suspended Libya's membership, no such immediate action followed from the AU. At the beginning of the crisis, the EU and AU started a two-track approach. On the one hand, they clearly condemned any violence against civilians and recognized their legitimate concerns and finally called for a mediation solution.

On 10 March, the AU established an ad hoc High Level Committee, which was supposed to negotiate a political solution, and which later led to the formulation of the AU roadmap for Libya. In the same document, the AU recognized the democratic aspirations of the rebels and condemned the use of "force and lethal weapons, whoever it comes from" (AU/PSC 265th meeting 10 March, para. 5). It reminds demonstrators to only use peaceful means of protest at a time when this would still have led to their crumbling and very likely physical destruction. Most importantly, the AU rejects foreign military interventions "whatever its form" (*Ibid.*, Para. 6). With these positions, the AU deviation and alienation from the later Western-led intervention in Libya started to take its course. The AU's attempt to negotiate peace from an impartial position and rejecting military intervention has largely not been shared by the EU. In a much quicker and more decisive manner the EU called on Gaddafi to "relinquish power" and recognized the NTC as "political interlocutor" (European Council 11 March 2011, para. 7–8) even before UN Resolution 1973 was adopted but following suit with France, which unilaterally recognized the NTC on 9 March. Likewise, UK Prime Minister Cameron (28 Feb. 2011) demanded Gaddafi's departure from power in late February. The growing differences between European and African leaders on how to engage the Libyan crisis became apparent. No serious attempt has been made to reconcile AU mediation efforts with the UK and France's position, which favored the anti-Gaddafi movement very early.

As the crisis deepened, with Gaddafi showing no signs of stepping down and mediation efforts did not lead to any positive development, Arab countries called for a no-fly zone. On 12 March, the AL suspended Libya's membership and demanded the immediate imposition of a no-fly zone, including the establishment of "safe areas" for civilians (Council Resolution 7360, para. 1). The AL's vote not only surprised the Western world but was also taken without coordinating with the AU or the EU. It increased pressure on the West to act swiftly. Subsequently, France, the UK, and the U.S. pushed for a UN Security Council resolution that provided for protection of civilian protesters and implemented a no-fly zone, which led to resolution 1973. The implementation of this resolution finally divided the AU and EU.

When the UN Security Council passed resolution 1973 on 17 March 2011, all three African non-permanent members (South Africa, Nigeria, and Gabon) voted in support of the resolution, despite the AU's previous rejection against of any kind of intervention. In Europe, three countries voted in favor (France, Great Britain, and Portugal) and two abstained (Germany, Russia). Thus, one might assume there is a fairly large majority across the two continents in support of the resolution and its execution. The opposite was the case.

The wording of Resolution 1973 includes reference to AU positions. For example, in the preamble the obligation to protect civilians refers not only to the Libyan government but also to "parties to armed conflicts." Furthermore, the UN explicitly recognizes the AU High Level Committee "with the aim of facilitating dialogue to lead to the political reforms necessary to find a peaceful and sustainable solution." With the passing of this resolution, African states surely assumed the AU was going to play an important part in finding a negotiated peace.

However, this endeavor failed with the beginning of the airstrikes against Gaddafi's troops, which started directly after the adoption of the resolution. Resolution 1973 authorized "all necessary measures" to protect civilians and established a no-fly-zone.

Many African states quickly felt betrayed by its implementation and the underlying political agenda of forceful regime change in a sovereign country by using humanitarian arguments for a military operation of which the main aim was to topple Gaddafi (Tull and Lacher 2012: 11 and Dembinski and Reinold 2011:30). Ugandan President Museveni (24 March 2011) bluntly stated, "I am totally allergic to foreign, political and military involvement in sovereign countries, especially in African countries" clearly "rejecting external meddling" and accusing the West of opportunistic and selective interventionism. The South African president Zuma (21 March 2011) "reaffirmed (. . .) Africa's rejection of any foreign military intervention, whatever its form. . . . As South Africa we say no to the killing of civilians, no to the regime change doctrine (. . .)." Breaking out of the front of anti-intervention voices was the Rwandan President Kagame (24 March 2011) by stating: "Our responsibility to protect is unquestionable—this is the right thing to do." Still, the primarily Franco-Anglo intervention in Libya and in the same year also in Côte d'Ivoire, has fuelled resentments against European military engagement in Africa and is recalling postcolonial political paternalism of African states (Mbeki 29 April 2011).

