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WEB LINKS

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For regular analyses and updates on developments in both areas see the newsletter www.euractiv.com and publications of the Centre for European Policy Studies http://www.ceps.be (especially its newsletter 'European Neighbourhood Watch'), the European Policy Centre http://www.epc.eu/ and the Centre for European Reform http://www.cer.org.uk

Visit the Online Resource Centre that accompanies this book for additional material: www.oxfordtextbooks.co.uk/orc/bomberg2e/

CHAPTER 10

The EU as a Global Actor

John Peterson

Chapter Overview

The European Union's ambitions to be a global power are a surprising by-product of European integration. Students of 'European foreign policy' focus on EU trade, aid, and the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), but cannot neglect the extensive national foreign policy activities of its member states. On most economic issues, the EU is able to speak with a genuinely single voice through the Commission. It has more difficulty showing solidarity on aid policy, but is powerful when it does. The Union's foreign policy aspirations now extend to traditional foreign and security policy, including defence. But distinctly national policies persist and the EU suffers from weak or fragmented leadership. Debates about European foreign policy tend to be about whether the glass is half-full—with the EU more active globally than ever before—or half-empty, and mainly about disappointed expectations.

Introducing European Foreign Policy

One of the founding fathers of what is now the European Union (EU), Jean Monnet, once described European integration as a 'key step towards the organization of tomorrow's world' (quoted in Jørgensen 2006: 521). Nevertheless, Monnet and the other founders of the original European Economic Community (EEC) had little ambition to create a new kind of international power. In fact, the EEC was given no external powers outside of the ability to conduct international trade negotiations, since a common market could not, by definition, exist without a common trade policy.

The European Union now aspires to be a global power: that is, a major international actor that can, like the United States (US) or China, influence developments anywhere in the world, and draw on a full range of economic, political, and security instruments in pursuit of its foreign policy goals. It can be argued that 'foreign policy has been one of the areas in which European integration has made the most dynamic advances' (Tonra and Christiansen 2004: 545). Still, the EU is a strange and often ineffective global actor. Distinctive *national* foreign policies endure in Europe and show few signs of disappearing. Thus, the notion of 'European foreign policy', comprising all of what the EU and its member states do in world politics, collectively or not, has gained prominence (see Hill and Smith 2005; Carlsnaes 2006).

Debates about European foreign policy tend to be about whether the glass is half-full or half-empty. On one hand, the EU has used enlargement as a tool of foreign policy and dramatically transformed the regions to its east and south (see Chapter 9). The Union is an economic superpower. It is gradually developing a military capability for crisis management or humanitarian intervention.

On the other hand, the EU suffers from chronic problems of disunity, incoherence, and weak leadership. European foreign policy can be undermined by all manner of rivalries: between its member governments, between EU institutions, and between them and national foreign ministries. The EU was entirely sidelined during the 2003 war in Iraq because it could not come even remotely close to a common policy (see Peterson and Pollack 2003). Some argue that the Union provided 'far too little leadership far too late' to the aborted 2005 effort to reform the United Nations (UN) (Laatikainen and Smith 2006: 21–2).

Often, the same international event or issue can be used to defend either the half-full or half-empty thesis. Consider the call by the head of the leading non-governmental organization, Human Rights Watch, for the EU to 'fill the leadership void' on human rights post-Iraq, after the US was widely viewed as flaunting them. Here, we might see the Union as a beacon of hope for a more progressive, humane international order. Or, we might share the despair of the issuer of the plea at how the EU continues to 'punch well beneath its weight' on human rights (Roth 2007). The EU consistently fails to meet expectations while never ceasing to develop new and bolder ambitions.

Development

The EU's international ambitions have their origins in the 1960s. French rejection of the proposed European Defence Community in 1950 effectively guaranteed the ascendancy of NATO in defence matters (see Chapter 2). However, American disregard for European preferences in Vietnam and the Middle East presented the Community with incentives to defend its interests collectively, and thus more effectively, in foreign policy. According to a logic known as the 'politics of scale', the whole—the EU speaking and acting as one—is more powerful than the sum of it parts, or member states acting individually (Ginsberg 2001).

By 1970, a loose intergovernmental framework, **European Political Cooperation (EPC)**, was created to try to coordinate national foreign policies. Linked to the Community, but independent of it, EPC was very much dominated by national foreign ministers and ministries. Member governments identified where their national interests overlapped, without any pretension to a 'common' foreign policy. The European Commission was little more than an invited guest, and the European Parliament was entirely excluded.

Nonetheless, EPC fostered consensus on difficult issues in the 1970s and 80s, including the Arab–Israeli conflict and relations with the Soviet bloc (through what became the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, or OSCE). EPC also helped the Community burnish its reputation as a defender of human rights by becoming the vehicle for its condemnation of South Africa's apartheid system. Europe was mostly limited to saying things—issuing diplomatic démarches—as opposed to doing things via EPC. But increasingly it backed up EPC positions with European Community actions using economic aid or sanctions (which were applied to Argentina during the Falklands War).

The perceived successes of EPC led to claims that Europe could become a 'civilian power' (see Galtung 1973). That is, the EC could uphold multilateralism, liberalism, and human rights as values, and be a powerful advocate for peaceful conflict resolution. EPC was given treaty status and formally linked to the activities of the Community in the 1986 Single European Act.

