The Development of African Conflict Management since 1963

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Institutionalized conflict management within the African Organization for Unity (OAU) never worked. The African Heads of State and Government ignored the concept in favor of the principles of the organization: sovereignty and non-interference. These practices shaped the postcolonial history of Africa and continue to do so.

The paper has to be seen in connection with an actual research project focusing on the conflict management of the OAU which has been established in 1963. It is not so much the purpose of the project to retrace the development of the normative concept on the basis of the existing documents. The aim of the project rather is to explain why this tool for conflict management has failed in spite of its numerous and laborious reforms. First of all internal political circumstances/facts are the reason for this failure. Though external influencing factors always played an enormous part in African conflicts, too, they cannot be held responsible for the failure of the self-fixed standards aiming to regulate these conflicts. The analysis of this failure uncovers factors which actually also influence the present security concept of the African Union (AU) in a very negative way – a concept for which the European Union – among others – also contributes to optimize its effectiveness and structure.