

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF PUBLIC SERVICE

Doctoral School of Military Sciences

Varga Márton:
**The regional crisis of the Sahel - a southern threat to the
European Union**

Theses of the doctoral (PhD) dissertation

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Budapest, 2022

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JUSTIFICATION OF THE TOPIC CHOICE AND INTRODUCTION OF THE SCIENTIFIC PROBLEM

The European Union (hereafter EU, Union, Community) has grown into a regional power during the long process of integration and is currently a community of 27 states. Integration affects almost all areas of life in the member states. At present, the Community is based on the balance of supranational and intergovernmental institutions. The complexity of the European Union is also reflected in the fact, that external actions affecting certain areas of the member states themselves, have also an impact on the community as a whole. Such effects can be found in the fields of economy and trade, but also in certain issues of foreign policy, energy policy or even in the case of migration. The European Union is therefore such a special entity in the international scene, which has more rights than international organizations in general, but does not reach the level of a state. Due to its supranational characteristics and its special nature described above, the European Union forms an independent regional unit. This approach is supported by the theory of regional security complexes.¹ As an independent region, we need to examine how it relates to other actors of the international system, such as the continent of Africa and its narrower regions, which all affect the Union and the security of the Union.

Europe is silent,² in the sense that the member states have reached a long and lasting peace in their relations with each other through integration. But is this silence real? Or did the perceived security make the member states comfortable, and Europe did not actually win its freedom?

In addition to historical relations, Europe has also complex economic and cultural relations with the countries of Africa, which has both visible advantages and consequences. Due to the close connections between the continents and their geographical proximity, Africa's problems can quickly make their impact perceptible in Europe.

The relatively young states of the African continent are built on fragile economic and social systems, as a result they struggle with various problems. One of the continent's most significant crisis zones is the Sahel region. The conflicts among the countries of the Sahel region are connected at many points, so it can be stated that the region forms a complex regional crisis

¹ The authors presented the theory in detail in the following book: Barry Buzan, Ole Waever: *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*, Cambridge University Press, 2003. dec. 4.

² "Europe is quiet, quiet again, / Its revolutions have faded away... / Shame on it! calmed down and / He did not win his freedom." Petőfi Sándor: *Európa csendes, újra csendes...*

zone. In the region, ethnic, religious, and cultural borders can be simultaneously found, sometimes even within a single state, which factors basically create an environment burdened with conflicts. From the failed and weak states to food and water shortages caused by severe environmental change, to extremely high poverty, almost all the different dimensions of security are burdened with significant problems in this region. Due to the growing population and the constantly worsening living conditions, it is extremely important to manage to solve the arising problems, in which the international community also assumes an increasing role.³

Europe needs to keep an eye on the surrounding regions. If we take a look at the Mediterranean region, we can see that the political changes in North Africa and the Middle East (MENA region - Middle East and North Africa) had a noticeable impact on the European Union. Although the conflicts in the Sahel are deep-rooted and can be traced back to a long history, their impact has increased in the region's immediate environment in recent decades significantly, and it is also noticeably increasing in the direction of Europe. Having that said, I base my research mainly on the period starting from the 1990s. It can be seen that the unstable system of the Sahel region is one of the main causes of the threat to the European Union coming from the south, which supports the actuality of my choice of the topic (more on this later).

According to the forecasts, migration pressure from Africa will increase significantly by the middle of the century.⁴ Unstable states, the spread of radical organizations, and illegal trade have many negative effects on the EU as well. In the view of the Union's future goals, an important question is how it can enforce its interests in the neighbouring regions, and in what way can it support the areas in its surroundings. International cooperation is required to manage regional conflicts effectively. Therefore it is important for the EU to build partnership relations in its narrower and wider neighbourhood, as well as to cooperate with other international organizations. This is reinforced by the EU's global strategy entitled Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe, presented in 2016,⁵ which emphasizes cooperation with international organizations and the creation of a new type of targeted support system to develop the economy and thereby reduce the causes of crises. The United Nations (UN), the North

³ United Nations: United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel, 2013 https://oses.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/united_nations_integrated_strategy_for_the_sahel_s-2013-354.pdf (A letöltés ideje: 2022.03.31.)