Yet, the geopolitical earthquakes that shook Europe beginning in 1989 exposed EPC as wholly inadequate. The idea of strengthening foreign policy cooperation in a new 'political union' was given impetus by the dramatic transitions in Central and Eastern Europe, the Gulf War, the attempted coup against Mikhail Gorbachev (and subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union), and war in Yugoslavia. Thus, the 1992 Maastricht Treaty grafted a new CFSP (along with a new Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) policy) onto the existing Treaty of Rome, resulting in the European Union's three-pillar structure. There is no question that the EU became far more active internationally in the years that followed. There is considerable debate about whether it also became more effective.

The Basics

The EU aspires to international power for two basic reasons. First, even the Union's largest states are medium-sized powers compared to, say, the US or China. All European states, especially—but not only—smaller ones, seek to use the EU as a 'multiplier' of their power and influence. There is controversy about whether the Union is a truly global (as opposed to a regional) power. However, its largest member states—France, Germany, Italy, and the UK—give the Union a 'pull towards the global perspective which many of the 2[7] simply do not have as part of their foreign policy traditions' (Hill 2006: 67). New EU military and civilian missions in Africa and Afghanistan, as well as the Balkans and Middle East, illustrate the point.

Secondly, the Union's international weight increases each time it enlarges or expands its policy competence. The twelve countries that joined after 2004 were all (besides Poland) small and (mostly) pro-American states with limited foreign policy ambitions. But EU membership allowed them to distance or defend themselves from the US on issues such as climate change or trade policy, while making the Union a potentially more powerful player on these and other international issues. Meanwhile, the EU has accumulated new foreign policy tools, beginning with aid programmes for Africa in 1963 and most recently a European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP; see below). The EU is powerful internationally above all because it presides over a market of nearly 500 million consumers, or around 40 per cent more than the US.

Whatever its accomplishments, European foreign policy is hindered by three basic gaps. One is between task expansion, which has been considerable, and the integration of authority, which has been limited. The total number of European diplomatic staff worldwide (EU plus national officials) is more than 40,000 diplomats in 1,500 missions. Yet, no minister or government can give orders to this huge collection of officials; in fact, no single EU official can direct even the Union's own staff because of fragmented institutional structures in Brussels. No one claims that the US—with around 15,000 staff in 300 missions—is weaker because it is so outnumbered (Everts 2002: 26).

The gap between the EU's economic power and political weakness is a related but separate problem. Europe manages to defend its interests on matters of 'low politics'—economic, trade, and (less often) monetary issues—with a more or less single voice. External trade policy is made via the **Community method** of decision-making (see Box 6.4), which delegates considerable power to the Union's institutions. The EU also has considerable authority in aid and development policy, and has emerged as a major power in international environmental diplomacy. In contrast, the Union often fails to speak as one on matters of traditional diplomacy, or 'high politics', which touch most directly on national **sovereignty**, prestige, or vital interests. The CFSP created by the Maastricht Treaty was meant to cover 'all aspects of foreign and security policy'. However, there is no *single* EU foreign policy in the sense of one that replaces or eliminates national policies. In contrast to (say) EU trade policy, the CFSP relies overwhelmingly on intergovernmental consensus. It remains difficult to

envisage member states ever delegating power to decide life and death questions, such as whether to use military force, to the Union's institutions. In short, the gap between the EU's economic power and political weight endures largely because the Community system remains more efficient, decisive, and (on the whole) politically acceptable to the member states than the CFSP system.

A final gap is between the world's expectations of the EU and its capacity to meet them (Hill 1998). In the early days of the post-Cold War period, European foreign policy-makers often oversold the Union's ability to act quickly or decisively in international affairs. Nearly two decades later, the rhetoric had muted but the EU still struggled to be a truly global, as opposed to a regional power in its European neighbourhood. Chris Patten (2005: 176), a former Commissioner for External Relations, was frank:

> America is a superpower, partly because it is the only country whose will and intentions matter everywhere, and are everywhere decisive to the settlement of the world's problems. Europe can help to solve these problems, but there are only some parts of the world—like the Balkans—where our role (while not necessarily crucial) is as important as, or more important than, that of China in the case of North Korea.

These three gaps—between task expansion and integration, economic unity and political division, and capabilities and expectations—all contribute to a more general mismatch between aspirations and accomplishments. To understand its persistence, we need to unpack European foreign policy and consider it as the product of three distinct but interdependent systems of decision-making (White 2001):

- a national system of foreign policies;
- a Community system focused on economic policy (and based within the first pillar in the EU's tri-pillar structure); and
- an EU system centred on the CFSP (or second pillar).

These systems remain distinct even if there is considerable overlap between them (see Table 10.1). Europe is the world's largest foreign aid donor, but only when the disparate and largely uncoordinated contributions of the Union and its member states are added together. EU environmental policy is made via the Community method but it is often unclear who speaks for Europe in international environmental diplomacy. Leadership of the EU system sometimes falls to sub-groups of member states, as illustrated by the 'EU-3', with France, Germany, and the UK taking the lead on nuclear diplomacy towards Iran.