The conviction that the Western-led intervention was primarily driven by a doctrine of regime change was reinforced by a joint statement of U.S. President Barack Obama, British Prime Minister David Cameron, and French President Nicolas Sarkozy on 14 April (New York Times) saying that "so long as Qaddafi is in power, NATO must maintain its operations." On 22 May, the EU High Representative for Foreign Relations traveled to Benghazi to open an EU office signaling that the EU would recognize the rebels as legitimate representatives of Libya. Additionally, in April the EU offered to launch a humanitarian support mission, EUFOR Libya, at the request of the UN Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Such a request never reached Brussels and no mission was deployed during the conflict. Only in 2013 when worried about uncontrolled refugees entering Europe did the EU send a border mission to Libya.

AU mediation attempts in April, when the rebel movement was very fragile and still at the brink of collapsing, to seek a diplomatic solution in the civil war also did not shed a completely positive light on the AU, as a ceasefire at this moment would have been only profitable for Gaddafi. Not surprisingly the NTC rejected the AU's roadmap for peace by arguing it one-sidedly favored Gaddafi. This feeling was underpinned by Zuma only visiting Tripoli but not Benghazi, the TNC stronghold. AU mediation efforts have not been seen as impartial. De facto the AU's roadmap and EU's humanitarian mission both failed, strangely barring both organizations from playing a more important role in their region.

Meanwhile, the diplomatic climate deteriorated further. The AU Assembly on 25 May clearly formulated what it thought of NATO's intervention in Libya. Accordingly it "defeats the very purpose for which it was authorized (. . .) the protection of the civilian population" (AU Assembly 25 May 2011, para. 5) describing NATO's involvement as a "dangerous precedence being set by one-sided interpretations of these resolutions [UNSC Res 1970 and 1973], in an attempt to provide a legal authority for military (. . .) clearly outside the scope of these resolutions" (*Ibid.*, para. 7). During the following months, the AU Commission issued its concern about civilian casualties as a consequence of NATO's airstrikes (AU 16 Aug 2011). Communiqués passed by the AU were strongly recalling the international principles of national sovereignty and were hardly concealing the AU's bitterness over NATO's regime change approach.

Not surprisingly, Europe and Africa have been divided on the issue of the official recognition of the NTC. Many African countries recognized the NTC with the fall of Tripoli in August. The AU, under South African leadership, refused to recognize the NTC until the very last minute of Gaddafi's final fall on 20 October 2011. When the UN General Assembly

recognized the new Libyan government, with 117 votes in favor on 12 September, not all African countries did (UNGA 16 Sep. 2011). Even today, a number of African countries have not recognized the new Libyan government. In Europe, a much quicker path to full recognition has been chosen. While France was the first European country to recognize the NTC in early March, even before military engagement started, all EU countries followed shortly. No European country has rejected the transferral of sovereignty rights to the NTC. Even Germany and Russia, which did not vote in favor of Resolution 1973, recognised the NTC earlier than many African states.

Deviations between the two continents also became apparent on the question of criminal prosecution of the Gaddafi clan. While the EU early on made it clear that criminal prosecution is inevitable, the AU issued “serious concerns” over the ICC arrest warrant. African leaders argued that it “seriously complicates the efforts aimed at finding a negotiated political solution to the crisis in Libya,” leading to the AU Assembly deciding not to cooperate with the ICC (17th AU Summit Malabo 1 July 2011). The political rift between Africa and Europe could not be deeper considering the strong European support for the ICC. Despite these visible differences between the continents, there have been disagreements within the EU and AU on Libya, too. The strong anti-interventionist stand of South Africa is not shared by all African countries. Nigeria has continuously demonstrated its support for Resolution 1973 and the ICC (Permanent Mission Nigeria 4 May 2011). In fact, the AU struggled internally with formulating a coherent approach to Libya. In Europe, the strong role France and the UK were playing left the impression of a fully united Europe. This was not necessarily the case, support for France and the UK was not unequivocal. Of the twenty-seven EU member states, nine supported the military enforcement of the no-fly-zone actively. The problem for African–European relations in the case of the Libyan crisis seems to be that the countries which held opposing views, either favoring a mediation or intervention approach, have been dominating the discourse in Africa and Europe, not leaving much space for alternative debates that could have been nurtured within the existing structures of JAES.

