

MARIA RAQUEL FREIRE
DANIELA NASCIMENTO
COORDS.

THE EUROPEAN UNION AS AN INTERNATIONAL ACTOR

PEACE AND
SECURITY IN
NARRATIVES AND
PRACTICES

This volume analyses the European Union as an international actor, focusing on its role in peace and security. In an international context where the challenges to peace and security are diverse, including the current context of war in Ukraine, this volume theoretically contextualizes the EU in peace and security studies, explores the institutional dimension of its functioning, and interprets the narratives and policies this actor pursues. A set of illustrative case studies seeks to reflect on the dynamics of peace and security within the framework of the EU and its actions/interventions, such as in the Eastern Partnership or in relations with Russia, and in contexts such as growing disinformation or through its presence on a mission on the ground.



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INTRODUCTION: THE EU AS AN INTERNATIONAL ACTOR: NARRATIVES AND PRACTICES

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Abstract: This introductory chapter presents the thematic outline of this volume which focuses on an analysis of the European Union (EU) as an international actor for peace and security as well as how the dimension of narratives and practices has defined its positioning in the international system. The chapter presents the structure of the volume which is divided into two parts: the first is analytical and establishes the volume's framework; while the second explores several relevant case studies.

Keywords: European Union, Peace, Security, Narratives; Practices

We live in turbulent times. In the European context, international relations have been definitively marked by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, on 24 February 2022, which has contributed to an increasingly tense and troubled relationship between Russia and the West. What was, without a doubt, a territorial invasion led by a revisionist Russia, which violated the principles of states' territorial integrity and Europe's border regimes, brought instability and uncertainty, in addition to a crescendo of violence that has been building since 2014, with a clear and direct impact on Europe's crumbling security. Moscow's strategies to divide the EU's Member States, as a way to project power, were blocked, giving way instead to a joint position of clear condemnation of Russian action. The result of this aggression has therefore translated into a sense of cohesion and union among the EU's Member States, the Member States of the Atlantic Alliance, and a reinforced transatlantic relationship, with an increased presence of the United States of America (USA) in Europe, faced with the new and unprecedented threat that Russia represents. In this particularly challenging context, for Europe and the world, it has become even more crucial to reflect on the EU's trajectory in terms of what its narratives and practices have been with respect to the realisation of its aspirations to project and establish itself as a relevant international actor particularly in the areas of peace and security.

Over the last few decades, the EU has visibly, according to its narrative, presented itself as an actor of peace and security, emerging and claiming to be, especially since the Second World War, precisely a project of peace which aimed to prevent the return of war to Europe. In the integration and development process of the European project, the economic dimension and the security dimension have always gone hand in hand with the normative dimension associated with the Union's founding values. Democratic principles – respect for the rule of law and human rights – are cardinal principles of the European

project, which have been called into question over the last few years and which currently face fundamental challenges.

Another fundamental dimension of the EU's vision as an international actor concerns the evolution of the regional and international context. Indeed, the end of the Cold War did not lead only to significant changes in the regional European context, but also allowed the EU to take on a leading role in the promotion of a European (and international) order, resting on the norms and principles of democracy and peace. In truth, the EU's international presence has developed gradually, in large part stimulated by the needs and demands of an international system in constant flux and the possibilities raised by the successive processes of enlargement, integration and association, which have also served as important tests of its capacity and ambition for projection as a recognised global actor on various levels, including in the areas of peace and security. Here, the role of the 2016 Global Strategy takes on particular importance and prominence. In it the EU openly acknowledges its aspirations of becoming a global actor operating at various levels and in areas of global interest and importance, specifically in defence, inclusive societies, human rights, and peace consolidation.

This is what forms the basis of this volume and in which various narrative and practical dimensions of the EU as an international actor are analysed in different contexts, with its action in the areas of peace and security serving as a fundamental backdrop. The volume contextualises and theoretically frames the EU in peace and security studies, while developing its institutional dimension, and interprets the narratives and policies concerned. One of the most important premises of this project is that the narratives associated with the construction of the Union as an actor help us to better understand and contextualise its policies and practices, its actions and inaction. This reading forms the basis of our study and presentation of a collection of case studies considered illustrative of the dynamics of peace and security within an EU framework and its actions/interventions, such as, for

instance, in the Eastern Partnership or in relations with Russia, and in contexts like that of increasing disinformation, the space policy as part of a new security strategy, or through its presence in field missions.

This volume is therefore divided into two parts: the first is dedicated to analytical chapters which provide background; the second presents case studies. To kick off the first part of the volume, Paula Duarte Lopes and Daniela Nascimento map security studies and peace studies, reflecting on how the EU has positioned and asserted itself as an actor of peace and security within these theoretical frameworks. The renewed security agendas that marked the international system primarily since the 1990s took centre stage, characterised by their connection with humanitarian and (under) development issues, at the same time introducing new challenges to their implementation. While these challenges are present at various levels and concern various actors, such as the United Nations (UN) or even the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), they have been particularly pressing and visible in terms of the action of the EU. In this chapter, the authors critically analyse and discuss how the EU has positioned itself faced with new threats to international peace and security and how this positioning can be interpreted within a broader framework of predominant peace and security agendas, as well as how it has come to be reflected in its ability to assert itself as a global actor of peace and security.

In the second chapter, Isabel Camisão and Ana Paula Brandão contextualise the institutional dimension and that of internal workings, essential to understanding this actor. Almost three decades after its creation by the Treaty of the European Union, the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) is still understood as a markedly intergovernmental domain, in which the decision remains in the hands of the Member States (MS) and there is a clear marginalisation of supranational institutions, such as the European Commission and the European Parliament. While not contesting the relevance of

the MS in the formulation and decision-making process regarding foreign policy, the literature has demonstrated that other institutional actors, aside from the European Council and the Council of the European Union, have gradually and strategically taken on an increasingly proactive stance in shaping the CFSP and setting its agenda. Using the policy process cycle model as a theoretical framework (agenda-setting, policy formulation, implementation and evaluation), this chapter maps these actors and their participation in the different stages of the cycle, while also analysing some of the strategies employed to expand its competencies and increase its influence in an area where States have traditionally shown great reluctance to delegate powers at the supranational level.

Having conducted an institutional analysis of the policies and mapping of the internal functioning of the EU, the third chapter, authored by Licínia Simão, follows up the previous exercise, though with an emphasis on the external dimension of this actor's actions. This chapter evaluates the conceptual and normative evolution of European security and defence since Maastricht, seeking to identify the most significant changes in the EU's interpretation of its role as an actor of international security and of how this is reflected in the evolution of a common security and defence policy (CSDP). In this chapter, the development of the CSDP by the EU is presented as a process that has accompanied European integration, its geographic enlargement and the profound transformations in geopolitics and international conflict. Having now reached notable maturity, the CSDP is considered an essential contribution of Europe to international peace and security and for the advancement of its security interests, in a world marked by persistent and destabilising conflict and by fractures and tensions in the alliances that have traditionally upheld European security.

The fourth chapter, penned by Clara Keating, Alexandre Sousa Carvalho and Maria Raquel Freire, introduces the question of narratives to the analysis of the actor. This chapter analyses narrative in

the discursive construction of the European Union, from a theoretical perspective, which is clarified in the way in which the narrative follows the EU's development in its internal and external expressions. The dimension of security is analysed in this chapter, with an emphasis on the European Security Strategy of 2003, the Global Strategy on the EU's Foreign and Security Policy of 2016, and the Strategic Compass of 2022, guiding documents that aim to consolidate the EU's strategic position in terms of security, and the narrative regarding the financial crisis beginning in 2008, and in what way it has been adjusted and what kinds of messages and interpretations it entailed. This critical look into the narrative(s) is an incisive analysis on the way in which they are involved in the Union's strategies and political action in these fields, identifying points of convergence and misalignments, as well as looking at the dominant narratives and the way that they seek to legitimise certain decisions and options, thereby contributing to the construction of a particular image of the actor. The manner in which these narratives reflect constituent principles, but also ambivalent dynamics in the difficulties that the EU faces concerning its internal functioning as well as the external context in which it operates, ties this chapter in with the ones that precede it. The final chapter of the first part, authored by Teresa Almeida Cravo, Bernardo Fazendeiro and Paulo Rupino, takes a more targeted approach in its discussion of the different types of EU action, whether in the form of field missions, policies or projects, for instance under the Eastern Partnership, the development aid policy, or even in a technological dimension associated with the actor's position. This chapter positions the EU actor within the framework of international peace and security, seeking to deconstruct the meaning of 'intervention' in its various applications and interpretations and complementing the analysis carried out until this point, in order to open the door to a series of case studies that comprise the second part of this volume and which serve to illustrate the dynamics discussed.

In the second part of this volume, we have brought together case studies considered relevant to the understanding of this actor, translating the narratives and practices of different areas of action relevant to our context of peace and security. In chapter 6, Vanda Amaro Dias analyses the construction of peace and security in the European neighbourhood, focusing on the case of the Eastern Partnership. Regional peace, security and stability have asserted themselves as vital components of the relationship of the EU with its wider neighbourhood. Nevertheless, endogenous and exogenous challenges – whether related to the coordination of different perspectives and interests within the Union, or to a regional scenario characterised by power struggles and by an increasingly complex and extensive agenda – have led to successive readjustments to the policies and practices that direct the construction of peace and security in the European neighbourhood. The Eastern Partnership, which is introduced in 2009 in an attempt to respond to these challenges while simultaneously strengthening the role of the EU as a regional actor of peace and security has not always accomplished what it set out to achieve. In fact, more than a decade since its creation the results of the initiative remain limited with regard to the ambitions of the EU as well as its eastern partners, especially those interested in a tangible prospect of EU membership. This disparity between the stated objectives and the achieved results has contributed to a notable fatigue regarding the Eastern Partnership, necessarily affecting the underlying intention to construct regional peace and security. In order to question this process, the chapter examines the evolution of the Eastern Partnership, as well as the results the initiative has produced, with the aim of fostering a critical and wide-ranging reflection on the contribution and the future of the EU as an actor of peace and security at the regional level.

Chapter 6 focuses on what is now considered the most ‘tense moment’ of the EU-Russia relationship. In this chapter, Sónia Sénica

examines the relationship over the last few years in order to gain a better understanding of the lack of commitments and the difficulties in cooperation, in particular after the annexation of Crimea in 2014. This chapter is based on an analysis of the tools, mechanisms, positions and discourses of the EU's foreign policy in relation to Russia and which allows us to identify an analytical framework to better understand the role that the EU has sought to play in terms of securitisation and stabilisation of the European continent, while at the same time striving for a necessary compromise with Russia, which is in its close vicinity. Although the European project has managed to maintain its attractiveness, offering conditions for a move towards democratisation and economic development for the countries that seek accession, in truth, from the Russian perspective, the red lines in relation to Europeanisation of the post-Soviet space have emerged as an increasingly divisive issue, as evidenced by the current situation in Ukraine. Another clear weakness has to do with the various sensitivities within the EU, particularly the Franco-German axis, which result in a lack of consensus regarding the relationship with Russia, arising simultaneously with the inability, especially in terms of defence and security, to ensure that it is respected. All of this has resulted in Russia's growing image as a 'great power', to quote Joe Biden, and, symmetrically, the weakening of the image of the EU as a central actor in Europe. Viewing all these layers together, it can be concluded that the EU needs to readjust in order to be successful, it will need to, above all, project its power with such strength as to force Russia to reach a compromise and cooperate.

Closely related to this background of difficult relationships, are the hybrid threats of disinformation, propaganda and fake news. In chapter 8, Sofia José Santos and Tiago Lapa begin by identifying disinformation as one of the most common terms in the modern international relations lexicon in order to discuss disinformation through the eyes and at the hands of the EU. Pointing to a far from

unprecedented reality – the deliberate production of false content to cause harm – new life has been breathed into disinformation and its practices – in terms of sophistication, the pace of production and reach – with the advent of social networks. Their openness, horizontality and algorithmic architecture have demonstrably facilitated the spread of so-called fake news. In International Relations, many of the discussions that have arisen around disinformation discuss as it relates to its impact on democracies, its utility and the effects and strategies of propaganda, the relevance for foreign policy or a combination of all three. These reflections often explicitly or implicitly contain grammars of security and insecurity. This chapter examines not only the way in which the EU, as a normative actor of security, has presented issues of disinformation in its official narratives, but also the security practices that it has adopted to tackle disinformation and, mainly, how these two dimensions – narrative and practice – have fuelled and supported a digital security agenda.

Sarah da Mota in chapter 9, on the other hand, focuses on an analysis of European space architecture as a post-modern constellation of security and defence, understood as central to the EU's action and position, as highlighted in the most recent European security strategy. Against the rapidly changing backdrop of the field of space – characterised by a new expanding space economy and by the involvement of a growing number of actors – States, organisations and private actors have strategically adapted to compete for a share of space power. In this second space race, Europe is an active candidate, seeking to assert itself as a relevant regional actor in search of autonomous capacities that ensure secure access to space as well as the protection of its economy, environment and way of life. This chapter addresses the atypical nature of European space architecture, defined by a close and cooperative relationship between the ESA and the EU, as well as increasing integration in the field of security and defence. On the basis of a post-modern European foreign policy, where

a post-sovereign dimension is added to the existing national foreign policies, this chapter demonstrates how the current European space architecture results from an assemblage of national post-sovereign policies and a network of shared infrastructure, which interact to form a constellation of innovative institutional arrangements, in a configuration which ultimately contributes to strengthening the EU's actorness in the fields of security and defence.

In chapter 10, Renata Cabral presents us with a focused analysis of the EU mission in Haiti, a country which has seen successive attempts and exercises in peace promotion since 1993, the year of the United Nations' (UN) first intervention in the country. With the aim of promoting stability in the region, forces which typically consist of actors that frame and justify their practices using the predominant rationale of global interventionism discovered in Haiti a complex scenario that required broader structural changes, as well as a new approach to its action. Against this backdrop, the chapter provides a critical analysis of the participation and specific involvement of the EU in the various peace missions in the country. The chapter discusses the contribution of the Peace Studies to the justification and design of the peace operations that are now carried out globally, the criticisms of this form of interventionism and the consequences of the international presence on Haitian soil and the construction of a positive peace scenario in the country. Finally, in the concluding chapter Maria Raquel Freire identifies the main lines of argument and contributions to the analysis of the EU as an actor of peace and security discussed in the volume, highlighting those that help us to gain a better understanding of the EU as an international actor and to reflect on the possible ways forward in terms of how the union can (re)position itself faced with the challenges that the war in Ukraine and the warmongering and aggressive stance of the Russian Federation pose to Europe's current architecture of peace and security.

**THE EUROPEAN UNION AS AN ACTOR
FOR PEACE AND SECURITY:
FROM CONCEPTUAL DEBATES TO PRACTICE**

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Abstract: This chapter presents an analysis of the conceptual evolution of peace and security and of how these have been rendered operational at the international level, notably within the framework of the United Nations (UN). This is followed by a discussion of the European Union (EU) as a peace and security global actor in liaison with the international conceptual developments of peace and security. This chapter argues that the EU is definitely a peace and security global actor. But it also points out that the concept of peace, although always assumed as implicit, is never directly addressed. One can thus identify a swinging movement regarding the interaction of peace and security concepts in European policies and instruments aimed at promoting political stability, starting with the European Security Strategy

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(2003), followed by the European Union Global Security Strategy (2016) and ending with the current Strategic Compass (2022).

Keywords: European Union, Peace, Security, Global Actor

Introduction

The promotion of peace and security has always had a central place, both at national level, at the level of the States' agendas, and at the international level in which they are inserted and in the international peace and security agenda(s). After decades of centrality and dominance of more traditional and statocentric approaches, the end of the Cold War brought into the debate new ways of conceiving peace and security and of making them operational, particularly within the framework of multilateral relationships. In fact, the multiplicity and prevalence of internal conflict dynamics characterising the international system since the 1990s, marked by high levels of widespread armed violence, forced displacement of populations and complex humanitarian crises, required new prevention and response strategies to effectively deal with these new challenges.

Renewed security agendas gain centrality characterised by their articulation with humanitarian and (sub)development issues, also introducing new challenges to their operationalisation. Although these challenges are posed at various levels and by various actors, such as the United Nations (UN) or even the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), they have been particularly pressing and visible at the level of the European Union's (EU) action. In this chapter, we will critically analyse and discuss how the EU has positioned itself in the face of new threats to international peace and security and how this positioning can be read in a broader framework of dominant security and peace agendas and how it has been reflected in its ability to assert itself as a global peace and security actor.

In the first part, we will briefly map the main debates on the concepts of peace and security, their evolution and content. Next, we will analyse the security-development nexus and its links with the peace promotion agenda, in order to discuss and frame the main implications in terms of the implementation of policies and strategies to promote peace and security on an international scale. Finally, we will start from these conceptual debates and their practical implication for an analysis of the EU as an actor that intends to assert itself as a guarantor of peace and security on a global scale, as well as the main challenges and obstacles it has encountered to fulfil this objective.

Peace: from concepts to missions and back to concepts

Peace Studies are characterised, from their inception, by a research-action approach that seeks to transform peace governance structures by peaceful means. They are a field of study committed to a 'substantial conceptual [and] theoretical core' (Lawler, 2002, 9), which is the value of peace. Peace is a complex concept, but in Peace Studies, this concept goes beyond the absence of organised physical and psychological violence (negative peace) and includes the existence of structural conditions that allow for the satisfaction of basic human needs and the functioning of representative and power-sharing structures and the protection of human rights (positive peace) (Galtung, 1969, 1996). Furthermore, for this concept to be promoted in a sustainable way it is essential to 'develop practices that lead to cultures of violence being transformed into cultures of peace' (Cook-Huffman, 2002, 46), a position also shared by Lederach (2003) in his work on conflict transformation. It is in this context that the concepts of direct, structural and cultural violence (Galtung, 1969, 1996) gain importance. These concepts allow violence to be understood beyond physical and psychological

violence exerted directly on someone (direct violence), promoting prevention and transformation dynamics. Thus, structural violence results from the 'social structure itself' created between humans, between groups of humans (societies), as well as between societies in the world (Galtung, 1996, 2). And cultural violence, through its system of norms and behaviours, legitimises direct and structural violence (Galtung, 1996, 2). This 'Galtung's trilogy of violences makes visible the global dynamics of exploitation' (Freire and Lopes, 2008, 15) which, if at first it was identified with the globalized capitalist system (Terriff *et al.*, 1999, 71), currently, has as its focus the Peacebuilding Architecture, created by the UN and in which most state and intergovernmental actors participate (Foullas, 2015; Campbell *et al.*, 2011; Paris, 2011).

Since Peace Studies are, by definition, based on an action-oriented approach, it becomes essential to know the concept of peace adopted and from which it is based in order to better understand the actions developed in the name of peace. At first, Peace Studies were accused of accepting the dominant paradigm, that is, the so-called Western model of development, from which the understanding of peace boiled down, in practice, to 'a minimal adjustment of the balance of power underlying the *status quo*' (Terriff *et al.*, 1999, 71). This critique implied a broadening of the practical understanding of the concept of peace to include 'the dynamics of the North-South relationship', thus including global structural violence (Terriff *et al.*, 1999, 71). This movement, however, developed in an expansionist manner into what Wiberg called a 'black hole' (2005, 25), in which any and every social problem was liable to be associated with dynamics of peace and violence (Tromp, 1981). Despite the dilution of the focus of analysis of Peace Studies with this increasing broadening of the concept, simultaneously this movement allowed for a better contextualization of the concept of peace at the individual, community, societal, regional and international levels.

This contextualisation has thus enabled the realisation of the 'rejectionist' (Dunn, 2005, 37) approach to the statocentric paradigm which has characterised Peace Studies since its inception, proposing a more inclusive view of different actors in different contexts, throughout different moments in time, with various intensities of participation in the peace dynamics under analysis. With the end of the Cold War, this 'black hole' gains consistency in the face of the new reality of conflict: 'new wars' gain visibility, witnessing the erosion of the state's monopoly on the legitimate use of force and illegal international financing on a scale never before recorded, with links to networks of flows of arms, drugs and human beings (Kaldor, 1999); Old wars' do not disappear and present complex connections with the dynamics of 'new wars' (Booth, 2001); and violent dynamics in contexts of formal peace also contribute to this new reality (Moura, 2005), bringing not only a more local scale of analysis, but also points of articulation with international networks of support and promotion of violence. As of the first decade of the twenty-first century, this broadening has started to be criticised: Peace Studies need to go through a fundamental reconceptualisation of their *raison d'être* (Pureza and Cravo, 2005); the research agenda has become too broad (Mason, 2002; Rogers and Ramsbotham, 1999), including development issues (Duffield, 2001), security (Buzan et al., 1997) and feminist studies (Brock-Utne, 1985), among others. Furthermore, with this 'black hole' as an object of analysis, the distinctive factor of Peace Studies since its foundation, an action-research based approach, loses its dynamics due to the inability to effectively translate peace research findings into action.

Even so, it is within this scope of enlargement and later of criticism that, within the scope of the UN, the concepts and terminology of Peace Studies are structurally adopted in the agendas, in the intervention policies and in the language used in the area of promotion, construction and consolidation of peace at an in-

ternational level. In this sense, the approval and adoption by the United Nations of the 'Agenda for Peace' (Boutros-Ghali, 1992), the 'Agenda for Development' (Boutros-Ghali, 1994) and the 'Agenda for Democratisation' (Boutros-Ghali, 1996) reflect on the one hand a concept of peace that is broader than the absence of direct violence and, on the other hand, the intention to translate these agendas into concrete intervention policies. This process resulted in a Peacebuilding Architecture in which a liberal peace concept is promoted, which includes a democratic governance and rule of law model, a market economy model, and a modern security model (Armed Forces and security forces at the service of democratic civilian power).

This model of intervention therefore ends up being characterised by all the problems identified above with regard to the evolution of the concept of peace within Peace Studies. First, the starting level of intervention remains the state, due to the nature of the UN itself. However, this raises doubts about the sustainability of the intervention, as it no longer has the national support of the institutions, the security forces, and those who govern the country. As a result, Peace Studies and International Relations studies have been undergoing a process of change towards a focus on a so-called '*local turn*' in order to better understand how to promote (and maintain) the cultures of peace necessary to ensure and sustain the positive outcomes and overcome the negative outcomes of peace missions. This focus derives from studies showing that after violent conflict ceases 'on average, these countries run a 50 per cent risk of renewed [violent] conflict over the following five years' (Collier and Hoeffler, 2002; Collier et al., 2003). Thus, issues raised by this '*local turn*' have included the concept of hybrid peace, where peace in violent post-conflict contexts tends to be one resulting from the interface between external interventions and local dynamics (Mac Ginty, 2010); of frictions as an approach that facilitates the

identification of dynamics that weaken or strengthen peace efforts (Björkdahl et al, 2016); of '*everyday peace*' which explores the peace and survival strategies of individuals and groups in deeply divided societies (Mac Ginty, 2014; Richmond, 2009); of post-liberal peace (Richmond, 2009, 2012).

A second problem raised by this type of intervention has to do with the fact that the mandates of peace missions defined within the scope of the UN Security Council have accompanied the dynamics of broadening the concept of peace to include not only security dimensions, but also humanitarian, development support, state building and democracy assistance. These mandates have raised several criticisms regarding the relationship between military and civilians in these missions, the coordination between humanitarian, security (military) and development support (civilian) actions, and the essentially technical approach of these missions. This development had an impact on the human resources used in peace missions which, before the 1990s, were essentially military/security forces, but which later came to include civilians associated with development support, democracy assistance and also humanitarian functions when necessary. This relationship, which was expected to reflect the need to implement a broader concept of peace, proved in practice to be an extremely complicated challenge to overcome. Although civil-military relations are discussed and defined (Egnell 2009), missions are ultimately always defined by security criteria and thus all activities within the mission, whether they are development support, humanitarian or democracy assistance, always end up being subordinated to the primacy of security considerations (Freire and Lopes 2009).

If, on the one hand, this dynamic can be considered logical and positive, it is crucial to remember that before the creation of these peace missions there were already civilian humanitarian missions, totally civilian development support policies and democracy as-

sistance projects that were also exclusively civilian. This change is seen as a militarisation of humanitarian aid and development support (Duffield, 2001; Armiño, 2002) and, on the side of the security forces it is considered a risk as they consider peace missions to be civilianising, calling into question and weakening the security dimension of the missions (Albrecht and Stepputat, 2015). In both cases one speaks of the politicisation of the process: of civilian aid/support/assistance because they are now only able to afford to go where peace missions go (e.g., Iraq 1991, Afghanistan 2001), changing their strategies and priorities; of the security dimension because they take into account social and political aspects that were not part of the analysis or the rules of engagement until then.

These dynamics resulted in an analysis of the peace-security, security-development and peace-security-development nexus, in a way questioning the broad concept of peace, where security and development could be considered dimensions of peace. In fact, from practice, it was quickly realised that these dimensions cannot simply be placed under the same peace mission mandate, thus reflecting a concept of positive peace, as both involve different actors, who follow and apply distinct principles of action, framed by studies and analyses with their own theories, concepts and logics (Development Studies, Security Studies) and with intense and extensive field experience.

This analysis of the links also resulted in the discussion about the best time for each type of intervention to be carried out: sequentially (*continuum* – humanitarian, security and development support) or simultaneously (*contiguuum*), in which the different dimensions overlapped in order to better support the objectives of each dimension and thus be coordinated within the same peace mission (Duffield, 2001; Armiño, 2002; Marquette and Beswick, 2011). This debate has already been partially overcome and there is recognition that a peace mission must adjust its mandate and

the nature of its intervention according to the reality in which it operates, with it being crucial, at the very least, to be reactive to local needs and, at the most, to be able to prevent threats to peace and potentiate/promote actions that contribute to the rooting and promotion of cultures of peace (Freire and Lopes, 2013).

The broadening of the concept of peace and the complexity of the mandates of peace missions have also resulted in an essentially technical approach, devoid of support at the level of the social fabric in terms of reconciliation, creation and promotion of cultures of peace (Blanco, 2020). Currently, on the one hand, the concept of peace has been qualified to try to better understand the outcome of these interventions: hybrid peace (Mac Ginty, 2010), emancipatory peace (Richmond, 2020), virtual peace (Richmond, 2004). And, on the other hand, the mandates of peace missions have come to be characterised essentially by the promotion of political, social, economic and institutional stability (De Coning, 2018; Curran and Hunt, 2020).

This last adjustment, in which the mandates of peace missions became essentially focused on promoting stability, ended up determining a divergence between the concept of peace and peace missions as proposed and understood within the scope of Peace Studies and the concept of peace underlying the mandates of these peace missions centred on a re-establishment of the *status quo*. This understanding that violent conflicts and wars are a constant that need to be managed and mitigated underlying Security Studies is rejected by Peace Studies. According to Peace Studies, in a situation of violent conflict, the adoption of a violent or peaceful response is a choice and not an inevitability (Freire and Lopes, 2008). Peace Studies, since their genesis, propose to change the *status quo* in terms of conflict management, focusing on a framework of transformation of the conflicts themselves. And it is within this scope that the concepts of positive peace, cultures

of peace and emancipatory peace become crucial and gain distance in relation to interventions in the name of peace. If, on the one hand, the key concepts of Peace Studies have shaped the goals, instruments and policies to be adopted at international level, on the other hand, the way these same goals, instruments and policies have been implemented has fallen far short of what Galtung's core value of positive peace embodies. Over the last decades it has become evident that the impact that Peace Studies had on the international framework for action revealed, once again, a certain level of acceptance of the dominant liberal paradigm, centred on a statocentric plan of action, resulting in a virtual peace characterised by unsustainability and superficiality.

Security in International Relations

As regards the concept of security, and over the past decades, it is relatively consensual that it has also undergone significant changes and adaptations in order to respond to threats that have also been changing and evolving both at national and international level. These changes also implied a necessary adjustment of security policies and instruments, as the focus of threats broadened, requiring new and/or adapted measures and responses and increasingly implying approaches that went beyond military issues. In fact, it is possible to argue that the concerns regarding the progressive erosion of the principle of territorial sovereignty, especially when placed alongside issues related to human rights and fundamental freedoms, were giving way to other broader concerns of global scope, including the impacts of climate change, development problems, global health or even migratory flows, among others. Although the state remains an important reference in terms of defining security agendas and priorities, the truth is

that it now shares the responsibility of promoting security with other actors, namely international organisations and even private security companies (Freire et al., 2012, 83-84).

It is in this context that Critical Security Studies emerge, which question the traditional objects and subjects of security, as well as the nature of threats. Still, this is a heterogeneous field of analysis, within which several approaches may be identified. Authors such as Ken Booth or Wyn Jones, references in Critical Security Studies, underline the normative approach underlying it, based on a questioning of the role and centrality of the State and on the promotion of the idea of the importance of individual security (Booth, 1991, 2007; Jones, 1999). On the other hand, authors such as Barry Buzan, Ole Waever or Japp de Wilde, associated with the so-called Copenhagen School, underline the securitization potential of several issues present in the international agenda, from which they assume a significant level of political use and treatment as an exceptional threat (climate change, migrations, underdevelopment, among others) (Buzan et al., 1998).

In a certain sense, the aim of this approach is to focus on the way the security agenda is being broadened in order to give focus and centrality to new themes and objects more centred on economic, environmental and social issues (Buzan et al., 1998, 1). At the same time, besides this broadening, a logic of securitisation of these new security themes is underlined, from which not only reference objects which constitute a threat are identified, but also the so-called functional actors which influence decision-making in this process in the face of these same threats. The logic underlying the securitisation process is, therefore, to elevate to a circumstance of exceptionality certain themes and topics which come to be seen and presented as representing a threat to the security of individuals. This also allows legitimising exceptional measures of response to those same threats among an audience which is receptive to that discourse and

conceptualisation. In this context, and in the perspective of these authors, securitisation always implies a political choice, implying the recognition of the authority of the actors of securitisation and of that general understanding of what constitutes a threat (Buzan et al., 1998, 25 and 29).

Another important dimension that underlies these more critical approaches to security is that of emancipation articulated as a fundamental goal for ensuring individual security. This emancipatory dimension has been defined by Booth as that 'which frees people (whether as individuals or groups) from the physical and human bonds that prevent them from doing something they would freely choose to do' (1991, 319). In this context, the importance of Critical Security Studies is highlighted insofar as they allow underlining and promoting an active and transformative role by people in security processes (Booth, 2007).

The Paris School, on the other hand, associated with authors such as Didier Bigo, focuses on the co-constitutive dynamics of actors, mechanisms and security practices, having innovated at the level of the reflection on security issues by introducing topics to the debates such as immigration, terrorism and transnational crimes, based on the concept of the deterritorialisation of these threats. In a certain way, it distinguishes itself from the Copenhagen School by the way it stresses and highlights the dimension of security practices as more salient than the dimension of the security discourse (Lopes, 2006).

What we would like to highlight in terms of what all these critical approaches to security have in common is that they offer alternative proposals and views on how (in)security should be conceived, challenging and going beyond the traditional view of state security and focusing on the broader political, economic and social dynamics that also go far beyond concerns with the military dimension of threats to state security (Ullman, 1983; Booth, 1991; Jones, 1999).

In other words, Critical Security Studies challenges universal and universalizable conceptions of security rather than merely taking into account the process through which it is conceived and addressed by the various actors involved in the process, including the influence of political considerations in the process. All with the aim of understanding how these – actors and processes – influence and impact specific security practices and contexts (Booth, 2007; Jones, 1999).

This process of broadening what can be considered security agendas also implies a process of broadening what can be considered security threats and about whom our security objects and referents should be. In this context, the question that has been raised is regarding the security referent, whose security? It is, to a large extent, in this context that the concept of ‘human security’ emerges, as a concept that comes to question the traditional and statocentric conceptualizations of security, focused on territorial integrity, state interests and military means to ensure them (Armiño and Azkue, 2013, 11). More specifically, it is in the 1994 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Report that statocentric concepts of security are openly criticised for neglecting the legitimate concerns and expectations of individuals in terms of guarantees of their security, well-being and daily survival. The focus is then on the security of people as central actors in security processes and agendas (UNDP, 1994), including economic security, food security and security against oppression (UNDP, 1994).

In this sense, the main objective of the concept of human security is to ensure three fundamental types of security: *freedom from want*, *freedom from fear* and *freedom to live in dignity*. All these dimensions are reflected and even underlined later on in the 2003 Report of the Commission on Human Security, which was created in 2001 within the framework of the United Nations. In this Report, it is recognised that:

Human security in its broadest sense encompasses much more than the absence of violent conflict. It includes human rights, good governance, access to education and health, ensuring that every individual has access to opportunities and choices [that enable them] to fulfil their own potential. (Commission on Human Security 2003, 4)

This definition highlights an attempt to give content and substance to this concept, which can be seen as being too broad, 'elastic' and even subjective similar to the evolution of the concept of peace analysed above. The aim is, with this, to enable the definition of concrete policies, practices and approaches that can enable the fulfilment of conditions of humanity and prevent more structural forms of violence and insecurity that characterise the international system and also the internal dynamics between states and people (Nascimento, 2019).

It is visible how the concept of security also ends up being the result of the various questionings and critical positions already mentioned before in relation to the classical views and approaches to security. But, in fact, it has become a kind of paradigm shift for all those involved in these processes, from academics, *practitioners* and policy makers, becoming central in analyses and decisions (Armiño and Azkue, 2013). However, its elasticity and comprehensiveness also make it an open and widely contested concept as 'ambitious but ill-defined' in that it incorporates 'a very broad set of threats to people's security, making it difficult to respond to this broad agenda in practice' (Kotsopoulos, 2006, 6).

However, and despite all the contestation and criticism, the truth is that the concept of human security, as well as that of human development, are gaining centrality in the debates and practices around international security. And, as we will see in the next section, it also becomes visible in the security agenda of the EU as a peace and security actor.

The EU's conceptual framework for peace and security

In 2012, the European Union was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for its contribution to peace and reconciliation, as well as to democracy and human rights in Europe. While, on the one hand, this prize recognises the EU's role as an actor of peace in European territory, on the other, it draws attention to the EU's capacity and competence in promoting peace, particularly in other geographies (Castañeda, 2014). And while there is 'no single 'universal' peace narrative formulated and projected by the EU' (Chaban et al., 2017, 1284), in fact there is 'a vision of normative identity where peace is a core norm' (Chaban et al., 2017, 1284). As Tocci (2008) notes, the EU is itself a peace project. This normative identity has always been projected through the definition of rules, the promotion of democracy and human rights, the rule of law, development assistance policies, all elements that contribute to a positive peace. But it is only with the Treaty of Maastricht (1991) that the EU presents clearer foreign policy objectives, including reference to conflict resolution as well as the strengthening of international security. These objectives are later reiterated in the Lisbon Treaty (2009), which states that the EU's External Service aims to preserve peace, prevent conflicts and strengthen international security. The pursuit of these objectives should be guided by the principles of democracy, human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law.

The Lisbon Treaty paves the way for a broader and more holistic vision and approach regarding the global security policy promoted by the EU. This Treaty includes several administrative and approach to action reforms, promoting a more consistent global security policy by the EU, but also necessarily making room for new challenges that the EU has had to deal with (Zwolski, 2012, 79).

The definition of the contexts of EU action has also been undergoing changes, reflecting different understandings of peace and

security. If with the Treaty of Amsterdam (1998) and the ‘Petersberg Tasks’, humanitarian, peacekeeping and combat actions within a conflict management framework become part of the EU, the Treaty of Lisbon reinforces and extends these actions, including disarmament operations, military assistance and advice, prevention of violent conflicts and post-violent conflict stabilization. The EU’s own action on peace and security has been framed by reference documents such as the ‘European Security Strategy’ (ESS) (2003), the ‘Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy’ (EUGS) (2006) and, more recently, the ‘Strategic Compass’ (2022). It is important to clarify that although most of these documents discuss a concept of security, the concept of peace is essentially underpinned by the actions and instruments adopted in these various identified areas of action.

Thus, the adoption of the 2003 European Security Strategy is considered a decisive moment in the EU’s trajectory as far as security agendas are concerned and which aims to project the Union as a global security actor and guarantor. This document was also seen at the time as a more or less natural consequence and result of relatively successful integration and enlargement processes which, ultimately, contribute to the promotion of peace and security in an increasingly enlarged European space (Freire et al., 2022; Simão, 2022). In the ESS it is also very clearly established why ‘Europe should be ready to assume its responsibility for global security and building a better world’ (EU, 2003). Although the ESS still refers to traditional security threats as relevant, it mainly underlines and establishes a broader understanding of these threats and what constitutes security, reflecting ‘the broader security threats and a deepening of new security referential objects in the international security agenda’ (Zwolski, 2012, 71; Williams, 2008, 7-9).

Building on this broader understanding, the EU makes its commitment by subscribing to the concept of human security as an increasingly central and relevant concept (Zwolski, 2012; European

Commission, 2009, 6; European Council, 2006). For example, it establishes that security is a precondition for development and recognises that in many parts of the developing world, poverty and disease cause immense suffering and contribute to the emergence of growing security concerns. Although the ESS does not elaborate or explicitly identify a European human security agenda, this dimension is underlying, and a Working Group was even established in 2003 to assess and consider the possibility of formulating a European human security policy and define action plans for its implementation within the framework of the ESS (Kostopolous, 2006, 12). It is possible to state that some of the conceptual and operational instruments conceived in the framework of this nexus to deal with more complex situations of violence, underdevelopment and insecurity represented a valid aspiration and an important contribution to promote and achieve more sustainable and humane forms of peace (Nascimento, 2019), referring in this way to an implicit concept of positive peace. The concept of human security thus, to some extent, underpins the EU's commitment to linking security and development objectives. The security-development nexus has become a key dimension of the ESS and the European Consensus on Development underpinning the whole European policy on development support. Essentially, the complementarity between security and development as essential elements supporting relations with third countries is underlined (European Council, 2003; Zwolski, 2012, 71). In this sense, some of the conceptual and operational instruments designed within the framework of this nexus to deal with more complex situations of violence, underdevelopment and insecurity can be seen as a valid aspiration and an important contribution to promoting and achieving more sustainable and humane forms of peace (Nascimento, 2019), thus referring to an implicit concept of positive peace.