Overlaps between these systems reflect how high and low politics often blur together in the twenty-first century. Disputes arising from Europe's dependence on Russia for energy, or the tendency of Chinese exporters to flood European markets, can touch upon vital national interests and preoccupy diplomats and governments at the highest political levels. Meanwhile, the EU has begun work on a security and defence policy: the ultimate expression of high politics. Blurred boundaries between both policy realms and systems for decision-making make European foreign policy an elusive subject that

TABLE 10.1 European foreign policy: three systems

System	Key characteristic	Pillar (or Treaty base)	Primary actors	Policy example
National	Loose (or no) coordination	Outside EU's structures	National ministers and ministries	War in Iraq
Overlap	*Some coordination of national and EU efforts*	*Pillar 1 with nuances (i.e. in annexes to Treaty; no funds from Community budget)*	*National ministers and ministries, Commission*	*Cotonou agreement*
Community	EU usually speaks with single voice	Pillar 1*	Commission and Council	Commercial (trade) policy
Overlap	*Turf battles*	*Pillars 1 and 2*	*Council and Commission*	*Economic sanctions policy*
EU	'Common, not single' policy	Pillar 2*	High Representative; national ministers and ministries (especially of large states)	Nuclear diplomacy towards Iran

*It should be noted that the 2007 Reform Treaty proposed essentially to eliminate the EU system of pillars.

is far more difficult to 'source' or study than (say) American, Chinese, or South African foreign policy.

A National 'System' of Foreign Policies

Distinctive national foreign policies have not disappeared from Europe, even if the EU has become a more important reference point. France uses the EU to try to enhance its own foreign policy leadership of a Europe that is autonomous from the US. Germany

has wrapped its post-war foreign policy in a European cloak in order to rehabilitate itself as an international power. The UK views the EU as useful for organizing pragmatic cooperation on a case-by-case basis. Small states have considerably 'Europeanized' their foreign policies (Tonra 2001) and rely on the EU to have a voice in debates dominated by large states. But all EU member states conduct their own, individual, *national* foreign policy.

Whether or not national foreign policies in Europe form a true 'system', they are notable for:

- their endurance;
- their continued centrality to European foreign policy; and
- their frequent resistance to coordination.

The last observation points to what makes foreign policy different from other EU policies: the logic of foreign policy coordination differs markedly from the logic of market integration. Integrating markets mostly involves **negative integration**: sweeping away old barriers to trade. Separate national policies can be tolerated as long as they do not impede free movement of goods, services, and people. Market integration typically has clear goals, such as zero tariffs or common standards. Progress can usually be measured and pursued according to timetables.

In contrast, it is plausible to think that a common foreign policy (analogous, for example, to the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)) requires **positive integration**: new EU institutions and structures to replace national ones. Foreign policy often has a black or white quality: if all states do not toe the line when the EU condemns a human rights violation or imposes an arms embargo, then the Union cannot be said to have a policy at all. Foreign policy coordination is often difficult to tie to specific goals or timetables. Compare the two main policy projects of the Maastricht Treaty (see Smith 1997). Monetary union had a clear goal—the euro—a timetable for achieving it, and criteria for measuring progress. The CFSP as a general concept was given no clear goal, nor any timetable or criteria for achieving it.

Defenders of Europe's system of foreign policy coordination, such as Chris Patten (2001), concede that Europe lacks a *single* foreign policy. However, they insist that the EU usually has a *common* foreign policy through which its member states and institutions act collectively. Each plays to its strengths and contributes policy resources to a (more or less) common cause. Increasingly, all member states tend to respect common EU policies and procedures.

Critics counter-claim that the war in Iraq showed how the EU is easily marginalized on matters of high politics. Decisions on whether to support the war were almost entirely made in national EU capitals, not Brussels. Nation-states have long been primary sources of European foreign policy. They are likely to remain so.

The Community System

The Community system for foreign policy-making consists of three main elements: external trade policy; aid and development policy; and actions to 'externalize' the internal market.

Commercial (Trade) Policy

The European Union is a major trading power. It is the world's largest exporter and second largest importer. It accounts for more than one-fifth of all global trade, and claims a higher share than the US. The EU is sometimes portrayed as a purveyor of neoliberalism (which emphasizes the benefits of the free market and limited government interference; see Cafruny and Ryner 2003). Yet, all trading blocs discriminate against outsiders and more than half of all EU trade is internal trade, crossing European borders within a market that is meant to be borderless. EU member states are sometimes accused of acting like a protectionist club in which each agrees to take in the others' 'high cost washing', or products that are lower in quality or higher in price than goods produced outside Europe, ostensibly to protect European jobs.

In practice, the EU is a schizophrenic trading power, not least because it blends very different national traditions of political economy. Generally, its southern member states are far less imbued with free-market values than those in the north or east. One consequence is that it is sometimes more difficult for the EU to agree internally than for it to agree deals with its trading partners. The power of the Commission in external trade policy is easy to overestimate (see Box 10.1). However, the EU does a remarkably good job of reconciling Europe's differences on trade. When the EU can agree, international negotiations become far more efficient. There is capacity in the Community system for shaming reluctant states into accepting trade agreements that serve general EU foreign policy interests. For example, in 2001 the Union agreed to offer the world's poorest countries duty-free access to the EU's markets for 'everything but arms', which France opposed but essentially was forced to accept. The deal was criticized for not doing enough to promote third-world development. But the EU generally claims that it offers the world's poorest countries a better deal than do most industrialized countries.

Aid and Development

Together with its member states, the EU is the world's leading donor of development aid, accounting for over half of the global total. Aid and access to the Union's huge market are frequently combined, along with other policy instruments, as in the cases of the EU's free trade agreements with Mexico and South Africa. Market access or aid also may be part of political cooperation agreements designed to promote democracy

BOX 10.1 How it really works

Commercial (trade) policy

Trade policy is the most integrated of all EU external policies. Case law and the Treaty establishing the European Community (not the separate 'Treaty on European Union') state that the Commission negotiates for the EU as a whole in most cases. There is no specific Council of Trade Ministers, and effective oversight by member states (through the so-called Article 133 Committee, made up of national trade officials) is limited. The EP has only the right to be consulted, although its assent is required for any agreement that establishes international institutions or has important budgetary implications, such as the EU's customs union with Turkey. The Commission's position thus seems indomitable.