The Libyan crisis very bluntly demonstrated institutional pathologies of African–European interregionalism. While the crisis in Libya unfolded, a number of joint AU–EU meetings took place within the framework of JAES. In April 2011 the Africa–EU joint task force meeting took place, which was followed in May by the Fourth Annual Joint Consultative Meeting in Addis Ababa of the AU and EU/PSC, followed by the fifth College-to-Collegemeeting of the AU and EU Commissions, which took place in June in Brussels. None of these meetings resulted in a substantive joint statement or dialogue. The joint task force meeting was only referring to Libya as a tragic event. The joint declaration of the College-to-College meeting did not mention Libya, but referred to the Ivory Coast and Sudan. Only the meeting of the AU and EU/PSC made reference in a slightly more substantial manner by stating “that the AU Roadmap contains key components for a political solution” (AU and EU PSC meeting 16 May 2011). On average, the impression prevails that the Libyan issue was not adequately tabled or discussed at joint meetings. The opposite seemed to be the case. Shinkaiye (Opening Remarks 4 April 2011) from the AU Commission in April 2011 criticized the Joint Task Force as focussing “more on meetings and not enough on concrete outcomes or results.” In the end, existing interinstitutional channels have not been used effectively leaving African–European relations in a state of organized inaction. One may conclude that JAES is hardly suitable for emergency crisis management. The Libyan crisis disguises the AU’s political impotence globally and bluntly revealed existing power asymmetries between the continents and considerably deviating perspectives on crisis management, military interventions, and protection of civilians. Principles of equal partnership and African solutions for African problems, as proclaimed in the JAES and reiterated in the joint meetings taking place during the Libyan crisis, have not materialized or become credible.

Without serious efforts to craft common and substantial approaches to grave events such as in Libya, the AU's and EU's approach to crisis management showed significant deviations that institutionalized interregionalism cannot easily reconcile. On the one side, the AU strongly favored negotiation and nonmilitary solutions, which might have led to a cease-fire and power-sharing agreement, rejecting criminal prosecution and foreign military intervention in any form. On the other side, the EU supported the criminal prosecution of the Gaddafi clan and its removal from power as the only viable option to protect the protesting population. These two approaches are difficult to reconcile and early on incapacitated any potential attempt to find a transcontinental solution.

The normative poverty of interregional relations ultimately inhibited the search for a common solution. Deviating political perspectives have become sharper through the crisis and have alienated both continents instead of crafting a joint reaction. Despite the fact that both organizations formally acknowledge the need to protect civilians, the main failure of the AU–EU institutional framework is that it could not address the deviating perceptions of how this concept should be applied. While it is easy to agree that civilians must not be willfully massacred, it is significantly more challenging to agree on the measures to prevent or stop such atrocities (Bellamy and Williams 2011: 826). There is currently no joint concept, equally shared by African and European countries, which is operationalizing the responsibility to protect in such a way that it is applicable in crisis situations, such as in Libya.

In Europe, a liberal human rights approach, which proactively supports sanctions, interventions and the legal prosecution of perpetrators of severe cases of human rights violations, and the political interests of former colonial powers have merged. In the case of the AU, the legacy of colonialism and the still mostly insecure and unstable character of many African states make them more vulnerable to external interference and almost naturally lead toward preferring norms of sovereignty and nonintervention. While the EU fully supports the prosecution of the Gaddafi clan, the AU withheld its support despite the fact that a majority of African states have ratified the Rome Statute. It is apparent the institutional framework established between the AU and EU does not engage in normative bridging between the continents. It is explicitly not a forum for joint norm creation transcending intercontinental cleavages. However, if this important normative cleavage is not addressed in the common institutional framework, interregionalism runs the risk of marginalizing itself instead of solving a common major crisis. Especially when JAES raised such expectations at the declaratory level.