In this framework, and according to some authors, CSDP missions and policies at EU level 'do not represent the full picture of the

EU's international security role' and other instruments and policies outside this framework should be taken into account' (Zwolski, 2012, 75). This perspective therefore assumes that the EU should seek to promote and achieve its security objectives through integration and enlargement, but also by promoting liberal values and multilateralism based on the principles of international law, meeting a newly implicit concept of positive peace. It is possible to verify this logic in the EU's practical action on a global scale, starting with economic and financial instruments, development promotion and technical assistance (Zwolski, 2012, 75).

Sven Biscop, for example, also argues that the ESS is more a foreign policy strategy document than a security strategy document, as it is not necessarily designed as a concrete response to threats of violence (Biscop, 2008, 12). According to him, this issue refers to the conceptual limits and difficulties of human security, especially in contexts where security priorities and difficulties are intertwined (Buzan and Hansen, 2009, 204).

In a sense, the European Consensus on Development illustrates this dilemma in that it is unclear which goals should be prioritised when the values underlying them are different and not necessarily compatible (Zwolski, 2012, 73). It is further suggested that the ESS and the Implementation Report should only be seen as a partial global affirmation strategy and that while they identify a set of guidelines on how the EU can act from a preventative, holistic and multilateral perspective, they ultimately fail to explain clearly what it should actually do (Biscop, 2009, 3). This argument is, to some extent shared by others, such as Howorth (2010, 464) who argues that 'the EU should adopt a more calculated strategic approach and finally start thinking in terms of broad 'goals', allowing it to make the best use of the wide range of crisis management tools at its disposal.

Following this narrative and the missions/operations and instruments implemented, Richmond et al. (2011) even mention

that the EU, in the first decade of the twenty-first century, began to emerge as a major actor in regional and global *peacebuilding* efforts. These authors suggest that in 2011, the EU would be well positioned to overcome the contradictions and limits of the liberal peace model promoted by the UN and other international organisations, as it had developed a normative framework and practical tools to be able to promote a ‘just and lasting peace’ (Richmond et al., 2011).

However, one of the criticisms that has been made to this security-development-peace nexus is that it promotes a certain invisibilization of the difficulties in determining the causal relationships between the different areas of action involved in it, which makes the ability to define policies adjusted to the various contexts more limited (Nascimento, 2019). The focus on this *soft power* approach by the EU in security matters should not, however, lead us to believe that it implies the neglect of the use of its *hard power*, since the two are not mutually exclusive. As Sven Biscop puts it, ‘comprehensive security’ corresponds to ‘the recognition of the interdependence between all dimensions of security – political, socio-economic, cultural, ecological, and military – hence the need to formulate integrated policies across all of them’ (Biscop, 2008). The CSDP has provided the EU with an approach to crisis and conflict management on par with those developed by traditional international organisations such as NATO, the UN or the OSCE (Deschaux-Beaume, 2011). The originality and value-added of the EU with this crisis management policy lies in its integrated approach combining military and civilian instruments (Deschaux-Beaume, 2011).

Anyway, in this first phase, the EU has essentially responded with its civil and normative power, only resorting to military power when situations have become critical. Although all three types of power: civil, normative and military are alive and commend themselves, there seems to be a clear progression in the order in which they

are put into practice, with military power coming in last in almost all cases. (Stivachtis, 2013, 14)

Authors such as Savković (2010) agree with this analysis, stating that ‘the comparative advantage of the EU method is that it is more acceptable to the conflicting parties because it is based on diplomatic negotiations. The ‘military solution is not the main focus and has a wide inventory of instruments needed for post-conflict stabilisation and reconstruction’. In this way, ‘the EU has used a different approach to assert itself in international relations as a leader of often complex peace support operations’ (Savković, 2010).

Just as it is vital to include ‘new’ security problems within the framework of analyses of the EU as a global security actor, it is equally vital to go beyond the framework of CSDP missions to explore the wider and more varied range of security instruments at the EU’s disposal. The reality suggests, in fact, that the EU has increasingly used different formats in terms of measures to respond to more traditional security threats, including measures of a political and economic nature. It is precisely the variety of instruments and resources that can be mobilised as part of the EU’s external action that allows its potential to contribute to violent conflict prevention and peacebuilding to be considered particularly promising (Juncos and Blockmans, 2018).

Still, we can also identify some obstacles in terms of fully assessing the EU’s performance in this regard. One of the most important obstacles concerns the question of the EU grand strategy and the extent to which such diverse instruments for responding to security threats are implemented and used with a clear purpose and reflecting clear and well-defined strategic objectives (Zwolski, 2012, 78).

The 2016 EU Global Strategy (EUGS) ultimately also contributes to this view that the EU can and should take a more central place in the global order with a view to consolidating its power and capacity to promote peace and security, both in Europe and beyond

(EU, 2016; Simon, 2022). At the same time, it recognises the various areas in which the EU should be involved and engaged, and which should go far beyond military capabilities and counter-terrorism measures to include the promotion of more just, inclusive societies, human rights and post-violent conflict reconstruction (EU, 2016, 4; Freire et al., 2022).

Since 2003, the EU had implemented more than a dozen military operations/missions and, according to Palm and Crum (2019), the justification and coordination of these missions with other foreign policy instruments affect the nature of the EU as an international actor. These authors suggest that the EU's identity has begun to evolve towards an identity along the lines of 'liberal power', as they identify a shift from value-based justifications ('normative power') to utility/interest-based justifications, and that military operations have become more embedded in EU foreign policy in general (Palm and Crum, 2019).

The EUGE constitutes, in fact, a new security (and foreign policy) narrative that ultimately redefines the very identity and nature of the EU as a global actor (Sanahuja, 2019). This new identity is distinct from the cosmopolitan and universalist vision of the 2003 ESS (Sanahuja, 2019; Leonard, 2017). We are witnessing a change in the role that the EU gives itself from a world-transforming narrative in line with its values to a defensive narrative, 'prioritising its own interests and the protection of its citizens in the face of an increasingly hostile world reluctant to be governed and reformed by Western powers' (Sanahuja, 2019, 410; Leonard, 2017). This change has also materialised through the development of a securitising legitimacy for the EU, referred to by different authors as an under-analysed aspect. Sperling and Webber (2019) refer to the EU's ability to mobilise efforts towards the collective securitisation of various threats; and Lucarelli (2019) points out that in turbulent times the EU's role as a global actor

has been reaffirmed through its collective securitisation capacity. The result of these dynamics is visible: in recent decades, ‘the civilian dimension of CSDP can be said to have developed in the shadow of its military counterpart’ (Juncos, 2020, 74), even being considered as the ‘ugly duckling’ of the EU’s approach to situations of violence (Pirozzi, 2018). However, according to Juncos (2020, 74), this civilian dimension of CSDP is actually the dimension that best mirrors the way in which the EU’s role as an international security actor has evolved as well as the kind of power it has been able to exert in this area.

In order to respond to several of the issues mentioned and to capitalise on the recurrently identified potential in a firmer and more assertive manner and also, to some extent, accelerated by the war situation in Europe since the invasion of Ukraine by Russia on 24 February 2022, the European Commission announced a new security and defence strategy for the period 2022-2030, replacing the ‘European Security Agenda’, further broadening the focus of EU action on security. This document, which was called ‘Strategic *Compass*’ (*A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence*) was formally approved on 21 March 2022, aiming to set out the tools and measures to be developed and implemented by member states in the coming years on promoting security in the physical and digital context. This ‘Strategic Compass’ is organised around four key pillars: crisis management, defence capabilities, resilience, and partnerships with allies to address common threats and challenges. These main axes of action are oriented towards the promotion of a forward-looking security environment, the need to respond to changing threats, the protection of European citizens from threats arising from terrorism and organised crime, and the promotion of a strong European security ecosystem. The *Strategic Compass* is thus presented as a fundamentally operational document, foreseeing a set of measures to be jointly developed

by the EU and seeking to operationalise and give more strategic meaning to the instruments that the Union already has, namely the European Peace Facility, the European Defence Fund or even the European Defence Agency.

The aim is therefore to promote a truly strategic vision for the EU on security issues, promoting a more geopolitical Europe that is more consistent in the political, strategic, operational, technological and industrial fields. This entails some risks as it is the first time that an attempt is being made to identify a set of very specific threats based on the definition of a set of more concrete measures and instruments. Based on the principles of solidarity in the face of common security and defence threats from all European countries (including the neighbourhood), the aim is to consolidate European defence capabilities not only for its own security and defence, but also to better and more effectively respond to wider international peace and security challenges. As stated in the approved document, this need is all the more important at a time when the European context is faced with a complex war which will inevitably lead to geopolitical changes and a necessary redefinition of defence priorities and strategic objectives which will also allow greater decision-making autonomy for the EU and its insertion in a new security and defence order in Europe (in conjunction with NATO) and in the world, in conjunction with the UN.

This document also introduces some risks or challenges, namely the management between the expectations it creates and the real capabilities that the EU has at its disposal to achieve those goals and objectives. Even so, it seems clear that the 27 intend to strengthen and increasingly assert their role as a security actor rather than a peace actor, especially in a context where the challenges to their own security and defence are obvious and require, more than ever, a common position.

Conclusion

It is indisputable that regardless of the analyses and expectations associated with the EU's role in the international system, the EU is today recognised as an international peace and security actor. This statement is grounded not only in the policies and instruments developed by the EU, but also in its operational actions and interventions in this area. As peace is a vital and structural element of the idea of 'Europe' built and projected by the European project, this concept has not been explicitly discussed within the scope of its projection beyond its borders. It is as if it were part of its normative identity, even when it is not mentioned. The concept of security has had a much more careful and committed attention. However, this idea of 'actor of peace' is inseparable, even if it is contested, when the EU defines, implements, acts as an actor of security. Juncos (2020, 75) states that the EU's involvement, even when symbolic, 'promotes a particular security identity: of a normative, multilateral actor committed to developing an integrated approach to conflict and crisis'.

Even so, there are several limits and difficulties that have been pointed out to the European Union in terms of its true capacity to incorporate, in a more assertive and clearer way, the various instruments and security policies that go beyond more military conceptions. One of these limits relates to the recurring issue of inconsistency and institutional and horizontal incoherence and to which the Lisbon Treaty sought to respond, although not always with the expected results (Zwolski, 2012, 79). But it is possible to identify other obstacles, well summarised by Zwolski (2012, 80), namely: the difficulty in delimiting security and other policies due to the contested nature of the concept of security; the prevalence of different perceptions of security at Member State level, even when an apparent consensus is visible in terms of the security strategies to be defined at European level; the lack of a

‘grand strategy’ or a cross-cutting ‘strategic vision’ that would enable better use to be made of the diversity of security instruments available to the Union; the difficulty in ensuring consistency in the development and operationalisation of European security policies at international level.

Many of the limitations identified to the EU’s actions as a peace and security actor also follow the criticisms made of UN peace missions, with regard to the administrative structure, the relationship with local dynamics, the relationship between civilians and the military or the medium-long term impact of these actions. The internal complexity of the EU is also reflected in the dynamics of decision-making and the operationalisation of actions to promote EU peace and security. Several authors point out that the most powerful member states have been the agenda-setters (Gegout, 2009) and that in many cases, such as in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), efforts to build peace and security ‘are severely compromised by the bureaucratic and organisational complexity’ of the EU (Froitzheim et al., 2011). Similar to analyses carried out on UN peace missions, several EU missions have also revealed a disconnect between concepts of peace and security and the local reality where the missions are operationalised (Juncos, 2012, 2018). Again, in the case of the DRC, the EU’s statocentric approach has resulted in its failure to take into account the realities of governance in the country, as well as the important cross-border dimensions of violence (Froitzheim et al., 2011).

Regarding the relationship between promoting (positive) peace and security, Heredia (2021), for example, finds that EU peacebuilding missions have been reconfigured, with the EU increasingly downplaying the goal of good governance and placing military capacity as central to international peace and security. ‘Contributing to the military capacity of states has moved from a commitment and a means to an end, to the very goal’ (Heredia, 2021, 311). Finally, all

these limitations and criticisms result, as in the case of UN missions, in a questioning of the impact of these actions in terms of building or consolidating peace and security in the intervened states and societies (Faleg, 2020, 135).

Undoubtedly, we can assume that the experiences and lessons drawn from the implementation of the various policies, instruments and conceptual and operational approaches that have accompanied the evolution of the EU as a peace and security actor reveal the transformation that has taken place and the transition from an essentially regional position to one in which it progressively asserts itself as a global security actor (Sharma, 2021).

Still, it is also indisputable that the return of war to Europe after the totally unjustified and illegal aggression against Ukraine by Russia opens another huge door to more and significant geopolitical changes in the European – and also global – space that open a huge space for new and complex threats to pose to the EU and its closest neighbourhood. More than ever, the Union has felt the urgency to (re)position itself and to (re)think its role as a security and defence actor out of doors, but also within its borders. In fact, the European Union's response to the war in Ukraine was immediate and assertive, including, for example, the activation of the European Peace Facility immediately after the beginning of the war to allow for military assistance measures and the supply of military equipment to Ukraine (Nunes, 2022, 6), demonstrating, for many for the first time in decades, a common position towards the challenges ahead and with a view to defending the European security and defence order. With this strengthening of the cohesion and unity of the EU, achieved at the cost of an extreme episode that threatens its own security and existence, we may be facing a strategic repositioning and consolidation of the EU as a security and defence actor, but perhaps moving it a little further away from its dimension of peace promotion.

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**BEYOND THE OBVIOUS:
INSTITUTIONAL ACTORS OF THE EU IN
THE CFSP POLICY CYCLE**

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Abstract: Almost three decades after its creation by the Treaty on European Union (TEU), the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) continues to be understood as a markedly intergovernmental domain, in which the decision-making and implementation remain in the hands of the Member States (MS), while supranational institutions, such as the Commission and the European Parliament, are side-lined. While not contesting the relevance of the MS in foreign policy formulation and decision-making, the literature has shown that other institutional actors, aside from the European Council and the Council of the European Union, have gradually and strategically taken on an increasingly proactive stance in the CFSP's agenda-setting and policy formula-

tion. Building on the policy cycle (agenda-setting; formulation; decision-making; implementation and evaluation) theoretical framework, this chapter aims to map these actors (European Council, Council of the European Union, European Commission, European Parliament) and their role in the different phases of the political process, as well as to analyse some of the strategies that they use to expand their competences and enhance their influence in an area in which States traditionally show great reluctance to transfer competences to the supranational level.

Keywords: European Union; CFSP; Policy Cycle; European Council; Council of the European Union; European Commission; European Parliament

Introduction

Foreign policy, security and defence are traditionally understood as core areas of the States' sovereignty, as they aim to protect their essential elements, populations, government and territory. It is not then surprising that, as a rule, States are particularly reluctant to give up competences in these domains, a reluctance which is confirmed by the process of European integration. The delimitation of competences of the European Union (EU) is governed by the principle of allocation, in other words, the EU acts within the limit of the competences which are attributed (delegated) to it by the Member States (MS) and to achieve the objectives set out in the Treaties. During the first four decades of the process of European construction, the MS delegated the necessary powers to the Communities for the deepening economic integration, maintaining powers at the national level for what is considered high politics, as is the case of security and defence.

This does not mean that these matters were completely absent at the community level. Following the failure of the European Defence

Community¹, the need to establish cooperation on foreign policy returned to the agenda of European leaders in the final years of the 1960s and the early 1970s. The so-called European Political Cooperation (EPC) was established in 1976, outside the framework of the Treaty of the European Economic Community². The Single European Act (1987) institutionalised the EPC³, maintaining the intergovernmental nature of cooperation, and defining a European foreign policy as an objective, that would include the political and economic dimensions of security (but exclude defence).

It was, however, the Treaty on European Union (TEU), signed in Maastricht in 1992, which took the decisive step towards the inclusion of cooperation on security (and defence), henceforth within a single institutional framework⁴. The TEU (1993) arose as a result of internal dynamics of development, but also as a response to the ‘acceleration of history’ (Delors, 1989) that led to the disintegration of the Soviet bloc and the consequent end to the bipolar world order. The uncertainty of the new (dis)order that emerged from the end of the Cold War confronted Europe with the need to guarantee the security, inside and outside its borders and, therefore, to coordinate the dimensions of the internal and external security of the common area. Even so, the MS remained reluctant to transfer competencies in these areas, resulting in a complex structure that based the recently

¹ In 1952 the Treaty of Paris was signed which founded the European Defence Community. The ratification process of the Treaty, however, was interrupted following its rejection in 1954 by the French National Assembly.

² Treaty of Rome signed in 1957.

³ The SEA codified the practices of the EPC with a specific organisational structure (outside the institutional framework of the EEC), including the Political Committee, the group of ‘European correspondents’ and a permanent secretariat headquartered in Brussels to assist the Community Presidency.

⁴ Despite having done away with the organizational duplication established by the revision of the Single European Act, the European institutions have different powers in the CFSP (TEU) from those they exercise in the areas of public policy located in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

created EU, thus stripped of its legal personality, on three pillars: European Communities, CFSP, and Justice and Home Affairs (JHA). The distinguishing feature of the second and third pillars created by the Maastricht Treaty was precisely their intergovernmentality, in other words, the fact that the decision remained exclusively in the hands of the MS. In the CFSP's case, this feature remained:

One fundamental aspect of the CFSP, including the CSDP, is its intergovernmental nature, with the leading role played by the Member States. Foreign and defence policies are perceived as largely executive powers and as strong and essential symbols of national sovereignty. (European Court of Auditors, 2019, 9)

Conceiving the CFSP as an intergovernmental policy resulted in the side-lining of supranational actors, such as the European Commission (henceforth Commission), the European Parliament (PE) and the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU), reserving the leading role for the European Council and the Council of the European Union (henceforth Council). In its original wording, the provisions of the TEU regarding CFSP (Articles J to J.11) specified that the EP be consulted and informed (Article J.7) and included the vague idea that the Commission should be fully 'associated' with the tasks carried out in the domain of foreign and security policy (Article J.9). The amendments made by the reform Treaties that followed⁵ did not fundamentally alter this situation. On the other hand, the EU institutions are considered 'purposeful opportunists' (Cram, 1993), or, in other words, actors that take advantage of or create windows of opportunity to maximise their powers and to advance their preferences, even in areas where the treaties allocate them limited formal powers. The literature has demonstrated that

⁵ Treaty of Amsterdam (1999), Treaty of Nice (2003) and Treaty of Lisbon (2009).

in the sensitive domain of security, actors such as the EP and the Commission especially have also often played a more important role in placing issues on the agenda and in policy-making than was expected, considering their formal powers (Brandão and Camisão, 2021; Riddervold, 2016).

In this chapter, we will take a specific look at the CFSP⁶, within the existing legal framework, through the lens of the cycle of public policies – or policy cycle (Lasswell, 1956; Jones 1970; Anderson 1975) – focusing on the role of four institutions: the European Council; the Council; the Commission; and the EP. Even though the CFSP displays fundamental differences compared to other EU public policies (starting with the abovementioned intergovernmentality), the design of the CFSP broadly conforms to the cycle of public policies: agenda-setting (‘deciding what to decide’), policy formulation (‘what are the alternatives?’), decision-making (‘deciding what (not) to do’), implementation, policy feedback (‘completing and shaping the policy cycle’) (Young e Roederer-Rynning, 2020). While we acknowledge the relevance of the criticisms made about the model (Jann and Wegrich, 2007; Young and Roederer-Rynning, 2020), in particular concerning its static nature and the fact that its stages cannot be easily compartmentalised or sequenced (Sabatier, 2007), we nevertheless consider it a useful tool to render the complexity of the policy-making process ‘intelligible’, thereby allowing for the institutional actors involved in the process (some more evidently than others) to be more easily mapped. Revisiting the argument that classifies some of these actors as ‘purposeful opportunists’, we will also attempt to identify some of the strategies (including informal ones) that less conspicuous actors make use of to expand their powers and increase their influence in domains traditionally in the hands of the MS.

⁶ Although the chapter mentions the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) where necessary, it is not its subject.

CFSP: Objectives, Values and Instruments and Actors

The Treaty of Lisbon (TL) bases the EU's external action on the Union's founding principles, the same principles it seeks to advance around the world: democracy, the rule of law, the universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for human dignity, the principles of equality and solidarity and respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law (Article 21 of the TEU). The same is true with regards to the specific provisions regarding the CFSP (Article 23 of the TEU). The CFSP thus aims to promote peace, security and progress in Europe and the world. Forming part of the CFSP, the common security and defence policy (CSDP) aims to strengthen the EU's capacity to act externally, by developing civil and military capacities to prevent conflicts and manage crises⁷. The Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy (henceforth Global Strategy)⁸ of 2016 takes an approach of 'principled pragmatism'⁹ – namely unity, commitment, responsibility, democracy, partnership (European Council, 2016) – reaffirming that the credibility and influence of the EU in the world will depend not only on the internal unity and the efficacy and consistency of its policies, but also the adherence to the values set out in the Treaties.

The EU has various instruments at its disposal in order to achieve its objectives under the CFSP: strategies; decisions (that may define

⁷ Cf. CFSP Programme Performance Overview. Available online: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/about_the_european_commission/eu_budget/programme_performance_overview_-_cfsp.pdf [18.01.2022].

⁸ Cf. Shared vision, common action – A stronger Europe: a global strategy for the European Union's foreign and security policy. Available online: <https://op.europa.eu/pt/publication-detail/-/publication/3eaae2cf-9ac5-11e6-868c-01aa75ed71a1> [18.01.2022].

⁹ 'We will be guided by clear principles. These stem as much from a realistic assessment of the strategic environment as from an idealistic aspiration to advance a better world.' (European Council, 2016, p. 16)

actions¹⁰ or positions¹¹ to be taken by the Union); restrictive measures (sanctions)¹²; dialogue and diplomacy (meetings; declarations; diplomatic efforts; the appointment of special representatives); diplomatic missions (to observe and gather information; monitoring); reinforced cooperation; international agreements; (civil) missions and (military) operations of the CSDP; systematic cooperation between the MS. With regard to financial instruments, the supranational budget allocation for the CFSP¹³ is worth noting, reflecting the expenditure related to (multilateral and bilateral) projects in the area of non-proliferation and disarmament, to the special representatives, to the actions to stabilise and to the CSDP's civil missions¹⁴.

The complex mesh of actors involved in the CFSP includes: the European Council, including the President and the respective support office, which includes advisors in the field¹⁵; the Council, including COREPER (II), the Political and Security Committee (PSC), working parties (e.g. Working Party of Foreign Relations Counsellors; Working Party on Non-Proliferation and Arms Exports), the External

¹⁰ In accordance with Article 28(1) of the TEU, the decisions related to an operational action 'shall lay down their objectives, scope, the means to be made available to the Union, if necessary their duration, and the conditions for their implementation.' It should be noted that, when adopting a national position or taking a national action, pursuant to a decision related to an operational action, 'information shall be provided by the Member State concerned in time to allow, if necessary, for prior consultations within the Council.' (Paragraph 3 of the aforementioned Article)

¹¹ Pursuant to Article 29, 'decisions which shall define the approach of the Union to a particular matter of a geographical or thematic nature.'

¹² See the interactive map of sanctions adopted by the EU, available: <https://sanctionsmap.eu/#/main>.

¹³ For up-to-date information, see the monthly CFSP Budget Reports.

¹⁴ The budget additionally includes a specific allocation for the CSDP, reflecting the European Defence Fund and Military Mobility. We should also note the off-budget instrument, the European Peace Facility, aimed at financing the shared costs of CSDP missions and operations, as well as assistance measures in support of third states and international organisations (see: Council Decision (CFSP) 2021/509 of 22 March 2021 establishing a European Peace Facility, and repealing Decision (CFSP) 2015/528).

¹⁵ For more information, consult: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/pt/european-council/president/cabinet>.

Relations Directorate General (RELEX) of the General Secretariat and the Directorate-General I 'CFSP team' of the Legal Service; the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (henceforth the High Representative) supported by the European External Action Service (EEAS); the (144) delegations (and offices) of the EU in third states; the Special Representatives¹⁶; the European Commission, including the HR (Vice-President / Commissioner for External Relations), the Commissioner for Crisis Management, the Commissioner for Neighbourhood and Enlargement, the Commissioner for International Partnerships, the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, the Directorate-General for International Partnerships, the Service for Foreign Policy Instruments, the Directorate G External Relations of the Secretariat-General and the Directorate I CFSP Team of the Legal Service; the EP, including the Parliamentary Committees and Sub-committees (Foreign Affairs - AFET; Human Rights - DROI; Security and Defence - SEDE), the Directorate-General for External Policies of the Union (DG EXPO) of the Secretariat, and the Interparliamentary Delegations¹⁷; the Member States and respective Permanent Representations in Brussels.

As stated above, this chapter concerns a policy (CFSP) and four institutions (the European Council, the Council, the Commission, and the EP). Although it is not the topic of discussion, it is important to note that there are various policies and respective instruments¹⁸ and actors, aside from the CFSP, which contribute to the European Union's external action. The EU's international action follows a

¹⁶ For more information, consult: https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/3606/EU%20Special%20Representatives

¹⁷ There are currently 44, regulated by the Conference of Presidents Decision of 29 October 2015 regarding Implementing Provisions Governing the Work of Delegations and Missions Outside the European Union, available online: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/123721/IMPLEMENTING-PROVISIONS-GOVERNING-WORK-DELEGATIONS-MISSIONS-OUTSIDE-EU.pdf>.

¹⁸ For more information, see the page for the Service for Foreign Policy Instruments https://ec.europa.eu/fpi/index_en.

Comprehensive Approach, which involves horizontal policy coordination (e.g., CFSP/CSDP, Trade Policy, Humanitarian Aid, Development Cooperation, etc.) and EU institutions on the one hand, and vertical coordination between the European and national level on the other:

Comprehensiveness refers not only to the joined-up deployment of EU instruments and resources, but also to the shared responsibility of EU-level actors and Member States. (European Commission and HR, 2013, 3)

The bridge between the policies included in two different treaties was established by Article 205 of the TFEU¹⁹, aimed at the coherence (horizontal) and consistency (vertical) of the European actor²⁰ in the international arena. The policy differentiation in terms of the nature and degree of the Union's involvement, of the respective outputs and competences of the institutions, is one of the elements that explains the complexity of European coordination when it comes to external policy (Brandão, 2016).

The role of the EU Institutions in the CFSP Policy Cycle

Setting the agenda: between the centrality of the European Council and the activism of the Commission and the EP

The policy cycle starts with an issue being placed on the political agenda, thus becoming an 'issue of concern' (Young and Roederer-Rynning, 2020, 44). In line with the intergovernmental nature of the CFSP, the TEU enshrined the centrality of the institution in which the

¹⁹ See also: Articles 18(4); 21(3); 26(2); 29, of the TEU.

²⁰ See: Articles 13 and 16(6) of the TEU; Article 7 of the TFEU.

highest level of representatives of the MS has a seat (Heads of State and Government), establishing itself as the agenda-setter, policy-shaper and (non-legislative) political decision-maker. In short, we can state that the institution contributes to agenda-setting, by setting priorities, to policy formulation and implementation, by calling for action and supporting it on the part of other institutions and the MS, and to monitoring, through assessing action (Anghel *et al.* 2022, 39). The leadership of the European Council does not depend only on the issue, but also on the moment of its intervention (as crisis manager, deadlock-breaker, shaper, and strategist, usually related to the urgency and sensitivity of the matter) (Van Middelaar and Puetter, 2022).

Pursuant to Articles 22 and 26 of the TEU, the European Council sets the priorities and strategic interests of the EU, as well as the objectives and guidelines of the CFSP, even in matters with defence implications, allowing the institution to be a strategic agenda-setter. The first strategic document in this domain, the 'European Security Strategy', was approved by the European Council of Brussels, in December 2003, and replaced by the 'Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy', adopted by the institution in June 2016 (European Council, 2016).

Beyond this strategic dimension, the institution contributes to putting issues on the agenda or keeping and/or making them a priority through its formal²¹, special²², thematic²³, and also

²¹ There are usually four meetings per year, as underlined in the 'Leaders' Agenda': 'Europe's role in the world will be on the agenda of every European Council meeting. Some issues will be linked to international developments, while others will be strategic discussions or preparations for important meetings with partners.' (European Council, 2020).

²² 'If international developments so require, the President of the European Council shall convene an extraordinary meeting of the European Council in order to define the strategic lines of the Union's policy in the face of such developments.' (Article 26 of the TEU) An example of this is the extraordinary meeting on 21 September 2001, convened following the September 11 terrorist attacks, which set out the first European plan of action to combat terrorism.

²³ For instance, the European Council thematic debate of 19/20 December 2013, dedicated to CSDP, the first on this subject since the entry into force of the Lisbon

informal meetings²⁴. Studies on the content of these meetings demonstrate that issues of external policy are of chief concern to the Heads of State and Government, only surpassed by macroeconomic issues and, during Tusk's mandate, the issue of migration.²⁵ A different analysis, centred on the dynamics of agenda formation (Carammia, Princen and Timmermans, 2016), demonstrates that the European Council adopts either selective targeting²⁶ or routine monitoring²⁷, including the tendency of development of the latter mode.

During each meeting, Conclusions²⁸ are adopted by consensus. Conclusions, while not legally binding, mould the EU's political agenda and the work of its other institutions. The institution also adopts the EU's Strategic Agenda, which sets out the organisation's priority areas of action²⁹. Complementarily, it is important to note

Treaty; the European Council discussion on 16 September 2010 dedicated to the Union's external relations.

²⁴ For example, the Informal Meeting of Heads of State or Government, 12 February 2015, convened following the Paris terrorist attacks. The European Council also holds informal or special meetings with third countries (e.g., Meeting of the EU heads of state or government with Turkey, 29 November 2015, within the context of the then ongoing negotiation process for Turkey's accession).

²⁵ See: Alexandrova *et al.*, 2014, for the period 1975-2012; Alexandrova, 2015, for the period 12/2009-11/2014; Drachenberg, 2018, for the period 12/2014-06/2017; Anghel and Drachenberg, 2019 for a comparison between the presidencies of Herman Van Rompuy and Donald Tusk.

²⁶ '[T]he European Council moves from one issue to the next as it selectively intervenes in issue areas that are at the top of the EU's agenda' (Carammia, Princen and Timmermans, 2016, 812).

²⁷ '[T]he European Council gives more sustained attention to a range of issues to keep tabs on them' (Carammia, Princen and Timmermans, 2016, 812).

²⁸ With the exception of informal meetings, which adopt Declarations. The European Council Conclusions are available online: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/european-council/conclusions/>.

²⁹ See: 'A new strategic agenda 2019-2024', agreed on 20 June 2019, and 'Leaders' Agenda 2020-2021', adopted at the special European Council meeting of 1-2 October 2020.

the work of the institution's president at the level of interinstitutional³⁰ and diplomatic³¹ dialogue.

The European Council has also established itself as an agenda-setter in times of crises, internal and external (Anghel, Drachenberge and de Finance 2016)³². In the words of the first President of the institution, Herman Van Rompuy,

[K]eeping out of day-to-day business which the other institutions do much better (in the well-tested framework of the 'Community Method'), yet springing into action to deal with the special cases – changing the treaty, letting new members in the club, dealing with a crisis. (Van Rompuy, 2012, 6)

Drawing from a joint analysis of the Conclusions of the European Council and the Foreign Affairs Council, in the period between 2014 and 2019, Lehne and Siccardi (2020) concluded that almost 45% of the conclusions concerned events in the EU's neighbourhood³³. The EPRS study on key issues of the European Council is in the same vein:

³⁰ For example, meetings with member of the Commission, the President of the European Council, the Coreper II ambassadors, and special envoys.

³¹ For instance, meetings and telephone conversations with representatives from third countries; visits to third countries; participation in sessions of international organisations and international conferences. In January 2022, during the visit to Slovakia, the key focus of which was the Ukraine situation, the current President of the European Council, Charles Michel, stated: 'A threat against Ukraine is a threat against Europe. That is why we are committed to supporting de-escalation, which we hope can be achieved through diplomatic channels.' (Michel, 2022)

³² 'One of the most striking development [sic] in recent years has been the substantial evolution in the working methods and formations of the European Council. As a result of the series of crisis [sic] of the last decade, we have witnessed an exponential increase in the number and types of meetings. All meetings are indeed meetings of Heads of State or Government, but not all meetings are formal European Council meetings.' (Anghel *et al.*, 2021, III)

³³ The authors identified the following main themes/countries: migration; Ukraine; Syria; Libya; Brexit; Israel/Palestine/the Peace Process in the Middle East; Climate Change; Bosnia and Herzegovina; Venezuela; Iran; Terrorism in the Levant; Turkey; Trade; Central African Republic; North Korea.

The security landscape has strongly deteriorated in the EU's neighbourhood in the past half-decade, both in the south and in the east. This has led the European Council to devote much of its attention to monitoring crises in the Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) countries of the southern neighbourhood, such as Libya and Syria, as well as in the eastern neighbourhood, in particular in Ukraine, and more recently, in Belarus. (Anghel *et al.* 2021, 77)

Since it does not have a permanent administrative structure, its continuity is ensured by the President of the institution and the HR, who, although not a member of the institution, participates in its work (Article 15 of the TEU) and plays an important role in interinstitutional liaison (Council, Commission, European Council); and, for decision support, by the Council and the Commission, which is usually asked to prepare preparatory reports (thematic or geographic). The President of the institution also represents the EU on matters concerning the CFSP, 'without prejudice to the powers' of the HR (Article 15 of the TEU).

A less evident actor, although also relevant in this phase of the policy cycle, is the Commission. Overall, the Commission plays an important role in setting the EU's agenda. While it is not listed among the formal powers conferred on them by the Treaties, their role as agenda-setter derives from the latter. Indeed, the Commission is assigned the task of promoting 'the general interest of the Union' and of taking 'appropriate initiatives to that end' (Article 17(1) TEU). This competence is defined in purposefully vague terms, which allows the Commission to influence the issues that deserve the EU's attention, for example by regularly releasing documents (working papers, reports, communications, etc.) where it contextualises and assesses the evolution of a particular sector or policy, sets short- and long-term objectives and presents solutions to the problems

it considers pressing, often involving the various stakeholders and civil society in the discussion of the problem and the proposals presented (Rhinard, 2016, 208).

The presidentialisation process which we have seen in recent years has also been key to the relevance of the institution as an agenda-setter. More than a *primus inter pares*, the President of the Commission now plays a clear role in the College's political direction and leadership, playing a central role in the appointment of the other Commissioners, the allocation of portfolios³⁴, and the organisation of the Commission. The Commissioners are accountable to the President and must resign should the President request it. Furthermore, the priorities set by the President for his/her mandate (announced during the election process) decisively contribute to the agenda-setting of the institution itself, informing its annual work programmes. In so far as the Commission has a near monopoly on the legislative initiative, these political guidelines therefore serve as the framework of a significant part of the legislative proposals (but also the non-legislative ones) presented by the institution, influencing the path followed by the EU.

In the specific domain of the CFSP, the importance that the two last presidents of the Commission attribute to the role of the EU as a global actor, for example, is evident. One of Jean-Claude Juncker's 10 priorities was for Europe to become a stronger global actor (Juncker, 2014), as is the case with the current President, Ursula von der Leyen, who listed among her 6 priorities the objective of making Europe stronger in the world (von der Leyen, 2019a). It is important to note that, in addition to informing the work programme of both Commissions, these priorities influenced the internal organisation of the Commission itself. For instance,

³⁴ In other words, the specific area for which they are responsible.

Juncker created a commissioners' group on external action³⁵, charged with discussing with other commissioners all issues related to external action. Similarly, von der Leyen created a Group for External Coordination (EXCO), whose objective is to prepare College meetings regarding issues with external dimensions. The new President of the Commission has also repeatedly emphasised the need for a close link between the internal and external dimensions, even presenting it as a defining element of her geopolitical Commission (European Commission, 2020).

Despite the above, the Commission's role as agenda-setter is less evident in the CFSP domain than it is in other areas. This is due, firstly, to the lack of legislative acts with regard to CFSP. In addition, as mentioned above, the treaties reserve to the European Council the setting of objectives and guidelines in this domain. The absence of formal and substantive competences relating to CFSP has not, however, hindered the Commission from extending its influence, beyond the mere 'association' as initially laid down in the Treaties. A convergence of factors explains the Commission's activism. The TL (2009) placed the general provisions on the union's external action and specific provisions on the CFSP under the same title (Title V) and entrusted the Council and the Commission with ensuring consistency between the different areas of external action (which include, but are not limited to, CFSP³⁶), cooperating to that effect (Article 21(3) TEU). The two institutions are assisted by the High Representative in this task, which resulted from the fusion of the positions of High Representative for CFSP and the commissioner

³⁵ Led by the then High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the Commission, Federica Mogherini.

³⁶ The following can be included in the external dimension: the common trade policy, the development cooperation policy, the European neighbourhood policy, humanitarian aid, and more.

of external relations³⁷. The new figure introduced by the TL also leads the EEAS and simultaneously sits on the Commission as one of its Vice-Presidents, as well as on the Council, as the chair³⁸ of the Foreign Affairs configuration³⁹.