In practice, power is considerably diffused. Member governments defend their own economic interests robustly at all stages: when defining the Commission's mandate for negotiations, during the negotiations themselves, and when the Council ratifies draft deals. At the last stage, the Treaty says that the Council can decide by qualified majority. In practice, important external trade measures almost never pass without unanimity. Thus, tensions between **intergovernmentalism** and **supranationalism** exist at the heart of the Community system even though the EU has a solid record of achievement in trade policy.

or human rights. The EU's relations with its most important neighbours—such as Turkey, Ukraine, or Russia (see Box 10.2)—are usually conducted through complex package deals involving trade, aid, and political dialogue.

Increasingly, the EU seeks region-to-region agreements such as the EuroMed partnership with the countries of the Mediterranean, and the Cotonou agreement, a trade and aid accord between the EU and 77 African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) states. Such package deals require links between different systems for making European foreign policy. For example, most aid to the ACP states is distributed via the European Development Fund (EDF), which member states finance directly and which is not part of the EU's general budget.

The EU's aid policy has faced serious challenges in recent years. Evidence that EU aid programmes are not very effectively managed has contributed to 'donor fatigue'. The new wisdom—reflected in World Trade Organization (WTO) rules—is that poorer countries need trade more than aid. Trade is seen as helping poorer countries to grow from within in a sustainable way, while aid is often wasted, especially through corruption. The labelling of the twenty-first century's first global trading round as the Doha development agenda both reflected the new wisdom and focused global attention on the EU (and US) for their reluctance to open (especially) their agricultural markets to developing countries.

The world's poorest countries continue to insist that they need large injections of aid, and remain wary of the EU's new preference (driven by WTO rules as well as political choices) for creating free-trade areas. Large transfers of EU aid continue to flow

BOX 10.2 How it really works

The EU and Russia

The EU's relationship with Russia is a classic glass half-empty or half-full story. A pessimist would make much of the EU's dependence on Russia for energy, particularly since price disputes between Moscow and former Soviet republics in 2005–6 led to interruptions (or threats of them) in flows of Russian natural gas. The EU's concern for its energy security is often viewed as making it the weaker partner in its relationship with Moscow. One upshot, according to this view, is that it is reluctant to speak truth of power about the erosion of Russian democracy, the suppression of human rights in Chechnya, or even the 2007 cyber-war waged (apparently) by Russia on Estonia, an EU member state.

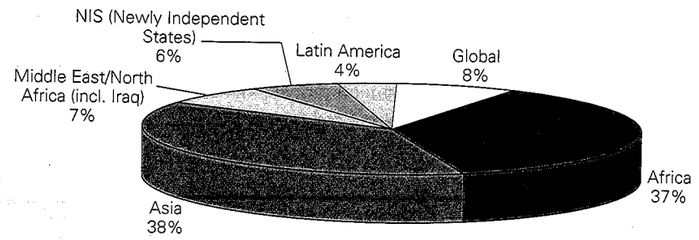
In practice, the EU and Russia are mutually and heavily interdependent. The EU relies on Russia to supply more than a quarter of both its oil and natural gas. But sales of raw materials to the EU account for most of Russia's hard currency earnings and fund nearly 40 per cent of Russia's federal budget. Around 60 per cent of Russia's export earnings come from energy, most of it in the form of sales to the EU. One former EU diplomat puts it bluntly: 'Europe should clearly work for a comprehensive partnership with Russia, but at the moment it is nonsense to suggest that this will be based on shared values' (Patten 2005: 178). The point was illustrated at the 2006 Lahti summit held under a Finnish EU Council Presidency. Vladimir Putin was invited to participate, a first for a Russian President. By all accounts, the meeting was fraught and Putin bristled at any criticism of his government. When the President of the EP, Josep Borrell (a Spaniard), told Putin that the EU could not trade oil for human rights, Putin reportedly replied that corruption was rife in Spain. Putin also noted that mafia was an Italian word, not a Russian one. The French President, Jacques Chirac, enraged other EU delegations by arguing that morality should not be mixed with business in the EU's dealings with Russia.

Still, the Finnish Presidency could plausibly claim that the European foreign policy glass was half-full. The (then) EU of 25—including former Soviet republics (such as Estonia) or satellites—delivered a more-or-less common message to Russia for the first time. The German Chancellor, Angela Merkel, insisted that she would continue to push Putin on human rights in Russia. And Lahti was one of Chirac's last EU summits, with one diplomat commenting: 'Chirac is a tired old man ... with a tad of hysteria in his voice' (*European Voice*, 26 October 2006).

to the Cotonou countries, most of which are in Africa. In fact, if all EU aid programmes, including those for North Africa and the Middle East, were added together, the total flow to Africa in 2004 alone was nearly €13 billion (and was projected to rise to more than €18 billion by 2010).

The Mediterranean (around €5.4 billion for 2000–6) and the Balkans (€4.6 billion for the same period) are also priority areas for Community spending. 'Foreign' aid to Central and Eastern Europe (€6.7 billion for 1995–9) has fallen as recipient

FIGURE 10.1 Funding for EC Humanitarian Aid by region in 2005 (%)



Total funding: €652,500,000
Source: European Commission (http://ec.europa.eu/echo/pdf_files/annual_reviews/2005_en.pdf)

states in the region have become EU members. In a sign of how enlargement has slid down its list of policy priorities, the Union budgeted less than €11.5 million for 2007–13 for 'pre-accession' aid to **candidate countries**.