Are AU–EU Relations Bureaucratic and Incapable?

With the establishment of an African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), African states are showing a serious commitment to managing Africa's conflicts through African institutions. APSA plans to cover the most important areas of security policies from conflict prevention to peacekeeping and post-conflict reconciliation. The AU has set up a Peace and Security Council (AU/PSC), which is the central organ for managing security matters within the AU, comparable to the UN Security Council and the EU Political and Security Committee (EU/PSC). A Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) and a Panel of the Wise (POW) have been designed as conflict prevention and mediation tools. Central to APSA is the African Standby Force (ASF), which, when operational, is planned to provide the AU with a rapidly deployable peacekeeping force of up to twenty-five thousand troops. APSA is a system of regional governance in which the AU and RECs are intimately interwoven. For example, in order for ASF to become operational, five RECs have been entrusted to build up regional standby forces, which are deployed under AU supervision. Despite APSA not fully being operational, the AU has deployed peacekeeping operations in Burundi, Darfur, Somalia, the Comoros, and Mali. As a result, the AU has become an important security provider on its home continent. Despite this, there are a number of deficiencies that decrease the attractiveness

to partner with AU in an operational setting. The 2010 African Peace Facility (APF) report finds the AU Commission lacks efficient control over the tasks and role it is supposed to play. Indeed, one of the biggest challenges of APSA is the mismatch of available capacities when compared with the security challenges the African continent poses to the AU. The 2010 APSA Assessment Report (para. 68) openly speaks of a “mandate-resource gap” pointing to the ability and willingness of the AU/PSC to mandate peacekeeping missions but the lack of resources to maintain them.

The EU has supported APSA capacity building through the Amani Africa–Euro RECAMP initiative, which aims at “strengthening the political-strategic capabilities” of APSA and in particular the Peace Support Operations Division (PSOD), which is managing the AU’s peacekeeping operations (Factsheet EURO RECAMP 2009). Its most recent exercise in October 2010 was successfully conducted but revealed a number of significant limitations, too. Besides the over-focus of the ASF on military capabilities in comparison to police and civilian functions, the PSOD is limited in its ability to manage several peacekeeping missions concurrently, insufficient logistical support and a lack of effective communication systems have been detected, and there is legal uncertainty about when RECs are obliged to deploy their regional standby forces (AMANI Africa Cycle CPX 3 Nov. 2010).

The AU has made significant progress in the operationalization of APSA, but how capable is the AU in managing conflicts? Despite the obvious progress, there remain equally significant capability limitations. On its own, the AU is not capable of running large, long-term operations. Practically no AU operation has been independently organized without external donor support. Either the EU has funded large parts of the operation, as in Somalia, or the AU operation was transformed into a UN mission (Burundi, Darfur, Mali). The targeted maximum troop strength for ASF will be around twenty-five thousand strong including military and policing capabilities. When the AU reaches this number, it will be a major contributor of peacekeepers. However, in February 2012 the UN deployed 86,414 peacekeepers in Africa (UN Factsheet Peacekeeping, 29 February 2012) alone, and it is apparent the AU will remain dependent on UN support for the foreseeable future. In fact, the peacekeeping capabilities the AU has demonstrated so far are bridging capabilities. Long-term comprehensive operations have mostly been conducted by the UN. De facto there remain very little or no capabilities that are rapidly deployable and that could apply robust and offensive force for example to protect civilians or implement a no-fly zone as required in Libya.