⁴ According to UN forecasts, only Africa will have a growing population by 2100. By then, the continent will have more than 4 billion inhabitants. About 1.2 billion people currently live in Africa. Forrás: Department of Economic and Social Affairs: World Population Prospects The 2015 Revision.

⁵ Európai Unió: Közös jövőkép, közös fellépés: Erősebb Európa - Globális stratégia az Európai Unió kül- és biztonságpolitikájára vonatkozóan, 2016, https://europa.eu/globalstrategy/sites/globalstrategy/files/eugs_hu_version.pdf (A letöltés ideje: 2022.03.31.)

Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the African Union (AU) are its main partners in its crisis management activities in the Sahel region. These organizations, as well as other organizations, are mentioned in the thesis, which mainly serves easier understanding and better transparency, but only to the extent absolutely necessary, in an explanatory manner, given that the European Union is at the centre of my research.

The beginning of my interest in regional conflicts, specifically the relationship between the Sahel region and the European Union, coincides with the civil war that broke out in Mali in 2012. My studies at the time (master's degree in European and international administration) focused primarily on the European Union and not on security policy, but I dealt in detail with EU crisis management issues in my diploma thesis (Emergence and functioning of EU crisis management through the Mali conflict). In order to get to know the topic more thoroughly, to expand my knowledge and to lay the foundation for a later research activity, I continued my studies in security and defence policy, where I examined the Sahel region within the theoretical framework of security studies (Sahel region: regional crisis on the threshold of the European Union, OTDK 1. ranking, 2017). Given that security policy and the development of the European Union both play an important role in my field of interest, I therefore chose a topic based on both in my doctoral research. During the implementation of my dissertation research, I was able to carry out the research both horizontally and vertically, combining the knowledge acquired in the two previous master's programs.

In the research, I want to connect the European Union's operating mechanisms and the theories of regional security. By comparing theories and practice, I would like to point out the contradictions between the goals declared in the strategies and the real actions. Although the European Union's foreign and security policy is constantly developing, it is still unable to prevent emerging conflicts, and the Union can usually only react to the threats and conflicts after and through lengthy decision-making processes.

In the course of my research, I am primarily looking for the answer to how the European Union can participate in crisis management and problem solution of a region which means a well-identified and growing threat to the EU? How effective and sufficient are the tools at your disposal? In the course of my work, I want to achieve results that provide useful findings from the point of view of the security of the European Union and its member states, promoting strategic thinking at the EU level and increasing the European perspective at the regional level.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The research was built up on the basis of the theories of the Copenhagen school, which theories have introduced new approaches in the field of the security studies. The three leading researchers of the school have been Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver and Jaap de Wilde. I would like to highlight three of their studies: *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*,⁶ *People, States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post-Cold War Era*⁷ and *Regions and Powers - The Structure of International Security*.⁸ These works have moved the focus of the security studies from the military approach and opened it wide.⁹ With the novelties on the field of security studies the whole perception of security has changed and the regional approach has appeared next to the state-centric thinking, put numerous conflict in a new light.

The Copenhagen school has reformed the thinking, but these theories have transformed and been expanding by the impact of dynamic changes of the security environment and of the criticism. In the Hungarian professional literature, I have to underline the work (*Biztonsági komplexumok - A biztonság empirikus elemzésének alapjai*)¹⁰ of Péter Marton, in which he presented a new question specific security complex theory, an important cornerstone of my research.

During my research, it was important to use the latest research, that is why Stig Jarle Hansen's study, the *Horn, Sahel, and Rift: Fault-lines of the African Jihad*¹¹ can also be found among the theoretical bases. This work describes the operation of the jihadist groups with different aspects. One of the target areas of Hansen's research has been the Sahel region, core region of my dissertation.