Although the task of the legislator has made it clear that, for CFSP matters, the High Representative does not fall under the Commission, this new aspect opened the door to the production of joint documents (designated 'JOIN') from the Commission and the High Representative regarding CFSP matters, facilitating the influence of the Commission in establishing priority issues. The Commission's participation in setting the CFSP agenda is enhanced by the provisions of the Treaty which provide that the High Representative 'with the Commission's support'⁴⁰ may 'refer any question relating to the common foreign and security policy to the Council and may submit to it, respectively, initiatives or proposals' (joint proposal) (Article 30 TEU). Furthermore, the Commission President is a member of the European Council (although without voting rights), which allows him/her to participate in the institution's meetings and, therefore, in the discussion on the CFSP general guidelines.

Another factor that helps to explain the influence of the Commission in setting the CFSP agenda relates to the high degree of inter-relationship between EU policies. The end (formally speaking)

³⁷ The title of High Representative has been held by the following people since 2009: Catherine Ashton (2009-2014), Federica Mogherini (2014-2019), and Josep Borrell (2019-presente).

³⁸ While it is considered a single legal entity the Council meets in 10 different configurations (at ministerial level) according to subject: agriculture and fisheries; environment; economic and financial affairs; general affairs; competitiveness; education, youth, culture and sport; employment, social policy, health and consumer affairs; foreign affairs; justice and home affairs; transport, telecommunications and energy. Cf. European Council/Council of the EU. Council configurations. Available online: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/configurations/> [17.01.2022].

³⁹ The so-called 'two hats'.

⁴⁰ The MS and High Representative may also do so of their own motion (Article 30 TEU).

of the pillar structure and the recognition of the EU's legal personality fosters interdependency between the various areas of external action and between these areas and other EU policies. The idea of a comprehensive approach has gained ground in the European narrative, especially since 2013⁴¹, meaning that, in its external action, the EU should make use of the set of instruments and resources at its disposal and that responsibility in these matters should be shared between the institutions and the MS. This comprehensive approach was then reaffirmed in the Global Strategy (European Council, 2016).

Given that the internal market is the Commission's priority area of action and that a significant proportion of EU policies rely or impact on this domain, the Commission has been adept at 'playing the market card' (Brandão and Camisão, 2021) to enter areas that do not traditionally fall within its competence, by making proposals in areas that are its privileged stage of action. The example of cybersecurity is illustrative of the Commission's use of this expedient. In the absence of a common EU cybersecurity strategy, the Commission began to introduce the topic in its communications, starting by highlighting the costs of cybercrime to the market and making proposals to counter these losses, for example in the field of information technology. The repetition of this narrative in official documents and speeches has contributed to the definition of the problem and catapulting cybercrime to the top of the European agenda (Brandão and Camisão, 2021).

Just like the Commission, the EP⁴², while a less obvious actor regarding agenda-setting, has also managed to assert its role.

⁴¹ Date of the joint communication of the Commission and the High Representative to the EP and the Council, titled 'The EU's comprehensive approach to external conflict and crises' JOIN(2013) 30 final, 11.12.2013. Available online: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=JOIN:2013:0030:FIN:EN:PDF> [17.01.2022]. This idea was then reaffirmed in the Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy (European Council, 2016). As clarified in the document, the word 'comprehensive' does not only refer to geography, but also to diverse policies and instruments.

⁴² The excerpts on the EP are from an adapted and updated version by Brandão, 2021.

Although the TL did not alter the intergovernmental nature of the CFSP, the increasing presence of the EP is noticeable, not only as agenda-setter and policy shaper, but also as a ‘diplomatic actor’ (Goirnard, 2020), either by initiative and activism of the institution itself⁴³ leveraging soft instruments and informal mechanisms⁴⁴, or under the EU’s ‘Comprehensive Approach’, which requires inter-political and inter-institutional coordination on EU external action.

The EP may influence the agenda, not least in the context of the right to consult and inform other institutions, as enshrined in the TEU (Rule 118 of the EP’s Rules of Procedure). It is therefore the task of the European Council to present an (oral) report to the EP after each of its meetings (Article 15 TEU). It is customary for the two institutions to exchange views at European Council meetings, the first item on the agenda of which is an intervention by the President of the EP at the invitation of the institution, followed by a debate and also between their respective Presidents every month, informally. The High Representative must regularly consult the European Parliament on the main aspects and the basic choices of the policy and how it evolves, ensuring that ‘the views of the European Parliament are duly taken into consideration’ (Article 36 TEU). In compliance with the provisions of the ‘Interinstitutional Agreement on budgetary discipline, cooperation in budgetary matters and sound financial management’ (European Parliament, Council and European Commission 2013), the HR shall report to the EP on the main aspects and basic choices of the CFSP.⁴⁵

⁴³ Indeed, ‘the EP’s engagement and influence in the field of foreign policy is to a large extent dependent on its own political will and the translation of this will into concrete initiatives, following a pattern typical for the ‘self-empowerment’ strategy pursued by the EP in numerous areas for decades.’ (Goirnard, 2020, 109)

⁴⁴ This is the subject of this chapter on the CFSP and does not consider the links between it and other areas of public policy under the Comprehensive Approach.

⁴⁵ E.g., Report of the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to the Council ‘CFSP Report - Our priorities in 2020’. Available online: <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-5194-2021-INIT/en/pdf>.

The duty to inform and consult the EP was reinforced by the HR's Declaration on political accountability: joint consultation meetings between groups of MEPs and members of the Political and Security Committee of the Council, the EEAS and the Commission on planned and ongoing civilian missions; in the wake of the 2002 Interinstitutional Agreement, the right of the EP Special Committee to access confidential information; exchange of views with Heads of Mission, Heads of Delegation and other senior EU officials in the course of parliamentary committee meetings and hearings; invitation to the HR to appear before the EP at least twice a year (Council of the European Union, 2010).

A second track established by the TEU is linked to the debate on progress in the implementation of the CFSP, including the CSDP (Article 36 TEU). In this context, and at the initiative of the EP, its Committee on Foreign Affairs draws up an annual report on the implementation of the Common Foreign and Security Policy⁴⁶. In these reports, the EP has reiterated the need for 'a stronger, more ambitious, credible, strategic and unified EU action on the world stage', so the MS and the Council must have 'the courage to make the most efficient use of all foreign policy instruments available in the Treaties', and also improve the decision-making process, namely through qualified majority voting (in the Council), especially in matters of human rights and civil missions (EP, 2021). Complementary to these debates, the EP Conference of Presidents may put debates on specific issues on the plenary agenda, with the presence of the HR.

⁴⁶ The institution's President must communicate this resolution to the President of the European Council, the Council, the Commission, the High Representative and the Member States. The EP also draws up an annual report on the implementation of the CSDP.

In reaction to international events and crises, the EP's (non-legislative) resolutions⁴⁷ have contributed to placing them on the agenda, or keeping them on the EU agenda, and/or reinforcing their prioritisation, and/or highlighting their human rights implications⁴⁸. The ideological pluralism and national diversity of MEPs, coupled with the EP's political autonomy from the European Council, the Council and the Commission, favour a dynamic and heterogeneous agenda. In support of the European Parliament's work, the documents produced by the EP's Research Service⁴⁹ and by think-tanks⁵⁰ should be mentioned.

At the level of macro decisions, over the years the EP has influenced the agenda, particularly concerning the revision of the Treaties. The proposal for a 'European Diplomatic Service', for instance, was provided for by the TL when establishing the current European External Action Service.

⁴⁷ In 2021, the EP adopted or initiated (procedure not completed) 337 resolutions and initiatives, of which 123 in the field of external relations (e.g. Resolution of 16 September 2021, on a new EU-China strategy; Resolution of 7 October 2021, on the human rights situation in Myanmar, including the situation of religious and ethnic groups), associated with various public policy areas, of which 2 specifically related to CFSP (Report on the implementation of the common foreign and security policy – annual report 2021; European Parliament Resolution of 8 July 2021 on the EU's comprehensive human rights sanctions regime (EU Magnitsky Act)). (Data for the period between 1 January and 31 December 2021, gathered for the research conducted in the European Parliament's Legislative Observatory. Available online <https://oeil.secure.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/home/home.do>).

⁴⁸ In this area, the EP has put particular emphasis on human rights defenders, freedom of expression, women's and children's rights, torture and the death penalty, human trafficking, the right to a safe environment, migrants' rights, among others. More recently, the institution has highlighted the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. See: European Parliament resolution of 20 January 2021, on human rights and democracy in the world and the European Union's policy on the matter – annual report 2019, the primary author of which was Portuguese MEP Isabel Santos, available online: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2021-0014_EN.html.

⁴⁹ For instance, Annual studies - Peace and Security Outlook e Mapping threats to peace and democracy worldwide - Normandy Index; thematic studies from the series Peace and Security. For more information on products and services of the European Parliament Research Service (EPRS), visit: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/at-your-service/en/>.

⁵⁰ Available on the EP's Think Tank website: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank/en/home>.

Policy and Decision Formulation: The dance of the four institutions led by the European Council

Once the issue/problem has been identified, it is then necessary to formulate proposals for action/resolution and decide what to do, i.e., which proposal to pursue (or not) (Young and Roederer-Rynning, 2020, 44). Here too, the role of the European Council stands out. The means used to influence agenda formation are also used by the institution to shape policy formulation. In terms of decision-making, the European Council establishes itself as a political and strategic decision-maker, starting with its deliberation on strategic documents. In this sense, it is considered ‘the supreme decision-maker of the Union’ (Van Middelaar and Puetter, 2022). The TL also contributed to reinforcing its presence as a decision-maker thanks to three amendments: the possibility to unanimously adopt a decision stipulating that the Council acts by qualified majority (Article 32(3) TEU); the creation of the post of President, which ensures the continuity of the institution’s work; the power to appoint the HR and to end his/her term of office, acting by qualified majority and with the agreement of the President of the Commission (Article 18(1) TEU).

Aside from the European Council, the Council is another obvious actor in policy and decision formulation. The Treaties reserve to the Council the power of frame the CFSP and take the decisions necessary for defining (and implementing) it (on the basis of the general guidelines and strategic lines defined by the European Council) (Article 26(2) TEU). The two institutions are also formally responsible for the decision (Article 31 TEU), acting unanimously and by consensus⁵¹ (with the exceptions provided for in Article 31(2) of the TEU).

⁵¹ In 2018, the Jean-Claude Juncker Commission presented a proposal to extend qualified majority voting to CFSP decisions to increase the speed and effectiveness

While the Council's ministerial meetings receive the most media coverage, a significant part of the negotiations in (and decisions by) the Council in various EU policy areas takes place in the committee that supports ministerial meetings, known as the Committee of Permanent Representatives of Governments to the EU (COREPER), and in the Council's preparatory bodies: specialised committees and working parties⁵². In negotiations on CFSP issues at ministerial level it is worth highlighting the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC)⁵³, chaired by the High Representative, whose work is supported by several preparatory bodies (in addition to the aforementioned COREPER), namely: the Political and Security Committee (PSC)⁵⁴, the Military Committee⁵⁵, the Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management

of the EU's decision-making. Cf. European Commission. A stronger global actor: a more efficient decision-making for EU Common Foreign and Security Policy, COM(2018) 647 final, 12.09.2018. Available online: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52018DC0647&from=EN> [20.01.2022]. This discussion was taken up by the current President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen.

⁵² The Council has more than 150 specialised committees and working parties.

⁵³ It is important to note that the proposals discussed in the Council can be adopted by any ministerial formation, due to the fact that the Council is a single legal entity.

⁵⁴ Composed of ambassadors from the 27 MS, it meets twice a week. The committee is responsible for the CFSP and the common security and defence policy (CSDP). It: monitors the international situation; recommends strategic approaches and policy options to the Council; provides guidance to the Military Committee, the Politico-Military Group and the Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management; and ensures political control and strategic direction of crisis management operations. Cf. European Council/Council of the EU. Political and Security Committee. Available online: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/preparatory-bodies/political-security-committee/> [18.01.2022].

⁵⁵ Composed of the Chiefs of Defence of the MS, regularly represented by their permanent Military Representatives (MilReps), it directs military activities within the EU framework and gives military advice to the PSC and makes recommendations on EU military matters. Cf. European Council/Council of the EU. Military Committee of the EU. Available online: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/preparatory-bodies/european-union-military-committee/> [18.01.2022].

(CIVCOM)⁵⁶ and CFSP working groups⁵⁷. It should be noted, however, that the literature has pointed to a gradual ‘eclipsing’ of the FAC’s importance in the foreign policy domain as a direct result of the affirmation of the European Council as the most important strategic centre with regard to CFSP decision-making in the post-Lisbon period (Maurer and Wright, 2021).

The central aspect of the European Council also restricts the Commission’s sphere of influence, insofar as it reduces the forums in which its influence can be exercised. It is nevertheless important to remember that, by attending the meetings of the European Council, the Commission President is in a privileged position to advocate the institution’s preferences. It is true that, in addition to the possibility of presenting joint initiatives or proposals with the High Representative (mentioned above), the Commission has no formal role in formulating and deciding the CFSP. As noted in the criticisms of the policy cycle model however, the policy formulation stage often occurs simultaneously with the agenda-setting stage (and may even precede it), making it difficult to unbundle the two. In this respect, the Commission takes advantage of the agenda-setting phase to identify proposals that it considers better serve the public interest.

The ideas initially expressed by the Commission are often endorsed by other institutional actors (e.g., the European Council), leading them to call on the Commission to make concrete proposals on these matters, which boosts the institution’s activism. The more

⁵⁶ Composed of representatives of the MS. It advises the PSC on civilian aspects and crisis management. Cf. European Council/Council of the EU. Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management (CivCom). Available online: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/preparatory-bodies/committee-civilian-aspects-crisis-management/> [18.01.2022].

⁵⁷ Cf. Foreign and security policy – the role of the Council and the European Council. Available online: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=LEGISSUM:4413645> [18.01.2022].

exploratory documents are usually followed by increasingly structured communications in which concrete measures and actions are outlined, often with a defined time frame. It is important to note that the presentation of the Commission's proposals is normally the result of a broad consultation carried out by the institution and of its knowledge of the preferences of the MS and other actors involved in the EU policy-making process. The use of public consultation (restricted to certain stakeholders or extended to civil society, depending on the case) and the consultation of experts are examples of strategies that allow the Commission to legitimise its proposals.

The Commission is also keen on making use of the relationships it has with other actors (governmental and non-governmental) to forge coalitions that help its preferred proposals move forward. The literature has shown, for instance, that it is not uncommon for the Commission to wait for a particular Council presidency⁵⁸ to introduce a proposal (Van Gruisen and Crombez, 2021). In the specific area of the CFSP (and the CSDP), the Commission takes advantage of its privileged relationship with the High Representative by presenting joint proposals which the latter's important role in foreign policy will boost.

The Commission also makes use of its relationship with private actors (e.g., in the industrial and business sector) to the extent that the area of security (and also defence) involves the development and marketing of products by the private sector. As a 'policy entrepreneur' (Kingdon, 2003), the Commission is also adept at

⁵⁸ The presidency of the Council (with the exception of the foreign affairs configuration) rotates among the MS every six months. During this six-month period, the Presidency chairs meetings at the various levels of the Council (working parties; specialised committees; Permanent Representatives Committee – COREPER; ministerial meetings). To ensure consistency in the work, the TL instituted trios, i.e. the MS holding the presidency have to work together in groups of three to set long-term goals. Cf. European Council/Council of the EU. The Presidency of the Council of the EU. Available online: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/presidency-council-eu/> [18.01.2022].

using strategies aimed at ‘softening up’ policymakers. An example of these strategies is the repetition of an idea in the speeches of the President and the Commissioners and in the official documents of the institution in order to construct a narrative. On the other hand, it should be noted that the Commission, recognised for the negotiating skills of its officials, participates in the discussions of the PSC and other Council structures that discuss and prepare the decisions of the FAC in its different configurations (FA, FA defence, FA development and FA trade).

As for the EP, while its role in the policy formulation phase may be less obvious, it is nevertheless still relevant. Unlike the policies enshrined in the TFEU, under the CFSP the EP may only make recommendations to the Council, the Commission and the HR (Article 36 TEU; Rule 118 EP Rules of Procedure).⁵⁹ The recommendation, though a soft instrument, allows the EP to give its opinion and influence the formulation of the decision, while the Council is responsible for the decision, including the incorporation (or not) of suggestions from the parliamentary institution. Regular consultation by the other institutions, as previously stated, also provides an opportunity for the institution to shape the CFSP.

Beyond the Treaty, the role of policy shaper has mainly been developed at the institution’s own initiative, with particular emphasis on three interrelated areas. First of all, as a ‘moral force’ (Bajtaj, 2015)⁶⁰, promoting the protection of human rights, through: (non-legislative) ‘emergency’ resolutions, in reaction to crises and

⁵⁹ For example, see: ‘European Parliament recommendation of 16 September 2021 to the Council, the Commission and the Vice-President of the Commission/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on the direction of EU-Russia political relations.’ Available online: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2021-0383_EN.html.

⁶⁰ ‘Over the years, the Parliament has built up a reputation of guardian of European values and strong supporter of human rights worldwide.’ (Bajtaj 2015, 23)

situations that undermine these rights⁶¹; encouraging dialogue between parliamentarians, local authorities and civil society organisations; creating networks of human rights defenders in third countries; Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought, first awarded in 1988⁶², its network of laureates and annual training programme in Brussels and at the European Inter-University Centre for Human Rights and Democratisation in Venice (Sakharov Fellowship). On issues of promoting democracy and the rule of law in third countries, the EP established the Democracy Support and Election Coordination Group (DEG) to coordinate its activities⁶³, including election observation, pre-election and post-election support ('parliamentary electoral dialogues'), support programmes for members and staff of parliaments, political parties and civil society organisations; Solidarity with Parliamentarians programme for the protection of parliamentarians at risk. Finally, with regard to mediation and dialogue for conflict prevention and resolution, mention should be made of the role of MEPs as mediators, the 'Jean Monnet Dialogues' to foster cross-party communication and consensus, the Young Political Leaders Programme to promote trust and reconciliation through peaceful dialogue.

It is also worth highlighting the shaping of policy through the 'diplomatic' practice developed by the EP within the framework of the interparliamentary delegations with a view to strengthening contacts with parliaments in third countries and promoting the

⁶¹ 'European Parliament resolution of 20 January 2022 on violations of fundamental freedoms in Hong Kong'. Available online: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-9-2022-0011_PT.html.

⁶² In 2021, it was awarded to Russian activist and political prisoner Alexei Navalny. Available online: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/sakharovprize/en/home>.

⁶³ Accordingly, the 'Comprehensive Democracy Support Approach', which guides the work of the DEG, the group of priority countries is defined, which by 2021 included Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine and Tunisia. For more information, see the DEG's Annual Work Programme 2021, available at https://www.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/230327/DEG_Annual%20Work%20programme%202021.pdf.

Union's values there. The delegations hold meetings, alternately in the Parliament of a third country and in the EP, and debates in Brussels and Strasbourg. The EP may also decide to send MEPs to third countries to attend events or to monitor the political situation in a third country.⁶⁴ MEPs may form unofficial groups, including 'friendship groups', to discuss relations with non-EU countries, albeit on an unofficial basis, and which therefore are not provided with assistance from and are not official organisations of the institution.⁶⁵

Finally, one avenue with potential is related to the joint drafting of strategic documents based on the proposal of the HR (Goinard, 2020, 111), as exemplified in the area of Cooperation by the 'European Consensus on Development' produced by the three institutions (Council, EP and Commission) in 2017.

In terms of decision-making, apart from the adoption of legislative acts and the respective legislative procedures, applicable to public policies covered by the TFEU, the EP has no presence in the CFSP. The only exception concerns the budgetary decision, even though the amount allocated to the CFSP⁶⁶ is not very expressive in

⁶⁴ E.g., Between 30 January and 1 February 2022, a delegation composed of nine MEPs from the Committee on Foreign Affairs carried out a visit to Ukraine: 'The European Parliament's fact-finding visit ... demonstrated its solidarity with the Ukrainian people and was part of an extensive and coordinated diplomatic effort to de-escalate tension and avoid the disastrous consequences of a possible armed conflict.' (European Parliament delegation ends visit to Ukraine – Press Release 01-02-2022. Available online: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20220131IPR22207/european-parliament-delegation-ends-visit-to-ukraine>.)

⁶⁵ E.g., In November 2021, the 'Indonesia-European Parliament Friendship Group' was established for the period 2021-2024. Despite the requirement for transparency and non-interference with the EP's official activities, the unofficial status of these groups has been controversial. See: Nikolaj Nielsen (2020), 'New oversight rules fail to catch MEP "friendship groups"', *EUObserver* (03 September). Available online: <https://euobserver.com/institutional/149312>.

⁶⁶ It relates to the operating expenditure arising from: 'single major missions as referred to in point (g) of Article 52(1) of the Financial Regulation; other missions (for crisis management operations, conflict prevention, resolution and stabilisation, and monitoring and implementation of peace and security processes); non-proliferation and disarmament; emergency measures; preparatory and follow-up measures; European Union Special Representatives' (EP, Council and Commission, 2020).

the total supranational budget⁶⁷ and the EP's powers are limited⁶⁸. Interinstitutional agreements between the EP, the Council and the Commission on the financing of the CFSP (e.g. 1997, 2013) have contributed to improved consultation and information procedures, as has the current 'Interinstitutional Agreement on budgetary discipline, cooperation in budgetary matters and sound financial management'⁶⁹.

In the context of concluding international agreements, the EP should be kept informed throughout the process leading up to the conclusion of the agreement. Unlike agreements in other areas, under the CFSP the conclusion of the agreement does not require the EP's prior approval, although the EP may make recommendations to the Council.

In the institutional field, the HR, the President and other members of the Commission 'shall be subject as a body to a vote of consent by the European Parliament' (Article 17(7) TEU). Candidates must also appear before a public hearing to assess their aptitude for the post. It should further be noted that the EP was involved in setting up the EEAS: the organisation and functioning were established by a decision of the Council of the EU, on a proposal from the HR, after consultation of the EP and approval by the Commission, while the relevant parliamentary committees contributed to the design of the new service.

⁶⁷ Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2014-2020 - EUR 2.066 billion (CFSP - support for preserving stability through missions and EU Special Representatives; CSDP - support for non-proliferation and disarmament), representing around 0.22% of the total MFF (ECA 2019); MFF 2021-2027 - CFSP EUR 2.375 billion; defence - EUR 8.514 million (Council of the European Union, 2020).

⁶⁸ The EP is not formally consulted in the following cases: expenditure on CSDP military operations, adoption of individual CFSP decisions with budgetary implications (expenditure on extra-budgetary instruments, such as the European Peace Facility). It should be noted that there has been a general tendency to increase the use of extra-budgetary instruments, including in the external dimension.

⁶⁹ Available online: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32020Q1222%2801%29>

Implementation: the time of the Member States

Once the way forward has been decided, the decision needs to be made effective/concrete (Young and Roederer-Rynning, 2020, 44). According to Articles 24(1) and 26(3) TEU, the implementation of the CFSP is the responsibility of the Council, the High Representative (assisted by the EEAS) and the MS, using national and Union means. As stated above, the Council is responsible for adopting the decisions⁷⁰ necessary to implement the CFSP, in accordance with the strategic interests, objectives and general guidelines defined by the European Council (Article 26(2) TEU). In this context, of particular note are decisions on: restrictive measures against third States, persons, entities, and/or bodies⁷¹; measures in support of the implementation of international treaties or programmes/actions/plans of action of other International Organisations⁷²; EU Special Representatives⁷³; CSDP missions⁷⁴.

Similarly to what happens in the other stages of the policy cycle, the Commission's role in the implementation stage should not be overlooked, even if it is less evident than that of other actors. In this phase, the Commission's intervention is enhanced by the in-

⁷⁰ In 2021, the Council adopted 118 decisions (Eur-Lex). A decision can be based on a proposal from the HR or a MS.

⁷¹ E.g. Council Decision 2014/512/CFSP 2021/2196 of 13 December 2021 amending Decision 2014/145/CFSP concerning restrictive measures in respect of actions undermining or threatening the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of Ukraine; Council Decision (CFSP) 2021/2197 of 13 December 2021 amending Decision (CFSP) 2020/1999 concerning restrictive measures against serious human rights violations and abuses.

⁷² E.g. Council Decision (CFSP) 2021/2309 of 22 December 2021 on Union outreach activities in support of the implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty.

⁷³ Council Decision (CFSP) 2021/1011 of 21 June 2021 appointing the European Union Special Representative for the Sahel.

⁷⁴ The CSDP is an 'integral part' of the CFSP, providing the EU with an operational capacity (Article 42 TEU). E.g. Council Decision (CFSP) 2021/1143 of 12 July 2021 on a European Union Military Training Mission in Mozambique (EUTM Mozambique).

terrelationship between policies in the external area and between these and other EU policies (discussed above), as it is formally responsible for managing the EU budget, including the CFSP budget. Indeed, the Commission implements the CFSP budget under the authority of the High Representative, allocated to finance civilian missions, EU Special Representatives⁷⁵, stabilisation actions, as well as bilateral and multilateral activities aimed at non-proliferation and disarmament⁷⁶. Within the Commission's organisational structure, the Service for Foreign Policy Instruments, created post-Lisbon and operating under the direction of the High Representative, is responsible for the financial and operational aspects of EU foreign policy⁷⁷. Still, it is important to note that a significant part of the EU budget (around 80%) is implemented through so-called 'shared management' which means that, in practice, the MS distribute the funds and manage the expenditure. That said, precisely due to its role in managing other areas of external action with foreign policy implications (e.g. international trade or humanitarian aid) as well as internal policies with an external dimension (e.g. migration, asylum, environment, internal security, internal market), the Commission is also responsible for coordinating the various instruments at the EU's disposal (whether or not they fall under the CFSP). As noted earlier, the adoption of the Global Strategy (2016) reinforced the

⁷⁵ The mission of EU Special Representatives (SRs) is to promote the EU's policies and interests in unstable countries and regions, as well as to work towards the consolidation of peace, stability and the rule of law. Currently the EU has SRs for: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Central Asia, the Horn of Africa, Human Rights, Kosovo, the Middle East Peace Process, the Sahel, and for the South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia. Cf. EEAS, EU Special Representatives. Available online: https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/3606/eu-special-representatives_en [20.01.2021].

⁷⁶ Cf. European Commission. Service for Foreign Policy Instruments, Common Foreign and Security Policy. Available online: https://ec.europa.eu/fpi/what-we-do/common-foreign-and-security-policy_en [20.01.2022].

⁷⁷ Cf. European Commission. Service for Foreign Policy Instruments. Available online: https://ec.europa.eu/fpi/index_en [25.01.2022].

idea of an approach that involves all dimensions of the EU ('whole of the EU approach') (Mogherini, 2017, 12), including in the implementation phase of the Strategy, a window of opportunity readily seized by the Commission to increase its influence in areas that had traditionally been closed to it.

The EP contributes indirectly to the implementation of the CFSP through its shared role with the Council as a Budgetary Authority, as stated above. In addition, the abovementioned activities of electoral observation and support for democracy and the Rule of Law, as well as 'diplomatic' action in the framework of interparliamentary delegations, can be understood as practices that contribute to the implementation of the CFSP and, consequently, to the Union's international presence and visibility. Finally, influence on the executive stems from the democratic control function, contributing to its accountability in the implementation phase of the CFSP (Goirnard, 2020, 112).

In the implementation phase, the characteristics of the European Council make it a less obvious actor. The nature, composition and functioning of the European Council are not conducive to an executive function. However, the institution's decisions on strategic interests, objectives and general guidelines indirectly shape the EU Council's implementing decisions. The institution's contribution to internal and external crisis management should also be highlighted (Anghel, Drachenberge and Finance, 2016; Van Middelaar and Puetter, 2022), as demonstrated by the increase in the number of extraordinary meetings:

These exceptional meetings reveal the urgent need for policy responses from the top EU institution to deal with unexpected crises. The European Council's agenda has shifted away from the earlier 'potpourri' of different issues to a single, specific topic capturing the leaders' attention. Some experts even see the European

Council turning into a 'quasi-permanent' forum for crisis management. (Anghel, Drachenberge and Finance, 2016, 4)

Although the behaviour of the European Council varies according to the specificity of each crisis, it is possible to identify a common pattern that comprises two phases (Anghel, Drachenberge and Finance, 2016, 27): the European Council first focuses on short-term initiatives in response to immediate concerns; in a second phase, it refocuses on long-term strategies to prevent the negative effect of crises on the EU. In this context, the role of the President of the institution in building consensus among MS and declaring the common perspective in response to the crisis should also be mentioned. For example, then HR Catherine Ashton was the first to speak on behalf of the Union on the Libyan crisis on 20 February 2011: 'We condemn the repression against peaceful demonstrators and deplore the violence and the death of civilians' (Ashton, 2011). Despite this growing presence as a crisis manager, studies highlight the institution's limited role conditioned either by its intergovernmental nature at the pace of sporadic meetings (Devuyst, 2012), or by the preference of MS to act bilaterally (or in small groups) at critical moments, their leadership being more visible in non-controversial issues (e.g., non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; combating small arms and light weapons) (Leonardo, 2019).

Evaluation: informal monitoring in an intergovernmental domain

The last phase of the cycle is the monitoring and evaluation of the effective implementation of what was decided and its effects (intended, inadequate, unintended) (Young and Roederer-Rynning, 2020, 44). As is the case in the implementation phase, the European

Council's power is less evident in the evaluation phase as it is not spelled out in a Treaty, so '[I]t is unclear how – by which means and through which mechanisms – the European Council is supposed to steer the rest of the EU's institutional machinery' (Smeets and Beach, 2021, 2).

However, over the years the European Council has strengthened the follow-up of the implementation of its conclusions (Anghel and Drachenberg, 2019), introducing and developing new practices, in line with the will expressed by Herman Van Rompuy, and reiterated by Donald Tusk, to make this monitoring regular. The work of the institution's president has contributed to this through reports and contacts with the ministers of non-compliant states, as well as the practice of reporting to the institution's regular meetings by the head of state or government of the country holding the presidency (of the Council of the EU). Deficits in the implementation of decisions have been identified in European Council conclusions, as well as the need to strengthen follow-up mechanisms. These have emerged stronger with the approval of the Leaders' Agenda (Anghel and Drachenberg, 2019). In the words of the then President of the institution:

many of you insist on a rigorous follow-up of our meetings to ensure that decisions are properly implemented. In Bratislava we agreed to intensify our focus on implementation by deciding that the Head of State or Government representing the Presidency would report on progress at every ordinary meeting of the European Council. I suggest to develop this practice by ensuring that the reports are clearer and provide a better basis for us to draw political conclusions for our work. (Tusk, 2017)

The effectiveness of this exercise depends not only on MS but also on the other institutions. As stated by Smeets and Beach (2021), ‘[I]t takes three to tango’.⁷⁸

As a follow-up to the Better Regulation Agenda (2015)⁷⁹ and the Interinstitutional Agreement on Better Lawmaking (2016)⁸⁰, the Commission, in partnership with the Council and the EP, regularly assesses whether existing legislation, policies and EU spending activities meet the objectives that were set when they were adopted. This evaluation, which includes parameters such as the efficiency, effectiveness, relevance, coherence and added value of the legislation or policy, will help inform the decision on future actions (European Parliament/Council of the European Union/European Commission, 2016). Despite the involvement of all three actors, it should be noted that the Commission has a notably proactive role in policy evaluation. In fact, especially in policy areas involving the adoption of legislation, evaluation is not limited to the formal phase of ex-post evaluation (the last phase of the public policy cycle model) but takes place throughout the entire policy-making process, starting even before the Commission presents its legislative proposal with its ex-ante impact assessment⁸¹.

⁷⁸ ‘The effectiveness of European Council involvement crucially depends on the actions of these two institutions. Involvement of the Heads can propel, paralyze or derail EU decision-making, depending on when and how they are brought into play. The Council and Commission play a crucial role by anticipating, setting the scene for and providing the follow-up to European Council involvement.’ (Smeets and Beach, 2021, 1)

⁷⁹ Cf. European Commission. Better Regulation for Better Results: An EU Agenda, COM(2015) 215 final, 19.05.2015. Available online: <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9079-2015-INIT/en/pdf> [25.05.2022].

⁸⁰ Cf. Interinstitutional Agreement Between the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission on Better Law-Making. Available online: [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32016Q0512\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32016Q0512(01)&from=EN) [25.01.2022].

⁸¹ Cf. European Commission. Better Regulation: why and how. Available online: https://ec.europa.eu/info/law/law-making-process/planning-and-proposing-law/better-regulation-why-and-how_en [26.01.2022].

In the specific area of the CFSP, the Commission and the Council are involved in the evaluation of the policy, starting with the reports produced by the High Representative. Indeed, the High Representative has presented an annual report on CFSP to the EP since 2010⁸². With the adoption of the Global Strategy in 2016 it was envisaged that the High Representative prepare an annual report on the state of implementation of this strategy. The first report, signed by the High Representative at the time, Federica Mogherini, was presented in June 2017⁸³. It should be emphasised that as it is a ‘comprehensive’ strategy and not exclusively a ‘security’ strategy (Mogherini, 2017), its assessment also reflects the Commission’s assessment of other policy areas that make up external action (such as enlargement, development and trade).

Democratic control contributes to transparency in politics and to holding the executive accountable to the institution that represents citizens. In addition to being one of the Branches of the Budgetary Authority, as discussed above, the EP exercises democratic control over the implementation of the supranational budget, including CFSP expenditure. In addition to budgetary control, the institution: monitors the operations of the EEAS⁸⁴; oversees the negotiations

⁸² The report is drafted by the PSC under the supervision of the High Representative, approved by COREPER, and then endorsed by the Council. Cf. EEAS. CFSP Annual Reports. Available online: https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/common-foreign-security-policy-cfsp/8427/cfsp-annual-reports_en [25.01.2022].

⁸³ Since then reports have been presented in 2018 and 2019. See respectively EU Global Strategy Report Year 2. Available online https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/eugs_annual_report_year_2.pdf [26.01.2022] and The European Union’s Global Strategy Three Years On, Looking Forward. Available online: https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/eu_global_strategy_2019.pdf [26.01.2022].

⁸⁴ According to the EEAS Annual Report, the Service ‘continued its proactive and targeted outreach to the EP on specific topics and files, notably MFF/NDICI, the EEAS Administrative Budget and the EEAS Discharge. The management of Parliamentary Questions required additional resources due to the increasing flow.’ (EEAS, 2021, 31) It should be noted that, with a view to strengthening interinstitutional relations and mutual understanding, the EEAS organises an annual programme of short-term secondments of EP officials. The report also notes that the EP ‘stressed the impor-

and implementation of International Agreements; may put questions to the Council and the HR (Article 36 TEU); invites the HR to be present at plenary debates with foreign policy implications (Rule 119 EP Rules of Procedure)⁸⁵, and EU Special Representatives to keep the EP informed about practical aspects of the implementation of their mandates (Rule 116 EP Rules of Procedure)⁸⁶.

Although the European Council is not formally accountable to the EP, its growing role in defining the general guidelines and the interinstitutional dimension of the multi-annual financial frameworks have led the parliamentary institution to oversee the implementation of the commitments made in the Conclusions (Anghel *et al.* 2022, D), setting up to this end a European Council Oversight Unit within the Directorate-General for Parliamentary Research Services⁸⁷. Although the right to put questions to the European Council is not formally enshrined, the President of the European Council is willing to answer MEPs on a voluntary basis provided the questions relate to its political activities.

The intergovernmental nature of the CFSP and the inherent centrality of the MS explains the absence of supranational democratic control over it⁸⁸, with the MS' foreign and defence policies subject to control

tance of further simplifying and modernising the EEAS's administrative management. More efforts are needed in order to address the gender imbalance in management and the geographical imbalance with regard to staff from post-2004 Member States.' (EEAS, 2021, 34)

⁸⁵ E.g. 'Myanmar: Speech by High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell at the EP debate' (09/02/2021). Available online: https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/92883/myanmar-speech-high-representativevice-president-josep-borrell-ep-debate_en.

⁸⁶ Before taking office, special representatives may be invited to appear before the relevant parliamentary committee to answer questions and make a statement.

⁸⁷ 'V. regular publications: 'European Council Conclusions: A Rolling Check-list of commitments to date'; 'The European Council in ...'; 'Key issues in the European Council: State of play in ...'.

⁸⁸ 'Some observers call this 'collusive delegation' whereby national executives have established an inter-governmental policy to escape national parliamentary

by their national parliaments (Diedrichs, 2004). It is therefore easy to understand the importance of the Interparliamentary Conferences on Common Foreign and Security Policy and Common Security and Defence Policy (IPC CFSP/CSDP), created in 2012, which bring together representatives of the EP and national parliaments twice a year and is organised by the Parliament of the MS holding the rotating Presidency of the Council⁸⁹. It is important to note, however, that the usefulness of Conferences may be limited by national and individual factors, including differentiated participation by members of national parliaments (Schade and Stavridis, 2021). In addition, it is customary for the EP's Committee on Foreign Affairs to invite representatives of national parliaments to meetings in Brussels.

The aforementioned information consultation mechanisms also allow the EP not only to influence the agenda and policy formulation, but also to monitor it. In addition to those provided for by the TEU, it is important to mention the growing activism of the EP which, on its own initiative, seeks to monitor the policy and has developed, over the years, 'a practice of intensive interinstitutional contacts and interactions resulting in a growing capacity to obtain information on current issues of CFSP' (Diedrichs, 2004, 45).