The Union has also become the world's largest donor of humanitarian aid through the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO), located within the Commission. It announced the largest contribution of any donor to humanitarian aid in Afghanistan within days of the start of the 2001 war. ECHO also contributed more relief than any other donor to areas affected by the 2004 Asian Tsunami, while still maintaining levels of assistance to victims of what it called 'forgotten' (but protracted) humanitarian crises in Africa (see Figure 10.1).

The EU's good deeds are often marred by bad 'plumbing'. ECHO was slammed for its lax spending controls by the Committee of Independent Experts whose 1999 report sparked the mass resignation of the Santer Commission. Commissioner Patten made reform of the EU's development programmes a personal crusade, and EU aid delivery certainly became more efficient. But the Commission still has some distance to go before it escapes the memorable charge (made by a UK Minister for Development) that it is the 'worst development agency in the world' (Short 2000).

Externalizing 'Internal' Policies

In a sense, the European Union has no truly internal policies: its market is so huge that every major decision it makes to regulate it (or not) has international effects. When the Union negotiates internal agreements on fishing rights or agricultural subsidies, the implications for fishermen in Iceland or farmers in California can be immediate and direct. The ultimate act of externalizing internal policies occurs when the EU enlarges its membership, as it did to impressive effect in the dozen years

beginning in 1995 when it more than doubled in size from twelve to 27 member states.

A rule of thumb, based on a landmark European Court decision (see Weiler 1999: 171–83), is that where the EU has legislated internally, an external policy competence is transferred to it. The Community has frequently taken this route in environmental policy, and now participates in several international environmental agreements through the first pillar. Where internal lines of authority are clear, the EU can be a strong and decisive negotiator. The Commission has become a powerful, global policeman for vetting mergers between large firms. When the Union seeks bilateral economic agreements, whether with Canada, Cameroon, or China, the Commission negotiates for the Union as a whole.

The Union's most important international task may be reconciling rules on its single market with rules governing global trade. The EU sometimes does the job badly, agreeing messy compromises on issues such as data protection or genetically modified foods that enrage its trading partners. External considerations can be a low priority when the Union legislates, and effectively treated as someone else's problem. Most of the time, however, the internal market has offered non-EU producers better or similar terms of access than they were offered before the internal market existed (Young 2002).

An increasingly important international task for the EU is reconciling its internal policies in Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) with its external obligations. What are often called 'soft' security issues, such as migration and transnational crime, have risen to the top of the policy agenda, especially since the terrorist attacks in the US, Madrid, and London of 2001–5. To the surprise of many, the EU managed rapidly to reach ambitious agreements on a common definition of terrorism and a European arrest warrant in the immediate aftermath of 11 September 2001 (9.11). However, JHA decision-making soon reverted to its previously uneven pace (see Chapter 7).

In contrast, EU enlargement has arguably been the most effective tool of European *foreign* policy in terms of exporting security and prosperity (Nugent 2004; Smith 2005). It has also produced enlargement fatigue and the European Neighbourhood Policy, a framework for cooperation with states on or near EU borders such as Ukraine or Russia which, in the Brussels jargon, do not have the 'perspective' of membership anytime soon (Dannreuther 2004). It is difficult to see how the powerful lure of actual membership could ever come close to being replicated by a policy that forecloses that possibility. Member states continue to tussle over how far the neighbourhood policy is a direct alternative, rather than a potential stepping stone to, EU membership. As suggested in Chapter 9, the EU's neighbourhood policy is another area where the EU struggles to meet expectations.

The EU System

The gap between the Union's growing economic power and its limited political clout was a source of increasing frustration in the early 1990s. Thus, a distinct EU system of making foreign policy was created, with the second pillar and the CFSP at its centre. This new system overlapped with but did not replace the Community system. Over time, it incorporated a nascent European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP). Confusingly, the CFSP and ESDP are mainly labels for 'institutions that *make* [policies] but *are* not proper policies' in themselves (Jørgensen 2006: 509).

The Common Foreign and Security Policy

The CFSP unveiled in the Maastricht Treaty marked a considerable advance on the European Political Cooperation mechanism but still disappointed proponents of closer foreign policy cooperation. It gave the Commission the right—shared with member governments—to initiate proposals. The CFSP even allowed for limited qualified majority voting, although it was always clear that most second-pillar actions would require unanimity. Compliance mechanisms in the CFSP were not as strong as those in the first pillar, with the European Court of Justice mostly excluded. The Common Foreign and Security Policy (like JHA policy) remained largely intergovernmental, even if links to the Community system were gradually strengthened (see Box 10.3).

Established habits of exchange between foreign ministries meant that member governments were able to agree a considerable number of common positions and joint actions in its early years (see Nuttall 2000: 184–8). Some measures, such as the 1993 Stability Pacts to stabilize borders in Central and Eastern Europe, or support for democratic elections in Bosnia (in 1995 and 1997) went well beyond the usual EPC declarations. Nevertheless, critics scorned the CFSP's inability to deal with more complex or urgent security issues, above all the wars in ex-Yugoslavia.

The CFSP was thus ripe for reform when the Treaty of Amsterdam was negotiated in 1997. This time, controversy over majority voting was mostly avoided by creating a new doctrine of 'flexibility', also known as constructive abstention or enhanced cooperation (see Stubb 2002). Under any name, it allows member states to opt out of certain CFSP actions (particularly those involving defence) as an alternative to vetoing them.