During my research documents of the international organizations were indispensable. Among the sources the primary legal sources, the previous and the currently valid treaties of the European Union can be found. Furthermore, the relevant strategic documents of the foreign,

⁶ Barry Buzan, Ole Waever, Jaap De Wilde: *Security - A New Framework for Analysis*, Lynne Rienner Publishers, London, 1998.

⁷ Barry Buzan: *People, States, and Fear: The National Security Problem in International Relations*, Wheatsheaf Books, 1983.

⁸ Barry Buzan - Ole Waever: *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security*, Cambridge University Press, 2003.

⁹ Although the focus has changed, military security has not lost its importance, in fact, it is playing an increasingly prominent role nowadays. The characteristics of security are constantly changing and thus inspire more and more research. However, in my research, military security is not the defining element among the dimensions of security.

¹⁰ Marton Péter: *Biztonsági komplexumok - A biztonság empirikus elemzésének alapjai*, Budapest, Budapesti Corvinus Egyetem, 2019.

¹¹ Stig Jarle Hansen: *Horn, Sahel and Rift, Fault-lines of the African Jihad*, Hurst & Company, London, 2019

security and defence policy and of course the special strategies for Africa and for the Sahel region are also listed among my sources. Not just the European Union, but other international organizations, for example the United Nations, the NATO, the African Union, the G5 Sahel, the ECOWAS and the OSCE appear in the dissertation.

My sources contain both international and Hungarian literature. In the case of Africa and especially the Sahel region, sources in French are essential, so among the sources there are French researchers (Alban Dignat, Gérard-François Dumont, Amandine Gnanguênon), African sources (Modibo Goïta, Boubé Namaïw) and other studies in French (Bruno Charbonneau). All of the studies, made by research centres, institutions, researchers of different regions, represent the different relations towards Africa. In this way we can see the differences in European-American relation, but also between the Europeans (e.g. French vs. North-European (Finnish, Swedish)).

The review of the Hungarian literature proved that more and more research were made about the African dynamics and the different aspects of the international terrorism. My research was backed by many different studies not necessarily about the Sahel region, but about international processes and features which have helped me to reach a better understanding of the Sahel and of the terrorism.

As a non-exhaustive list of the Hungarian experts of Africa made direct or indirect impact to my dissertation, I would like to mention Besenyő János, Búr Gábor, Marsai Viktor, Tarrósy István, Benkes Mihály. There are two Hungarian book must be highlighted: *Afrikai terrorista és szakadár szervezete*,¹² *Az Iszlám Állam Terrorizmus 2.0*.¹³ There are also numerous useful works in the Hungarian literature about the European Union, European processes, security and defence policy. From this field I would like to mention Gazdag Ferenc, Molnár Anna, and Balázs Péter. I would like to mention separately my Supervisor, because I used several studies of Remek Éva, which were both useful parts of my research in the chapters concerning the European Union and Africa.

Since political ambitions, different objectives, as well as roles actually realized in practice are important in my research, I refer several times to actors who have had an impact on the relevant area as the head of an international organization or even as the leader of a state.

¹² Kiss Álmos Péter (szerk.): *Afrikai terrorista és szakadár szervezetek 2.* bővített kiadás. Budapest: NKE Szolgáltató Nonprofit Kft, 2016.

¹³ Besenyő J.-Patrner Z.-Speidl B.-Vogel D.: *Az Iszlám Állam Terrorizmus 2.0*, Kossuth Kiadó, 2016.

Accordingly, the works and thoughts of former UN secretary-generals Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Kofi Annan and Ban Ki-moon were used. I refer to French President Emmanuel Macron several times, as the French influence significantly affects the relationship between the European Union and Africa, as well as the Union's foreign policy operation itself. The thoughts of former or current leaders of the institutions of the European Union are also presented, for example Jean-Claude Juncker, Ursula von der Leyen and Federica Mogherini are also cited.

RESEARCH AIMS, QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESES

With the research of security studies, regional security theories, international relations, and the international law, I would like to make recommendations to a more effective prevention of conflicts and long-term solutions in the region. During the research I would like to reveal:

1. the regional characteristics of the Sahel region;
2. the relation of the Sahel region and the European Union;
3. the causes of the Sahel region's regional crisis and possible solutions;
4. the future possibilities of the European Union's crisis management and its global ambitions based on the activities in the Sahel region.