Conclusion

An initial reading of the institutional dynamics in the CFSP policy cycle makes clear the centrality of the European Council and

control without establishing an oversight at the supranational level (Lalone 2005: 39). (Bajtay, 2015, 29)

⁸⁹ Under the Portuguese Presidency in the first half of 2021, the IPC CFSP/CSDP was held on 3 and 4 March, including the participation of the Portuguese Minister of Defence on the panel on 'Defending Europe: EU-NATO cooperation and the Strategic Compass'. (Portugal 2021)

the Council of the EU, in line with the intergovernmental nature of cooperation on foreign policy, security and defence. However, a closer and broader focus beyond the TEU reveals the relevance of less obvious institutions in this area of public policy, stemming from their proactivity and initiative, the contribution of the informal cooperative space and the potential of soft instruments.

The centrality of the European Council, enshrined by the TEU, lies above all in the first three stages, as strategic agenda-setter, as political decision-maker and policy shaper, and also as crisis manager. More recently, in critical contexts, it has strengthened the follow-up of its findings. The increase in the number of meetings and the diversification of formats (e.g. thematic, informal) demonstrate the institution's growing presence in the CFSP policy cycle beyond the strict lines of the TEU. An eminently strategic and political institution, it defines strategic interests, objectives and general guidelines, guiding and shaping the work of the other institutions, including the Council, which is also central in this policy area. Within this framework, the President's role as a consensus builder and diplomatic representative of the Union stands out.

The Council, the second obvious actor in this policy, has a greater role in the formulation and decision stages and in the implementation stage of the policy. This centrality is due to the work of the High Representative, but also to the work of the various Council structures, including working parties, specialised committees, the Secretariat and, at the highest level, ministerial meetings. Even so, the literature shows that the Council has been losing prominence to the European Council, the institution which has taken charge of the strategic decision on CFSP matters by bringing European leaders together at the highest level.

While the Treaties give the Commission limited powers in the area of CFSP, the institution has been adept at using a range of resources and strategies to expand its role. The creation of the

new post of High Representative by the TL, with a double seat in the Council and the Commission (where he/she holds the post of Vice-President), was strategically exploited by the Commission to be associated with the agenda-setting and policy formulation stages. The Commission has also capitalised on the comprehensive approach adopted by the EU for its external action. More than a simple allusion to geography, 'comprehensive' means an integrated use of the various EU policies (including those traditionally seen as belonging to the internal dimension, such as the internal market), putting them at the service of the Union's foreign policy. This comprehensive approach allowed the Commission to use areas traditionally within its competence to enter areas traditionally in the hands of Member States. Because of its extensive negotiating experience, the Commission also excellently exploits the power of coalitions with other actors (including the private sector) to advance its preferred proposals at the policy formulation stage. This interrelationship between internal and external policies enables the Commission to play an active role in the implementation and evaluation stages as well. As with other institutions, the Commission's leadership, embodied by its President, also marks the extent to which the institution intervenes in the domain of the CFSP. The classification of her Commission as geopolitical (von der Leyen, 2019b) is suggestive of the importance that the current President of the Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, attaches to the external dimension (and to the link between internal and external policies), foreshadowing a particularly proactive CFSP mandate.

The aforementioned intergovernmentalism present in the CFSP explains the limited formal presence of the supranational institution representing European citizens in this area of public policy. In spite of this limitation, it is possible to discern the EP's contribution in the different stages of the policy cycle, with a greater presence in the first and fourth stages, thanks not only to the mechanisms

provided for in the TEU, but also to informal mechanisms set up and/or boosted at the EP's initiative. The EP's activism has enabled it to assert itself beyond the straitjacket of the TEU, with particular focus in the area of human rights, promotion of democracy and the rule of law, and mediation and dialogue for peace. This involvement includes the work of the Parliamentary Committees (and subcommittees) (AFET; DROI; SEDE), the initiatives of the MEPs (e.g. reports; motions for resolutions; questions to the Council and the HR; mediation, dialogue and good offices for conflict prevention or resolution in third countries; participation in interparliamentary delegations and missions to third countries), and the role of the President (e.g. formal and informal meetings with the HR; external representation in interparliamentary forums; co-chair of the Sakharov Prize Network). Following a soft power approach to international relations (Bentzen and Immenkamp, 2019), enhancing its role through soft instruments and informal dynamics, the EP also has the added advantage that arises from the political autonomy that the EU political system grants it: unlike national parliaments (within the national institutional framework), the EP and its members can take 'foreign policy positions and views freely without being politically obliged to support the position of the Council, the HR/VP and the Commission' (2015, 21).

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**A WORLD IN CRISIS:
THE EVOLVING EU SECURITY
AND DEFENCE POLICIES**

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Abstract: The European Union's (EU) identity as an international security actor has developed as a response to the fast changing regional and international security context since the end of the Cold War. The EU's peace promotion has transited from a liberal peace promotion model, which structured global interventionism in the 1990s and early 2000s, to a model promoting principled pragmatism and resilience. It has also been accompanied by a strong development of its security and defence dimension. This chapter analyses the development of the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) as an integral part of its crisis management and conflict resolution policies, and questions what the impact of this process is on the conceptual development of the Union's role as an international security actor.

Keywords: Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), European Union, Peace Promotion, Resilience, Crisis Management, Conflict Resolution

Introduction

The European project has experienced an accelerated development of its security and defence policies since the end of the Cold War, reflecting a regional and international context marked by an increase in conflicts, their greater complexity and duration and a marked interdependence that carries the impacts of conflicts across vast geographical and political spaces (SIPRI, 2021; Palik, Rustad and Methi, 2020). Although the transatlantic relationship and membership of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) by the vast majority of European Union (EU) Member States remain the main axes of European security, the EU has gradually assumed an increasingly relevant role as an international security actor (Bretherton and Vogler, 2006).

The focus on multilateralism, namely through the partnership with the United Nations (UN) and the empowerment of regional organisations such as the African Union (AU), has allowed the EU to support international efforts in many of the most devastating international conflicts, whether in its direct periphery, from Palestine to Abkhazia or Cyprus, or in sub-Saharan Africa, Asia or Latin America (Tocci, 2021). This presence has been made possible through the use of the important instruments of development support and humanitarian aid that are part of the genesis of the European Communities, but also, since 2003, through the civilian and military missions of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP, renamed Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) since the adoption of the Treaty of Lisbon in 2009).

In addition to these missions, a series of other instruments were mobilised for an increasingly holistic and complex promotion of peace and *peacebuilding*. This has resulted in a more capable, more autonomous and more confident international security actor in the responsibilities that fall upon Europeans to stabilise their periph-

ery and create responses to global international security problems (Freire, Lopes, Nascimento and Simão, 2022). In the post-September 11, 2001 context, in particular, the dissension between the allies over the United States of America's (US) intervention in Iraq and the US military over-extension resulting from the Global War on Terrorism facilitated the rapprochement between the French and the British (Carrilho, 2021), with a view to creating a European crisis management and conflict resolution capability that could be used in the Balkans and in conflicts of direct interest to Europeans, namely in Africa.

This path was reflected in the hyper-liberal nature of the peace-building model promoted by the EU throughout much of the 1990s and early 2000s (Tocci, 2021). In the case of the European periphery, the experience of enlargement marked even more the political conditionality, the belief in market economic forces and political, economic and social reforms that transposed the European model to other contexts in the search for lasting peace (Leuffen, Rittberger and Schimmelfennig, 2013). In Africa or the Middle East, for example, political conditionality was gradually complemented by a contribution to crisis management and conflict resolution through civilian and military missions under the ESDP. The adoption of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009 and the Global Strategy for the European Union in 2016 paves the way for a new, more pragmatic approach, in the face of a regional context of major upheaval on the Union's eastern and southern borders and globally marked by expanding jihadist terrorism with the capacity to affect security in the European space. The commitment to an integrated approach (Zwolski, 2013) to promoting peace is reinforced, placing the multiple European instruments and policies at the service of an ambition and need to promote regional stabilisation and continue to be an important promoter of peace on a global scale.

It is in this context of conceptual transition, on what is the priority in terms of European security, that the CSDP has gained renewed

momentum since 2016. This chapter starts from the realisation that the development of a military dimension in EU action has a direct impact on how security is perceived and how the EU understands its international role in this area. The chapter seeks to understand how the development of CSDP has influenced European crisis management and conflict resolution policies and the conceptualisation of the EU's role as an international security actor. It begins by mapping the evolution of the concept of security that is at the root of European crisis management and conflict resolution policies and then focuses on analysing the changes that the development of ESDP and CSDP has introduced into this conceptualisation and the practice of these policies.

To this end, it analyses the Union's official political and strategic documentation, as well as the technical and administrative documents which support the policies and instruments which give substance to the EU's global presence in the field of international security. From this analysis emerges the conceptual and practical basis of the Union's action, allowing us to identify the ways in which the development of security and defence policies shape the Union's response to crises in the international system. This trend has, moreover, become more apparent with the armed intervention by the Russian Federation in Ukraine, which began on 24 February 2022.

The central argument reinforces the idea that the Union's security narrative has increasingly focused on ensuring the security of European territory and European citizens, in a context perceived as clearly hostile to European powers and principles. In line with the hybrid nature of the threats that mark European defence and the idea that responses to international conflict should be based on the accountability of third states, the focus has been placed on the resilience of European societies and Europe's partners, particularly after the 2008 financial crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic. This translates into important adjustments to the management of security and defence in Europe and in the relationship with partners.

From international security to the security of Europeans: European crisis management and conflict resolution policies

European integration is often understood as a project for peace in Europe, which has prevented the recurrence of war between European powers. The peace that this approach has promoted for more than seven decades is based on shared democratic principles and rule of law, growing economic integration that produces results in welfare and social support for European populations, and ensures a European capacity to speak on the international stage in matters such as global economic and financial policies, development aid or, more recently, international peace and security policy.

The literature on European security underlines the definition of Europe's past, of war and mass destruction as the 'other', in relation to which European integration defined itself (Diez, 2004). In other words, European integration aimed to ensure a context in which European powers would not choose war as a way of making policy in Europe. The eminently normative and civilian character (Manners, 2002; Smith, 2005) of this international actor reflects this choice and marked its international positioning during the decades of the Cold War. However, with the end of the bipolar opposition and the emergence of violent conflicts in the Balkans and Africa, the interests of the European powers in ensuring a capacity for autonomous military and political action, complementing the USA and NATO, gradually consolidated.

This leap towards a European military capability does not begin naturally in 2003, when the first EU missions were deployed, precisely in the Western Balkans (Northern Macedonia and Bosnia-Herzegovina). The definition of political priorities for action regarding European security begins as early as the 1970s, with the adoption of the Davignon Report in 1973, which gave rise to European Political Cooperation (EPC). The formalisation of the

EPC in the Single European Act, which came into force on 1 July 1987, reinforced the role of the European institutions in designing a Community position on European security issues. As Rogério Leitão (2005, 24) argues, '[f]or the first time in a Community text, references are made to European security and the role of the WEU [Western European Union] and NATO in the defence of Europe'.

These advances, though timid, would prove extremely relevant in the face of the profound changes that the 1980s and 1990s would bring to European security. The negotiations between the USA and the Soviet Union (USSR) aimed at reducing armaments in Europe, including nuclear equipment, and the issue of German reunification, which arose after the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and which the Strasbourg European Council of 12 December 1989 would approve, are two examples of the complex demands that European security placed on European countries and their institutions throughout this period. Once the issue of unified Germany's membership in NATO had been resolved, the question of the reorganisation of Eastern Europe arose, which would be based on NATO, the European Union and the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), from which would emerge the 'Charter for a New Europe', the Paris Charter. At that time the Treaty for the Reduction of Conventional Forces in Europe would also be signed between the members of NATO and the Warsaw Pact, which constituted a cornerstone of the European security order. In other words, the reorganisation of European security was based on NATO's collective security and defence guarantees and the economic prosperity and social welfare promoted by European integration, rather than on the political, diplomatic or military capacity of the new European Union.

The negotiations for the Maastricht Treaty, which entered into force on 1 November 1993, addressed the issues relating to the creation of the European Union (EU), whose political and security identity was now to be assumed. The Treaty provides for the cre-

ation of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), which covers all questions relating to the security of the EU, 'including the eventual framing of a common defence policy, which might in time lead to a common defence' (European Union, 1992). The Treaty also safeguards the WEU's role in the preparation and implementation of actions having defence implications and the bilateral policies of the Member States and their obligations under the North Atlantic Treaty. For its part, in line with its position in favour of European strategic autonomy, France will promote forms of bilateral cooperation with some European countries, primarily Germany, which will result in the formation of *Eurocorps*.

It will therefore be with this institutional architecture that the Europeans will deal with the conflicts in the Balkans, in the face of the violent dissolution of the Yugoslav Federation, in what will be the first, but not the only, challenge to their claim to be a relevant international security and defence actor. What the analysis suggests is that the EU's actions in the Bosnian war between 1992 and 1995, was effective in deploying the foreign policy tools in which [the EU] had strength and experience and which also met the expectations placed upon it. A stronger conclusion, however, is that the EU was ineffective in dealing with the Yugoslavian crisis; it was unable to respond to a pressing military need, exert sufficient political pressure to deter various warring factions from escalating the conflict and financial aid that did not have the effect of bringing the crisis to a speedy conclusion.

We were thus faced with the difficult situation of having European countries strongly committed to changing the dynamics of the Balkan conflict, including through participation in UN missions and within NATO's ongoing transatlantic dialogue, but without the capacity on the ground to give the new European Union a central role in managing this crisis. Protecting Greece and Italy from the negative impacts of war was a central concern, but even there,

European capacity remained limited to the humanitarian dimension, border control and in supporting post-conflict stabilisation, already in line with future membership prospects that would be extended to the Western Balkan countries. Preventing the escalation of the conflict failed, demonstrating that without credible military force, European efforts would be insufficient to prevent large-scale atrocities and force the parties to the negotiating table. It would have to be NATO and the US that managed military operations in the face of the failure of European economic and political diplomacy. But it would have to be Europeans who would have to commit to the long-term stabilisation of this region through its integration into the EU and NATO.

The lessons learned from this conflict were particularly important for the development of the CFSP and for the role that the EU would take on in international peace and security. The Treaty of Amsterdam, which enters into force on 1 May 1999, will strengthen the foreign policy instruments at the EU's disposal, allowing for more detailed planning and monitoring of the most relevant international issues for the Union. At the security level, the Treaty integrates the 'Petersberg tasks' into the CFSP framework, with Member States undertaking to make conventional military forces available to the WEU for 'humanitarian and evacuation missions, peacekeeping missions and combat force missions for crisis management, including peace-making missions' (European Union, 1997). The Treaty also provides for the creation of the position of High Representative for CFSP, with the aim of enabling the Union to speak with a single voice in foreign policy matters.

This framework would be of the utmost relevance in the development of the first ESDP missions which, after the adoption of the European Security Strategy in 2003, would come to frame the European military presence in the Balkans, in stabilisation missions, as well as in Africa and the Middle East, where the European

presence has been more significant. It is worth highlighting that the vast majority of ESDP missions have been of a civilian, police or advisory nature¹, in line with the eminently civilian nature of the EU, and are framed by international law, either through bilateral requests for assistance or a mandate from the United Nations Security Council.

We therefore have a gradual growth in the European Union's capacity to participate actively in international *peacebuilding* and post-conflict reconstruction efforts, which will become a very relevant part of the Union's image as an international security actor. If it is true that European countries maintained a regular and very important participation in UN missions throughout the 1990s, leading some of the most complex ones, as was the case of France in Rwanda in 1992, it will be in the post-September 11, 2001 context, with the beginning of the US and NATO global operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, that the EU is called upon to assume a greater role as a peacebuilding actor in its own right. At the heart of its actions is a commitment to the liberal principles underlying its internal and external action, reproducing the logic of conditionality inherited from both development aid and enlargement policies. As Chamlian (2016) argues, this approach combines contributions to the restoration of peace in post-conflict situations with instruments aimed at developing European-like societies by reproducing unbalanced power relations.

The instability that swept the southern and eastern periphery of the EU, throughout the twenty-first century and very intensely with the armed interventions of the Russian Federation in Georgia in 2008 and in Ukraine in 2014, as well as the so-called Arab Spring in North Africa and the Middle East, with the military intervention of European countries such as France in Libya, have created important

¹ Information available at www.eeas.eu.

challenges to the promotion of peace that the EU has practiced. One of the most complex challenges is the growing contestation of the liberal order, on which the EU's external relations have been based since the end of the Cold War. Western hyperliberalism (Tocci, 2021) was confronted with the limits of this order and simultaneously with the advance of rival autocratic powers, including in their aggressive action against the interests of European citizens.

The following section analyses the definition of a regional and international security policy from the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty, since it provides the mechanisms that would develop the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy to unprecedented levels.

Defence Europe and the integrated approach to international security

The Treaty of Lisbon, which entered into force on 1 December 2009, is the result of the consensus reached among Europeans after the failure of the project of adopting a Constitutional Treaty for Europe. The Treaty of Lisbon created the conditions for reinforcing the coherence of the EU's external action (Brandão, 2010), particularly with the creation of the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the strengthening of the role of the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, at the level of the EU's external representation, at the level of internal coordination of the mechanisms emanating from the European Commission (in his role as Vice-President of the Commission) and at the level of the instruments designed under the CFSP and CSDP (chairing the Foreign Affairs Council, the European Defence Agency and the EEAS).

Amongst the elements that the Member States retained in the new Treaty, the instruments that enabled the deepening of integration in security and defence matters should be highlighted, develop-

ing the now renamed CSDP within the CFSP, and stimulating ever closer European action in security and defence matters (Teixeira, 2008). Among the elements to be highlighted is the clarification of institutional relations within the scope of the CSDP, notably with the reinforcement of the powers of the High Representative in defence matters, and the creation of two important solidarity clauses in security and defence matters (mutual defence, Art. 42(7), and a solidarity clause, Art. 222, in case of natural or man-made disasters, as well as in case of terrorist attacks). The type of missions in which the Union may use its civilian and military capabilities (Article 43) is also extended beyond the Petersberg tasks and finally the creation of two mechanisms: enhanced cooperation and permanent structured cooperation.

The provision that Member States may initiate a Permanent Structured Cooperation on Defence (PESCO), advancing, in the European framework, projects that will develop joint military capabilities, considered strategically important for the projection of European forces and complementary to NATO's action, assumed particular prominence in December 2017, with the decision of the European Council (European Union, 2017). The decision provided that a set of binding mutual commitments, made by 25 Member States², through national capability development plans, reviewed and updated annually, and which will be communicated to the Council, the EEAS and the EDA, and which must be made available to all participating Member States. This closer cooperation on defence equipment would be leveraged by a set of European-level defence investments, as well as by the strategic alignment promoted by the 2016 EU-NATO Joint Declaration.

The international context in which these developments are taking place is one of great contestation and volatility in the direct

² Malta and Denmark decide not to participate.

neighbourhood of the Union, in its strategic partnerships, namely with the Russian Federation and, since the election of Donald Trump to the White House, also with the USA, as well as of internal fragmentation, given the decision of the United Kingdom to leave the EU. It is also worth remembering that, between 2009 and 2014, the EU concentrated many of its efforts on managing the financial crisis and that, in 2014, the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation and the beginning of the war in Eastern Ukraine took place. This international context and the arrival of a new European Commission, committed to strengthening the EU's place in the world, would prove to be very favourable elements for the drafting of a new global policy document, updating the European Security Strategy of 2003 with the new Global Strategy of the European Union of 2016.

The EU is challenged to a broader reading of international insecurity, still marked by the liberal model of peacebuilding (Nascimento and Simão, 2019), but increasingly struggling with violent crises in its periphery. In the EU's reading of international insecurity, crisis management gains prominence over conflict prevention. Rieker and Riddervold (2021, 2) argue that, in the management of the crises in which the EU finds itself involved in this period, 'the promotion and safeguarding of a *rules-based* international order [...] tends to take second place to the widespread perception that there is a security crisis that must be managed quickly'. The authors conclude that, in examples such as the war in Ukraine since 2014 or the management of the migration crisis since 2015, the adoption of stabilisation measures that addressed concerns about threats to the Union's security took precedence over normative considerations. This has resulted in concerns about the security and stability of Europeans, in a defensive, securitarian and increasingly militaristic logic, marking a paradigmatic shift from the normative and civil actor that had been built throughout European integration.

Much of Europe's political attention throughout this period was directed at creating more integrated responses to the multiple security crises where European states identified threats to European security. The European consensus created around the need to advance with the construction of a Defence Europe meant that the interests of member states in the multiple crises in Eastern Europe, the Sahel or the Middle East came to be equated with the reinforcement of the Union's own capabilities in responding to these crises. It is impossible to understand these decisions without remembering that the relationship between Europeans and the United States, including in the framework of NATO, has, throughout the twenty-first century, gone through periods of tension, divisions and political conflict. The interventions in Afghanistan, in the post-September 11, 2001, but especially in Iraq (2003) and Libya (2011) represent fractures in the rules-based international order, weakening international law, undermining the legitimacy of the Western liberal order and proving profoundly inadequate to deal with the sources of insecurity emanating from the jihadist terrorism that marks this period.

If the European Security Strategy identified conflict prevention, holistic approach and multilateralism as the guidelines for EU action (European Union, 2003; Rehl and Weisserth, 2010), the EU Global Strategy, presented to Member States in 2016, places the focus on principled pragmatism and resilience (European Union, 2016). The integrated approach, which the Lisbon Treaty inaugurated, is now widely implemented and resilience becomes the main concept underlying European security and its external action. As Giusti (2020) argues, the Global Strategy promotes a new role for the Union: 'Instead of spreading norms especially in its neighbourhood, the EU would rather engage selectively in a wider space, pragmatically supporting the others becoming resilient. This shift tends to de-politicize external actions, with the risk of obfuscating

the question of accountability and responsibility while maintaining the capability to influence’.

This understanding is also reflected in the capabilities that will be a priority for European defence. With the North American withdrawal from some geographical areas, including the Sahel, we are witnessing an investment of different configurations in the stabilisation of these areas. On the one hand, an effort, through the United Nations, to promote peace agreements in Mali or in the Central African Republic and the deployment of the respective peacekeeping missions, to which several European States have contributed nationally with contingents and military equipment, including Portugal. In addition to these missions, the EU has invested in training and capacity building missions, in order to strengthen the ability of these countries to exercise sovereignty over their territories and thus directly combat the jihadist groups active in these areas. The actions of these groups have devastating impacts on these societies, as well as in Europe, where groups linked to al Qaeda and ISIS have shown the ability to carry out terrorist attacks in Belgium and France, particularly in 2015 and 2016.

In addition to these means, European states, led by France, have been present in ad hoc missions such as the Takuba force or Operation Barkhane. These ad hoc missions result from the formation of coalitions of states around specific problems, ensuring timely responses to security crises, without relying on the lengthy processes that European multilateralism entails. Naturally, this form of action entails risks to multilateralism itself, escapes the control that a more robust institutional framework could require, and creates room for unaccountability in the absence of a clear institutional framework for the action of forces on the ground (Seabra, 2019).

In light of the new focus on stabilising regions from which threats to European security emanate and strengthening the resilience of these states, the EU has sought to support partners on the ground

who can contribute to these goals. What Raineri and Strazzari (2019) call ‘emerging communities of stabilisation practices’ are the result of *outsourcing* forms of European security priorities, including border controls and counter-terrorism, that contribute to the pragmatic legitimisation of local partners, which are not always aligned with EU principles, thereby reproducing negative dynamics in relations between local actors that perpetuate initial instability.

If, on the one hand, crisis management and conflict resolution policies become marked by an increasingly integrated EU approach and a focus on resilience, with challenges of political disengagement by the EU and inconsistent application of the Union’s normative principles (Giusti, 2020), on the other hand, the creation of a security and defence policy will necessarily shape these policies.

At an early stage, the political priority in European defence was to develop processes internal to the EU that would rapidly shape the defence planning of its member states. This is an area where planning takes place over long periods of time and where the impacts of changes made take several decades to be felt. Mechanisms such as the Capability Development Plan and the EU Coordinated Annual Review of Defence, the innovative action of the European Defence Agency or the alignment of commitments under PESCO, the European Defence Fund (EDF) and its predecessor programmes, have all begun to contribute to providing European countries with joint strategic capabilities and commonly identified means to meet the needs of a very challenging security context.

In the strategic dialogue process leading to the adoption of the Strategic Compass in March 2022, in addition to matters relating to the coordination of defence investments, strategic planning and the development of the future European Defence Technological and Industrial Base (EDTIB), operational matters, command and control matters, and those relating to emergency support in crisis and conflict situations (with the adoption of the Peace Facility) have

become part of the European reflection. The Strategic Compass is a political document which identifies the priority axes for EU security and defence, in line with the priorities identified in the EUEU. This document, together with the joint NATO-EU declarations and the new Strategic Concept of the Atlantic Alliance, which should be adopted in summer 2022, constitute the political and strategic *acquis* for the defence of European states and their international relations in this area.

The Strategic Compass provides a common assessment of the EU's strategic environment and its implications, identifies common objectives, bringing purpose and coherence to European action, sets out ways and means to enhance the Union's collective capacity, and establishes concrete targets against which to measure progress. This is the first strategic level document adopted by the European Union in the field of defence. Its adoption acts both as the endpoint of the process of structuring the CSDP and the foundations for a European defence, and as the starting point for the still long and arduous path of providing the Union with the political, command and control and technological means to respond to crises and conflicts that emerge in its areas of strategic interest.

This initial impetus of European defence was very much marked by the work of the European Commission. Although CSDP is an area that the treaties define as intergovernmental, the Commission has assumed a primary role, in line with art. 21(3) of the Lisbon Treaty which requires that cooperation between the Council and the Commission, with the assistance of the High Representative, can ensure consistency between the different areas of EU external action and between these and other European policies (de Ojeda, 2021, 53). In order to achieve this goal, the Juncker Commission began internal coordination processes under the leadership of the High Representative Federica Mogherini, with the creation of the wider Europe unit, which was followed by the Von der Leyen

Commission through Team Europe, bringing together the commissioners with responsibility for external action in a coordination effort. This involvement of the Commission in matters relating to international peace and security is marked by its genesis within trade, cooperation and development and humanitarian support policies. Thus, the coordination of civilian/economic instruments controlled by the Commission offers the advantage that they do not require coordination at 27, which is normally difficult and time-consuming. Moreover, the Commission ensures presence on the ground through its network of delegations, which under the Lisbon Treaty have become embassies under the responsibility of the High Representative. Finally, the Commission's experience in promoting stabilisation and transformation policies through enlargement and association policies has made it an institutional actor with extensive experience (Faleg, 2018).

The Commission also implements the budget for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, including CSDP civilian missions, and manages internal EU policies with strong external impact, including internal security, migration, climate, energy, transport, space, the internal market for defence, among others. In 2021, the Union's new budget cycle started, with the approval of a multi-annual package 2021-2027 of around €8 billion for the European Defence Fund, an instrument outside the European budget, as well as the addition of the new European Peace Facility, which will now be able to authorise the provision of military assistance to third countries and which the Commission has the responsibility to implement.

Finally, as a result of the experience of COVID-19 and the ongoing war in Ukraine, since February 2022, the Commission has also been called upon to contribute to other areas relevant to defence, beyond the structuring of a European defence market. Its role in promoting research and innovation and reducing strategic dependencies, notably with the creation of the Critical Technologies Observatory, the

creation of common procurement processes for military equipment or its initiatives on containing hybrid threats, enhancing cybersecurity and cyber defence, promoting military mobility and cushioning the impacts of climate change linked to defence.

This look at the European Commission is particularly relevant to our analysis of the impact of the creation of the CSDP on the overall security concept implemented by the EU, since the concept developed over its lifetime was naturally marked by the limitation of the Council's powers in security and defence matters, until the Maastricht Treaty, but even after it. The civilian nature of European security stemmed from the primary role played by the Commission and the political limits to cooperation in military matters. With the ongoing changes, not only does the drive towards a notion of military security stem from the political decision of member states reflected in the Council and the European Council, but it is also reflected in the actions of the Commission itself, in its effort to cohere the objectives of a more resilient and secure Europe with the relevant sectoral policies. In a holistic and integrated approach to security and EU policies, civilian instruments are now at the disposal of a policy that integrates military capabilities, means of control and command at European level, as well as mission deployment, monitoring and retrenchment.

Conclusion

This chapter assessed how the development of a European defence policy transforms the concept of security underlying EU external action. From the assessment of security threats to the mechanisms that should respond to them, the development of CSDP, underway since the end of the Cold War, has contributed to gradually changing the way the EU responds to crises in the international system and its engagement in conflict resolution.

On the one hand, the analysis underlined the increasing focus on internal security of the EU, after almost two decades of being outward-looking, acting through ESDP/CSDP or Community instruments to respond to conflicts far from its territory, in support of multinational efforts in the UN framework or in support of the OSCE and the African Union, for example. The new focus on the security of Europeans is largely due to the impact of the terrorist threat on European soil that irremediably links the internal and external security of the EU and makes clear, in a framework of global interventionism to combat the global jihadist phenomenon, the need for the Union to develop more and more competent military means.

On the other hand, in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis, the pandemic of COVID-19 and the fractures imposed on Western cohesion with the Trump administration in the White House and the UK's exit from the EU, the international context seemed more volatile, demanding more from Europeans in safeguarding their own security. This reverted to a discourse focused on resilience and the need to build capacity with partners.

Since 2016, with the development of the CSDP, and exponentially after the start of Russia's military intervention in Ukraine in February 2022, the international security actor that the EU has shaped is very little different from its US and NATO allies. In fact, the alignment of positions and cohesion between allies and partners in NATO and the EU have been pointed out as the main success factors in imposing sanctions on Russia and providing political and military support to Ukraine. It is still too early to assess the success of these measures in guaranteeing peace and security in Europe, at a time when war continues to devastate Ukraine and the international community has been unable to put an end to it. But it is very clear the will of the European leaders to reinforce the alignment of the European and North American position, in a context perceived as competitive and hostile. The impacts that this will have on the cur-

rent plans for the creation of a European defence market and for the strategic autonomy of the EU can only be assessed at a later stage, but difficulties in this matter are expected.

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**FROM STRATEGY TO PRACTICE:
CONSTRUCTING THE NARRATIVE AND
POLITICAL ACTION OF THE UE**

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Abstract: This chapter analyses the role of narrative in the discursive construction of the European Union (EU) and in how it accompanies the development of the EU in its internal and external expressions. In this chapter we analyse the security dimension with a focus on the European Security Strategy of 2003, the Global Strategy of the European Union for Foreign and Security Policy of 2016, and the Strategic Compass of 2022, framework documents that aim to consolidate the EU's strategic

positioning in terms of security, as well as the narrative concerning the period of the financial crisis beginning in 2008, how it was adjusted and what kind of messages and interpretations it entailed. This critical look at the narrative(s) aims at a more incisive analysis of its implications in the strategies and political action of the Union in these matters, identifying points of convergence and misalignments, as well as looking at how the dominant narratives seek to legitimise certain decisions and options, thus contributing to the construction of a certain image of the actor.

Keywords: Narrative, Security, Economics, Crisis, European Union

Introduction

This chapter analyses the dimension of narrative in the discursive construction of the European Union (EU) actor, in its development in security matters and in the face of the financial crisis, in its internal and external manifestations. We believe that the intersubjective dimension associated with the process of constructing narratives, involving material and ideational elements, helps us to better understand the dynamics associated with the usual criticism that is made of the EU regarding the gap between the discursive dimension of its action and the dimension of operationalising policies. The dimension of security is analysed in this chapter, focusing on the European Security Strategy of 2003, the Global Strategy on the EU's Foreign and Security Policy of 2016, and the Strategic Compass of 2022, guiding documents that aim to consolidate the EU's strategic position in terms of security, and the narrative regarding the financial crisis beginning in 2008, and in what way it has been adjusted and what kinds of messages and interpretations it entailed. The analysis of the security and financial dimensions,

understood as dimensions that have been central to the very process of consolidation of the European project, allows us to gauge how the construction and adjustment in the narratives moulds the readings of this actor. In analysing the EU, we know that the debate on the institutional architecture and multi-level decision-making is ever-present. In this chapter, however, we focus our analysis mainly on the narrative constructed at the EU level, providing examples from Member States where necessary.

This critical look into the narrative(s) proposes an incisive analysis on the way in which they are involved in the Union's strategies and political action in security matters and in the context of the financial crisis, identifying points of convergence and misalignments, as well as looking at the dominant narratives and the way in which they seek to legitimise certain decisions and options, thereby contributing to the construction of a particular image of the EU actor.

The chapter begins by discussing and analysing what we mean by narratives, how they are constructed and adjusted, and for what purposes. This critical analysis of the role of narratives will be illustrated in the study of the framing documents of the European security strategy, as well as in the discourses associated with the financial crisis, particularly between 2008 and 2015. This critical discursive look at the narrative dynamics and the way they seem to impact on political discourses and the representations of the social actors involved is fundamental for us to understand the EU's own evolution as an international actor.

Narratives: the act of telling stories

Considered by some to be intrinsic to life and sociability itself or one of the main dynamics of time organisation in humans (de Fina & Johnstone, 2015, 157; Barthes, 1975, 237; Abbott, 2002, 3;

Förchtner, 2021b, 315), the act of storytelling – of relating, sharing, transmitting, negotiating, co-building and forging them in various settings – is a dynamic that shapes the symbolic boundaries of people, groups and societies. Whether in everyday conversation or in political communication (among so many other contexts), narratives organise chaos as they identify, select, assemble and articulate events into a possible order – temporal and/or causal – that allows participants to encompass fragmented realities and parts of the world into an ‘intelligible whole’ (Ricoeur, 1990; Förchtner, 2021). In doing so, they create knowledge and give meaning to events in time, space, and person, positioning them, giving them perspective, shaping them, and arranging them into categories.

The simultaneously epistemological and ontological nature of narratives goes beyond the mere representational dimension: they function as devices that act in human and non-human interaction and forge perceptions of the self, of others and of reality, for this very reason intrinsically constitutive of social identities. Firstly, the articulation of the world through narrative acts and insinuates itself into the affections and emotions, the empathy of those who tell or listen to stories, producing moments of ‘suspension of disbelief’ about the representation of the narrated world, whether fictional or not. Secondly, the very form and internal consistency of narrative – where you ‘connect the dots’, and therefore the times, spaces, characters, plots – is forged and co-constructed in concrete activities, for there are no stories without tellers, audiences, or purposes for which they are intended. From the articulation of these three aspects – ‘suspension of disbelief’, articulation of events along lines of cohesion and coherence, and principles of cooperation between speakers that impel them to accept the truth of a story – emerges the immense potential for persuasion and manipulation of any narrative, making it an extremely powerful instrument that projects itself into the performativity of human

actions and activities, with concrete social and political effects of the utmost relevance.

Narratives constitute are broadly studied across different disciplines, including history and historiography, literary and cultural studies, narratology, social studies and anthropology, linguistic, sociolinguistic and discourse studies, among others. The purpose of this chapter is not to present an in-depth literature review, but rather to identify an angle that allows us to illuminate the dynamics at play when we focus on how the EU is constructed, in the texts analysed, as a social actor over time, in dynamic processes of constitution of facts, concepts and perspectives on European security, as well as in light of the changes in the representations of what constitutes European space motivated by the financial crisis between 2008 and 2015. Given the macro nature of the social actors involved and the type of material collected (mostly documentary texts on security and the financial crisis), we opted for a critical discursive look at the narrative dynamics in the texts and the way they seem to impact on political discourses and the representations of the social actors involved. If the subject of the analysis were different, other aspects of the narrative would be looked at.

A look at narratives in critical discourse studies allows us to identify, with Förchtner (2021) and Riessman (2008), three distinct focal points. One identifies narratives as modes of representation of events, worlds and characters anchored in the dynamics of articulation of these events from temporal or causal lines, with a view to creating a sense, an 'intelligible whole' of thematic and ideational (or representational) nature.

Another is structural, formal, narratological in nature, and is concerned with narrative typologies (according to time, space, characters, narrators, narratees) or with textual processes whose dynamics of cohesion and coherence follow sequences that are formally and structurally specific to them (see, for instance, how the structure of

oral narratives proposed by Labov & Waletzky (1967) helps us to identify constituent elements of narrative sequences: the summary, the orientation, the complication and resolution, the evaluation, the moral of the story). From a linguistic perspective which assumes that narratives contain a textuality that differentiates them from other textual types (such as argumentative, descriptive, explicative, instructional), Martin Reisigl proposes a detailed conceptual framework that allows us to analyse how certain linguistic-verbal and semiotic choices and patterns not only serve to represent but also go together with a *relief of action*, situate them in time and space, (*historicization*), lead to accept truths (or *potential fictionalization*), position events and identities of social actors (*subjectivization*), providing certain angles and perspectives on the narrated world, always partial (*relativization*, see Reisigl, 2021). In this chapter we follow some thematic dynamics of *subjectivization*, in a very partial manner. In other words, regarding the theme of security and the discourses on the financial crisis, the texts analysed reveal marks of the places that prompted their production while some of the textual choices point to the fluid dynamics of modelling and positioning of the EU social actor and its possibilities for action in specific historical and political contexts.

We are also interested in a third perspective, more closely related to a dialogic-performance approach (Riessman, 2008), which views narratives as practices and forms of social interaction, whose fragments circulate through distinct communicative spaces, shaping and constituting ways of saying, being, and knowing. This interactive and dynamic approach allows us to embrace the idea that narratives are social acts that intrinsically interact with specific audiences, in which participants construct knowledge and social identities together in a here and now that is embodied in the present, evokes pasts and projects futures. In this sense, for instance, a historical-discursive approach on a given theme allows us to identify, from a single event

in the present, how different actors establish trajectories between distinct points in the past, and thus construct chronologies and causal relations, and consequently historical narratives that compete with each other and that have real effects on the production of ways of thinking and acting, identities and modes of social and political regulation (Wodak & Meyer, 2016; Förchtner, 2021).