In the case of Northern Africa, the absence of a functioning African security organization is even more apparent. In Northern Africa the sub-regional APSA component is hardly existent. Whereas Western and Southern Africa have managed to set up a regional standby force that is operational and has been deployed, as in the case of ECOWAS, the northern part of Africa is barely integrated into APSA. While ECOWAS and SADC are relatively functional RECs, no such organization exists in Northern Africa. Neither the AL nor the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) has shown interest in operationalizing the Northern African components of APSA. Due to the lack of a regional host for ASPA, a new institution had to be founded. The North African Regional Capability (NARC) has been entrusted with operationalizing ASPA. Only in December 2008 did NARC defense ministers agree to a permanent secretariat based in Tripoli (APSA Assessment Study 2010, para.131). This office has been staffed only by Libyan nationals appointed by Gaddafi, and NARC opened a liaison office during the course of 2011 at the AU headquarters as one of the last RECs in Africa (APSA Roadmap 2011–2013, para. 41). While all other RECs have conducted ASF exercises, there is no ASF in Northern Africa. Its regional components are lagging significantly behind the rest of the continent and, where efforts to operationalize ASF have been made, these efforts have been neutralized by the uprising in Libya and neighboring countries. Thus, no Northern African security structure was in place that could be entrusted with peacekeeping, mediation, or intervention force in a situation of crisis. Instead the gatekeeping

role envisioned for NARC as part of ASPA structure has been filled by AL, a Trans-African-Arabian organization, with much looser ties to the AU. However, even if NARC had been operational in spring 2011, it would have been incapacitated just by the outbreak of the civil war in Libya. Thus, the AU has very little institutional leverage over Northern Africa and its political authority has been equally weak in this part of Africa. De facto in the case of Libya, the AU was left with basically only one capability: political mediation.

Coincidentally, the AU and EU deployed their first African peacekeeping missions in the same year (2003) in Burundi and the Congo. In 2003, the EU issued its first ever European Security Strategy (ESS), which fostered “early, rapid, and when necessary robust intervention,” promoting the idea of “an international order based on effective multilateralism” in which regional organizations and the UN would play a key role in maintaining peace and stability. Impressively, since 2003 the EU has deployed fifteen military and civilian missions to Africa more than the combined number of AU and UN operations. EU Battle Groups have been operational since 2007, providing the EU with a rapid reaction tool. They largely function as a rapid reaction force for small- to medium-size operations. Each BG is fifteen hundred soldiers strong. Of the fifteen EU BGs, two are on standby and may be deployed concurrently (Keukeleire and MacNaughtan 2008: 179). Although the EU BGs have not yet been deployed, they are indicative of what the EU can provide. Like the AU, the EU has specialized in short-term support missions. All of its operations in Africa have been deployed in cooperation with the UN. In no case has the EU taken responsibility for a long-term comprehensive mission on its own. The 2004 joint UN–EU declaration on peacekeeping cooperation expresses the preferred EU contribution to peacekeeping operations.

Table 1: EU Deployment Scenarios

Scenario 1	Stand alone mission: under political and strategic control of the EU but mandated by the UN.
Scenario 2	Modular approach: the EU provides specialised support in a confined area.
Scenario 3	Bridging model: foresees a limited temporal, but rapid deployment of EU troops within a larger mission.
Scenario 4	Standby model: EU provides for an “over the horizon reserve” force which intervenes on the request of the UN

Source: EU–UN co-operation in Military Crisis Management Operations Elements of Implementation of the EU–UN Joint Declaration Adopted by the European Council, Brussels (17–18 June 2004).

As illustrated in Table 1, the EU favors four models of peacekeeping: stand alone missions, complementary support for existing operations, providing bridging capabilities, or an “over the horizon” reserve force. Thus, it clearly prefers short-term, limited support missions with a bridging character. Despite these deployment scenarios, the EU BG concept has been widely criticized for lacking the formulation of strategic vision and political mandate, which is what has incapacitated its deployment so far (Ballosi-Restelli 2011). The BGs do not provide the EU with offensive military capabilities. They are lightly armed and act defensively. The BGs would simply not be able to conduct a NATO-like operation, such as those in Kosovo or Afghanistan or the implementation of a no-fly zone over Libya.

Both the AU and EU have made significant progress in developing crisis response forces and have embarked on a number of peacekeeping operations in Africa. Nonetheless, their

ability to intervene militarily in ongoing conflicts to stop mass atrocities remains limited. Both organizations have specialized in lower-scale operations that often have a bridging character, and in most cases, require cooperation with external partners, most prominently the UN or NATO. Neither the AU nor the EU possess the military capabilities displayed by NATO in its air campaign in Libya.