I would like to build my dissertation based on the following hypotheses:

1. The Sahel constitutes a regional entity, its crisis must be interpreted as a regional conflict and can only be resolved at the international level. The states of the region cannot deal with the problems on their own.
2. The regional crisis of the Sahel can only be solved with comprehensive and coordinated support, because of its complexity and extent.
3. The crisis in the Sahel is a direct threat to the security of the European Union in short and long term. The security of the two regions is closely related.
4. For the European Union, in addition to its political and economic goals, it is extremely important for the preservation of its security to facilitate the solution of the crisis in the Sahel region. However, within its current framework, it is not able to act effectively, it is necessary to take further deepening measures in the course of institutional and integration development.

During my research, I would like to achieve the following results:

1. to prove that according to the theory of regional security complexes the Sahel region forms a regional unit;
2. to prove that the Sahel region as a regional unit has its own internal mechanisms, so the causes of its crisis must also be determined regionally;
3. to prove that the Sahel as a region has an impact on the European Union and that the effects of its crisis threaten the security of the EU;
4. to prepare a proposal for the European Union to help to achieve the global ambitions of the Union and, at the same time, to solve the crisis in the Sahel region.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND TOOLS

In the doctoral dissertation, I used the theories related to the topic, the relevant EU and other international strategies, and the international experiences of the implementation of previous strategies with an analytical research strategy. In the dissertation, I first defined the theoretical framework within which I conducted the research. The most decisive such foundations were provided by the theory of multisectoral security and the theory of regional security complexes. Given the characteristics that arose during the research, according to which the system of international relations and the security policy developed dynamically from both theoretical and practical points of view, I therefore used the theoretical framework together with its criticisms.

My research is applied research, as my goal is to draw conclusions that can be used in practice through analytical research. To reach the conclusions, I first analysed the causes, consequences and effects of the crisis in the Sahel region. Within this, I used the Malian civil war that started in 2012 as a case study at several points. The main reason for this is that the problem of the region as a whole can be more easily understood and the effects can be identified through the revealed case study. For the sake of transparency, the second and third chapters are structured similarly. They all start in the same way by mapping the theoretical framework to the region. Thus, on the one hand, the geographical frameworks themselves are identified, which is helped by the definition of the regions, and on the other hand, the two regions can be connected through the same approach. The exploration of the relationship between the regions shows the cause-and-effect relationship that embodies the southern threat formulated in my research.

In the research, I strove to present, in addition to the formulated theories, the criticism attached to them. I presented the goals formulated by the published official documents, basic

contracts, and strategies in the light of the actual steps taken in practice. In this way, the research creates the fuller picture that underpins my conclusions and suggestions on both the theoretical and practical levels.

It is necessary to make certain demarcations in relation to the research. The dissertation contains historical overviews, which in the second chapter on the Sahel serve to understand the roots of the crisis, and in the third chapter on the European Union, I mainly present the development curve. In the relationship between the two regions, I mainly worked on the events of the recent past, which I expected from 2012, the outbreak of the Malian civil war. In addition, it is important to highlight that the crisis in the Sahel, the European security environment and the relevant policies of the European Union are also extremely active topics that constantly provide new information. Accordingly, events after December 2021 are mentioned in the thesis, but they no longer form the basis of the research.

My research is primarily to be interpreted within the framework of international security studies. Given the interdisciplinary nature of this field, the research looks into many scientific fields and affects policy, but these only promote a broader understanding and do not affect the primary role of international security studies.

STRUCTURE OF THE DISSERTATION

The dissertation consists of an introduction and four chapters. In the introduction, I present the basic problem statement, methodological and literature review, research aims and hypotheses.

The first chapter summarizes the theoretical framework of my research. The two main theories that I used during the research are the theory of multisectoral security and the theory of regional security complexes, both of which can be linked to the Copenhagen school. These two theories, together with their critics, are decisive in security studies to this day.