Understanding narratives as situated social practices allows us to understand what they do in a given time and place, how they circulate and re-contextualise themselves. This dynamic helps to identify processes that normalise, reconfigure, distance or even exclude (silence or forget) representations, knowledge or identities. Following the steps of recontextualising certain elements (or fragments) of stories through spaces of their production in a timeline allows us to make explicit the power of narrative in the work of legitimising or delegitimising realities or identities. It is no accident that Theo van Leeuwen identifies narrative as one of the fundamental instruments of legitimation through discourse (among others, such as authorisation, moral evaluation or rationalisation), which he calls *mythopoesis*, that is, ‘legitimation conveyed through narratives whose outcomes reward legitimate actions and punish non-legitimate actions’ (van Leeuwen, 2007, 92). Thus, in the steps of identifying a problem and its outcome, as well as the moral evaluation that arises from it, the narrative structure acts in the affirmation of a given possibility of truth and in the explicitness of the role of the actors in the construction of that same truth.

The effects of these dynamics are naturally relevant when aiming to analyse political narratives and forms of political reality. Firstly, political narratives: a narrative is political when it emanates from political actors, focuses on political themes and events, emerges as an articulation of truth with political impacts, in summation, a narrative that is constituted throughout political action and life. Secondly, the ‘reality’ of a political reality seems to depend on the way facts are narrated and

anchored in truth values, which makes one wonder to what extent a political reality can be narrated faithfully – and what this faithfulness consists of (Shenhav, 2006, 247-250). Answers to these questions not only reiterate classic debates that return to the relationship between language and reality, they also point to the representational and non-representational power of language, which, in addition to naming and recognising – or excluding and silencing – realities, influences political action, contributing to its material configuration through its very materiality. In the following sections we illustrate these dynamics, first by looking at the construction of the security narrative and then at the discursive dynamics of the financial crisis.

Security Strategy 2003, Global Strategy 2016 and Strategic Compass 2022: the construction of the security narrative

The security dimension has been present in the Community narrative since the early days of the European project. The idea of economic integration that underlies the project was put forward after World War II, anchored by the premise that Europe needs peace and security. The idea of security has therefore been associated with the European Communities from early on, even though in institutional and operational terms its development has come up against several obstacles. However, what is relevant here is to understand how, in its narrative, the EU has built an understanding of security and how this is projected in its performance as a security actor. To this end, we analyse three fundamental documents in this field of action, namely the 2003 *European Security Strategy*, the 2016 *Global Strategy on the EU's Foreign and Security Policy*, and the 2022 *Strategic Compass for Security and Defence*.

The normative dimension, oriented towards a set of fundamental values such as democratic principles and fundamental freedoms, has

been very present in the European narrative. References to ‘normative power’ as conceptualised by Ian Manners (2002) imply shared principles and norms reflected in the *acquis communautaire*, including the centrality of peace, freedom, democracy, the rule of law, and human rights. According to Manners, four other elements should also be highlighted in this normative alignment: social solidarity, anti-discrimination, sustainable development and good governance. The underlying idea is that these normative principles distinguish the EU from other actors and in some way guide its actions. The backdrop to the emergence of the European Communities, the very institutionalisation of European integration and the Treaties seek to define what the EU is, regardless of what the EU does, reflecting potential for change.

This idea of normative power as defining this actor has been contested, which has led to ways of understanding and doing being imposed on the external expression of these principles. The diffusion of normative principles has been seen by some as part of a dominant narrative led by the Western liberal values that has accompanied the development of the EU itself. The way it defines a particular identity where the Union is perceived as potentially a positive force in international relations, has further generated criticism of Eurocentrism (Diez, 2013). Still, these have been the founding principles of the European project and have been successively firmed up in institutional documents. This means that, in the field of security too, these constituent values of the European project are successively underlined as an integral part of institutional and policy development. On the European Security Strategy of 2003, the first official and comprehensive document to put forward a security strategy, Javier Solana wrote

For the first time, the EU agreed on a joint threat assessment and set clear objectives for advancing its security interests, based on our core values. (Solana, 2009)

The European security narrative can thus not be detached from the identity narrative that accompanies it. The strategic security documents under analysis here are a reflection of this self-identification, as well as the context in which they are produced. Mälksoo (2016, 376-7) even argues that these documents are exercises in world-ordering where the way the EU defines itself as a security actor reveals the need to tell a particular story about its positioning and contribution to international affairs. They also reveal, in our view, a self-reflexive and somewhat reactive exercise.

The European Security Strategy of 2003 (ESS, 2003) is a document that seeks to define the criteria for decisions on the EU's security role in the face of a list of common threats. The reference to rogue states and the need to reintegrate them into the international system, as well as the concern about the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, demonstrate how the EU needs to develop a strategic culture that allows for early, rapid and, if necessary, robust interventions. This document is adopted in the post-September 11, 2001 context and is clearly marked by concern over Islamist terrorism, transnational criminal networks and arms control issues. The agenda reveals the clear identification of threats as well as puts forward potential responses to them. This leads to the identification of a set of instruments necessary to accompany the EU's external action, both in terms of civilian resources and material power, accompanied by the capacity for intergovernmental coordination. Furthermore, the development of strategic partnerships with countries such as Russia, Japan, China, Canada and India, is identified as central to the strategy of consolidating the EU's presence as a relevant actor in combating these threats. (Bailes, 2005, 1)

The narrative is marked by the identification of threats, very much informed by the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States, and the mapping of potential responses to these, either through the development of internal capabilities – in close coordination with

Member States – or external articulation with strategic partners that allow a greater scope of the Union’s presence in the production of international security. Based on its founding values and principles, the EU intends to assert itself as a security actor, and through this document to clarify its position to a wider audience, both externally and within its member states, demonstrating an alignment capability in security matters. The normative attraction model is expanded, visible in the enlargement policy and the creation of the European Neighbourhood Policy, for example, seeking to bring ‘others’ closer to these principles and this vision of security.

The European Union’s 2016 Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy reframes the approach to promote ‘resilience’ as a means of local development and empowerment, rather than the ‘transformative diplomacy’ more traditionally associated with cooperation projects. The latter proved to be very limited and attracted some criticism over imposing and imitating practices which did not necessarily respect local wishes. A more recent trend that stems from this change in narrative is that the EU’s actions are becoming more technical (project-based) and less political, thus losing the less positive connotation associated with the idea of imposing governance schemes (Schumacher, 2015). The Global Strategy in this way introduces a new concept, ‘principled pragmatism’, which seeks to adjust the narrative to a distinctive context. This concept points to a pragmatic view of the world and international relations, as they are and not as they should be, and to the issue of principles, since, even while recognising the existence of different models, the norms and principles of international law should be the reference to follow (Global Strategy, 2016).

In this document the narrative is clearly modified. The situation is very different, with the war in Georgia in 2008 bringing violence to the EU neighbourhood area and underlining instability in the post-Soviet space and relations with Russia, with a clear impact on

European security. The war in Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea in 2014 add to the concerns, marked by Moscow's violation of the border regime in Europe, contributing to the document's clear take on the EU's role as a security actor, backed by a firmer narrative. The more global context, in addition to the tension in relations with Russia, is marked by Brexit and the migration flows of recent years, which deepen feelings of insecurity and instability within the European space. In this way, the document has a stronger security orientation, advancing a comprehensive reading of it, emphasising defence issues, and positioning the EU as an actor with the capacity to act globally (Mälksoo, 2016, 376). In the words of the document, this reading results from a realistic assessment of the strategic environment as well as an idealistic aspiration to move towards a better world (Global Strategy, 2016, 16). The security narrative is anchored in the understanding that the EU is as secure as its neighbourhood, as well as on the close interconnection of internal and external security (Global Strategy, 2016, 14). The idea of resilience that marks the narrative stems from the adverse context and the EU's desire to assert itself as a global actor.

The change in the narrative regarding Russia and how these relations are key in defining European security can be highlighted here as illustrative. Indeed, the shift in the narrative on Russia from the 2003 Strategy to the 2016 security document is tremendous: from positive references to Russia as a partner and the need to coordinate efforts with Moscow and other international actors, as well as continue to work closely with Russia on various topics, the narrative has been framed broadly in negative terms. The document follows the 2014 setback in EU-Russia relations and the new narrative of the 'other as threat' that has accompanied the evolution of relations (Freire, 2020). Expressions such as 'Russia's violation of international law and the destabilisation of Ukraine' and that 'managing the relationship with Russia represents a key

strategic challenge' (Global Strategy, 2016, 33) are illustrative. The interdependence of EU-Russia relations is nevertheless acknowledged when it is mentioned that it is important to engage Russia to discuss differences and cooperate if and when interests overlap, which shows a positive appeal, albeit limited to keeping dialogue channels open (Global Strategy, 2016, 33). A reference in line with the five principles set out by the Council in March 2016 guiding EU relations with Russia, namely: '(1) implementation of the Minsk agreements on the eastern Ukraine conflict as the key condition for any substantial change in the EU's stance towards Russia; (2) strengthened relations with the EU's Eastern Partners and other neighbours, including Central Asia; (3) strengthening the resilience of the EU (e.g. energy security, hybrid threats or strategic communication); (4) selective engagement with Russia on issues of interest to the EU; (5) the need to engage in people-to-people contacts and support Russian civil society' (European Parliament, 2022).

The invasion of Ukraine by Russia on 24 February 2022 fundamentally changed the strategic framework of the EU's relations with Russia, given the European leaders' understanding of this action as a fundamental violation of structural principles of international order, such as the border regime and the principle of the territorial integrity of states, as well as in the area of fundamental rights and freedoms with the humanitarian consequences associated with this war. The Strategic Compass for Security and Defence, 'For a European Union that protects its citizens, its values and interests and contributes to international peace and security', approved on 21 March 2022, reflects this context of enormous tension between the EU and Russia, perceived as a revisionist and aggressor state. The narrative is clear:

The return of war in Europe, with Russia's unjustified and unprovoked aggression against Ukraine, as well as major geopolitical

shifts are challenging our ability to promote our vision and defend our interests ... The European Union is more united than ever. We are committed to defend the European security order ... The more hostile security environment requires us to make a quantum leap forward and increase our capacity and willingness to act, strengthen our resilience and ensure solidarity and mutual assistance. (Strategic Compass, 2022, 2)

This document, which was supposed to be the foundation of a geostrategic EU, already seems obsolete, overtaken by events (Witney, 2022). Indeed, the most recent revision of this document took place after the invasion of Ukraine, reflecting on the one hand, the new strategic context and affirming the union of member countries in the face of the identification of a shared threat, while, on the other hand, it proved to be insufficient in producing a strategic vision of the future, revealing the EU more as a regional actor than as the desired global power (Blockmans, Crosson, Paikin, 2022). European security is under review, and the agenda is marked by a commitment to investment in defence capabilities and new technologies that will provide the EU with the means necessary to act as a producer of security. The Strategic Compass, organised around four central pillars – crisis management, resilience, capabilities and partnerships – seeks to steer security policies and actions, emphasising the EU's founding principles and reaffirming its role in a specific geographical context and space, while positioning this actor as a producer of security. The road from narrative to practice remains long nonetheless (Koenig, 2022).

The conceptualisation of the EU as a security actor has evolved from the first strategic document of 2003 to the 2016 Global Strategy, showing a more refined understanding of the EU's role in international security and in European security issues in particular, where Russia has assumed a prominent place. The Strategic Compass, ap-

proved in March 2022, already reflects the stark divide between the EU and Russia in the context of the war in Ukraine. The narrative of the security actor has been consolidated, in an internal logic of capacity building that is very visible in the last approved document, as well as in an external logic of strategic alignments from which Russia has been excluded (for instance, the G8 returned to the G7 format with Russia being invited to leave the group, and more recently, after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, it has been considered a revisionist actor that again violates the border regime in Europe and has become a fundamental threat to European security). The principled pragmatism and resilience narrative also demonstrate a unique stance, with the EU seeking to respond to critiques of meddling, while also responding to its own inability to promote transformation, as is intended by 'normative power'. These documents lend meaning to the EU's action in terms of security and seek to give legitimacy to the way in which security is conceptualised and operationalised. The adjustments in time reveal a shaping of the narrative that responds to different audiences and seeks to concert different interests, while redefining the positioning of the EU actor in the European security framework.

Financial Crisis

While the security dimension has been present in the community narrative since the start of the European project, the fact remains that several 'crises' have permanently marked and accompanied the European project in recent decades, to the point that we can begin to contextualise its evolution not only by its achievements, but also by the crises it experiences. This process is not, however, exclusively European. From Ulrich Beck's (1992) 'risk societies' to Agamben's (2004) 'states of exception' – to name a few – several

authors have warned that our times have been defined by the adoption of 'extraordinary measures' so often that they become less and less exceptional or extraordinary. As Agamben says, these 'extraordinary' moments have now become the standard for states to act, and 'crises' (or risks, as Beck would say) have colonised everyday politics and become mundane and almost omnipresent in society.

Since the 1990s, the area that makes up the European project has gone through numerous crises with political and legal effects: from the end of the Cold War to German reunification; from the 'mad cow crisis' to various overproduction crises; from the crisis of the democratic deficit of the European institutions to the crises of EU enlargements; from wars on the EU's doorstep (e.g. in the Balkans) to crises of terrorist attacks in Madrid or London; from the crisis of ratification of the Constitutional Treaty in 2005 to the Lisbon Treaty in 2009, from the 'rare political opportunity' (Thygesen, 2016) of implementing an Economic and Monetary Union to the economic and financial crisis of 2007 onwards.

Since then, new crises have emerged and are piling up. In 2014 (and again in 2019), the European Parliament elections strengthened the weight of populist and Eurosceptic parties, especially radical right-wing parties (Manucci, 2021). In July 2015, the Greek referendum that rejected the conditions of the 'bailout' proposed by the European institutions and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) possibly marked the culmination of a multidimensional crisis, simultaneously a financial, banking, sovereign debt, monetary (eurozone), and social and political crisis, in addition to other aspects. Just two months after the referendum, the image of the dead body of Alan Kurdi (a 2-year-old Syrian child) which had washed up on the EU's Mediterranean coast served as a wake-up call for the European reception policy in the refugee crisis, which by then had reached its peak. In 2016, Brexit and the election of Trump shook the foundations of the European bloc, forcing the latter to question

its political positioning and its economic and commercial diplomacy to the point where, in 2019, Macron announced the ‘brain death’ (DN, 2019) of the Atlantic Alliance. Like the rest of the world the EU was faced with the pandemic in 2020, and in 2022 the scenario of war returned to its doorstep and, with it, the nuclear threat.

But it is not only the crisis scenario and its respective state of exception that assumes ‘the legal form of that which can have no legal form’, to paraphrase Agamben (2004, 12). The crisis discourse has also become a normative discourse and a legitimization of governance during this increasingly less exceptional exception. Crises are thus a continuation of politics by other means, and crisis discourse one of its weapons. As Lawrence writes:

Crises are surprisingly unexceptional in the EU political arena. Rather than being a politics out of the ordinary, crises are, in some sense, politics as usual. Though the events that make up a particular crisis may be more or less exceptional in their breadth, scope, and disruptive potential, the discourse of crisis appears as a part of the status quo of EU government – and indeed, of contemporary government in general. (Lawrence, 2014, 194)

What makes the financial crisis such an important crisis in Europe? Firstly, its own delimitation. The crisis has taken many forms, depending on the most expressive dimension of the moment: a ‘(macro)economic’, ‘financial’, ‘banking’, ‘fiscal’, ‘monetary’, ‘euro-zone’, ‘(sovereign) debt’ crisis, as well as being perpetuated, creating a crisis of governance, an institutional crisis, a political and social crisis. In other words, it was an existential crisis (Menéndez, 2013) which merged several crises into one. While this chapter does not seek to analyse the different dimensions and origins of the crisis, it is important to bear this multiplicity in mind given that it is reflected in the different narratives about the crisis. As Schmidt puts it:

The EU's sovereign debt crisis stems not just from the economics, including the volatility of the financial markets in response to perceptions of countries' high deficits, excessive debts, declining growth, and loss of competitiveness. It is also a result of the politics of the crisis, in particular with regard to EU leaders' ideas about the crisis and how they have communicated (or not) about them to national publics and to financial actors. (Schmidt, 2014, 245)

What made the financial crisis an existential one is not only due to different origins and diagnoses derived from the multiplicity of expressions of the crisis, or from institutional incapacity and structural imbalances in the architecture of the European project, but also to the very narratives about the crisis, often antagonistic or mutually exclusive. This section will look at narratives about the crisis (who recounts the crisis, what they say about it and how they tell it) focusing on their loci of enunciation as a constitutive space of discursive conflicts. It is from these standpoints and discursive conflicts that wisdom and knowledge are produced, legitimised and crystallised, and credibility and, finally, authority are attributed to various discursive actors. In other words, narratives (and the ideas that frame them) have a genealogy and a historical process that is highlighted and revealed even more at a time of crisis. Narratives are, on the one hand, ways of framing trajectories – events in a timeline – and, on the other, they are reified products: narratives (whether by their mode of framing or by their use of fragments of that framing) circulate and recontextualise themselves – that is, they follow trajectories, carrying with them the marks of inscription in another time and space.

There are, therefore, two dynamics to highlight here when it comes to the (co-)constitution of narratives in dispute. First, narratives frame and organise the event, the theme or the subjects

(individual or collective) in different ways, creating tension between these different framings. Second, the narratives themselves, as reified products of different historical trajectories, respond to the national hegemonic expression of the integration process of each country, its positioning, which are situated in complex symbolic networks and geographies. And therefore, permeable to different expressions of crisis. Hence, it was possible to witness a set of narratives in dispute, with their own degree of porosity towards the same disputes: besides the genealogy, the biographical trajectory, the historical process of certain ideas, the narratives are based on different historical trajectories and national hegemonic expressions on the European integration process and the positioning of each country in that process. What is more, these narratives are also permeable to the different expressions of the crisis (in scope, dimension, other narrative geographies) that circulate and make themselves felt at a given moment. In other words, as already mentioned at the beginning of this text, narratives about the EU and the crisis do not arise spontaneously, but are anchored in a historical trajectory, and are the product of different interests, geographies and identities (past, present and future). From here onwards, this section looks into understanding what these narratives are, how they reflect distinct political trajectories and horizons, and how they point to the extreme porosity of the relationship between national and international in terms of genesis and impact.

Perhaps the best example of trajectories of narratives in the crisis comes from the EU itself. On 1 October 2008, in a short press conference in Brussels, the then President of the European Commission, Durão Barroso, clearly demonstrated the framing and nature of the crisis (i.e. financial, market), as well as the EU's response to the crisis (particularly through the ECB), in conjunction with those he identifies as the main losers (i.e. banks, markets, companies, and the European architecture itself):

The financial crisis is indeed a very serious situation. It requires a major effort on all sides. Europe is taking its responsibilities. There is work to be done in the short term – and there is work to be done in the medium and long term. We must, first of all, address the urgencies and then make our structures future proof. The supervision authorities, the Member States, the central banks and especially the European Central Bank, the Presidency of the Council and the European Commission: we all work together, and the appropriate interventions are taking place where companies are in difficulty. ... Let me pay tribute to the dedication, the seriousness and the sense of common good of all those who are involved. I would like to emphasize the fundamental role played by the European Central Bank. It does a superb job by ensuring the liquidity of the markets. The Euro is a factor of stability, a true European asset in these tasking times. But the challenge is not only to inject liquidity into the markets. We also need to inject credibility into the markets – in terms of European and of global governance of the financial system. Regarding the contribution of the Commission, we have been in close contact with our partners and market actors throughout ... So it is fair to say that the work achieved since the beginning of the crisis, and more particularly in the last few days, shows that our system can cope. The European financial system has the ability to respond. We can have confidence in it. (Barroso, 2008, 2)

Also in 2008, the European Commission launches the European Economic Recovery Plan (or EERP) in November, which is adopted by the European Council the following month. The Plan includes, among others, ‘a major injection of purchasing power into the economy to boost demand and stimulate confidence’ and also temporarily proposes ‘that Member States and the EU agree to an immediate budgetary impulse amounting to € 200 billion (1.5% of GDP) to boost demand in full respect of the Stability and Growth Pact’ (European Commission, 2008). The reversal of this plan of-

ficially begins to be discussed shortly afterwards, as the European Commission itself acknowledges,

Ministers agreed at the Informal Ecofin in Göteborg of 20 October 2009 on the need for a co-ordinated and comprehensive approach on exit strategies, encompassing measures to rebuild a stable and viable financial sector, ensure fiscal sustainability and to raise potential output. As to the fiscal exit strategy, it was agreed that substantial fiscal consolidation was required beyond the withdrawal of the stimulus measures of the European Economic Recovery Programme in order to halt and eventually reverse the increase in debt and restore sound fiscal positions. (European Commission, 2010)

As Gonzáles and Figueiredo (2014, 308) point out, '[this] was, in fact, a sudden change of EU policy orientation. Portugal followed in strict terms the initial orientation towards a fiscal stimulus, which partly explains the increase in public expenditure between 2008 and 2010'. In line with the EU's policy shift from stimulus to fiscal consolidation, and in view of the evolution of the financial or banking crisis into a sovereign debt and eurozone crisis, the European Council decides in May 2010 on the (temporary) creation of a European Financial Stabilisation Mechanism (EFSM). On 28 and 29 October of the same year, the European Council takes 'the political decision' (European Council, n.d.) to create the European Stability Mechanism (ESM), a permanent agency that will formally replace the EFSF from 2012.

The years following 2010 are marked by the application of measures that bring the troika to countries like Portugal and Greece and to the dispute between narratives of the way out of the crisis (e.g. austerity vs growth), as well as narratives of the genesis of the crisis. Although originating in the United States in the 2007-08 subprime mortgage crisis, its impact(s) on Europe has also been accompanied by various narratives of the genesis (and blame) of the crisis: those that describe the 'frugal' North and the 'wasteful'

South; those that blame the disparities on the imbalances in the European architecture (e.g. the economic and monetary union and the euro in particular), centred on Germany's hypothetical aspiration to realise a project of power – that of imposing its will on Europe by diplomatic means – often invoking its failed attempts to achieve it by military means in the twenty-first century.

Several authors have already summarised some of the main narratives, but it is worth recalling that the different stories about the crisis depend on the actors involved. Such is the case with the financial crisis, where politicians, technocrats and bankers have narrated contrasting stories about the reasons for the crisis (Froud et al., 2012 apud Schmidt, 2013), and these narratives have shaped and framed a view not only on crisis, but also, and consequently, on how to act on it. Schmidt (2013) highlights the central role of collective memory in the positions and narratives adopted by various countries: how, for example, the hyperinflation of 1923 was always present in *ordo-liberal* narratives by German leaders in their response to the crisis (as opposed to the depression of 1931); or how the emphasis on economic governance and solidarity by France emanated from its own vision of leadership in the European project (Schmidt, 2013). Or even in Greece, the narrative of German hypocrisy – which, in the midst of the European Union, refused the debt forgiveness it had been granted in 1953, thus allowing it to consolidate and assert itself on the European continent (Cotterill, 2015), while German politicians talked about the moral obligation of an insolvent country being able to sell sovereign territory, from the islands in the Aegean Sea to the Acropolis and the Parthenon (Inman and Smith, 2010).

This phenomenon of introducing morality into crisis narratives is particularly common, but the evolution and different faces of the crisis allowed for a 'shift of emphasis' in the narratives, which enabled a homogenisation of representations about peoples, nations

and cultures: by blaming them as lazy or greedy on the one side, frugal and austere on the other, it became increasingly difficult to adopt a consensual exit strategy from the crisis, as the dominant narratives tended to be mutually exclusive¹. As Howcroft emphasises,

The fact that the financial crisis has been transferred to the people of the countries in crisis (and the unemployed) who are now depicted as being personally responsible for the crisis is an interesting change of emphasis. However, this must come as a relief to the banks which initially were getting a lot of criticism for their activities which led to the financial crisis in the first place due to their reckless housing loans and other schemes to sell debt. (Howcroft, 2012, 301)

At the 2013 Europe Day celebrations in Florence, Barroso welcomes the fact that his policy choice is widely shared, as consensus between the different actors (Member States, European institutions, political parties and social partners) is crucial. This policy choice rejected the dichotomy between the terms ‘austerity’ versus ‘growth’ and reframed that opposition between ‘unsustainable short-term stimulus that will lead to a short-living relaunch of growth’ versus ‘sustainable long-term reforms’.

According to some ... discourses, Europe and the Euro are the cause of the problem. Let’s be intellectually honest and let’s spare no effort to explain again and again that while known as the ‘euro crisis’, this is not a crisis of the euro itself. The euro remains a cred-

¹ Dijsselbloem’s statements in 2017 are an example of this. The then Dutch Finance Minister and President of the Eurogroup was interviewed by the German newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, whom he told ‘During the crisis of the euro, the countries of the North have shown solidarity with the countries affected by the crisis. As a Social Democrat, I attribute exceptional importance to solidarity. [But] you also have obligations. You can not spend all the money on drinks and women and then ask for help.’ (Khan and McClean, 2017)

ible, stable and strong currency. This is an economic and financial crisis in individual countries that impacts on the rest of the euro area. And the financial crisis was also not euro-specific, for it affected countries in the Eurozone and outside, inside the European Union and outside, as the case of Iceland clearly shows. This crisis was the result of the combination of irresponsibility of a significant part of the financial sector with aggravating unsustainable public debt and the lack of structural competitiveness in some Member States. The monetary union absorbed some of the shocks – as it was intended to do – but was itself severely shaken as a result. It is therefore appropriate to say that while this is not a crisis of the euro area as such and was certainly not created by the European Union, it has posed very specific challenges – economically but also institutionally and politically – to the euro area and implicitly to our European Union. (Barroso, 2013, 3-4)

From another perspective on the same reality, and during his stay at the Greek Ministry of Finance, after his departure following the 2015 referendum, Yanis Varoufakis expressed several times his opposition to the anti-democratic power and lack of transparency of the Eurogroup, stating that:

The Eurozone is the largest and most important macro-economy in the world. And yet, this gigantic macro-economy features only one institution that has legal status: the European Central Bank, whose charter specifies what powers the Frankfurt-based institution has in its pursuit of a single objective: price stability. Which leaves the question begging: ‘What about economic goals, beyond price stability, like development, investment, unemployment, poverty, internal imbalances, trade, productivity?’ ‘Which EU body decides the Eurozone’s policies on these?’ Most people believe that the answer is: the Eurogroup. Indeed, it is in the Eurogroup where the crucial decisions are reached on which the present and future of Europe

depend. Except that the Eurogroup does not exist in European law! Without written rules, or legal process, the Eurogroup makes important decisions that are subsequently rubber-stamped, without any serious debate, at the EU's Economic and Financial Affairs Council (Ecofin). The lack of written rules or legal procedures is not the only problem. There are two other problems that Europeans should know about. One is that the troika dominated the Eurogroup and imposes a decision-making process in which the finance ministers are neutered, forced to make decisions on the basis of next-to-no information. The other is the outrageous opacity of the Eurogroup's proceedings. (Varoufakis, 2016)

While Varoufakis sees the Eurogroup in this critical light, the official discourse of the European Union, while not directly denying its outlines, presents them as a positive given, selecting vocabularies associated with formal and institutional authority. In an official online page on financial assistance to eurozone Member States, the European Council states that the Eurogroup 'politically endorses: decisions on granting financial assistance to a euro area member state and on the conditions on which this assistance would be provided'; 'memorandums of understanding', and 'decisions to release tranches of financial assistance following reviews of the progress achieved in implementing a programme'; on the criticism of its undemocratic nature, '[t]he Eurogroup acts once the approval processes in the euro area member states are complete', processes which 'may involve consultation with or approval by national parliaments'. The role of the Council, on the other hand, is to 'formally approv[e] the conditions on which financial assistance is granted in order to ensure consistency with the EU economic policy coordination process' (European Council, n.d.).

While Barroso had shared his satisfaction with his vision and with the wide dissemination of his framework at the 2013 Europe

Day celebrations in Florence, the following year in Berlin, Barroso would present what he considered should be the essence of the European project from the crisis:

Now, the third phase is mainly – or should mainly be – about the power and influence required to safeguard Europe’s peace and prosperity under the conditions of globalisation. The economic and financial crisis showed, particularly, that the improvement of the governance of the Euro Area was indispensable for the long term sustainability of a single currency. Further institutional steps of a more political nature may become indispensable. The challenge is, of course, how to make them in a way that keeps the integrity of the internal market and of our Union as a whole. A multiple-speed reinforced cooperation in Europe may become a necessity. But a Europe of multiple classes has been – and must always be – avoided at all costs. So: flexibility, yes, stratification, no. (Barroso, 2014)

Now that his narrative and framing of the crisis has become widely accepted, Barroso goes on to present a vision for the future based on ‘safeguarding peace and prosperity’, the ‘integrity of the internal market’ and of the Union itself. Barroso’s speech is rooted in doublethink: the crisis is presented simultaneously, particularly in some countries, as virulent or even ferocious, but it is discursively re-presented in the past²; Barroso characterises the strengthening of the European architecture (in particular the governance of the Eurozone) as ‘indispensable’ and affirms the possible need for more institutional reforms, although he does not

² In 2013 Barroso had already proclaimed something similar in order to create a bond of credibility and trust and therefore centrality and authority in his discourse and vision: ‘although we are not yet out of the woods, the existential threat to the Euro is essentially over’. (Barroso, 2013, 4).

recognise responsibilities, either in the institutional weaknesses in the worsening of the crisis, or in the responses given by these institutions in managing it. If in 2013 Barroso stated that the ‘crisis was the result of the combination of irresponsibility of a significant part of the financial sector with aggravating unsustainable public debt and the lack of structural competitiveness in some Member States’, it is no coincidence that in some cases, such as Portugal, the worsening of the debt was due not to a desperation that was innate to southern European countries, including Portugal, but precisely because it followed the recommendations and guidelines of the EU itself: Portugal’s consolidated public debt as a percentage of GDP reached 60% in 2002 (the year the single currency was introduced) and rose slowly but consistently to 72.5% in 2007³; however, it is from 2008 – the year in which the EERP is launched – that the Portuguese public debt accelerates (75.6% in 2008) and skyrockets in 2009 and 2010 – 87.8% in 2009, 100.2% in 2010 (Pordata, 2022), between three Stability and Growth Programmes (SGP) and until the parliamentary rejection of the fourth SGP in 2011, which led to a funding crisis, early elections and a request for bailout that culminated in the memorandum of understanding with the Troika.

The Portuguese case is paradigmatic, not only of the power of hegemonic narratives and imaginaries about the integration process – and how these influence the way various actors look at the crisis – but also of the existence of porosity of external narratives in the internal discourse. In the decade between the end of the Cold War and the new century, Boaventura Sousa Santos (1994) spoke of how the ‘imagination of the centre’ was one of the main functions of the Portuguese state since Portugal’s accession to the then EEC

³ This is something that is also frequently invoked by those who blame the European architecture, and in particular monetary union, for the creation of regional imbalances and asymmetries in the Eurozone, leading certain countries to run deficits by default, and that facilitating indebtedness was the solution.

in 1986. In 2002, the author revisits the concept in an article for *Visão* magazine, where he states that

Such a function consists of formulating the problems of Portuguese society as being the problems of the developed societies that share the EU with us. As the Portuguese state has been the great protagonist of our integration into the EU, it is also the main subject of the discourse of the imagination of the centre. This discourse produces a double effect of concealment. On the one hand, it hides the fact that Portuguese society is a society of intermediate development and, as such, has its own problems, which are very different from those faced by countries like Germany, France or Sweden. On the other hand, given this reality, the imagination of the centre is a discourse that has no adequate translation into the actual practice of governance. Hence the very sharp discrepancy between the official country portrayed by the imagination of the centre and the unofficial country that experiences first-hand the distance between that imagination and everyday real life. (Santos, 2002)

In the same vein, Joaquim Aguiar's analysis of the four foundational narratives of the Portuguese democratic regime follows, the last of these being what Aguiar calls the 'integrationist strategic' narrative, as 'the one that made the EU the opportunity for Portugal's modernisation as if it were the symmetrical path of maritime expansion' (Aguiar, 2005). In Portuguese media the EU is often portrayed as a political project that provides security, social cohesion, economic capacity, prosperity, solidarity, responsibility and righteousness. As far as Portugal's position in the EU is concerned, the positive discourses are the most prominent: Portugal is well integrated in the EU (even if from time to time it is conceded that Portugal cannot catch up with the development of other countries), integration

into the common market and the single currency are seen as good opportunities for the country's economic development, and EU tax policies help Portugal to manage the Portuguese economy responsibly.⁴ The crisis is associated with a 'surge in Euroscepticism linked to the strict conditions of Portugal's 2011 bailout package' (Dennison and Franco, 2019); although it has subsided since 2015 and integration has regained some support, it should be noted that, according to Magalhães (2017, 222), there has also been a decline in instrumental support for the EU, reaching the lowest levels since accession.

Conclusion

This chapter has analysed the role of narratives in the discursive construction of the actor – the EU, focusing mainly on the narratives constructed at the Union level, on how these narratives influence its strategies and political action in security matters and in the context of the financial crisis. Understanding that narratives are not only ways of framing trajectories, but also instruments that act in the construction of political realities, we identified points of convergence and misalignment, dominant narratives and the way these seek to legitimise certain decisions and options. In this chapter we presented, in a very partial way, some thematic dynamics of subjectivation: faced with the theme of security and the discourses on the financial crisis, the texts, aside from marking the moments and places of their production, point, through vocabular choices

⁴ This reference to the Portuguese media is based on the ongoing research within the project 'MEDIATIZED EU - Mediatized Discourses on Europeanization and Their Representations in Public Perceptions', with the involvement of Maria Raquel Freire, Sofia José Santos, Moara Crivelente and Luiza Bezerra, Centre for Social Studies, funded by the H2020 programme, European Commission.

and other discursive strategies of recognition or legitimation, to the fluid dynamics of modelling and positioning of the EU social actor and its possibilities of action in concrete historical and political contexts. The recontextualisation of narratives thus becomes very evident in our analysis.

The consolidation of the security narrative marks the trajectory of the EU, drawing on a logic that is both evaluative and material, underlining the relevance of contexts, and, in the discursive work on security, pointing to a somewhat reactive stance. The ambivalence associated with the normative principles that constitute the very essence of the EU vis-à-vis a pragmatic approach required in the encounter between internal and international dynamics is reflected, for example, in the choices of the expressions ‘principled pragmatism’ or even the word ‘resilience’. Strategic documents in the area of security serve as a guide and aim to legitimise options and actions in this field, thus shaping the narrative, whether in relation to spaces – domestic and international – or in time – reflecting the EU’s own institutional evolution. The war in Ukraine has clearly added not only a layer of severity to the discourse, but also an expression of greater cohesion in the EU in the reading of threats and how to respond to them. The recontextualisation of the narrative is particularly illustrative in the ‘Strategic Compass’, in which Russia is now identified as the greatest threat to European security. In the case of the financial crisis, faced with the recognition by both its critics and proponents that the political decision-making process was mainly centred in the Eurogroup – and given its acknowledged informality and poor transparency – it was important to first analyse the Commission’s discourses as a dominant narrative. Nevertheless, we have not left out the narratives that circulated within Europe, while highlighting how some narratives that were more dominant in national or regional spaces were shaped and influenced, not only by the place in which they were spoken, but also by their

collective memories, as well as by the interdiscursive and ideological porosity between different scales – for example national and international – of action.

It is thus clear that the trajectory of the EU can also be understood through the analysis of the narratives that inform it, and that the cases studied here clearly demonstrate how these are modulated and modular in contextual and temporal terms and always in relation to their various audiences. The dominant and missing narratives are also identified and seen as fundamental in how history is recontextualised and how they mould the readings and perceptions of the EU actor. A story that continues to be constructed, told and untold.

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**INTERVENTION AND SOVEREIGNTY:
SPECIFICITIES OF THE CONTEMPORARY
INTERNATIONAL ORDER**

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Abstract: There are few observations about contemporary interstate relations that do not, in one way or another, refer to intervention and sovereignty. However, the historical and geographical variation, the omnipresent dialectic between the two concepts and their respective practices, widespread in international relations, plays a crucial role in establishing the founding assumptions of the international order. This chapter begins by delineating the historical and theoretical roots of intervention,

and its evolution over time. Subsequently it argues that, as both a concept and practice, intervention presupposes an international arena made up of sovereign states, major material asymmetries, the need to avoid wars or at least to avoid invoking the state of war, and technologies that allow and facilitate the capacity to interfere in outside territory. The chapter then presents two empirical case studies – EU missions and operations beyond its territory, as well as cyberattacks and interference in states' internal agendas – with a view to illustrating the relationship between intervention and sovereignty, and how these concepts evolved in the early twenty-first century. On the basis of interventionist practices at a global scale, the chapter concludes with a few points about the current international arena.

Keywords: Intervention, Sovereignty, Digital Technology, European Union

Introduction

There are few observations on contemporary international relations that do not refer to intervention. Whether to define sovereignty, to argue for humanitarianism, or to label external interference in the internal affairs of states, hardly any of these terms and phenomena – all of which are ubiquitous in international relations – will be addressed without mentioning the concept and practice of intervention. Given its omnipresence, this chapter aims to outline the theoretical and historical roots of intervention as a dominant concept and widespread practice in international relations, thereby determining the assumptions of the contemporary international scene.

However deep-rooted the practice of intervention may be, it was by no means preordained. Of relatively recent origin, the concept and practice of intervention proliferated because it reflected the

dilemmas and contradictions inherent in the political order of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. More specifically, both the practice and the concept capture the imperial structures of a Europe consisting of sovereign states in economic–material ascendancy, structures whose characteristics became widespread as that order expanded globally throughout the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries.