The Amsterdam Treaty's main second-pillar innovation was the creation of a new High Representative for the CFSP (who also served as Secretary-General of the Council; see Chapter 3). The High Representative was meant to help give the EU a single voice and the CFSP a single face. After his appointment to the post in 1999, former NATO Secretary General Javier Solana at times proved a skilful coordinator of different actions and instruments, whether sourced in Brussels or national capitals. He fronted the Union's diplomatic efforts, in cooperation with NATO, to head off civil war in Macedonia in 2001, and has had a leading role in nuclear dialogue with Tehran.

BOX 10.3 How it really works

Making foreign policy decisions

Provisions in the Maastricht Treaty for **Qualified Majority Voting** (QMV) on foreign policy seemed to mark a major change from European Political Cooperation. However, QMV has rarely been used in the second (or third) pillar. The glass remains (at least) half-empty: rules on when QMV may be used are far more complex than in the first pillar, and nearly all important CFSP decisions require a consensus. Because it could not agree a unanimous position on Iraq (far from it), the EU was completely sidelined during the drift to war in 2003. It is difficult to identify any major foreign policy decision of the George W. Bush administration that was influenced by any CFSP decision, except perhaps a relative softening in tactics for dealing with the Iran nuclear dossier. The CFSP's annual budget is in the range of a paltry €150 million. Looking to the future, foreign policy by unanimity seems impractical, even impossible, in an EU of 27 plus. Procedurally, it is clear how the CFSP works. Substantively, there is controversy about whether it works at all.

But there is a case for viewing the glass as half-full. Each time the EU is faced with an international crisis, it tends to act more quickly, coherently, and decisively than it did in response to the *last* crisis. Following the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the EU agreed a raft of statements or decisions within days. Subsequently, the EU moved decisively—sometimes controversially so—and gave its consent to counter-terrorist agreements with the US on issues such as airline passenger records and container security (see Box 7.3; Rees 2006). The EU's diplomacy (through the 'EU-3') on Iran, its participation in the Middle East Quartet (on an equal footing with the US, Russia, and the UN), and a range of CFSP actions in central Africa and the Balkans suggest a steady integration of European foreign policy.

However, the EU continued to be represented externally by its *troika*, with Solana joined by the Foreign Ministers of the state holding the Council Presidency and the country next in line, and the European Commissioner for External Affairs. In some cases, such as the Group of Eight summits, special formulae for representation involved a confusing mix of Commission and national officials.

There has thus never been a clear answer to the legendary (and apparently apocryphal) question asked by the US Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, in the 1970s: 'What number do I call when I want to speak to "Europe"?' The 2004 Constitutional Treaty proposed to assign that single number to a new EU Minister for Foreign Affairs (MFA). The MFA would combine the roles of the High Representative and the Commissioner for External Affairs, with its holder serving as Vice-President of the Commission and chairing EU Councils of Foreign Ministers, in perhaps the most audacious attempt ever to combine the supranational with the intergovernmental in one position. The Constitutional Treaty also contained provisions for a new EU External Action Service, working under the authority of the MFA and bringing under one roof EU and national diplomats. An intended effect was to make the EU's missions in foreign capitals more

like real embassies, with clout and resources. But no clear consensus was reached over whether all EU officials working on external issues (such as those responsible for development or trade policy) would fall under the MFA's authority.

The rejection of the Constitutional Treaty in the French and Dutch referenda in 2005 left these reforms in limbo. However, the 2007 Reform Treaty rescued nearly all of them, even though fresh (primarily British) objections to the title 'Minister of Foreign Affairs' meant that the title 'High Representative' was retained for this post (with nearly all of the same duties as assigned to the MFA in the Constitutional Treaty). Many EU diplomats agree that 'one day in the future we will have a better framework for the conduct of European foreign affairs ... The logic of history, of international politics, of diplomacy, even of public finance, all point in that direction' (Avery 2005). When that day comes, it will have been a long time in coming, even if foreign policy remains one of the youngest of all EU policies.

A European Security and Defence Policy?

Given the CFSP's mixed record, as well as Europe's claims to be a 'civilian power', it might seem paradoxical to extend the EU system into the realm of defence. Most EU states have long accepted the supremacy of NATO on defence matters. Yet, the EU has taken small but decisive steps in recent years towards creating an ESDP. The 1999 crisis in Kosovo marked a turning point. Again, the EU appeared timid and weak as it had earlier in Bosnia. NATO took the lead in pushing both crises towards resolution, and the US military contributions dwarfed those of Europe. Thus, the EU made firmer Treaty commitments to security cooperation, first in Amsterdam but especially at Nice. In particular, the so-called **Petersberg tasks**—humanitarian and rescue missions, peacekeeping, and crisis management, including 'peacemaking'—were marked out as basic EU foreign policy goals. A new Political and Security Committee of senior national officials was created and designated the linchpin linking ESDP to the CFSP. Plans were agreed to enable deployment of a EU Rapid Reaction Force of up to 60,000 troops.

Sceptics argued that the real problem lay not with Treaty language or institutions but with Europe's weak and under-funded militaries. Military spending in most EU states declined sharply after the Cold War, leaving the US to extend its lead in the application of new technologies to military hardware. The target date for declaring the EU Rapid Reaction Force concept operational was delayed and then fudged. The American administration under George W. Bush initially refused European offers to contribute troops to the war in Afghanistan in 2001, in large part because there was almost nothing that US forces could not do more effectively on their own.