In the second chapter, the crisis in the Sahel region is presented from different perspectives. In order to explore the crisis in detail, I used Mali as a case study because this country is one of the states in the worst situation in the region, and all elements of the crisis in the region can be found in it.

In the third chapter deals with the European Union, as a regional organization that wants to play a role of global power. Accordingly, I am examining the Union as a region, its global power tools from the perspective of foreign policy, as well as its relationship with Africa and especially the Sahel region, which contains long-term dangers for the Union.

In the fourth chapter, I summarize the results of the research and reveal what answers I found to the hypotheses. Based on these, I present the new scientific results of my research, as well as the possibilities of their practical applicability.

I closed the research on December 31, 2021.¹⁴

RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

At the very beginning of the dissertation as a scientific problem I stated the question how the European Union can participate in crisis management and problem solution of a region which means a well-identified and growing threat to the EU. Furthermore, how effective are the instruments available to the Union?

During the research, I first dealt with the characteristics of regional conflicts. For this, I reviewed the system of the Sahel region as well as the security complex of the European Union, revealing the relationship between these two regions. The examination of the regions revealed that although the regional approach is much more appropriate than the state-centered examination of conflicts, the principles laid down in the theory of regional complexes formulate too strict restrictions regarding each region. The European region itself is an excellent example of how political changes were able to radically change the structure and boundaries of the complex in roughly a decade. It can also be seen that the world is changing and that certain issues, problems, and threats are able to define a region that would otherwise not form a unit based on regional security complexes. It is therefore necessary to handle these flexibly and to use new, question-specific complexes instead of the strict complex system. By formulating the issue-centered region, the related actors, participants in conflicts, useful partners in overcoming the issue, etc., can be defined much more specifically.

The aim of my research was, among other things, to gain a better insight into the European Union's relationship with other regions, the relationships that influence the future of European security. The conclusions regarding the Sahel region lead to the possibility of connecting the European Union and the Sahel region. A direct connection between the two areas can be discovered from many aspects. Historical ties, current economic, social, and political conditions, and the interdependence evident in the forecasts all underpin these relationships. From these, the current and expected risks and threats that will have an influence

¹⁴ In 2022, significant changes have taken place both in terms of European and African security. Although the Russian-Ukrainian war and the deterioration of the relationship between France and Mali and the withdrawal of French troops from Mali significantly affect the security of the European Union and the Sahel region. They were no longer included in the thesis due to the time limitation of the thesis and due to scope limitations.

on Europe's security in the coming decades and centuries are clearly visible. The effects are already perceptibly present in both European domestic and foreign policy, inducing important questions for the institutions of the Union and the member states.

My goal in the dissertation was to present the problems of the Sahel region in detail from several perspectives. In order to this, I examined the region based on different sectors of security and presented why we consider this region to be one of the most serious crisis zones in the world today. For the better understanding, I expanded the description with a case study in which I presented Mali. Mali is an excellent example of the problems faced not only by countries in the Sahel but also in other African regions. In my research, I both refer back to historical background and give an outlook on future predictions.

As another goal of the research, I examined the development of the European Union's crisis management and the possibilities for further development. After the historical overview, I explored the actions that the European Union made to solve the crisis in the Sahel region, and also to prevent or reduce the effects towards the EU. I was able to demonstrate that one of the main directions of threats in the European security concept is the threat coming from the south, and the crisis in the Sahel region is an integral part of the arising southern threats. The European Union actively deals with the crisis in the region and tries to contribute to the management of the problems. During the analysis, I presented that the Sahel appears both at the level of strategies and the specific actions to ensure the European security. In the research, I showed that partnerships and different forms of cooperation all play a significant role in the security image of the European Union.