In any case, a more cyclical or linear view of history, or even one less receptive to the semantic complexity of concepts, would be sceptical of the need to investigate the historical roots of intervention. Despite its recent application, an observer of what are termed ‘international’ phenomena would note – with the benefit of hindsight – a broad spectrum of ‘interventions’. ‘Intervention’, the observer would say, ‘has always been the prerogative of the major powers’. Without calling into question exercises in retrospectivity, exercises with which the past is usually unveiled in the present, the aim is not so much to find correspondences between history and the present than to reveal the theoretical specificity of a term in contemporary legal, political and colloquial jargon. While the first approach, based on historical anachronism, presumes similarities over time, facilitating – if not allowing – generalisations and comparisons between distinct periods and places, the second addresses difference, explaining how the emergence of a concept with its own, albeit contested, semantics reveals specific, maybe even unique, socio-political characteristics in the contemporary international panorama.¹ It is precisely these specific characteristics

¹ The importance of linguistic, especially semantic, reality for deciphering small – and sometimes large – differences between different historical periods and political orders is noted in the practice of conceptual history (*begriffsgeschichte*) (Koselleck, 1989), genealogy or archaeology of knowledge (Foucault, 2002), widely disseminated in the discipline of international relations (e.g. Berenskoetter, 2017; Debrix, 2003; Fierke, 1998).

that are outlined here. Likewise, the need to scrutinise not only the concepts from which sometimes ill-considered practices unfurl on the international scene is underlined, but also to demonstrate how these practices and the material reality from which they arise foster new concepts – in this case, intervention – in order to distinguish the past from the present (Adler & Pouliot, 2011; Hopf, 2010)we approach world politics through the lens of its manifold practices, which we define as competent performances. Studying International Relations (IR).

To explain the emergence of the notion of intervention and what it reveals about the particularities of contemporary international reality, we first have to contextualise it in relation to the norm with which it is usually contrasted: sovereignty. As a result of the consolidation of the modern state at the end of the eighteenth century, it is almost as if the notion of intervention were juxtaposed with sovereignty, a supposedly undeniable and indivisible right to which European (and Christian) states are entitled.

In any case, discursive reality is not enough to explain the prevalence of the term. For sovereignty to be challenged, an entity capable and willing to actually carry out an intervention is required. Therefore, intervention also reflects the practices associated with growing economic and material asymmetries, including technological ones, which allow certain powers to question established norms.

Together with the crystallisation of the concept of sovereignty and the rise of great international (and imperial) powers, the preservation of world peace has consolidated the concept of intervention in modern political jargon. In other words, given the increasing emphasis on the practice of peacekeeping – rather than the pursuit of war – the notion of intervention, especially humanitarian intervention, comes across as a legitimate form of coercion without a state of war necessarily being invoked. Intervention allows global

policing or 'semi-belligerency' in times of peace, practices which have become increasingly feasible with technological advances that streamline swift military operations in a foreign territory, at low financial cost. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, new forms of air and space operations, for instance, have enabled a broad spectrum of political actors, especially states, to put the sovereignty of third parties at stake in a subtle and concealed way, i.e. without it being possible to unequivocally state the existence of aggression or occupation. In the absence of a clearly evident identification of external interference, a state of belligerency can hardly be invoked officially and legally.

In short, the concept and practice of intervention presuppose an international landscape composed of sovereign states, major material asymmetries, the need to avoid or invoke a state of war, and technologies that expedite the ability to interfere in alien territories. It all began with the rise of the norm of sovereignty in modernity, a conceptual and practical rise that separated the (European) orders of the late eighteenth century from the mainly feudal norms that had prevailed until then. In any case, even the notion of sovereignty that gradually became established in Europe in this period does not necessarily correspond to the practice that also took root in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. There are differences which need to be highlighted. This chapter therefore begins by outlining the theoretical and historical roots of intervention and its evolution over time. It then goes on to present two empirical cases – the missions and operations of the European Union outside its territory, and cyber-attacks and interference in the internal agendas of other states – in order to illustrate the interaction between the concepts of intervention and sovereignty, as well as the increase in the spectrum of interventions. All this thanks to technological changes and new norms of humanitarian and developmental aid since the end of the twentieth century. These interventions are characterised by

more subtle forms of engagement with states which are not always overtly coercive, unlike in the early nineteenth century. The chapter concludes with some considerations on the current political landscape in light of the practice of interventionism on a global scale.

Sovereignty *versus* intervention

The basic platitude of international relations is that the notion of sovereignty to which the modern state is linked was born in 1648 with the Treaty of Westphalia (which is simply a collective of two treaties – that of Osnabruck and that of Munster – that ended the hostilities of the Thirty Years' War). The treaty allusion is trivial because of what is widely published in international relations textbooks and because the combination of the two treaties does not refer to the notion of sovereignty as it is recognised in the current international order. Sovereignty is still today a contested concept, and in fact has never had a truly stable meaning (Bartelson, 1995, 2006).

As far as present-day politics is concerned, and in light of the United Nations (UN) Charter, sovereignty refers to horizontality between states – that is, to the supposed equality of rights and duties to which each internationally recognised state is entitled, regardless of its size, economy, religion, political regime, etc. Horizontality and equality between states – or rather between the European authorities who signed the agreement – did not reflect the real purpose of the Treaty of Westphalia; that sought to emphasise the burgeoning principles of what was to become a secular Europe by invoking equality between monarchs, whether they preached Catholicism or Protestantism (Jackson, 2004; Kissinger, 2015). These were principles of a secular order in the making – not a settled secular order – since non-Christian monarchs were excluded from this society of

states. (Bull, 1977). The Treaties of Westphalia were thus intended to cement respect for the principle of *cuius regio, eius religio* ('who governs the kingdom decides its religion') originally proposed by the peace of Augsburg in 1555 (Windsor, 1984).

Regarding horizontality, the charter also stipulates the UN's duty not to intervene in matters within the domestic forum of each state. Horizontality in conjunction with the principle of non-intervention thus reflects the norms currently contained within the concept of sovereignty, sometimes defined as, 'the authority of a state to govern itself,' an authority specifically opposed to international hierarchy and external interference in the internal affairs of states. On the one hand, hierarchy would imply that some states could have more authority than others; on the other, the absence of the principle of non-intervention would justify interference in matters of solely domestic governance (Dunne, 2003). Contemporary sovereignty reflects these modern precepts.

In any case, although equality between states seems to converge with the notion of non-intervention, the two principles are not always in line with one another. Stephen Krasner (1999) has divided the modern concept of sovereignty into several parts – international legal sovereignty, Westphalian sovereignty, domestic sovereignty, and interdependent sovereignty. This is to expose the various contradictions on which the organisation of the contemporary international order is based. Krasner (1999), moreover, argues that the order in which we still live is simply hypocritical for invoking a confusing norm – sovereignty – to which few actually conform. In other words, many states together with other international bodies end up appropriating the right to intervene, systematically calling the norm of sovereignty into question, so that the principle of non-intervention ends up enjoying theoretical rather than practical acquiescence on an international scale.

To better understand the evolution of the term and the practices which have consolidated the 'organised hypocrisy' of the contempo-

rary international order (Krasner, 1999) in the meantime, it is worth separating the European origins of the concept from the impact of its expansion beyond the continent.

Sovereignty in the nineteenth century: a restricted club, ready to interfere

The theoretical rather than practical acceptance of sovereignty stems in part from the tensions that were aggravated between European states, as well as non-European states, throughout the nineteenth century. At the same time as the concept of internal sovereignty was developing in Europe, the question of potentially interfering in the domestic reality of other states also arose. This could have been for humanitarian reasons, or to support a particular front in a civil war, or to help oppressed peoples achieve independence or self-determination (Hoffman, 1984). Emer de Vattel, an eighteenth-century theorist of international law, had already argued for a regime of exception as far as sovereignty was concerned:

But if a prince, by violating fundamental laws, provides his subjects with the legal right to resist him – if tyranny becomes so unbearable as to compel a nation to submit to its own defence – all external powers have the right to come to the aid of an oppressed people who have begged for assistance (Vattel, 2008: 298).

Exceptional regimes aside, intervention amounted to an attempt to circumvent a norm that explicitly restricted the involvement of third parties in a state's domestic scenario. In other words, it was precisely a form of interference in internal affairs that was prohibited under the concept of sovereignty (Hoffman, 1984).

In any case, practices very similar to domestic interference proliferated around the globe in the nineteenth century, thereby determining those that would continue after decolonisation in the mid-twentieth

century. By way of example, the growing concern for humanitarianism, with a view to protecting Christian minorities, becomes particularly relevant in relations between European states and the Ottoman Empire. From the Russian imperial policy of defending Orthodox Christians living there, to the struggle for Greek independence (1821) or the rescue of Maronite Christians in Lebanon (1860-1861), the Ottoman Empire had been forced to allow direct interference by foreign forces – mainly British and French – to show its respect for the non-Muslim peoples within its empire (Bass, 2008; Wheeler, 2002).

Interventions of the kind being practised by the Ottoman Empire reflect not only a notion of sovereignty to be safeguarded just among (Christian) European states, but also a growing confidence of these political communities in the superiority of their civilisation. Although he was sceptical about the proliferation of interventions, John Stuart Mill (1859) did maintain that certain civilised principles were inconsistent with the practices of so-called ‘barbarism’.

In fact, European interventions legitimised through superior civilisational precepts led to a general European complacency about getting involved with the internal affairs of a number of powers from Africa to Asia (Jahn, 2018; Neocleous, 2014; Swatek-Evenstein, 2020). Powers seen as backward or barbaric did not enjoy sovereignty and could thus be policed, often suffering reprisals that would be interpreted as acts of war in a European context by the other powers of that continent. In other words, while the pursuit of violence between European states was regulated according to certain procedures, beginning with the formal declaration of belligerency, these principles were of little or no effect in the protectorates of European empires (Dunne & Reus-Smit, 2017). The empires adopted direct violence and other methods of coercion without belligerency being formally recognised. European states could therefore applaud a state of peace when in fact wars in everything but name were raging in territories other than European ones (Dudziak, 2012; Fazal, 2018)

The conceptual reality, based on ideas of civilisation and even superior race shared with other European powers, also reflected a growing material and technological asymmetry between European and non-European powers. The industrial revolution endowed European states, along with the United States of America (USA) and Japan at the end of the nineteenth century, with immense material resources that allowed them to plan violence over great geographical distances. Add to these same resources the automatic weaponry and the increasingly faster independent ships with which European, Japanese and American forces were equipped, and any empire could effectively reproduce hierarchical dynamics across the globe, while maintaining a supposed horizontal sovereignty between them. They not only had the financial and economic means to maintain supremacy in the face of alleged 'barbarism', but the effective technologies, too, which facilitated patrolling, and capturing and punishing anyone who rose up against the hierarchy.²

In short, the concepts of modern sovereignty and intervention emerge in parallel. Modern sovereignty implies a rejection of external involvement in internal political affairs, and intervention is born as a way of circumventing this central prerogative of the European international order of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. At the same time as these concepts become established in this period, characterising the mode of relationship between European sovereign states, the imperial actions of the great Western powers end up consolidating an entrenched practice of involvement in the political affairs of communities other than European ones.³ Many of

² The notorious battle of 'Rorke's Drift' (1879), later depicted in the film *Zulu* (1964), reflects nothing more than this global technological and economic asymmetry between colonisers and settlers. After the outbreak of hostilities between British forces and a contingent of Zulus in present-day South Africa, just 150 troops, equipped with state-of-the-art ordnance, held off a force of over 3000 Zulu warrior tribesmen.

³ So great were these powers' capabilities, and so systematic was their coercive interference, that many Europeans did not hesitate to apply the label 'Belle

these underlying tensions and contradictions in the predominantly European international order of the nineteenth century eventually spread across the world during the twentieth century. As sovereignty became the right of other independent political communities, the practices that characterised much of European imperialism were maintained, expanding and also formalising the contradictions inherent in the European international and imperial order.⁴

Intervention in the post-World War II international scene

The theoretical – rather than practical – adherence to the concept of sovereignty in contemporary times, to which Krasner (1999) referred, reflects many of the tensions already witnessed during the nineteenth century. While certain ideas gradually lost international legitimacy – such as those of racial and civilisational superiority – other differences emerged throughout the twentieth

Époque' to the period between 1870 and World War I, a period of regional peace and prosperity, among other things; a peace in disguise anyway, recognised only between sovereign states, since it acquiesced in a regime of violent (European) interventionism at global level.

⁴ On the expansion of the European international order, see (Bull, 1977; Wight, 1992): "Wight explores the debate between three groups of thinkers - Machiavellians, Grotians and Kantians. He examined the distinctive doctrines each offered concerning war, diplomacy, power, national interest, the obligation of treaties, the obligation of an individual to bear arms, and the conduct of foreign policy. Martin Wight died just twenty years ago. He was 58. He left behind a reputation rare in its combination of exceptional erudition and analytical intelligence with a personality and character which friends and pupils have never forgotten. He was aweinspiring without being in the least bit alarming. He left Oxford, where he was a scholar at Hertford, with a First in History in 1935. He proceeded by a sequence of short steps - Chatham House, Haileybury, Nuffield College, Chatham House again - to the London School of Economics where he was University Reader in International Relations for twelve years. For the remaining eleven years of his life he was Dean of the . School of European Studies and Professor of History in Sussex University, of which he was one of the founding framers. His published works are, by some more profligate standards, few but they include the evergreen study of Power Politics (first published in 1946, re-issued enlarged in 1978.

century that pitted sovereignty against the practice of intervention. Notwithstanding the enactment of the UN Charter in 1945, which envisaged strict obedience to the principle of non-intervention, the Cold War superpowers, particularly the United States and the Soviet Union, would compete in a context where vast material asymmetries remained, where new technologies would intensify low-cost, rapid interventions, and where the preservation of peace remained the bedrock principle of the post-World War II world.

Regardless of continuities, the main difference between the nineteenth century and the post-1945 world stems from the proliferation of the concept of sovereignty in the international order, especially following the decolonisation struggles in the second half of the twentieth century. Sovereignty ceased to be the prerogative of a few European and American powers, becoming instead a central pillar of the normative organisation of the new liberated states, which became members of a political order characterised – albeit only nominally – by horizontality between sovereigns and acceptance of the principle of non-interference in the domestic forum.

Once the right to equality was guaranteed to former colonies, interventions were no longer made with explicitly hierarchical references, such as those of an allusion to a superior civilisation. Moreover, regardless of the difficult coexistence of legal horizontality with great economic-material asymmetries, the emphasis on the pursuit of peace acquires even greater projection in the post-World War II period.⁵ Whereas interventions in the nineteenth century were legitimised mainly in non-Christian communities, as had been the case in the Ottoman Empire, European states engaged in coercion and occasional wars to resolve outstanding political issues. By the

⁵ The concern for international peace, so often invoked in the UN Charter, reflects not only the fear of another world war and the resulting terrible loss of human life, but also the fear of mass destruction caused by nuclear weapons.

mid-twentieth century war is no longer effectively sanctioned as a legitimate practice. Even Chapter VII of the UN Charter mentions using force to maintain international peace and security without invoking the term 'war'. Thus, in a context where war is forbidden and there is apparent horizontality between states, the concept of intervention is further circulated by analysts and politicians on the international scene to explain a form of coercion that disrupts sovereignty, and which occurs in the absence of a state of belligerency. As in the nineteenth century, intervention authorises an interruption of sovereignty, while allowing the application of violence without a formal declaration of war. Superpowers could thus intervene through proxy wars in various internal conflicts of other states, without ever having to admit that a state of war existed (Carson, 2018). This practice has persisted in the aftermath of the Cold War. (Hoffman, 1984; Holmqvist, 2014; Neocleous, 2014).

New global trends also broaden the political spectrum of intervention and expand its range of action. In this sense, intervention is no longer restricted to supporting a particular belligerent front; it is also involved in humanitarian aid and development support. Growing concerns with humanitarianism together with the development of international humanitarian law since the mid-nineteenth century gave rise to a new form of intervention, which acquired predominance after the end of the Cold War, that is, with the end of the American-Soviet rivalry (Swatek-Evenstein, 2020; Trim, 2014). The addition of new forms of intervention, based less on the protection of certain religions or alleged races, therefore reflects an important feature of the contemporary international order, differentiating it from the previous one.

To protect civilians and mitigate the collateral effects of internal armed conflicts and natural disasters, the UN progressively authorises the deployment of peacekeeping troops in order to secure both peace and the humanitarian strands, too (Hoffman & Weiss, 2018). Although

the European interventions in the Ottoman Empire also claimed humanitarian principles (notably in the protection of Christians), the end of the twentieth century increasingly favoured human security in a broad sense, regardless of religion.⁶ Consequently, humanitarianism – undertaken by various international organisations, including non-governmental organisations – provoked sharp discussions on the link between sovereignty and human rights violations, discussions that would later give rise to the principle of Responsibility to Protect (R2P).⁷

Beyond the problem of violence, the material asymmetries between the various states, mainly between former colonial empires and those that acquired independence in the post-World War II period, generate another type of intervention, not always visibly coercive. In the absence of standards of civilisational superiority, Soviet-American antagonism encouraged a global competition for economic development projects, which sought to bridge the great inequality between and within states. This new form of intervention is explained by the need for each conflicting centre to wish to confirm the superiority of opposing development ideologies, specifically those of Marxism-Leninism and Liberalism (Berger & Weber, 2014). Cooperation and financial aid projects thus foster degrees of economic dependency between financially equipped powers and developing states, dependencies that exacerbate the power of major financial and economic centres. Moreover, after the end of the Cold War, economic development projects intensified, many of them with clear trade-offs (such as the obligation to

⁶ This rule became so relevant that in 1999 the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) powers called the massive bombing of Yugoslav positions a 'humanitarian intervention' and not a war (Roberts, 1999). In 2008, Russia also invoked humanitarianism to protect minorities during the rifts between Georgia and the breakaway republics of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

⁷ The latter was approved in 2005 at the UN global summit by all member states, triggering a wide debate on the instrumentalisation of humanitarian principles for an alleged new form of imperialism (Bellamy, 2008; Booth, 2001; Wheeler, 2002).

reform the domestic political-economic system). This led to forms of intervention in the domestic affairs of various states, especially those that were triggered by deep economic recessions and civil wars. (Duffield, 1999; Pugh, 2005).

To sum up, intervention and its concomitant counterposition to sovereignty reflect some continuities and differences with respect to its origins in the nineteenth century. On the one hand, great economic-material asymmetries still constitute a hierarchical political order in everything but name, which in turn undermines the prevailing sovereign horizontality. On the other, the dissemination of the concept of sovereignty, which causes a veritable global expansion of the European order, sharpens the clash between the ideas of non-intervention and intervention, exacerbating the state of global hypocrisy to which Krasner (1999) referred. At the same time, the rise of humanitarianism and initiatives to promote development during the twentieth century foster forms of interventionism based on political-economic regime change, without direct force or violence being directly applied.

Finally, technological developments increasingly facilitate interventions in a variety of ways. While in the nineteenth century steamships and railways were able to mobilise and supply well-equipped troops across the globe, new technologies developed throughout the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries streamlined interventions at an unprecedented speed and at no great economic or even human cost. ‘Drones’, for example, or unpiloted aerial devices allow international powers to launch violence extremely quickly without peace being directly jeopardised, without violations of sovereignty being widely publicised, and without those responsible for the aforementioned interventions being easily identified. (Boyle, 2020; Chamayou, 2015).

Given all these developments – normative (the expansion of the concept of sovereignty, humanitarianism and development), mate-

rial (the existence of major economic-military inequalities), and technological – intervention has become less a presumed regime of exception than a common practice. This is not unrelated to the broadening of the spectrum of intervention. In the following two examples – EU missions and operations outside its territory and the use of new technologies to interfere in the internal affairs of other states – visible and openly coercive intervention is not the norm, but its impact on sovereignty is remarkable.

European Union missions and operations

The EU nicely captures the new type of intervention of the twenty-first century. Cautious in relation to the flagrant use of force, this regional organisation does, however, have a foreign policy of global reach. It is particularly active and shows a clear will and capacity to interfere in the internal agenda of states that are dependent in terms of international hierarchy. From humanitarian aid to development support, from political conditionality to economic sanctions, there are multiple manifestations of actions which, while they do not fit into a narrow reading of the concept of intervention, nevertheless constitute interventionist practices that deserve to be highlighted – among them are its civil and military missions and operations.

In the last two decades, the EU has carried out 37 missions and operations outside its territorial area and on three different continents. It has done so under the aegis of its Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), which ‘allows the Union to take the lead in peacekeeping operations, conflict prevention and in strengthening international security’ (EEAS, 2018). The fact that they involve an explicit request by the state where they take place and/or the authorisation of a UN Security Council resolution, in the context of collective security, seems to remove the overt stamp of interven-

tionism that violates the border of the states' sovereignty; that is, intervention made without the consent of a state or the seal of the international community. These missions and operations, however, widen the limits of interaction between these two concepts and therefore deserve an appropriate reading, at their various levels: from decision making, to the nature of the intervention and its impact on the understanding of sovereignty.

Between January 2003 and May 2022, the Union deployed 37 CSDP missions and operations in Europe, Africa, and Asia: 19 completed and 18 currently in progress.⁸ Interventions that are civilian in nature or require non-executive military support are termed 'missions', and interventions that are military in nature and have an executive mandate at the command level are termed 'operations'. The first civilian mission was deployed in January 2003 in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUPM/BiH), following the UN International Police Force (from 1995 to 2002). It was tasked with training and equipping a multi-ethnic police force to enforce the law and combat organised crime and corruption and ended in June 2012. Shortly afterwards, in March 2003, the Union deployed its first military operation in the Republic of Northern Macedonia (EUFOR Concordia), taking over tasks for which the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) had previously been responsible. It kept close cooperation with NATO to provide security during the implementation of the Ohrid peace agreement, ending in December of the same year. There are 11 civilian missions currently deployed in Ukraine, Georgia, Kosovo, Libya, Palestinian territories (Ramallah and Rafah), Niger, Mali, Somalia, Iraq and Central African Republic; and 7 military operations deployed in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Somalia, Mali, Central African Republic, Mediterranean and Mozambique.

⁸ For a list of CSDP missions and operations, see https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/missions-and-operations_en

Many countries around the world have been the scene of crises, instability and violence since the beginning of CSDP missions and operations; however, the precise number of states subjected to this type of intervention is small, in contrast to the EU's rhetoric of global reach (Almeida Cravo, 2021). Geographically, the choice of the Union's area of intervention has focused on the territories closest to it and where insecurity at its borders may have a more significant contagion effect. This observation fits in with the strategic priority assumed by the Union to link international peace and security with the peace and security of its own area. These missions and operations, deployed under CSDP outside its jurisdiction, aim to 'help resolve or prevent conflicts and crises, enhance partners' capabilities and ultimately protect the EU and its citizens' (EEAS, 2020). Interventions in its immediate neighbourhood encompass 16 missions and operations in 8 territories and the Mediterranean Sea. In Africa, the number is higher, but the pattern is similar: 19 operations concentrated in only 9 countries. On the Asian continent, only two countries have drawn the Union's attention: Indonesia (Aceh) and Afghanistan. So far there have been no missions or operations on the American continent.

The decision-making process itself is revealing about who effectively controls the mission or operation. Within the EU, it is the Political and Security Committee (PSC), responsible for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the CSDP, composed of representatives of all Member States, which discusses and recommends a mission or operation as an appropriate course of action for the Union. Following this recommendation, it is in the context of the Foreign Affairs Council, and subject to a unanimous decision by Member States, that the European Council issues a decision to establish a specific mission or operation. It is politically and strategically controlled by the Council together with the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security

Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission (HR/VP). This EU instrument was strengthened with the creation of the European External Action Service (EEAS) and its *Global Strategy* outlined in 2016 (EEAS, 2016) and it is seen as an ‘essential pillar of European security and defence’ and ‘a concrete example of EU action for global security’, as stated by the current HR/VP, Josep Borrell (EEAS, 2020).

In reality, EU missions and operations are predominantly guided by the interests and concerns of the Union, to the detriment of those prioritised by the recipients. This form of intervention therefore ends up primarily reflecting the external rather than internal will for it to take place. In common, they often have a focus on Europe’s security, stability and trade interests, expressed through links with perceived transnational threats such as those associated with migration, terrorism or organised crime – a clear example of which is the EU NAVFOR Atalanta military operation launched in 2008 to combat piracy off the coast of Somalia. While the interests of the recipient countries are not completely ignored, they are relegated to the background in favour of the stabilisation objective that serves the Union.

In terms of scale, civilian and military missions and operations are not particularly large compared to other organisations such as NATO – which at one point had 130,000 soldiers and civilian personnel in its Afghanistan operation – or the UN, currently with 15,000 personnel in Mali. The largest EU military operation was EUFOR Althea, which had up to 7,000 civilian and military personnel deployed; the largest civilian mission to date was EULEX Kosovo, with 1,710. In the current 18 missions and operations, the EU has a total of around 4,000 personnel on the ground. However, the mandate of these missions broadly touches upon several areas of the supposed edge of state sovereignty, with tasks ranging from crisis management to mediation and peacebuilding. The majority of the 37 missions and operations deployed have been civilian (22) and

have focused on capacity building and strengthening – for example, strengthening police, border guards, customs officials; monitoring peace processes – training on gender issues, assisting with legislative changes; drafting national justice strategies – helping to reform rule of law institutions, monitoring court activity. Certain executive missions even perform functions on behalf of, and instead of, the recipient state itself. The remaining 15 military missions and operations have avoided overt use of force and coercion (Tardy, 2005: 23), but should not be seen as non-intrusive. Focusing on military assistance to armed forces, deterring armed violence, protecting humanitarian aid, advising on security sector reform, training local security forces, implementing arms embargoes, or preventing trafficking to Europe – the intervention is often structuring for a state’s capabilities.

The EU has already sent Falcon aircraft to the Mediterranean, ships to the Horn of Africa, soldiers to the Congo, police to the Palestinian territories, judges to Georgia, monitors to Aceh, and human rights advisers to Iraq. Its specialisation in military and civilian resources and its flexibility in deploying both has proved useful and is, as Fiott puts it, ‘a hallmark of the Union’s strategy against instability’ (2020, 8). Moreover, CSDP missions and operations are only one element of a much wider and more comprehensive array of global interventionism instruments that exists prior to the deployment of an actual EU intervention, whose activities upon exit endure and are incorporated into other external policies of the Union in the country concerned.

This peculiarity of EU action has generated very fruitful discussions on the distinctiveness of its involvement on the international stage. In particular, much-debated ideas like that of the EU as a ‘civil power’ (Duchêne, 1972) and ‘normative power’ (Manners, 2002) have drawn attention to the Union’s ability to exert power and influence, not through the projection of force and coercive means, but

through its leadership by example. According to this proposition, the normative power of the EU would be reflected in the echo across borders of the Union's commitments inward, namely the values of peace, freedom, democracy, rule of law and human rights.

A recurrent criticism of the EU's involvement in the periphery is, however, the way it seems to view conflict and post-conflict contexts as clean slates where its own institutional model can be implemented. Assuming the universality of *liberal peace*, the paradigm followed in CSDP missions and operations (and other interventions) implies the imposition of a hegemonic system in the Global South that reproduces Western social, political and economic institutions and norms (Richmond, 2011). The preferred *modus operandi*, for example of elaborating institutional and reform designs guided by Western standards often ignores the local political and economic dynamics that have sparked resistance to the reforms transplanted by the Union. In fact, according to Marchetti and Tocci, EU efforts to build a civil society in recipient countries tend to replicate their own urban, liberal middle class, which responds primarily to Union rather than local concerns (2015, 175). This one-size-fits-all approach is notable for a poor understanding and appreciation of local contexts, thus overlooking indigenous resources crucial to the promotion of peace and security. Indeed, despite statements of support for local engagement, it remains grounded in the liberal paradigm and the practice of expert knowledge, characterised by weak participation of local authorities and communities, from consultation to planning. By way of illustration, the EU mission in Georgia, EUJUST Themis (2004-2005), focused primarily on helping to draft a legislative proposal. Once local counterparties started proposing legislative changes that went against the European criminal justice model, the proclaimed principle of local involvement was promptly dismissed and part of the strategy was effectively completed without Georgian input (see Kurowska, 2009, 206-209).

It seems clear that, despite the difficult path that was stuttering before the inclusion of security and defence as a central component of European integration, the CSDP was successful in institutionalising political cooperation between Member States. This capacity for internal understanding translated into specific commitments on global interventionism, of which civilian and military missions and operations represent a significant result. It is, however, questionable whether these joint efforts of the EU and its strategies for action in the international arena are necessarily in the interest of the countries of the global South in the short and long term. In this interplay between sovereignty and intervention, where the Union's foreign policy has participated, the priority remains the EU's understanding, values and interests. On the one hand, the mere presence of foreign civilian and military personnel and, on the other, the adoption of an external model – even with formal consent – therefore have a real impact on the sovereignty of the intervened countries, and this should not be ignored.

Intervention in the digital age

The development of information and communication technologies (ICTs) has opened up new and very effective possibilities for intervention at marginal cost. The global connectivity provided by the Internet, the emergence of social networks, the increase in processing power accompanied by a decrease in its cost and the maturing of artificial intelligence (AI) pose serious challenges to sovereignties.

Several digital technologies are currently a key tool to consider in the context of hybrid threats – actions whose purpose is to subvert or harm the target by influencing their decision-making processes but evading detection or assignment (Hybrid CoE, 2022). Social media

can be a powerful weapon. Through them, it is possible for a state to foment discord and dissension among the population of another state without ever making itself known. It does this by creating or interfering in internal polemics, exacerbating the discourse and pushing positions to extremes. To do this efficiently, it often uses *bots*⁹ endowed with artificial intelligence, capable of analysing and sparking discussions as if they were a legion of humans (Caldarelli et al., 2020; Scott, 2020; McCarthy, 2017; Brangham, 2018).

A state can also spread false news through social networks, and those targeted will take care of spreading it massively through *retweets* or sharing. It has been shown, for example, that the global anti-vaccine disinformation during the Covid-19 pandemic is thanks to only twelve people (Binder, 2021), and that only three conspiracy theorists created the Qanon theory¹⁰ (Zadrozny and Collins, 2018). A more recent example occurred in the 2022 French presidential election, where a *tweet* simulating provenance from BBC News falsely referred to Emmanuel Macron reportedly telling his audience that Europe would need to prepare to receive up to 60 million refugees from Africa and the Middle East over the next 20 years because sanctions on Russia were leading to the economic collapse of Africa, which imports large amounts of Russian wheat. This fake news was presented by supporters of Macron's opposition as 'proof' that he was preparing France for mass immigration. The news was widely spread on Twitter and other social media, including on pro-Russian channels on Telegram (Coleman, 2022).

Adding to the problem of fake news is the fact that the technology companies that own the platforms where it is posted are

⁹ A *bot* (short for robot) is software designed to interact with other systems or with humans, emulating the behaviour of the latter.

¹⁰ According to this theory, a cabal of child sex abusers, satanists and cannibals, operating a global child sex trafficking network conspired against former President Donald Trump during his term (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/QAnon>).

hesitant to address the situation because their algorithms, which choose what to display in feeds, have already learned that controversial content causes more user engagement, keeping users online longer and thus more exposed to the advertising that underpins the companies' revenues (Hao, 2021; Lewis, 2018).

The problem of fake news will tend to get worse with the generalisation of what are known as 'deepfakes'. These are synthetic audio and video clips generated with the aid of AI techniques, and which are hardly distinguishable from the real ones (Sullivan, 2019). These, too, are within the reach of any actor with everyday computational devices, such as a desktop computer, while the necessary software is freely available on the Internet (DeepFaceLab, 2020). One of the most recent known uses of *deepfakes* occurred during the invasion of Ukraine, when cyber attackers broadcast a video via the Ukrainian news website, Ukraine 24, purportedly of President Volodymyr Zelensky, announcing his surrender and advising his fellow citizens to do the same (Abreu, 2022).

Another form of intervention, such as the one used in the Cambridge Analytica case, is to make psychological profiles of social media users based on the large amount of information they have about them. This makes it possible to create personalised political messages to influence millions of voters (Cadwalladr and Graham-Harrison, 2018). In fact, current communication via the internet and leveraged on the aforementioned digital technologies constructs a significantly different reality from the mass media of the twentieth century. In the first place, actors no longer need to make significant investments in newspapers, radio, or television to access large audiences. And furthermore, they no longer have to broadcast just one message aimed at millions, but can instead 'mass-personalise' thousands of carefully crafted messages based on the profile of voters who use social networks, to play on each individual's desires and fears so as to influence their vote more effectively. These mes-

sages may also include false information specifically created for this purpose. Open democratic societies are particularly susceptible to this type of intervention as they do not systematically block their citizens' access to the internet in general, which is common practice in the autocracies and dictatorships of our time.

Another type of more muscular intervention can occur in the form of cyber-attacks whose origin is difficult to fully prove, at least in the same way that it is possible to identify the actors in a traditional war. Several cases have been reported in the media of cyber-attacks that have permanently destroyed information (Pereirinha, 2022) or rendered companies unable to operate (Vodafone, 2022). Different non-state actors take this sort of action for a variety of motivations, such as to obtain financial reward or fame, or to instigate chaos. But they are also undertaken by states, either to destabilise the target society or as a precursor to armed action (Tucker, 2022). In this most extreme case, the disabling of a country's critical infrastructure – such as power supply, water supply, telecommunications, or hospitals, for example – would severely impair the response capacity of the target of the intervention. Although done remotely, these actions can have serious direct consequences for a city's population, as would have happened, had it not been detected, in the case of an attempt to poison water intended to supply a city in Florida, USA (Greenberg, 2021).

Other 'digital weapons' have been used in the past, such as the seminal Stuxnet virus. This *malware*¹¹ was intended to cause the centrifuges used in Iran for uranium enrichment to fail. An early version manipulated valves in the equipment to increase internal pressure and thus damage it, also compromising the enrichment process. A later version manipulated computerised systems manu-

¹¹ A contraction of *malicious software*, the term *malware* is attributed to software products with nefarious purposes, such as the exfiltration or destruction of data.

factured by Siemens used to control and monitor the speed of the centrifuges, making them work outside normal limits and again causing them to break down. It is important to note that in this case the systems concerned were isolated from the internet, but it was still possible to infect them using other techniques (Zetter, 2014).

These and other techniques will be used more and more, with technologies such as artificial intelligence already at the centre of the future strategies of military organisations (NATO, 2021; Jing, 2021).

Conclusion

The singularities of the concept of intervention reflect certain conditions and contexts of action during the last two hundred years of international relations. Regardless of their differences, there are certain continuities and trends in the contemporary international order, listed below.

- The increasing expansion of the concept of sovereignty coupled with scepticism about who can enjoy that right, including the circumstances in which that right should – if at all – be suspended.
- The existence of significant economic-material asymmetries between global powers, to the extent that some international actors are able to act and thus interfere in the internal affairs of others without fear of major reprisals. Hedley Bull (1984) summarises this dynamic well by exemplifying that a great power ceases to be ‘great’ from the moment it suffers an intervention.¹²

¹² It is therefore no coincidence that some US citizens, by falling victim to alleged (cyber)interventions in the 2016-2017 elections, have called into question the ranking of the country’s status as an international power.

- A concern with preserving peace, rather than pursuing war, without the use of force being totally ruled out (for example, force can be used to protect minorities against barbarism or to promote humanitarianism), thereby facilitating coercive policing in the absence of a formal declaration of hostilities.
- The availability of technological means that temporarily suspend the sovereignty of third states, without the alleged global peace being jeopardised: that is, without occasional interference in internal affairs being easily equated with permanent – as opposed to temporary – occupations, invasions or manipulations by the intervening parties.

Notwithstanding the continuities between the past and the present, the differences in practice are still relevant. The contemporary international order is no longer guided by a form of interventionism that is always explicitly racial or openly coercive, as it was at the end of the nineteenth century. The aim of the new modes of action is not always to help religious minorities or to put allied political authorities in power. But they are nonetheless practices that call sovereignty into question – albeit in a less transparent way. In this regard, as a result of humanitarian and developmental concerns, the spectrum of intervention has increased. When some powerful actors, such as the EU, seek to impose certain institutional arrangements which do not always reflect local interests and wishes, many of these actions end up falling within the tradition of intervention, even when the aid is requested by agents of the state in question.

In addition to the less overtly coercive way in which interventionist practices were developed in the early twentieth century, new technologies, such as those of the digital age, have also broadened the spectrum of intervention. Whereas in the nineteenth century,

fast ships, and in the early twentieth century, aircraft, facilitated the ability of great powers to act on the international stage, especially in their colonies, new information technologies open the door to new and increasingly subtle forms of interference in the internal politics of sovereign states.

Technological and normative changes have had repercussions on the practice of intervention. In the same way that the concept of sovereignty continues to be reinterpreted and defended in the current international order, everything indicates that intervention will not stop being an unavoidable, albeit contested, practice in political relations between and within states.

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CASE STUDIES

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**BUILDING PEACE AND SECURITY IN
THE EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD:
THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP CASE**

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Abstract: Regional peace, security and stability have long been core elements of the European Union's (EU) relationship with its wider neighbourhood. However, endogenous and exogenous challenges – related both to the interplay of different perspectives and interests within the Union and to a regional setting marked by power struggles and an increasingly complex and diverse political agenda – have triggered successive revisions and adjustments in policies and practices that guide the construction of peace and security in the European neighbourhood. The Eastern Partnership (EaP) was created in 2009 as a response to these challenges and, simultaneously, as a means to strengthen the role of the EU as an actor for regional peace and security.