The ESDP has thus been restricted to modest missions, and is central to no EU member state's national defence policy (Cooper 2004b: 189). Its supporters insist that it has produced tangible achievements. The French-led 2002 intervention in Bunia (Congo) came in response to a UN request and was designed to keep a

humanitarian disaster from escalating, although its scope was very limited and its benefits questioned. Similarly, the EU claimed success in taking over from NATO command of a large peacekeeping force in Bosnia in 2004, but was criticized for perpetuating a culture of 'dependency, helplessness, and disillusionment' and failing to 'coordinate complex civil and military matters' (see Manners 2006: 190–1). More recently the EU has launched small civilian missions (for policing and training) in Aceh, Gaza, and Afghanistan.

What is clear is that the ESDP has become a framework for combining European military assets at the 'hard' end of capabilities in specialized areas such as jungle or desert fighting or coping with a chemical weapons attack through the so-called European battle groups (Smith *et al.* 2006: 263). Meanwhile, the European Defence Agency has sought to coax sorely needed cooperation between defence ministries and arms makers, quietly but gradually, since its launch in 2004. ESDP remains an area with a large gap between ambitions and achievements, but it is also a continuing growth area for European integration.

Theorizing the EU as a Global Actor

The expansion of the EU's foreign policy role confounds many international relations (IR) theorists, particularly those in the realist tradition. Most realists make two assumptions. First, power in international politics is a zero-sum commodity. Secondly, all alliances between states are temporary (see Mearsheimer 2001; Waltz 2002). On one hand, realists claim to be able to explain why the EU is often weak or divided on matters of high politics, such as Iraq or North Korea. On the other hand, realists find it difficult to explain the EU's international ambitions and activities, or even why it does not collapse altogether. More generally, twenty-first century works of IR theory often barely mention the EU, or ignore it altogether (see Sullivan 2001; Elman and Elman 2003; Burchill *et al.* 2005).

One consequence is that research on European foreign policy 'has come to resemble an archipelago' (Jørgensen 2006: 507), which is only barely connected to the study of IR more generally. Consider intergovernmentalist approaches to European integration, which are themselves derived from liberal theories of international politics (see Moravcsik 1998). Intergovernmentalists assume that governments respond to powerful, domestic economic pressures. When governments agree economic policy deals that benefit national economic interests, they try to lock in those gains by giving EU institutions strong powers of enforcement. In contrast, governments face far weaker incentives to delegate foreign or defence policy powers to EU institutions, which explains why the EU's trade policy is far more integrated than the CFSP. Beyond that insight, however, intergovernmentalists have shown little interest in the EU's global ambitions. As such, what has been described as 'the most suitable theoretical tradition' for explaining European integration also seems to be 'currently running out of steam and relevance' to European foreign policy (Jørgensen 2006: 519).

In contrast, the oldest theory of European integration—**neofunctionalism**—may still have mileage, at least by proxy. Institutionalism, a theoretical 'cousin' of neofunctionalism (see Haas 2001), focuses on how the EU produces habits that eventually mature into institutionalized rules of behaviour. For example, habits established through twenty years of foreign policy exchanges within EPC led to the CFSP. The EU often creates new roles or organizations—such as the High Representative or the Political and Security Committee—which develop their own interests, missions, and escape close intergovernmental control. Institutionalism has established itself as the leading theory of EU politics (Cowles and Curtis 2004), and has shed interesting light on European foreign policy (M. E. Smith 2003; 2004).

BOX 10.4 Compared to what?

The European Security Strategy

Equipping the EU with a military capability made it possible also to give the Union a *security strategy*: a set of principles that could guide foreign policy action and specify how ESDP might be deployed together with other EU policy instruments. The 2003 European Security Strategy (ESS) was agreed at a tumultuous time after the Union's sharp and bitter divisions over Iraq. It was possible to view the ESS as a step forward for the Union as a global actor (see Biscop 2005), but also impossible not to view it as partly, at least, a response to the 2002 US National Security Strategy (NSS; see Dannreuther and Peterson 2006).

The NSS was unveiled, with powerful symbolism, one year and one day after the terrorist attacks of 9/11. Many US allies were shocked by the strength of its endorsement of three principles: the need for shifting coalitions in a war on terrorism, the sanctity of unchallenged US military strength, and the inevitability of having to 'pre-empt' threats to American security unilaterally. Other US agencies were consulted, but the NSS was primarily written in the back rooms of the National Security Council by White House advisors. The NSS was full of dark warnings about the nature of the terrorist threat and how the US would respond to it.

In contrast, the tone of the ESS was largely celebratory: extolling the achievements of European integration, while urging that European habits of cooperation and multilateralism needed to be exported. The ESS was penned by officials in the Council General Secretariat working under Javier Solana, but was reviewed and redrafted in a series of workshops with academics and experts in different European venues. The ESS ended up being a much shorter document than the Bush administration's NSS. In places, it reads more like a set of ambitions than a genuine strategy (Heisbourg 2004). On balance, there was just enough that was common to the two strategies—especially about the need for strong, proactive policies to counter terrorism—to make it possible to think that the transatlantic alliance might be more durable than it sometimes appeared around the time of the Iraq war (see Baylis and Roper 2006).

Yet, the leading theory of European foreign policy clearly has become **constructivism** (see Tonra and Christiansen 2004; Bretherton and Vogler 2006). As discussed in Chapter 1, constructivists depart from realists and liberals in insisting that the interests and identities of EU member states are not fixed before they bargain with each other. Rather, they are 'constructed' through bargaining, which is a highly social process. Constructivists, in contrast to institutionalists, insist that ideas matter as much as (or more than) institutions in IR. Alexander Wendt (1992; 1999) portrays the EU as more than a temporary alliance because its member states assume a measure of common identity through shared ideas, including ones about the desirability of multilateralism, environmental protection, and so on. Many constructivists do not shy from questions about what the EU *should* do in foreign policy, insisting on the importance of a 'normative power Europe' that stands up for its values and principles (Manners 2002).