Although the cooperation initiated by the EU primarily contribute to European security, they also increase security for the surrounding regions and the other partners. We could see that the Union not only supported cooperation between itself and other states, but also played a role, for example, in the formation of the G5 Sahel group, which can be an important step in the regional solution of problems. I also compared the Union's global power aspirations set out in its strategies with the practical experiences. It also became clear during the thesis that an important measure of the European Union's becoming a global power player can be the result that the Union can achieve in the Sahel region. Other question whether the EU will be able to renew itself and overcome those pitfalls that are raised by the differences between the member states. My research pointed out that the currently used internal mechanisms do not provide the European Union with adequate tools to be able to pursue a fast and consistent policy. In this way, it can be established that either the tool system needs to be transformed, or the ambitions must be set to a level that is realistically achievable.

Following the outlined objectives, the dissertation gave a comprehensive picture of the nature of regional crises, the characteristics of two regions, the European Union and the Sahel region, their relationship with each other, and the relevant mechanisms of the European Union. Through the work carried out in the research, it was possible to draw conclusions regarding the theoretical approach, as well as in the practical field, which may represent novelty and useful results.

As an expected result of the research, I wanted to prove that the Sahel region forms a unit according to the theory of regional security complexes. I partially proved this proposition, since based on the theory of regional security complexes, I considered it to be identifiable not as an independent complex, but as a sub-complex. At the same time, it is important to note that, from the perspective of the issue-specific security complex approach, the region can definitely be treated as an independent unit.

The dissertation proved that the Sahel region as a regional unit has its own internal mechanisms, so the causes of its crisis must also be sought in the region's cooperation. Due to the description of the characteristics of the crisis, the totality of transnational effects, and the cross-border nature of African societies, it became clear that states acting independently are not able to compete with the problems causing the crisis.

Through the examination of the relationship between the Sahel region and the European Union, it was confirmed that the Sahel region as a region has an impact on the European Union and that the effects of its crisis threaten the security of the European Union. These effects can be detected even today, but based on long-term forecasts, the effects coming from the direction of the Sahel region will have an even stronger influence on the European security.

At the beginning of the research, I set as a goal to prepare a proposal for the European Union to be able to help the states of the Sahel region to deal with the crisis, and promoting its own security. At the end of the research, it can be stated that the Union uses a wide range of crisis management tools in the Sahel region. However, it had to be established that the obstacle to effective crisis management and the most effective global role can be traced to the internal functioning of the Union, the decision-making mechanism, and the lack of joint political determination. Consequently, in order for the European Union to be able to play an important role in the management of crises in other regions for its own security, it will need to review and reform its own internal operations. This is how the Union will be able to create the image of a reliable partner that regions and countries in trouble can count on.

THE FULFILLMENT OF THE HYPOTHESES

In accordance with the objectives of the research, I started my research based on four hypotheses. According to the first, the Sahel constitutes a regional entity, its crisis must be interpreted as a regional conflict, and it can only be resolved at the international level. The states of the region cannot deal with the problems on their own. The correlations discovered during my work confirmed this assumption. The regional nature of the Sahel region was confirmed from both theoretical and practical points of view. Observing the trends of the crisis, it was also confirmed that the affected states will not be able to solve this crisis on their own.

Based on my second hypothesis, the Sahel crisis can only be resolved with comprehensive and coordinated support, given its complexity and extent. During the research, it was proven that the region's problems encompass the region in a geographical sense, but also in a figurative sense in the economic, social, political, environmental and other segments as well. Under such conditions, independent actions lose their effect, therefore it is necessary to find comprehensive programs and to search for synergies that can bring about development in parallel.

According to my third hypothesis, the crisis in the Sahel directly threatens the security of the European Union in both the short and long term. This assumption has also been confirmed, since the negative effects that are already reaching the territory of the Union and will have an increased influence on European security in the future can be clearly demonstrated. We can find political and economic effects at the same time, or characteristics affecting social security.