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However, more than a decade after its creation, the results of this initiative remain limited given the ambitions of both the EU and its Eastern partners, particularly of those interested in a tangible prospect for membership. This mismatch between stated objectives and achieved results has contributed to a notable EaP-fatigue, affecting its underlying goal of fostering regional peace and security. In order to delve into this process, this chapter analyses the evolution of the EaP and the results achieved within the scope of this initiative. The goal is to encourage a critical and comprehensive reflection on the contribution and future of the EU as a regional peace and security actor, taking the EaP as a case study.

Keywords: Eastern Partnership, European Union, Peace, Security

Introduction

The peace-security-stability triad has consistently characterised (though not always in a balanced way) the relationship between the European Union (EU) and the countries in its wider neighbourhood in the post-Cold War period. At an initial stage, the Enlargement Policy has established itself as the preferred approach for promoting positive change leading to peace and security at Europe's borders. However, the success of this policy, demonstrated by the accession of ten new Member States in 2004,² posed a new challenge to the EU, which was now faced with the need to assert itself as an actor of peace and security in a neighbourhood composed of countries with no prospects of accession. It is in this context

² In 2007, Bulgaria and Romania would join this group of countries, which, due to delays in the required reforms, were unable to complete their accession process in 2004.

that the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was created in 2003 to strengthen and deepen cooperation with partners in the Mediterranean, Eastern Europe and the Southern Caucasus. To this end, it offered a system of incentives aimed at promoting political and economic reforms, to stimulate stabilisation in the neighbourhood, thereby also stimulating peace and security in the wider European area.³ This marks the beginning of a second phase in the EU's post-Cold War relationship with countries in the wider neighbourhood. Although the policy framework differs, in practice the methods, mechanisms and strategies tested and implemented with Enlargement will be maintained. But the European partners are no longer offered the ultimate reward for meeting the targets proposed by Brussels: membership to the EU itself.

Endogenous and exogenous challenges – related both to the articulation of different perspectives and interests within the Union and to a regional scenario marked by growing power struggles and a gradual complexification and diversification of the security agenda – have led to successive readjustments of the ENP. The Eastern Partnership emerged in 2009 as a response to these challenges and to strengthen the EU's role as a regional actor of peace and security. However, more than a decade after its creation, the results of this initiative remain limited not only in view of the ambitions of the EU but also of its partners, especially those interested in a tangible prospect of accession. This mismatch between stated objectives and the achieved results has contributed to a notable fatigue in relation to the Eastern Partnership, necessarily affecting the underlying intention to construct regional peace and security. Nevertheless, the growing destabilisation of the European

³ Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament (2003). Wider Europe - Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours. COM (2003) 104 final.

neighbourhood, culminating in the war in Ukraine, has reaffirmed the strategic nature of this region and how important it is that the EU equip itself with the appropriate tools and mechanisms to promote regional peace and security. In order to place this process in context, this chapter begins by contextualising the emergence of the Eastern Partnership within the ENP. It then analyses the main novelties that this initiative brings in relation to the existing frameworks for relations with the neighbourhood. The chapter goes on to map the results, evolution and implications of the Eastern Partnership, and ends with a problematisation of the future of this initiative, with the aim of fostering a critical and comprehensive reflection on the contribution of the EU as a peace and security actor at the regional level.

Post-enlargement European peace and security: from ENP to Eastern Partnership

Presenting itself as an alternative to Enlargement, the ENP continues its model of promoting regional peace and security by stabilising the European neighbourhood, albeit without the inclusion of the prospect of accession to the EU. This is justified by the success of this approach, the lessons learned during its implementation, but also by the conviction that the export of the European governance model and its founding principles – democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights, peace and freedom – are at the heart of the EU's power of attraction and its ability to influence by example (Lucarelli, 2006). There is therefore a comprehensive political strategy aimed at ensuring stability and security at Europe's borders, legitimising the EU's action as a 'force for good' and consolidating its role as the guardian of European peace (Manners, 2010).

The ENP consequently emerges as a security approach, which aims to promote stability in the neighbourhood – and, by this means, the security of the Union itself – (Dias, 2014) and highlight the role of the EU as a regional actor of peace and security (Joenniemi, 2007). This rationale is a continuation of the European Security Strategy (ESS), which portrays security problems in the neighbourhood as a threat to regional peace and points to closer relations, through sharing the ‘benefits of economic and political cooperation’ with eastern neighbours, as the best strategy to ensure European security (Council of the European Union, 2003).

The EU thus offers the neighbourhood a framework for relations based on shared values and commitments, political dialogue and economic integration, and the development of regional cooperation (Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, 2003). The aim is to stimulate a series of internal reforms in the neighbourhood countries that will enable them to replicate the same formula of governance and cooperation that underpins the project of European construction. To this end, the EU articulates a strategy that combines the material dimension (through financial and economic benefits granted on the basis of positive conditionality), with the ideational dimension (through an institutional arrangement facilitating the socialisation of partners and their gradual identification with European principles and values) (Dimitrova, 2010).

The main issue at this new stage of the EU’s relationship with its neighbourhood in a post-Enlargement scenario is that, even if the promotion of stability as a guarantee of regional peace and security remains a cross-cutting goal, membership is no longer a real possibility. This is a fundamental element which, combined with ineffective conditionality mechanisms, the difficulty of coordinating policy instruments and socialisation dynamics based on vague principles defined unilaterally by the EU, means that the ENP has

a much less satisfactory transformative potential than it does in the context of Enlargement (Sasse, 2008).

The lack of democratic progress in Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus, the war between Russia and Georgia in 2008, the severe economic crisis that befell partners in the region in 2009, and the vulnerability of energy supplies in the region (Boonstra and Shapovalova, 2010), among other events, demonstrate that the ENP was not sufficiently empowered to deal with challenges in the European neighbourhood or to ensure regional peace and security. Added to this is the discontent of European partners at the lack of differentiation between the countries covered by this policy and the insufficient resources, political and financial, to support the reforms proposed under the ENP (Simão, 2017).

It is in this context that a new initiative has arisen to promote greater differentiation between the various countries covered by the ENP, to rehabilitate relations with the Eastern neighbourhood and to establish the EU as a central actor in the promotion of regional peace and security. The Eastern Partnership, launched at the Prague Summit in 2009 (Council of the European Union, 2009), appears as a new step in a continuing effort to ensure peace and security in the European neighbourhood, as explained in the next section.

The Eastern Partnership and the construction of European peace and security

The creation of the Eastern Partnership aims to establish the EU as a more credible, coherent and effective actor in the management of security challenges in the wider European area. To this end, it offers greater integration between the EU and its partners in Eastern Europe – Moldova, Ukraine and Belarus – and the Southern Caucasus – Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan – based on the promo-

tion of political and economic reforms relevant to the reduction of socioeconomic instability in the region (Ágh, 2010).

Broadly speaking, this initiative aims to complement the ENP framework as well as the ESS strategic vision with a more ambitious approach to the EU's role in the region and based on greater differentiation between eastern partners and the southern neighbourhood. Additionally, the Eastern Partnership combines a bilateral dimension with a multilateral dimension (which emerges as the main novelty of the Eastern Partnership) to enhance the effects of political and economic integration of the actors covered by this initiative and to strengthen regional cooperation (Communication from the Commission, 2008). The bilateral dimension incorporates a range of mechanisms to facilitate stability and prosperity, including the conclusion of Association Agreements – which should replace the Partnership and Cooperation Agreements signed during the 1990s as the legal basis for the EU's relationship with its Eastern neighbours – Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas, visa liberalisation, enhanced cooperation on energy security and support for reforms in these countries. In turn, the multilateral dimension ensures regular political and technical contacts, enabling the EU to monitor and support the progress of its partners in a more permanent and effective manner. This dimension also makes it possible to develop channels for socialisation and learning, allowing for a regular sharing of information and experiences between European partners, as well as the creation of common positions and joint initiatives (Council of the European Union, 2009). Similarly, we are seeing an improvement in the incentives offered by the EU, with a greater allocation of funds and the development of new programmes, instruments and initiatives aimed at boosting the relationship with its Eastern partners and ensuring greater civil society involvement in them (Korosteleva et al., 2013).

In this way, the Partnership aims to give a new impetus to the EU's relations with its Eastern neighbours, guaranteeing their differ-

entiation from Mediterranean countries but maintaining conditionality and socialisation as basic strategies for promoting stability, security and peace in Europe.

However, the creation of the Eastern Partnership was not a consensual process, accompanied as it was by intense internal debate. In this respect the divergence between the new EU Member States, who favour a deeper relationship with the Eastern neighbourhood, including the possibility of accession, and the old Member States, mainly France and Germany, stands out. The latter preferred to focus on post-Enlargement European institutional consolidation and feared that too abrupt a rapprochement with the Eastern partners could jeopardise their relationship with Mosco, thus altering geostrategic balances in the enlarged Europe with an impact on regional peace and security (Nitoiu, 2011).

Emerging as a compromise between these two positions, this initiative has made it possible to deal with issues which are fundamental to the maintenance of peace and security in the European area, including the management of borders, energy and visa regimes. Although these are key issues for maintaining regional peace and security, the EU portrays their management as a predominantly technical process (Simão, 2017). The underlying rationale regards the transfer of the European integration process, itself based on a functionalist notion, which has contributed to making war obsolete in the EU area. This is not to say that, in structural terms, the Eastern Partnership lacks a geopolitical dimension. On the contrary, as an initiative that, in practice, aims to expand the EU's influence into an area disputed by other regional actors – most prominently Russia – it inevitably contributes to exacerbating rivalries between competing regional projects (Dias, 2016). In this sense, the Eastern Partnership presents itself as a complex approach, consisting of different layers (and in close articulation with other EU external policies), in which its geopolitical design establishes its purpose

and limits, the issues that make up the regional political and security agenda constitute its scope of action, and technical processes enable the management and achievement of its objectives. In this sense, this apparently technocratic approach constitutes an important power tool at the service of European interests, in particular with regard to the promotion of stability in the neighbourhood, based on the export of the European governance model. Nevertheless, the results achieved have not matched the EU's ambition and stated policy objectives, with important consequences for the evolution of the Eastern Partnership, as well as for the European contribution to the promotion of regional peace and security, as discussed below.

Results, developments and implications of the Eastern Partnership

Different visions of the Eastern Partnership within the EU, combined with the different ambitions of the European partners and their dissatisfaction at the lack of a prospect of accession, as well as changes in the regional and international environment, have made it difficult to achieve the goals of this initiative.

This is not unrelated to the fact that there is a significant divide between the countries covered by this initiative. On the one hand, there are Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia, countries which have clear European aspirations and see rapprochement with the EU as an important pillar for their affirmation as independent states, for the protection of their sovereignty and territorial integrity, for the consolidation of their identities and for their integration into the international community. In a different position are Belarus, Armenia and Azerbaijan, which see the Eastern Partnership from a more pragmatic perspective. These countries rely on an instrumental management of relations with Brussels, seeking to draw

immediate advantages or conditions that favour the survival of the respective regimes, but without opting for an effective European integration (Dias, 2015a). This distinction is key to contextualising the differentials of the Eastern Partnership in terms of framing its achievements and contribution to the promotion of peace and security in Europe, especially in the post-Ukrainian crisis and post-Ukrainian War context, as we shall see below.

The Vilnius Summit in 2013 demonstrated how the limited results of the Eastern Partnership and the division between the countries covered by this initiative are critical for regional security. Indeed, the failure to sign the Association Agreements with Ukraine and Armenia highlighted Brussels' limited capacity to ensure the stabilisation of its neighbourhood, in an area that Russia disputes and lays claim to, considering itself as having an exclusive right of influence (Haukkala, 2015).

This is mainly due to two reasons. Firstly, the EU did not satisfactorily accommodate criticism from its partners on the lack of inclusion of a concrete prospect of membership that would act as a robust incentive for the intense reform process envisaged under the Eastern Partnership. As a result, a notable fatigue regarding this initiative has come about, which has affected the political motivation of European partners – even those with European aspirations – to meet the goals proposed by the EU and move forward with the European integration process. Secondly, the EU has shown very limited capacity to understand and prevent one of the most important costs of this Partnership: the deterioration of relations with Moscow. Given that many of the countries covered by this initiative are still highly dependent on the Kremlin in such key sectors as energy, any disruption in this relationship has the potential to significantly affect their political and economic stability. On the other hand, Russia offers its allies incentives in the short term, without political and economic conditions, which is an added value compared to the relational model

offered by Brussels, which generates medium- to long-term benefits when the agreed conditions are met (Emerson, 2014). This explains why, on several occasions, many of these countries have chosen to maintain a cooperative relationship with Moscow rather than invest in deepening their relations with the EU.

However, the events associated with the Vilnius Summit had more profound consequences for European peace and security. The failure to sign the Association Agreement with Ukraine not only triggered a deep crisis in the country but also marked a turning point in the relationship between the EU and Moscow. In effect, we have witnessed an exacerbation of the tension between these two actors and a growing antagonism between their regional projects (Dias, 2016). Based on this reading, Russia accuses the West of meddling in Ukraine's internal affairs with a view to implementing a pro-Western government and, based on this narrative, promotes the destabilisation of the country through the annexation of Crimea in March 2014 and unofficial support for separatist forces in the Donbass region. This support has been instrumental in perpetuating an ongoing civil war ever since, with clear impacts for European peace and security.

The Ukrainian crisis has undeniably highlighted the geopolitical dimension of the Eastern Partnership. However, the EU's response has not matched its level of ambition or the objectives enshrined in this initiative. Although harsh in its political condemnation of Moscow, the Union did, *in fact*, accept the annexation of Crimea and Russia's active, although never officially acknowledged, participation in the conflict in eastern Ukraine (Dias, 2015b). This suggests that, notwithstanding the implications for Ukraine's future, in particular the impossibility of realising the European aspirations demonstrated by the *Euromaidan* movement, at this stage the EU considered that the best strategy for preserving European peace and security was to refrain from openly adopting a more confrontational stance towards the Kremlin.

This did not, however, entail a complete abandonment of the EU's regional ambitions, as demonstrated by the progress in the negotiations on the Association Agreement with Ukraine, which was eventually signed in 2014, together with the Association Agreements with Moldova and Georgia. The signing of these agreements sends a clear sign against Russia's adoption of a more aggressive stance, presented, as they are, as a way to help these countries move out of Moscow's orbit of influence (Cadier, 2019). In this regard, the EU's response is extremely complex, integrating elements of conflict and cooperation with Russia, but also dynamics of protection and concession in what is its vision for European peace and security (DeBardeleben, 2020).

This has led to important changes in the EU's relationship with the Eastern neighbourhood, but also in defining and articulating what the Union wants to be in its role as a promoter of peace and security. In an attempt to remedy the damage inflicted on the Eastern Partnership and European stability, the 2015 Riga Summit reaffirmed the sovereign right of each partner to choose the level of ambition in its relationship with the EU, as well as the objectives it aims to achieve. As a result, we are seeing a strengthening of the bilateral dimension of this initiative, seen as the best platform for guaranteeing the maintenance of European peace and security, even though the multilateral dimension continues to emerge as the preferred means for developing ties between the countries covered by the Eastern Partnership and for strengthening joint projects and initiatives. In this way the EU distances itself from the more assertive approach pursued by Russia in the Eastern neighbourhood, and projects itself as a more benevolent and reliable partner (European Council, 2015).

However, changes to the EU's relationship with the Eastern neighbourhood have taken on a more cross-cutting dimension, requiring readjustments to the ENP and to the guiding strategy

of European foreign policy more generally. Indeed, the limited results of the Eastern Partnership and the weakening of the idea of European peace led to a review of the ENP in 2015. The ‘new’ ENP, as presented by the European Commission and the European External Action Service, aimed at a differentiated approach that would contribute more effectively to addressing the root causes of instability in the European neighbourhood, including radicalisation, violence, terrorism, the absence of consolidated democratic structures and the continued violation of human rights. The stabilisation of the neighbourhood is therefore the main priority in a strategy aimed at protecting and securing the values and interests that have made it possible to achieve peace on European territory. While these statements are not new in the ENP’s guiding policy and strategy documents, stabilising the neighbourhood now appears more clearly articulated as a matter of survival of the European project itself (European Commission & High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, 2015).

The European Union’s Global Strategy, announced in 2016, will also reflect these changes, highlighting the EU’s role in maintaining regional peace and security and promoting resilience in the neighbourhood in the face of powers that destabilise European order and stability, including Russia (Simão, 2017). In practice, this reorientation of European foreign policies had few implications for the relationship with countries with proclaimed European aspirations, such as Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia, or with the process of concluding Association Agreements and Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas (Dworkin and Wesslau, 2015).

Generally speaking, conditionality and socialisation remain the main strategies for ensuring the stability of these territories and promoting their rapprochement with the EU. However, an unquestionable dimension of pragmatism is introduced that makes

it easier for countries without European aspirations to maintain a cooperative relationship based on common interests, but without any requirement for shared values. What emerges is a prioritisation of security issues in the EU's relationship with its Eastern neighbourhood, which justifies a framework without transformative ambitions when there is no clear interest from the European partners. This does not mean a loss of power on the EU's part, but a transfer of it from the structuring documents of the ENP and the Eastern Partnership to the Association Agreements and the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas that regulate the bilateral dimension of relations with Eastern partners. In these, the internalisation of the *acquis communautaire*, as a requirement for deepening political association and economic integration in the European market, is still very much present, reproducing the traditional mechanisms that the EU has used in its relationship with the neighbourhood (Blockmans, 2015).

This trend is accompanied by the Eastern Partnership itself, which takes on a more technical framework as the platform guiding the EU's relationship with its partners in Eastern Europe and the Southern Caucasus. Nevertheless, in the bilateral dimension, where there is harmony of interests and identities, we are witnessing a process of integration that differs little from the one which has taken place at the Enlargement Policy level, except for a clear prospect of accession. In practice, this contributes to affirming the European peace and security project, strengthening the political dimension of the Eastern Partnership and making the geopoliticisation of the shared neighbourhood with Russia more visible (Cadier, 2019). As a result, we are witnessing enhanced competition for power and influence in the region and a growing dichotomy of the regional, and mutually exclusive, ambitions of the EU and Russia (Dias, 2016).

The 2017 Brussels Summit reflects this evolution, with a clear commitment to the principles and norms of international law,

including support for the territorial integrity, independence and sovereignty of all countries covered by this initiative. It also highlights the prioritisation of the peaceful resolution of conflicts and the promotion of peace and security at regional level, through the construction of a democratic, prosperous and stable space marked by increasing levels of cooperation. However, the degree of involvement in this process should remain a voluntary choice, adjusted to the interests of the European partners. More practically, this Summit establishes a set of 20 deliverables to be achieved by 2020 in order to strengthen the resilience of the Eastern partners and the multilateral dimension of the Eastern Partnership, which clearly lacks a bilateral dimension. These deliverables are divided across four platforms: 1) strengthening institutions and good governance; 2) economic development and market opportunities; 3) connectivity, energy efficiency, environment and climate change; and 4) mobility and people-to-people contacts. Added to this are a set of cross-cutting deliverables, applicable to all platforms, such as the development of vibrant civil societies, gender equality, non-discrimination and the strengthening of strategic communication (Council of the European Union, 2017).

The celebration of ten years of the Eastern Partnership has prompted a new re-evaluation of this initiative, its instruments and measures, with a view to preparing new targets and deliverables for the post-2020 period. This process has confirmed the strategic importance of the neighbourhood for regional stability, security and peace, and has identified the need to strengthen the bilateral and multilateral dimensions of the Eastern Partnership, focusing on relations that are better adjusted to the interests and levels of ambition of the European partners, and on forums and initiatives that enable the achievement of common goals. In a context strongly marked by the pandemic crisis, the EU has reiterated its solidarity and cooperation with its Eastern neighbours, even if conditionality has

remained the main strategy for engagement within this Partnership. In this way, strengthening resilience in the neighbourhood emerges as one of the main objectives of this initiative for the next decade. This position, in line not only with the guidelines of the ENP but also of other external policies more transversally, aims at stabilising the neighbourhood, based on sustainable development and preservation of the European governance model as the main generators of tangible results for the populations. Similarly, it aims to ensure the centrality of the EU in promoting regional peace and security, in a rather wide range of matters – from environmental security to digital security, and inevitably to human security and conflict resolution (Council of the European Union, 2020).

This approach aims to give the Eastern Partnership a more strategic, ambitious, effective and flexible dimension through the implementation of five long-term objectives for the joint action of the EU and its partners: 1) resilient, sustainable and integrated economies; 2) accountable institutions, the rule of law and security; 3) environmental and climate resilience; 4) resilient digital transformation; and 5) resilient, fair and inclusive societies. Structured around the pillars of investment and governance, this agenda envisages providing assistance to European partners through various channels, including the new Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument, as well as adapting the Eastern Partnership architecture to better reflect these new goals and ambitions (European Commission, 2021).

Still, neighbouring countries with European aspirations continued to criticise this initiative for not accommodating either their desire to integrate into the European project or their security needs. From the perspective of these actors, these issues could only be resolved through the inclusion of a concrete and tangible goal regarding EU membership, a demand that may be met in the short to medium term as discussed below.

From the construction of European peace and security to the return of interstate war in Europe: what is the future of the Eastern Partnership?

The competition for influence over a shared neighbourhood that the Ukrainian crisis exposed was exacerbated by the evolution of the international conjuncture, strongly affected by dynamics associated with what appears to be a tense and complex transition towards a multipolar order, but also by the resurgence of authoritarianism and the growth of illiberal populism, which call into question the values that underpin the European project (Leigh, 2019). This framework is fundamental to contextualise Russia's important role in the evolution of peace and security dynamics in the wider European space. Seeing in the EU's neighbourhood policies a threat to its own strategic interests, Russia has pursued a regional approach incompatible with the liberal model of peace and security pursued by the EU.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022, in flagrant and gross violation of the basic norms of the international order, and the return of war to European territory have revived the debate on the EU's role in building regional peace and security. Contradicting the traditional divide between Member States who advocate deepening relations with Eastern partners and those who prioritise maintaining stable and non-confrontational relations with Moscow, the EU responded to this invasion in a quick, unified and robust manner. Institutions and Member States have united in outright support for Ukraine, supporting its resistance against the invading Russian forces politically, militarily and economically: a resistance that the Ukrainian leadership says is also done in the name of protecting peace, security and European values (Zelensky, 2022). Part of this support includes ensuring a clear prospect of accession for Ukraine. Following the Russian invasion, and in an attempt to tie Ukraine's fate to the European project, President Volodymyr Zelensky lodged

the country's official application for EU membership on 28 February 2022. Moldova and Georgia followed suit, having long shared a desire to join the EU, but also a fear of an increasingly aggressive and unpredictable Russia. Although the immediate response by European decision-makers was initially to simply acknowledge Ukraine's European direction, without accompanying this recognition with any formal commitment, the high levels of support within the EU for a possible accession of Ukraine (Bélanger, 2022) as well as the need for a clear political stance, translated into an unexpected breakthrough. Indeed, during an official visit to Kyiv on 8 April 2022, the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, offered Ukraine an accelerated EU accession process. This allows procedures that usually take several years to be concluded in the matter of a few weeks (Reuters, 2022).

It must be understood that this does not mean that the country will be in a position to join the EU in the short term, since it will have to go through the complex and lengthy process of meeting the accession criteria and implementing European legislation and regulations in all areas. However, this may have important consequences for the future of the Eastern Partnership and for European peace and security.

If successful, the start of accession negotiations with Ukraine means that the framework for relations with this country will shift from ENP/Eastern Partnership to the Enlargement Policy, where it will join the countries of the Western Balkans and Turkey. On the other hand, if the reasoning behind committing to a prospect of accession for Ukraine also applies to Moldova and Georgia – both of which contain within their borders, as recognised under international law, separatist territories politically, economically and militarily supported by Russia – this transfer of ENP/Eastern Partnership countries may be far more significant. The realisation of this scenario would reduce the countries covered by this initia-

tive by half. This reduction would not be dictated by geographical imperatives, but by political and geostrategic ones, with the Eastern Partnership in this case composed only of countries that see the relationship with the EU in a more instrumental way. It is therefore unlikely to be permeable to stabilisation strategies based on conditionality and socialisation that have driven the European project to build peace and security in the neighbourhood. Moreover, Belarus, although formally covered by the Eastern Partnership, has remained a non-participant spectator, favouring a closer and more symbiotic relationship with Moscow. The authoritarian nature of the Lukashenko regime, the long history of fraudulent elections and human rights violations, as well as what some analysts consider to be a clear loss of autonomy to Kremlin control (Simão, 2022), have translated into successive EU-imposed that would lead to Minsk's suspension from participating in the Eastern Partnership in August 2021 (Brzozowski, 2021).

In this scenario, only Armenia and Azerbaijan would be left. Armenia's participation in the Eurasian Economic Union, a regional governance project within a supranational framework, led by Moscow since 2015 (Dias, 2015c), limits the EU's ability to strengthen and deepen its cooperation with this partner. The failure of negotiations for an Association Agreement in the framework of the Eastern Partnership and its replacement by a Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement in 2017 confirms pragmatism as the dominant principle of relations between Brussels and Yerevan (Council of the European Union, 2019), with an impact on the EU's ability to contribute to the stabilisation of this territory. For its part, the EU's relationship with Azerbaijan seems to present even more challenges. Baku, drawing on its geostrategic and energy relevance, made it clear that its relationship with the EU would be on a differentiated basis and that Azerbaijan would sovereignly choose how and in which dimensions of the political association and economic integration offered by the

EU it would choose to participate. This pragmatic approach led to the negotiations for the conclusion of an Association Agreement, which began in 2010, being abandoned in favour of a new negotiation process for the setting of a comprehensive agreement, which began in 2017. So far, however, the only priorities that have been set concern the partnership between the EU and Azerbaijan where economic and energy issues have taken precedence over political and social commitments (European Commission, 2018).

Potentially reduced to two partners without real European aspirations, the Eastern Partnership could lose relevance and pertinence. Rather than a death foretold, this reflection should prompt a broad political and academic debate on the consequences of the European peace and security project in the Eastern neighbourhood.

For now, the neighbourhood will continue to play a key role in the strategic orientation of European external policies. This interpretation is confirmed by the Strategic Compass, adopted on 21 March 2022, which creates the framework for the EU to assert itself as a stronger, more responsible and reliable security actor within a five-to-ten-year period. Profoundly influenced by the War in Ukraine, this document points to Europe's geopolitical awakening in the context of the centrality of power disputes and a threat to the spirit of the UN Charter and the Helsinki Accords. Against this background, the EU must be able to protect its strategic interests by all available means and policies, including in the area of defence, where a significant strengthening of investment is expected. Similarly, it must enhance its presence, effectiveness and visibility in its neighbourhood, taking on greater responsibility for security in Europe. To this end, it sets out to develop partnerships that are more in line with the ambitions of partners who share the EU's values and interests. This has been in keeping with the conditionality approach associated with the Eastern Partnership since the Riga Summit, and which prioritises the deepening of rela-

tions with partners with European aspirations, without adopting a punitive stance towards its more pragmatic neighbours. Alongside the war in Ukraine, the Strategic Compass condemns a climate of constant strategic intimidation of Moldova and Georgia, reflected in threats to their sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as the perpetuation of conflicts in Transnistria, Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The increasing authoritarianism in the region also emerges as a threat to regional stability, with implications for security, resilience, freedom and economic development in the wider European area. Against this backdrop, the option of strengthening the EU's strategic autonomy aims to ensure the capacity for an effective response to crises and threats in the neighbourhood, as well as a clear and positive contribution to regional stability (European Union, 2022). This framework demonstrates that, regardless of the relational framework of the EU's relations with its neighbourhood in the medium to long term, the neighbourhood will continue to play an essential role in European stability and in asserting the EU as a promoter of regional peace and security.

Conclusion

Joan DeBardeleben argues that the Eastern Partnership has gone through a process of incremental adaptation to the challenges that arise in the EU's relationship with its partners (DeBardeleben, 2020). These include: the different visions of EU Member States regarding this initiative and its prioritisation vis-à-vis the strategic relationship with Russia; the different degrees of ambition of the countries covered by the Eastern Partnership, with a clear division between countries with European aspirations and more pragmatic partners; the growing centrality of security issues within this initiative, which has made it cover new areas and consolidate its security approach;

and, the way in which European external policies are perceived by third parties. This last point is key in the evaluation of the Eastern Partnership, as one of the most important criticisms against the Partnership relates to its insufficient capacity to accommodate the perceptions and interests of EU partners, in particular the prospect of accession, constraining their commitment and motivation in fulfilling the reforms proposed by Brussels (Leigh, 2019). On the other hand, the EU also seems not to have recognised how the Eastern Partnership has been perceived by competing actors and the implications of these perceptions for the evolution of security dynamics in the wider European space.

The return of war to the wider European space demonstrates the consequences of this lack of care for the perceptions of external actors and has an inescapable impact on the EU's neighbourhood policies, including the Eastern Partnership. Nonetheless, the fact that the EU itself is built on crises may not mean the end of the European peace and security project. Against all expectations, the invasion of Ukraine presented the world with a united, motivated EU capable of responding quickly and effectively to the constraints of the situation. However, the EU's positioning as a guardian of European peace will depend, internally, on the strength of its union, especially as the costs of war intensify, and, externally, on its ability to support its eastern neighbours and develop effective and coherent mechanisms to ensure an effective contribution to the building of a stable, secure and peaceful Europe.

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**THE EU AND RUSSIA
IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY:
PARTNERS OR ADVERSARIES?**

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Abstract: In the midst of Russia's strategic confrontation with the wider West following the Russian invasion of Ukraine, it seems relevant to start a reflection on Moscow's relationship with the European Union (EU). Analysing the tools, mechanisms, positions, and discourses of EU foreign policy towards Russia will provide an analytical framework for fully understanding the role that the EU is pursuing in terms of the securitisation and stabilisation of the European continent. Although the European project manages to maintain its appeal as an actor that allows it to provide the transition to democratisation and economic development of countries seeking membership, from the Russian point of view the red lines in relation to the Europeanisation of the post-Soviet space emerge as a divisive issue. All this has resulted in the increased projection of Russia's 'great power' image, to quote President Joe Biden, and symmetrically in the devaluation of the EU's image as a key actor in Europe. Among all these layers, it can be concluded that Putin's war in Ukraine

made the EU more assertive and cohesive in condemning this unilateral decision that has shaken not only the European security architecture, but the very notion that democracy and freedom were guaranteed, too.

Keywords: Russian Federation, European Union, Confrontation, Cooperation

Introduction

The relationship between the European Union (EU) and the Russian Federation is at its most tense since the end of the Cold War. Mutual mistrust, the tense atmosphere in the political rhetoric of both actors, and the positions taken in foreign policy have played a large part in their antagonistic positioning in the current international system. Although they share an immediate neighbourhood and have possible converging interests, in recent decades the two actors have followed a path of frank estrangement, which has motivated asymmetrical positions and exacerbated measures not only in political-diplomatic dealings, but above all in their expression in specific external actions.

The current international situation seems to have provided the conditions that resulted in this distancing. On the one hand, with the end of the liberal international order of North American hegemony and the subsequent transition of power with the rise of China and, on the other, with the focus of the foreign agenda of actors such as the United States of America (USA) being on the Indo-Pacific region, Russia snatched the opportunity to assert long-held claims: (i) to be recognised as a ‘great power’ (The Hill, 2022) by its peers; (ii) to contain the spread of the West’s influence in the post-Soviet space, and (iii) to maintain its own sphere of influence, above all in neighbouring countries.

In recent decades, Russia has followed a path towards the defence of what it considers to be its strategic interests or the so-called 'red lines' (BBC News, 2014). Apart from the three Russian military interventions in the post-Cold War period – Georgia in 2008, Crimea in 2014 and Syria in 2015 – the structural lines of its foreign policy have remained constant, denoting a certain predictability of its intentions. Both domestically, with an increasingly strengthened and centralised leadership, and externally, with an increasingly assertive foreign policy, the Russian Federation has sought to legitimise its external action with the existence of a permanent external threat, and its leadership has managed to keep the established regime free from an anti-system opposition, preventing it from actively participating in national political life.

In this context, the EU and Russia seem to find themselves on opposite sides of the current international system with its bipolar nature, where on one side are the so-called liberal democracies and on the other the so-called illiberal regimes. These diverging paths are thus reflected at three major levels, these being: the bipolarism of values, between states that promote the defence of individual freedoms and democratic principles and those that restrict them; the bipolarism of regimes, democratic systems versus illiberal systems; and finally, the bipolarism of capabilities, between great global powers and regional powers.

Although there are necessarily points of convergence due to geographical proximity and interdependence, especially at the level of energy, Russia currently considers the EU to be an 'unreliable partner' (TASS, 2021). This is a manifestation of the current state of the relationship and the climate of suspicion that has been established. However, for the EU, Russia's recent foreign policy has raised not only bafflement, but also alarm, given the possibility that its inflexible position might not favour the easing of the climate of

tension and could even escalate into a macro-scale military conflict on the European continent, especially with the Ukrainian crisis.

Plagued by shock waves caused by successive crises – financial, populist, migratory, Brexit and pandemic – the European project has tried to show not only its resilience, but above all its intention not to allow itself to be marginalised in issues relevant to the stabilisation and security of the European space. Despite the difficulty in showing consistency in its approach to Russia, the different sensitivities of its Member States mean that the EU persists in exploring the formula of engagement with its Russian neighbour, especially through the Franco-German axis, keeping the political dialogue route open, and never exhausting the diplomatic mechanism in the various formats available. As a global actor the EU seems to be aware of the precariousness of depending to a large extent on the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in matters of security and defence. This precariousness naturally leads to a differentiating position of strength in the relationship with Russia.

From cooperation to stagnation

Russia's relationship with the EU has fluctuated in recent decades in parallel with the different cycles of Russian foreign policy, which has moved towards and away from the West. Indeed, at the beginning of the new millennium and under the new leadership of Vladimir Putin, there was a clear intention to draw closer to the West, through common interests, as in the case of the fight against international terrorism after September 11. In this period Russian pretensions seemed to coincide with the Western idea, especially from 2007, when President Putin's famous Munich speech (2007) saw a new phase of distancing began.

For Russia, the international action initiative of the then US administration led by George W. Bush (with the connivance of European partners) of military intervention to depose existing regimes, such as the invasion of Iraq in 2003, justified by the existence of weapons of mass destruction in its fight against the 'axis of evil' (Bush, 2002), was not acceptable. Just as questionable for Moscow was the military intervention in Libya in 2011 that culminated in the deposition and death of Gaddafi. The instability caused by the deposition of the regimes in this already troubled region gave rise to what became known as the 'Arab Spring' and the consequent regional instability that followed, which was not only political, but above all societal.

For the Kremlin, these Western foreign policy choices that failed to consider the immediate consequences have contributed significantly to the terrorist attacks by Islamic radicals that have occurred on European soil, and to the emergence of migratory movements that began to plague the EU itself from 2015. Although there was a brief interregnum during Medvedev's presidential term, during which the so-called reset was considered, Moscow began to harden its position towards the Western model very soon after 2012 and refocus on strengthening its internal regime, especially after the wave of anti-leadership protests that occurred at the time of President Putin's presidential return.

The initial cooperation intentions were laid down in the EU-Russia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement signed by the parties in 1994, with the Russian Federation, natural heir of the former Soviet Union, emerging as the first strategic partner in the post-Soviet space. However, it was impossible to foresee the subsequent European dilemma of finding the necessary balance between an assertive strategic partner and the different European sensitivities. The mechanisms provided to keep the relationship alive, such as the annual EU-Russia Summit, were not sufficient and they stag-

nated, and furthermore the shared themes started to be of a more commercial and energy nature. Russia went from seeing 'the EU as a mentor or role model, to taking over the existing gap' (Trenin et al., 2013, 12) focusing only on its specificity in terms of either values or strategic interests.

The roadmap of initial strategic cooperation quickly gave way to a distant relationship that would culminate in the current estrangement, especially after the annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the destabilisation of the Donbass. It is more about 'alienation than confrontation, as is the case with the US' (Trenin, 2019). It emerges as consensual that Russia intends to assert itself as a global actor with its own characteristics, invoking its domestic specificity as a 'sovereign democracy' (Lipman, 2006) and its external specificity as the last stronghold of the defence of Christian values in the world (Pravda, 2016) and in the assertiveness of the defence of its strategic interests. Russia's predictability seems to lie precisely in this duality. If, on the one hand, it embarks on an internal path tending to strengthen the current leadership and an increasingly conservative society, especially after the constitutional reform of 2020, at the same time it maintains assertiveness and the projection of military force externally as a way of enforcing its claims, as has been the case in the current Ukrainian crisis. This particular aspect of Russia's character, of interconnection between its domestic and foreign policies – the so-called 'Russian intermestic' (Freire, 2017) – has been admittedly differentiating in its position in the international system.

Broadly, and in different periods, the Russian leadership has been able to preserve and even legitimise itself, justifying many of its external options, especially within civil society, with the existence of an external threat, usually referring to the West. At the level of Russia's official narrative, there are several points when 'Russophobia' (RFE/RL, 2018), the 'demonisation of Russia' or the 'disinformation campaign' – known as 'fake news' – are mentioned

as a counterpoint to the state of the relationship with the US, the EU or NATO itself. At the same time, not only is Russia considered by the current Biden administration as the ‘main threat’ (Reuters, 2017), and by NATO as the ‘greatest threat to Euro-Atlantic stability and security’ (NATO, 2021), but it is also seen by the EU as responsible for interfering in electoral processes in European countries, for cyber-attacks, for interfering in the European financial system through acquisitions by major Russian businessmen, for using energy supplies as an instrument of external pressure, for exploiting migratory flows as a way of destabilising Europe, and even for disrespecting essential values such as human rights.