Conclusion

When the former British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, urged that the EU should become a 'superpower but not a superstate' in 2000, he provoked little controversy outside of his own country. The idea that the EU should take a lead in expressing European power internationally has become almost a mainstream view (see Morgan 2005; Smith *et al.* 2006). The EU has come a long way from humble origins in foreign policy. But it remains an odd global power, which has difficulty living up to its ambitions. It has increased its potential international power each time it has enlarged. Yet, EU foreign policy is only as good as the quality of the consensus amongst its members, and it is often of poor quality in an enlarged EU of 27+ member states.

One reason why assessments of European foreign policy vary so widely is because it is unclear how the EU's success as a global actor should be measured. There is no question that the Union is far more active internationally than its founders ever imagined it could be. In several policy areas, especially economic ones, it is a global power. No other international organization in history has even tried, let alone claimed, to have a 'common' foreign policy.

There were signs post-Iraq that foreign policy was being reclaimed by European national capitals, or groups of states acting together, even if none appeared to be giving up on the EU system altogether (see Hill 2004). The Reform Treaty's institutional reforms might move the EU closer to a truly common foreign policy. Or, its effect might be, yet again, to raise expectations that cannot be met. How, for example, would coherence emerge from the constellation of a new EU President, a new Foreign Minister (still called the 'High Representative') and a continued Commission President and (probably) Commissioners for development and trade policy? Consider the (cryptic? confused?) comments of the US Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, on a post-Iraq fence-mending visit to Brussels:

> As Europe unifies further and has a common foreign policy—I understand what is going to happen with the Constitution and that there will be unification, in effect, under a foreign minister—I think that also will be a very good development (quoted in *Financial Times*, 11 February 2005: 1).

The future of European foreign policy will be determined largely by two factors: the EU's relationship with the US and its ability to wield its 'soft power', or its power to persuade rather than coerce (Nye Jr. 2004). Whether the George W. Bush era marked a glitch or a watershed in transatlantic relations is an open question. The failure of hard (mostly) American military power to achieve US policy goals in Afghanistan or Iraq, let alone Iran or North Korea or the Middle East, rekindles questions about whether Europe's soft power might make it an alternative source of leadership in the twenty-first century (Rifkin 2004; Leonard 2005). Alternatively, Europe's declining population and military weakness might foreclose such questions. One of the EU's top diplomats argues that Europe will never maximize its soft power until it invests far more in hard power (Cooper 2004a).

It is easy to see why debates about Europe as a global actor are so lively. The EU is likely to remain an often uncertain and hesitant global power but one that never stops trying to be more coherent and effective. It will no doubt continue to frustrate its partners, but sometimes show surprising unity, and fascinate—probably as much as it confounds—future students of international politics.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Define 'European foreign policy'. Explain why this term has assumed wide usage amongst those who study the EU's international role.
2. Why has cooperation in foreign policy been so much more difficult to organize at the EU level than economic cooperation?
3. Why is the most effective way for the EU to promote development in the less-developed world increasingly seen as 'trade not aid'?
4. Can the EU remain a 'civilian power' if it also becomes a military power?

FURTHER READING

The best single source text on Europe as a global actor is Hill and Smith (2005). Useful overviews include K. E. Smith (2003) and Bretherton and Vogler (2006). Good historical treatments are available, told both from the points of view of a practitioner (Nuttall 2000) and an academic institutionalist (M. E. Smith 2003). The EU's neighbourhood policy is scrutinized in Dannreuther (2004) and its Security Strategy is the focus for Biscop (2005) as well as Dannreuther and Peterson (2006), who compare it to its US counterpart. The Union's contribution to the United Nations, as well as multilateralism more generally, is scrutinized by Laatikainen and Smith (2006). On the idea of the EU as a 'civilian power', see Sjursen (2006). A good review of recent debates about ESDP is Howorth (2007).

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Smith, K. E. (2003), *European Union Foreign Policy in a Changing World* (Oxford and Malden MA: Polity).

Smith, M. E. (2003), *Europe's Foreign and Security Policy* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press).

WEB LINKS

A good place to start researching the EU's external policy role is the website of the Paris-based Institute for Security Studies (www.iss.europa.eu), which formally became an autonomous European Union agency in 2002. Other specific areas of EU policy have their own, dedicated websites:

- European Defence Agency: http://www.eda.europa.eu/
- External relations (general): www.europa.eu/pol/ext/index_en.htm
- Foreign and security policy: www.europa.eu/pol/cfsp/index_en.htm
- Humanitarian aid: www.europa.eu.int/pol/hum/index_en.htm
- Justice/home affairs: www.europa.eu.int/pol/justice/index_en.htm
- Trade: www.europa.eu.int/pol/comm/index_en.htm
- Development: www.europa.eu.int/po/index_en.htm

The Commission's site (www.europa.eu.int/comm/index_en.htm) has general information about EU foreign policy, but the websites of national foreign ministries often reveal more. On the EU's relationship with the US, see www.eurunion.org and www.useu.be. Weblinks on the EU's other important relationships include ones

devoted to the Cotonou convention (www.acpsec.org), EU–Canadian relations (www.canada-europe.org), and the Union's relationship with Latin America (http://aei.pitt.edu/view/subjects/D002022.html).

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