In the first half of my fourth hypothesis, I stated that, in addition to its political and economic goals, it is extremely important for the European Union to promote the solution of the crisis in the Sahel region in order to preserve its own security. This suggestion of mine was confirmed both literally and figuratively by the research. The declared goal of the Union is to be a key player in global security and to be able to intervene in the security processes of other regions. Participating in the resolution of the Sahel crisis would have a direct positive effect on the security of the European Union. On the other hand, participating in the solution of a crisis situation that is so complex and diverse, and that is not located in the immediate neighbourhood of the Union, could significantly increase the recognition of the European Union among global power players. In the second half of the fourth hypothesis, I stated that the European Union is not capable of effective action within its current framework, and that it is necessary to take

further steps in the course of institutional and integration development. Looking at the role played by the European Union in previous crises and the development of its crisis management, it can be seen that the EU was not able to act in order to prevent various conflicts with the available tools. This is supported by the fact that new and new stages of integration development followed as a result of emerging crisis situations. However, the strategic goals and the currently applied institutional frameworks still do not correspond to each other, so I consider it proven that further steps are necessary in the direction of deepening integration.

NEW SCIENTIFIC RESULTS

During my research, I achieved the following scientific results:

1. I consider it necessary to introduce a new term for the Sahel region after analyzing the regional security complexes of Europe and Africa, and in this connection the region of the Sahel region. Compared to the earlier static security complexes of Buzan's theory, security complexes are able to change rapidly. From this I came to the conclusion and proved that the region of the Sahel is no longer a zone of conflicting states on the border of protocomplexes, but a clearly distinguishable subcomplex within the West African complex.
2. I proved that the two regions are closely dependent on each other in terms of sustainable security. Furthermore, according to the question-specific approach, they form a common complex.
3. Based on the five dimensions of the sectoral theory of Buzan, I proved that there is no security dimension among them that would be responsible for the entire crisis in the region and would be the key to the solution. On the other hand, breaking points can be identified, which, through their development with international support, can create spirals of development, which are capable of increasing security in several dimensions at the same time.
4. I proved that the European Union is still unable to prevent crises with its old crisis management methods. It is necessary to fill in the gaps of the European security policy and to review the existing partnership agreements.

USABILITY OF RESEARCH RESULTS, RECOMMENDATIONS

During the research, I gave a comprehensive picture of the various aspects of the southern threat. As a result, the problems that cause the crisis in the Sahel region and the effects that affect the security of the European Union can be better understood. The European Union gives priority to the crisis in the Sahel region, created an independent strategy to deal with the region's problems, and devotes significant resources to increasing the region's security. Nevertheless, the problem of the southern threat and the crisis in the Sahel region are a lesser-known element of world politics and everyday politics.

The subject of further research may be whether it is necessary to raise the issue more into everyday life. What would be the result of securitization of the problem of the southern threat? If we were to deal more with the presentation of crises, what effect would it have among the European population? Would the process of securitization ultimately result in a retreat from the crisis, or would it demand a more decisive action and a more unified action from the political leaders? The steps that I have formulated as a proposal will certainly require wider awareness of the problem, so the above questions will have to be dealt with. I trust that my research can be a useful stepping stone in this work, either through published studies or by inducing further research. In addition, it can promote a better understanding of the threat to the south of the European Union. In this way, Hungary can participate more effectively in the management of challenges coming from this direction. The Hungarian Armed Forces are present in Africa in several missions and in several countries. Learning about the crisis in the Sahel region can contribute to making decisions about further engagements. The results of the research can be used in education, primarily in the fields of security and defence policy and international studies, as well as in PhD training.

My dissertation can be useful not only for researchers, but also for political decision-makers, as many questions have arisen that are important for the formation of security policy either at the domestic or at the EU level. In the dissertation, I did not only raise the problem, but I also proposed a possible solution, which can also contribute to the discourse on the future of the EU initiated by the EU. Seeing the foreign policy and security policy mechanisms described in the research, it will definitely be justified to think further and possibly reform this area.

LIST OF THE AUTHOR'S RELATED PUBLICATIONS

- Varga Márton - Az Európai Unió biztonsági környezete napjainkban
A Hadtudomány és a 21. század '21, Konferenciakötet, pp. 127-145, 19 p. (2021)
- Varga Márton - A Száhel-övezet mint biztonsági komplexum?
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