JAES has also not facilitated conflict-solution operational capabilities; for example, in the form of joint operations. While the EU since 2003 deployed fifteen peacekeeping missions to the African continent, and the AU has deployed missions to five countries, the influence by joint interinstitutional setups is marginal, because in no case have the AU and EU cooperated operationally. Peacekeeping capabilities and their use remain largely under the tutelage of the respective headquarters. In fact, JAES provides for very few if any joint conflict-solving instruments that could be applied in crisis situations. Crisis reaction of the AU and EU usually remains an individual one.

In this context, France's full return to NATO in March 2009 played a crucial role (Irondele and Merand 2010: 39–40). The traditional divide between France and Britain on the role the EU and NATO should play for Europe has finally been buried, with France very pragmatically opting for the deployment of NATO capabilities instead of crafting an EU intervention force in cooperation with political support from the AU. In fact, France was the driving force behind the Libyan intervention, as America and Britain did not demonstrate much leadership interest. One immediate trigger for the French-driven intervention in Libya results from a foreign policy disaster in Tunisia in early 2011. The democratic revolution in Tunisia not only expelled the long-standing autocratic regime of Ben Ali but also disguised the very close ties France was entertaining with his regime. Diplomatically, France lost credibility but was eager to redeem itself, and supporting the anti-Gaddafi movement seemed to provide an adequate opportunity. However, despite the fact that NATO's intervention in Libya was primarily driven by France, this does not in itself explain why AU–EU cooperation has performed so poorly in this conflict.

The security structures developed in Africa and Europe are mainly a substitute for UN peacekeepers, to allow for more regional ownership and to relieve the UN from its chronic overstretch (Gowan 2008). Both African and EU military capabilities rely heavily on cooperative relations with the UN, because on their own they are often insufficiently equipped. Furthermore, the capabilities they have developed are not geared toward joint deployment. Cooperation in the field has so far not been a priority or an end in itself. From the French perspective, using NATO comes with at least two advantages: First, NATO provides for a range of military capabilities from low- to high-intensity operations, which the EU BGs or the AU do not possess. Second, NATO deployment traditionally does not conduct bridging operations but executes its missions much more independently. Needless to say, with France opting for NATO as its institution of choice, the potential to activate existing interregional links between the EU and AU automatically declined. Third, with France using NATO, it got access to vital military equipment from NATO's champion, the United States. The military bombing campaign in Libya would very likely not have been possible without U.S. support.

In summary, for France, the driving force behind EU foreign policy on Libya, the EU did not provide the necessary military assets to enforce a no-fly zone and assist in removing the Gaddafi regime. Thus, the EU was not the preferred foreign policy option in this case. In Africa, the AU could not develop the needed political clout to promote its diplomatic efforts to solve the crisis and get support for its Libyan roadmap effectively. Not only because NATO sidelined the AU completely but also because ASPA is very weakly anchored in Northern Africa (politically and institutionally), and NARC could not fulfil a position of gatekeeper for the AU. Furthermore, there also appears to be a political rift between the AU's negotiation approach and the AL. The latter three in contrast to the AU very quickly decided to oust Gaddafi and supported the idea of a no-fly zone, giving crucial political and military momentum for

the rebels. The AU's attempts to negotiate a peace solution between Gaddafi and the rebels also failed, because it was not adequately coordinated with Arabic institutions (Abass, Kingah, Nita 2011: 2–3). In addition to this, both sides—Gaddafi and the rebels, showed no substantive interests to agree on a peace deal. In such a context, activating joint AU–EU institutional ties did not seem very attractive. Additionally, the peacekeeping orientation of the ASF and BGs primarily but not exclusively builds on the idea of playing a stabilizing role in the transition period between the end of a conflict and the beginning of a peace-building process, but not during an ongoing military conflict. Although AU is involved in peace enforcement operations in Somalia, the deployment of troops was slow and not suitable in the Libyan case. Furthermore, the EU has not shown any sign it would be willing or interested in engaging in peace enforcement in Africa. None of its fifteen missions on the continent have done so.

Conclusion

This article addressed the issue of interregional inaction, a phenomenon that so far had not found much attention in the academic literature. The observed noncooperation between the AU and EU during the Libyan crisis is remarkable because both continents pledged to engage in common security matters and have developed an elaborate system of interinstitutional relations. Furthermore, the Libyan crisis has interfered with vital African and European interests and one can expect that both continents would take the chance and craft a common solution. However, the opposite was the case. Therefore, the article relates to what can be called a rational functional and sociological approach to institutionalism and interregionalism.

The potentially greatest stumbling block for a joint African–European initiative for engaging the Libyan crisis is rooted in the normative emptiness of institutionalised interregionalism. Beyond the initial agreement to rhetorically condemn targeting civilians, there was no agreement between Africa and Europe on how to engage with Libya. The AU's fierce opposition against any intervention, whatever its form, is hardly reconcilable with the European regime change and criminal justice approach. These differences proved to be too far reaching to be moderated by existing interinstitutional ties. The fundamental agreement that civilians should be protected led to deviating assessments on how this goal may be achieved. Consequently, both organizations had little to talk about to formulate a joint strategy. Actually, the Libyan crisis reinforced old patterns in European–African relations. On the one side, sovereignty rights in Africa still seem to trump over humanitarian considerations. While on the other side, European countries cared little about African ownership and very quickly intervened militarily and openly endorsed a regime change policy, which given the colonial history of France and the UK can hardly be expected to resonate well in Africa.

Taking the perspective of a functional utility approach, African–European interregionalism faces a number of problems that de incentivized member states to use existing interregional institutions. From a capacity perspective, both the AU and EU have not been adequately equipped to solve a major security crisis within their political sphere. Peace enforcement capabilities have been scantily developed by the AU or EU. Neither organization would have effectively implemented a no-fly zone over Libya, which the AL requested and the UN mandated. De facto both organizations have very limited capabilities suitable to enforce a mandate protecting civilians. Although the AU complained about NATO having sidelined its peace efforts, the AU had very little means to respond to the very likely case of failed peace talks. For the EU, a similar scenario developed. While it used the rhetoric of protection of civilians and regime change early in the conflict, it did not have the necessary enforcement capacities to impose its agenda.

For France, the EU did not provide for the desired military capabilities to implement a no-fly zone and topple Gaddafi. In the case of Africa, ASPA failed, because it did not develop strong enough ties in Northern Africa and was outperformed by AL and later NATO. While the first surprisingly quickly promoted the idea of a no-fly zone, the latter executed it without

coordination or supervision from the AU, leading to the AU's political marginalization. For leading European countries, the interregional solution was not attractive, because alternative avenues have been available in the form of NATO. NATO was chosen because it provided the necessarily institutional capacities and monopolized the execution of UN Resolution 1973.

Last, the political consequences of the military removal of the Gaddafi regime for the joint African–European institutional framework should not be underestimated. Bypassing existing common institutional frameworks can hardly empower them. At worst, it demonstrates that single EU member states do not need or want to rely on them in matters of high political stakes and thereby undermines the idea of equal partnership and African solutions to African problems as written into JAES. At best, it disguises the incapacity of these structures to craft common solutions. Both do not raise expectations for African–European interregionalism to solve common future crises effectively.

The Libyan example clearly demonstrated that JAES is primarily a technical tool for structural cooperation such as capacity building support from the EU for ASPA, but it failed as a venue for politically dialogue on more political sensitive issues of regime change and protection of civilians. What bedeviled the joint institutional structures is the absence of a truly shared strategic view providing specific guidance for conflict resolution and the lack of adequate resources on both sides of the Mediterranean for it to prop up peace enforcement measures when necessary. Libya certainly is a case of high political stakes, and in other less contested areas, security cooperation between the EU and AU has been less problematic. Nonetheless, the Libyan case visibly revealed existing shortcomings of interinstitutional frameworks and their condition as organized inaction.

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