Contrary to the US and NATO, and lacking deterrence in terms of security and defence, the EU has been trying to assert its position regarding Russia using other types of mechanism, but ones whose political reading contains the same message of opposition and containment of Russia’s assertive stance. The EU Member States have made their position clear at key moments, such as with the package of economic sanctions implemented after the attack on the dissident Sergei Skripal in 2018, the award of the Sakharov Prize in 2021 by the European Parliament to Russia’s main political opponent, Alexei Navalny, or even the approval of the financial package of emergency aid to Ukraine in January 2022.

In recent decades, the EU has tried to adapt both to the new challenges presented in the international context, and especially to the Russian foreign agenda, especially in a European context. Accordingly, its Global Strategy (European Union, 2016), approved in 2016, seems to reflect precisely this concern, pointing out ‘Russia as the greatest strategic challenge’ (*idem*). The EU thus intends to carry out its external action through resilience. The concept of ‘resilience’, which has become a ‘buzzword in Brussels’ (Romanova, 2018), stems from a realistic concern to adjust its performance as a relevant actor on the European continent to the new external constraints.

European resilience taken as an external approach to its partners, whether they are candidate countries for the accession process, or neighbouring countries. This external approach to the European continent results from 'a policy of concentric circles' (Romanova, 2018), which, in the case of the EU-Russia relationship, derives from the concern based on the perception of risk and on issues of securitisation related to the Russian ability to instrumentalise the energy supply, hybrid attacks or even the Russian minimisation of the cohesion and unity of the European project (Romanova, 2018). Equally worrying is the Russian Federation's ability to interfere with the EU's national sovereignty and freedom of action in the foreign policy of neighbouring countries, particularly those whose strategic goal is to join the European project, such as Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. The concept of resilience is also broad in its European interpretation on the issue of values, particularly by defending democratic principles and individual rights. This political agenda in terms of normative power has been implemented by the EU, but without achieving success in terms of the real containment and deterrence of Russia.

The Crimean factor and the current Ukrainian crisis

The annexation of the Crimean Peninsula by Russia in 2014 turned out to be the decisive event of the beginning of the greatest tension in the relationship between the EU and Russia. Not only because, from the European perspective, it was a violation of international law and therefore an illegal and internationally unrecognised annexation, but more especially because it reconfigured the borders that had existed since the end of the Cold War and destabilised the European continent with the outbreak of a conflict in eastern Ukraine. For the West, Russian exploitation of the power

vacuum and political and social destabilisation following the 2014 EuroMaidan revolution in Ukraine, the Russian military presence in Crimea, as well as the referendum held on 16 March 2014 on the integration of the peninsula into the Russian Federation, serve to illustrate Russian assertiveness in foreign policy and its claim to extend and consolidate its sphere of influence in the post-Soviet area. Indeed, Russia's military intervention in Georgia in 2008 had already raised the suspicion that Russia's pretensions in its shared neighbourhood with the EU could lead to a larger-scale Russian project. In any case, the European response reverted to cancelling the existing bilateral political-diplomatic mechanism, the EU-Russia Summit, and imposing a package of restrictive economic sanctions on the Russian Federation. The policy of economic sanctions has been a widely used instrument in relations with Russia. However, its effectiveness has been questioned, given the ingenious way in which Russia has managed to bypass its constraints at home and abroad.

Another relevant issue in the EU's approach to the Russian Federation has been the difficulty of reconciling different European sensitivities within the framework of the European project. The perception of Member States that have Russia as a neighbour is substantially different from the perception of the countries in southern Europe. The Crimea factor has also shown that European fragility exists above all at times of great external tension. More than the wave of crises that have plagued the European Union – financial crisis, Brexit, migration crisis, populism, pandemic – the strained relationship with Russia has sidelined the role of the European project as a relevant actor on the European continent. For the EU, Russia has become a disruptor of the international system and for Russia the EU 'is not a reliable partner' (Lavrov, 2021).

At the same time, the Crimean issue seems to demonstrate the confrontation in terms of views regarding the European security architecture. Within the European project, the defenders of the

Euro-Atlantic axis stick to the argument that the EU's defence lies in the partnership with the United States of America through the Atlantic Alliance and see Russia as a threat. However, the defenders of the engagement policy sustain their approach with the fact that Russia belongs to Europe and a permanent dialogue must be coordinated with the Russian partner, ultimately aiming at an effective conciliation of political agendas with regard to stabilising the European continent. This duality of approaches has jeopardised the European cohesion needed for a joint policy approach to the Russian Federation.

After almost two decades of cooperation, the annexation of Crimea prompted a relationship based 'on a framework of economic sanctions and mutual alienation' (Hoffman and Makarychev, 2020). This antagonism likewise refers to the asymmetrical positioning in the international system. Something that the current Ukrainian crisis has been making quite clear. While, on the one hand, Russia wants to be recognised by its peers as a major power in the international system, advocating a multipolar order and demanding that its security guarantees are safeguarded, on the other, the wider West is trying to promote an approach to Russia through the dual strategy of containment and dialogue. Russian 'red lines' are difficult to reconcile with Western non-starters.

With the presence of force through the movement of troops near the Ukrainian border since the spring of 2021, Russia has placed itself on the international political agenda. In addition to containing the enlargement of organisations of Western influence on its borders, such as NATO or the EU itself, Russia has chosen its preferred interlocutors, these being the United States of America and NATO, and ignored the EU's position in the negotiation process for the creation of a new normative framework for European security. Through the formula 'more tanks, more talks', the Russian position has remained inflexible with regard to the accession of

countries like Ukraine and even Georgia. The internationalisation of the Ukrainian crisis exposed the weakness of the EU's position and put the US leadership and NATO to the test, always relegating to the background the position of the country whose national sovereignty and territorial integrity were called into question. The fact that the US president publicly recognised Russia as a great power at the first summit with his Russian counterpart in June 2021 seems to have given Russia the negotiating strength it needed to move towards a new cycle of external assertiveness in Europe as a way of securing its claims.

Although at first the US approach to the Ukrainian crisis was more reactive than proactive, it soon became clear that coordination with European allies and partners would provide the strength needed to reset the balance of power with Russia. Despite the message of unprecedented cohesion and unity delivered by Western leaders at the February 2022 Munich Conference, the most appropriate asseveration was the official Ukrainian narrative that declarations of good intentions would not be enough to contain Russia, but weapons would. President Zelensky's appeal in Ukrainian showed not only the desperation of a leader whose country faces one of the world's largest armies, but above all, the recognition that when there is antagonism between great powers, small countries can come off badly.

The current Ukrainian crisis has reflected the fragile position of the European project. At first, its North American partner advanced to the negotiations with Russia without requiring its presence; later on, it was the Franco-German axis itself that took the initiative and embarked on an approach to Russia aimed at calming the crisis and defusing the climate of tension. Both the approach promoted by President Macron and that of Chancellor Scholz were aimed above all at showing that the EU is an actor to be considered in Europe and that it cannot be sidelined. As early as 2019, the French

President put forward what became known as the ‘Macron doctrine’, according to which there would have to be a rapprochement with the Russian Federation, otherwise the climate of tension with the West would worsen. The fateful prediction was confirmed by the current crisis, which is not Ukrainian but ‘Russian’ (Baerbock, 2022). The negotiation impasse remains, as does the worsening tension between the West and Russia.

The Navalny effect

At the current time of shift of power in the international system to a new bipolarism, motivated by the emergence of China, the United States of America has turned its focus to the Indo-Pacific region. This change in the international order seems to have contributed to a Russian position that is increasingly distant from the West, and at the same time stronger with its Chinese partner. But this antagonism at international level does not only relate to capabilities or relationships between illiberal regimes and democracies; it also occurs at the level of values. One facet of Russian predictability has been a process of increasing concentration of power in its leadership in the face of a civil society that is increasingly conservative and legitimises the actions of its political elite. The concentration of power in the Russian President is so evident that when the necessary decentralisation of power to the Russian Governors to implement local measures to tackle the pandemic crisis was implemented, there was total apathy in the system and a significant inability to organise autonomously.

The Russian political regime has not allowed the anti-system opposition to operate, particularly political opponents such as the currently imprisoned Alexei Navalny. The accusation of alleged fraud and corruption in the Russian political elite and Navalny’s repeated

attempts to break the Russian monolithic system have led to his actions being thwarted several times, either through arrests or even through attempts on his life. In the latest episode of poisoning by agents derived from Novichok, in August 2020, the Navalny factor acquired an international dimension relating above all to the defence of human rights. The international community, and in this case the EU itself, saw the issue as a violation of fundamental rights and immediately adopted a position condemning Russia's action. For its part, Moscow rejected the accusations, basing them on the climate of mutual distrust and Russophobia on the part of the West.

The Navalny issue, which for Russia should be seen as a domestic issue, has gone way beyond Russia's domestic sphere and became yet another crisis in the context of a climate of tension with the West. The internationalisation of the Navalny factor has shown that the estrangement between the West and Russia is also a crisis of values. In this particular case, the EU made its position clear not only through the indignation expressed in official narrative terms, but above all by the display of that stance in the implementation of a new package of economic sanctions, directed this time at Russian entities and institutions, and also at Russian citizens. Finally, the European Parliament awarded the Sakharov Prize to Navalny in December 2021, in a clear declaration of defence of freedom of opinion and political freedom.

The pandemic and the 'confrontation of vaccines'

Another point of major tension between the EU and Russia occurred with the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic crisis. The pandemic quickly proved to be an issue that cut across regime types, countries and societies. The health crisis was global, and after the early stages, when the state once again took the lead in

managing this type of crisis, it soon became clear that managing the pandemic would require supranational cooperation using existing multilateral mechanisms.

The EU's action illustrates this change in approach. After a period of domestic preoccupation with implementing national measures, the Member States realised that the response would have to be a joint one and that the coordinated acquisition of the vaccine would have to be achieved within the framework of the European project. A strategy considered beneficial for containing the disease on the European continent. Indeed, after the first wave, it was possible for European countries to develop cooperation policies, particularly with African countries, for the supply and distribution of vaccines. This strategy, which became known as 'vaccine diplomacy', also had its moments of 'vaccine wars', namely between the EU and the Russian Federation.

For Russia, it was a triumphant moment to be able to announce to the world that it had produced its anti-Covid-19 vaccine, not only the first, but the first with considerable efficacy. Somehow, the management of the pandemic should force a refocusing on the essentials by sidelining international antagonisms. However, the Russian breakthrough was questioned by the EU, not so much for its speed, but rather for the controls carried out on its effectiveness and manufacture. The dispute with the European regulator dragged on for several months and outweighed the Russian willingness to supply and assist in the manufacture of the vaccine. European reluctance to benefit from its offer was so evident that Moscow was quick to point to the permanent European mistrust of Russia, as well as the EU's defence of the economic interests of Western pharmaceutical companies. Even though some European countries unilaterally decided to opt for importing the Russian vaccine, this episode ended up by helping to worsen the tension between Russia and the West.

Russia's war in Ukraine: from the projection of force on the border to Azovstal

'We have been left with no other option to protect Russia and our people ... The situation demands that we take decisive and immediate action. The Donbass people's republics have turned to Russia with a request for assistance. In this regard, in accordance with Article 51 of Part 7 of the United Nations Charter, with the approval of the Council of the Russian Federation and in furtherance of the treaties of friendship and mutual assistance ratified by the State Duma on February 22 with the Donetsk People's Republic and the Luhansk People's Republic, I have decided to launch a special military operation' (Putin, 2022). On 24 February 2022, President Putin announced what he considered to be 'a special military operation' in support of the Russian-speaking people in the Donbass, according to which, they would be the target of genocide and a restrictive identity policy operated by the Kyiv government.

The Russian military incursion into Ukraine blatantly marks a new phase in Russia's international positioning in terms of a more assertive and militarised foreign policy, generating perplexity in many Western capitals, and ushering in a period of greater strategic confrontation with Russia.

After several months of projecting military force on the border with Ukraine in joint military exercises with Belarus, Russia demanded security guarantees from the West, in particular from the United States and NATO, in the face of what it perceived to be the threat posed to the post-Soviet space by the enlargement of the Western sphere of influence. Condemning the breaking of verbal promises regarding the enlargement of organisations such as NATO or the EU itself made at the end of the Cold War, Russia was beginning a period of major international criticism and contestation

over what would later be considered ‘a strategic error for which it would pay a severe price in the years to come’ (Stoltenberg, 2022).

In the first phase of the conflict, until the ‘Bucha’ event, and according to the US administration (The Washington Post, 2022), there were two possible scenarios in terms of Russian strategic objectives: a minor military incursion, only focused on eastern Ukraine, and forcing Kyiv to recognise the independence of the two breakaway republics, or a broader incursion, aiming to take the Ukrainian capital and compel the capitulation of President Zelensky. Neither scenario has been confirmed after more than three months of Russian military invasion. After several difficulties in military operations for logistical reasons, planning failures and the strength of Ukrainian resistance, the new phase of the war announced by the Russian Foreign Minister, Serguei Lavrov (TASS, 2022), turned Russia’s attention to the Donbass with the aim of extending its area of control to Odessa, making the land link with annexed Crimea and blocking Ukraine’s access to the Black Sea.

The conflict in Ukraine comes across as an illegal war because it goes against international law; unprovoked because it was a unilateral Russian decision and multidimensional, whose shock waves have destabilised the European security architecture and the international order itself. Besides being a military crisis, where one of the belligerents, in this case the aggressor, is a nuclear power and a permanent member of the Security Council with the right of veto, it is a humanitarian crisis, having led to millions of refugees and internally displaced persons. Furthermore, it is an economic crisis, with the implementation of several packages of economic sanctions on Russia from the enlarged West and the Russian threat to cut energy supplies, and it is a political-diplomatic crisis, with the condemnation of Russia in the UN General Assembly or the consequent suspension from the Human Rights Council. It is also a communications crisis, with a Russian disinformation campaign and

an intensified official narrative on both sides, with Moscow criticising Western Russophobia and the West blaming President Putin for reapplying his playbook of other Russian military interventions such as Grozny and Aleppo.

In this last dimension, for the first time the war also takes place in the social networks more than the traditional media. Through the publications of soldiers from both sides, as well as of the various political decision-makers, the world is following the two versions of the same war every second. If it is possible in this way to give a partial version of the facts, it also generates a wave of solidarity in Western civil society after the events in the town of Bucha were made public following the withdrawal of Russian troops. In several occupied cities, the Russian strategy has involved terrorising the civilian population, bombing entire towns and committing acts of extreme violence. The 'axis of condemnation', the wider West, held President Putin responsible for the atrocities committed in the theatre of operations in Ukraine; according to the mission conducted by the International Criminal Court, these amounted to war crimes, crimes against humanity, and possibly even genocide.

The shockwave generated by the evidence of the crimes committed shocked the citizens, but above all it affected the leadership of Ukraine's partners, who felt impelled to take more robust measures of support, whether by supplying heavy weaponry or by imposing more restrictive economic sanctions on the Russian economy. The war thus moved to a differentiating level with Ukraine emerging as a fortress between Europe and Russia, the victim of an attack on democratic values and human rights, in short, in a defensive existential war, but also in defence of the civilised world. Not even the argument used by the Kremlin, of 'denazification', 'demilitarisation' or even 'instrumentalisation of Ukraine to contain Russia', has been able to prevent the moral defeat of President Putin with this war.

More than the symbolic act of preventing the capture of the capital or sinking the *Moskva* in the Black Sea, questioning the myth of Russia's Herculean military capacity, Ukrainian resilience has managed to contain the 'occupiers' and President Zelensky has emerged as a hero whose leadership in this crisis is exemplary. The greatest illustrative example of this war, however, is the besieged martyred city of Mariupol, in which the last stronghold of Ukrainian resistance, the Azov battalion, has for weeks resisted continuous Russian onslaughts on the Azovstal industrial complex. The focus of the war became the evacuation of stranded civilians and the perseverance of Ukrainian soldiers. For the Ukrainian leadership, Azovstal has become a non-negotiable 'red line', whereas Moscow demanded the surrender of Ukrainian 'ultranationalists' to present as a trophy on the Great Patriotic War day of 9 May.

The political and diplomatic route has never been completely ruled out. But whether it was a European initiative, through the Franco-German axis, a Turkish initiative, hosting meetings between the parties in Antalya and Istanbul, or an Israeli initiative, starting talks with Kyiv or Moscow, it did not produce the expected results and progress. But the common denominator was always to try to achieve the necessary ceasefire to allow humanitarian corridors to Mariupol and a pacification of the conflict.

Only after the Secretary General of the United Nations (UN) went first to Moscow and then to Kyiv, with a previous stop in Istanbul, was it possible, after some constraints on the ground, to get the first civilians out of Azovstal. Even with the Russian bombing of Kyiv during the meeting between President Zelensky and António Guterres, the UN action is considered positive and to some extent successful. Likewise, the act undertaken by the permanent member of the Security Council receives an international wave of condemnation from the West. But this incident does not overshadow the message made clear by Guterres that there are two conflicting

views of the scenario in Ukraine, which, as an invasion, involves an aggressor and a victim.

Another equally relevant aspect of this war has been the spiritual one. From early on, the position of Pope Francis has been to call for peace and an end to the atrocities committed, having told the Kremlin he is willing to meet with the Russian president, but never obtaining a favourable response. And while the position of the leader of the Catholic Church is to some extent predictable, the position of the Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church, Cyril I, has earned the condemnation of many of the faithful and even some criticism from his Catholic counterpart. In recent years, the Russian Orthodox Church has taken a relevant role in legitimising the Russian regime, in a certain deification of the leader and in supporting an increasingly conservative society, advocating Russia as the last stronghold of Christian values. In the case of the invasion of Ukraine, the Russian Patriarch has assumed a very important role in justifying the war, whether through his sermons or through the blessing given to the Russian troops.

In general, this has been a costly war, with substantial losses, which has forced Russia to turn its focus to other regional areas by strengthening partnerships and alliances. This was the case with China. Xi Jinping's China, considered a possible and relevant mediator in the conflict, assumed an ambiguous position from the beginning, later moving to a certain pro-Russian neutrality, and finally making itself available to play a constructive role in peace-making in the conflict at its own pace and according to its strategic interests. Without ever yielding to Western pressures, China has never condemned the Russian decision, has never used the term 'war' and has always pointed to the responsibility of the United States for 'legitimate' Russian security concerns.

Over the several weeks of Russian invasion of Ukraine, with a stalemate in bilateral negotiations, the difficult task of mediation

and the evident prolongation of the war, three considerations are pertinent: (i) it has become clear that Russia will not relinquish its pretensions and cannot afford to lose face; (ii) Ukraine, even accepting the status of neutrality going against its constitutional framework of NATO membership, will hardly want to give up its territorial integrity; and (iii) after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the normalisation of the West's relationship with Putin's Russia will certainly be problematic.

Conclusion

The current time of strategic competition between Russia and the West – the US, NATO and the EU – appears to be quite decisive due to Russia's assertive and militarised position regarding the current Ukrainian crisis. In any case, over the past few years there has been a marked gap between the official narrative and external positions of both sides. Although several episodes have contributed to this result, the Russian President's famous 2007 Munich speech could be regarded as the beginning of this cycle, which tends towards concerted action and cooperation being difficult.

In the particular case of the relationship between the EU and the Russian Federation, the tension in the relationship points to divergences at three distinct levels that could justify the current antagonism and also be impediments to stepping back from the current *lieu d'affaires*: (i) the fact that Russia maintains as a permanent vector of its foreign policy the post-Soviet space, a neighbourhood shared with the EU, aiming to strengthen its sphere of influence in the region, aspiring to veto the freedom of choice in foreign policy of countries that wish to join the European project; (ii) the strengthening of the Russian political regime, specifically through the constitutional reform initiated in

2020, to centralise power in its leadership and thus prevent the materialisation of what the EU sees as the defence of democratic values and individual freedom in Russian society, and iii) the declared antagonism with the USA and NATO itself, labels of the liberal international order, from which stems the strict defence and security of the European project itself.

In this expanded framework, a scenario of the convergence of strategic interests, the concertation of common objectives and the rapprochement of Russia with the European Union would seem to be quite difficult.

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**DISINFORMATION THROUGH THE EYES AND AT
THE HANDS OF THE EU: DECONSTRUCTING
AND INTERCONNECTING DIGITAL NARRATIVES
AND PRACTICES OF (IN)SECURITY**

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Abstract: Many of the debates that have developed around disinformation in International Relations reflect on it mainly with regard to its impact on democracies, its usefulness and effects on propaganda strategies or a combination of the three. Within this context, grammars of security and insecurity are often explicitly or implicitly present, revealing the security agendas of the different actors and the ways in which the digital aspect gives continuity to them or reconfigures them. The relationship of the European Union (EU) with the phenomenon and practices of disinformation are no exception to this. Assuming that the understanding of (in)security depends on each actor's political perspective on the world, this chapter analyses how the construction of the EU's political agenda in the face of disinformation, namely in terms of narratives and

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practices, reflects its own locus of enunciation in the international system. Reflecting its vision as an actor in the Global North, the way the EU approaches disinformation mirrors its geopolitical positioning and both identity and security elements that, in turn, sustain and reveal its own digital – normative and power – agenda.

Keywords: Disinformation, EU, Digital, Security

Introduction

Disinformation is one of the most common terms in the current lexicon of international relations. It synthesises a reality that, although by no means unprecedented (the deliberate production of false or misleading content to cause harm), has seen a new lease of life in the digital age in terms of sophistication, pace of production and reach.¹ Due to its openness, horizontality and algorithmic architecture, digital technology has facilitated the spread of what is commonly referred to as ‘fake news’² and made room for phenomena such as hybrid threats³

¹ ‘Digital’ here refers to the systemic or ecological nature of information technology (Nardi and O’Day, 1999). In this light, we can regard the digital world as a system of actors, practices, values and technologies in a specific environment. We consider this systemic approach helpful, as it takes into consideration the complex relationships between actors and digital artefacts. Its focus is not only on technology, but also on users’ activities and the ways in which members of a digital ecology shape new practices and new technologies.

² ‘Fake news’ is a controversial term, criticised for being an oxymoron. Alternative terms are therefore used together with the terms under ‘information disorder’ and ‘disinformation’ (Wardle and Derakhshan, 2017).

³ There is no single, agreed definition of what a ‘hybrid threat’ is as the evolving nature of this type of threat is recognised, as is its consequent need to remain flexible in order to adapt to new realities as they arise. These threats include elements of asymmetry and unpredictability (Bajarūnas, 2020) through various national, EU and NATO initiatives, has taken in recent years to address them. Although these threats do not constitute a new challenge for states and international actors, they became a major concern for European countries following Russia’s conventional and unconventional war in Ukraine in 2014. The article argues that addressing hybrid threats is a constant, never-ending process that requires the development of societal and governmental resilience. Hybrid threats are constantly changing and evolving,

or astroturfing⁴ that point to broader dynamics of disinformation and which, as recurrent as they have been in contemporary international political action in the last decade, confront us with the possibility of a transition from episodes of informational disorder to a disinformation order (Bennett and Livingston, 2018).

In the international sphere, issues of disinformation often go hand in hand with the use of security and insecurity discourses, whether used explicitly or implicitly, revealing the security and power agendas of the different actors and the ways in which digital technology perpetuates or shapes them. The use of the security argument in the face of disinformation is largely related to the association of disinformation with damage caused in terms of power or through the lens of sovereignty and interference. In democratic contexts, alongside – and within the scope of – the security threat, disinformation is also seen as a procedural political challenge and, above all, an identity challenge, since it calls into question the guarantee of trustworthy information, a fundamental part of democracy.

The EU's relationship with the phenomenon and practices of disinformation is no exception. Assuming, as Booth (1997) states, that the understanding of (in)security depends on each actor's political perspective on the world, this chapter aims to deconstruct the EU's agenda for disinformation, analysing how its construction mirrors its locus of enunciation in the international system and, in this regard, reflects its vision as an actor of the Global North, with its own geopolitical position and a political agenda for the digital space that simultaneously

which means that our response to them also needs to be constantly evolving in order to keep up. The article also provides some recommendations for European policymakers on the next steps that Europe, especially the EU, should take when addressing hybrid threats., of which disinformation may be one.

⁴ Astroturfing is 'the attempt to create an impression of widespread grassroots support for a policy, individual, or product, where little such support exists. Multiple online identities and fake pressure groups are used to mislead the public into believing that the position of the astroturfer is the commonly held view' (Bienkov, 2012).

reveals identity and security elements. We thus focus on how the EU has presented disinformation issues in its official narratives, as well as the security practices it has adopted to combat disinformation and, above all, how these two dimensions have contributed to, sustained and revealed its own normative and power digital agenda.

To this end, we analyse the official narratives and security practices through which the EU presents, from its point of view, how disinformation is generated, what it means and how to fight against disinformation, exploring what constitutes threats, referents, priorities, red lines and solutions to protect the EU from disinformation. Moreover, we reveal the subtexts and connotations on which its discourses – as systems of representation and practices – are based and which are validated by them.

The chapter is structured in three sections. In the first section, the characterisation of disinformation and the contemporary information (dis)order in its various meanings and definitions are discussed. It is argued that, while on the one hand it may be useful to clarify the concept on the basis of the main interactions between different perspectives of the phenomenon, which may be compared to the EU's own approach, on the other, an essentialist definition of it may be spurious, given its socially constructed character and positioning. The second section maps out how the EU has addressed and framed disinformation, firstly looking at the different viewpoints from which the EU perceives and operationalises the issue of disinformation, then exploring how the EU defines 'disinformation'. This section also presents and synthesises its origins as well as the trends and the standards and practices that, since 2015, the EU has put in place to address disinformation. Finally, the third part critically explores the elements that are prioritised or silenced in the way disinformation is addressed, contributing to a better understanding of the limits and potential of its own policy agenda on this issue.

Disinformation and the current information (dis)order

The origins of the disinformation phenomenon lie in previous centuries, going hand in hand with the history of mass media (Hofseth, 2017; Schudson & Zelizer, 2017). However, the era of information overload (Andrejevic, 2013), sub-journalism (Picard, 2015) and online news production (Karlsson, 2011) has added dimensions to their analysis.

With the more or less self-legitimised opening of the news production process to new actors, especially on digital platforms, the dimensions of objectivity have largely ceased to refer to and depend on an accredited professional code of conduct, and now depend on the individuality of the reporter (Mellado, 2014), whose alignment to a professional practice may vary.

A 2018 EU study entitled *Fake News and Online Disinformation*⁵ produced some general results on European internet users' perceptions around disinformation. Respondents from 26,576 telephone interviews conducted in February 2018 perceived traditional media (radio, television and print newspapers) as the most trusted sources of information. There was a tendency for more highly educated respondents to express greater levels of confidence in a range of different formats, while younger respondents (15-24 years old) were more likely to trust news and information they accessed online. At the same time, the more highly educated respondents also said they both encountered 'fake news' more often and were more confident in their ability to identify it as fake. 85% of respondents felt that 'fake news' was a problem in their countries, while 83% felt it was a problem for democracy in general. The respondents believe that journalists and national authorities are mainly responsible for stop-

⁵ Available online: <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/final-results-eurobarometer-fake-news-and-online-disinformation> [18.01.2022].

ping the spread of disinformation. It was again those with higher levels of education and who used social media daily who expected the most incisive reactions from different decision-makers. It was also the more highly educated who reported that they encountered 'fake news' more often and that they felt more comfortable with the process that allowed them to detect its fakeness.

Tandoc et al. (2017) established a typology that uses different meanings and connotations to define the concept of 'fake news'. It is based on a review of 34 academic articles and identifies six different types of 'fake news': 1) 'Fake news' as a tool of satire, often in humorous programmes, 2) 'Fake news' that uses parody for humorous purposes, based on fictional and quite implausible material, 3) Fabricated 'fake news', which have no factual basis and are disguised as real news to misinform the public, 4) 'Fake news' in the form of manipulated images and videos designed to create false narratives, 5) 'Fake news' in the form of advertising but in the guise of genuine reporting, and 6) 'Fake news' as propaganda designed to manipulate the public's political orientations and attitudes.

Zaryan (2017) points out that the definition of 'fake news' in the media includes the dimensions of satire, hoaxes, poorly reported news that is often retracted on the platforms that published it, misuse of data and imprecise and sloppy journalism. The author argues that definitions of the concept have progressively come to depend on both the evolution and the scope of the phenomenon itself, as well as on the various areas in which it is defined in the form of a specific externality that varies according to the field of analysis.

In journalism, for instance, 'fake news' is defined as: 1) authentic material presented in an incorrect context, 2) imposter news content shared on websites specialising in 'fake news' with layouts that imitate real news websites and 3) all fake information and content intended to manipulate public opinion (Zaryan, 2017).

Rubin et al. (2016) introduced the term ‘journalistic deception’ to the discussion, defining it as an act of communicating messages verbally in the form of a lie or non-verbally by withholding information to initiate or sustain a false belief. The author defines three types of ‘fake news’: 1) fabrications in the form of fraudulent reporting, 2) the hoaxing that is common on online social networks and 3) humorous fake news.

Allcott (2017), meanwhile, who identifies the 2016 US election as an archetypal case of information (dis)order, emphasises intentionality as a crucial factor in defining an ideal type of ‘fake news’, understood as truly fake content that is deliberately produced for the purpose of manipulating readers.

The author, in constructing a typology of six forms of fake news, argues that the first type arises from unintentional processes that ultimately spread untrue and non-factual news. The second type are rumours that do not originate from sources or news. The third type involves conspiracy theories, which are difficult to confirm as true or false because of their nature and because the people who report them believe in their veracity. The fourth type is satire which is unlikely to be considered factual. The fifth type regards false statements by politicians, while the sixth concerns news or reports that are biased or misleading, but not entirely false.

Allcott concludes with the observation that the phenomenon is not new, or even recent. Similarly, the ‘yellow journalism’ from over a century ago, described by Hofseth (2017), also fitted into a model that distanced itself from factual journalism. Fake news was also very common during the First World War (Schudson & Zelizer, 2017). Hofseth (2017) considers ‘fake news’ to have two distinct purposes: to profit from the content that is produced and spread and to influence in the form of propaganda. Similarly, the author believes that this kind of purported news content can be created and disseminated intentionally or unintentionally.

Beckett (2017) returns to a typology of 'fake news' composed of seven categories. The predominant terms used to define the content of 'fake news' include adjectives such as 'manipulated', 'false', 'misleading' and 'imposter'. The adjectives depend on the framework of production and dissemination of the content, i.e. whether the contents are the result of satire and parody where the main purpose is not to cause some harm, whether they arise from sharing or publication in a totally unrelated context or whether they are totally false and aimed exclusively at manipulating and causing harm.

Derakhshan and Wardle (2017, 8-9) mention three types of information disorder: disinformation, misinformation and malinformation. The authors also divide the information process into three phases: creation, production and distribution. They argue that disinformation (e.g. conspiracy theories) is deliberate and aimed at harming a person, group, organisation or country, while misinformation (e.g. misuse of statistics) is false but without malice, while malinformation (e.g. when contexts are deliberately distorted) is based on actual facts and used intentionally to harm a person, organisation or country.

Furthermore, some authors (Holmes, 2014; Zaryan, 2017) refocus the characterisation of a (dis)information order on the modalities of access and the frames of reception to content. According to this perspective, what really counts is whether people access it or not. News – real or fake – only exists if people have access to it and/or share it. This approach implies the need to look at a given information (dis)order composed of modalities of disinformation reception and understand that its true impact is defined by its audience.

Based on the previous contributions it is possible to suggest a definition of disinformation that considers its variable impact and the modalities of access and reception frameworks to disinformation content as a condition for its (re)production and impact in the physical world. Thus, Lima Quintanilha, Torres da Silva and Lapa (2019) define disinformation as any content that is non-factual,

misleading or unverifiable that is received and read as news by at least one person. This content is produced and distributed through media channels, whatever its content (satire, humour, propaganda, fraudulent advertising, etc.) by one or more persons using their own or other sources, with the deliberate aim of distorting reality, disinforming, entertaining, manipulating public opinion or harming others, or unintentionally as a result of the production and distribution of inaccurate information, with varying impact in the social, cultural, economic and political spheres (Idem).

However, many academic and institutional efforts to delimit the phenomenon of disinformation and its origins result from various concerns (professional, as in the case of journalists or scientists, economic, political, etc.) and the dissolution of the concept of ‘truth’, especially in the last decade (Somay, 2021). On the one hand, it is important to recognise that there is a dispute over the appropriation of ‘truth’, and what separates this from misinformation, which arises from institutional arrangements and power relations in which information is contested and denied. On the other, there may be a technocratic, securitarian and essentialist⁶ temptation by political institutions, academia and technology companies to address disinformation, which, according to Springer and Özdemir (2022), has increased over the course of the pandemic.

While the post-truth context is often criticised for promoting disinformation, the technocratic and essentialist interpretation of factual elements can sustain dogmatic, securitarian and deterministic interpretations that preclude critical scrutiny. In the context of the pandemic many of the proposed ‘infodemic’ solutions were framed narrowly and technocratically, as fact-checking algorithms or deploying digital apps for population surveillance.

⁶ Essentialism is a narrative embedded in technocracy, an extractive, entrenched, uncritical and decontextualised epistemology that ignores the social, historical and political contexts in which information and knowledge is produced and understood (Bayram et al., 2020).

The issue of disinformation was also in the spotlight, for example, during the 2016 US presidential election and the Brexit referendum process (Rose, 2017). The discussion ranges from the impact and consequences of information disorder to the type of public policies that should be used to fight the threat, understood as both internal and external. And it remains on the agenda, particularly in the Russia-Ukraine conflict and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which positions its current framework socially and politically. Against the background of the current state of international relations, the EU introduced measures in 2022 that cut off access to Russian state media content, perceived as external threats, and which covered search engines, social media posts and shares as well as online video feeds⁷.

A range of actors and loci of enunciation, local, national and international, compete in characterising disinformation, an endeavour which is in itself inherently political, particularly in an era of digital transformation. It can be framed, upstream, as a crisis of both knowledge and epistemology, which determines the contents, production methods, actors and legitimacy of knowledge (Springer and Özdemir, 2022) and, downstream, in how its effects and scope are defined. We can therefore stress that knowledge and disinformation are socially and politically constructed and situated, in this case, within the Union.

Different loci of enunciation, different (in)securities

Contrary to realist and liberal views of international relations that consider the international system anarchic, the international

⁷ Available online: <https://www.wsj.com/livecoverage/russia-ukraine-latest-news-2022-03-09/card/eu-orders-removal-of-russian-state-owned-media-from-search-results-social-media-reshares-Nxb4WXbCaQnCUMmL9Mvk> [18.04.2022].

system is understood here as hierarchical, in other words, marked by structuring historical inequalities, built from positions of power in terms of class, sex, gender, spirituality, linguistics, geography, race (Grosfoguel, 2011), which divide the world between a centre and a periphery, a global south and a global north, a so-called developed world and an underdeveloped world, a so-called world of knowledge and a so-called world of exoticism, for example. In this context, all international perspectives stem from a history, an experience and a geography that affect the political, security and geopolitical views of each actor (Tuathail, 2003). As Cox stated, 'Perspectives derive from a position in time and space, specifically social and political time and space. The world is seen from a standpoint definable in terms of nation or social class, of dominance or subordination, of rising or declining power, of a sense of immobility or of present crisis, of past experience, and of hopes and expectations for the future' (1981, 207).

In fact, despite the common understanding of what the term 'security' fundamentally means, what is defined as a *threat and* what is understood as a *security referent* to be protected is far from something universal, varying, in fact, between different societies, cultures, chronologies, geographies, spaces and, above all, standpoints.⁸ According to Ken Booth, the understanding of what security is, or should be, depends on each actor's political perspective on the world, with the result that different world views and different political discourses of politics offer different views and discourses of security (1997, 106). The security choices that are made at each moment and by each group, as well as the respective narrative constructions that give them a shape and meaning do not emerge spontaneously, but rather in a space of power that is

⁸ As the Copenhagen School and especially the Aberystwyth School or Post-Colonial Studies have highlighted.

already constituted and simultaneously constitutive (Santos, Roque and Santos, 2018) this article aims to study the discursive practices and political consequences associated with the use of such labels. The political implications of using the ‘terrorist’ label in regards to the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK). They emerge and take shape within a wider discursive, ideological, identity and power structure in which they are embedded and which shape, validate (Santos, Roque and Santos, 2018) particularly by means of discourse, that security is gendered and gender constructions are in turn built on dynamics of in/security, and that gendered power relations and representations are always entangled with other structures of inequality and domination such as racism, this article argues that gendered categories of othering in the media’s representations have been critical to produce and justify 1 and naturalise them.

The EU as an international actor

As one of the central elements of the so-called ‘Global North’ (De Sousa Santos, 2014; Araújo, 2021), the EU is commonly regarded as an ‘economic giant’ but a ‘political dwarf’, as former Belgian minister Mark Eyskens put it in 1991. It is nevertheless widely recognised as a ‘normative power’ for the example it set as a historical success as a project that integrated former rival states and for its commitment to promoting European norms and principles, often perceived as universal in its relations with non-member states (Manners, 2002). They mirror a locus of enunciation that embodies a modernity cherished by theses sometimes comparable to Fukuyama’s ‘end of history’ (2006), even if, as Kennedy (2006) states, there is a widespread tendency to suppress colonial traces from the image of the EU, often hermetically sealed in the history and formality of the past. This standpoint is also found in the security field. Even if the European Union’s (in)

security environment has undergone changes and intensifications, particularly in its eastern and southern neighbourhood and in the digital sphere (EC&HRUFASP, 2016), the referents and threats they identify align with its locus of enunciation as an actor of the Global North in the international system with normative implications (in terms of practices, discourses and regulation – within and beyond its borders), security maintenance and power.

The EU's approach to disinformation

The EU considers disinformation one of the major challenges of today (European Commission, 2018d). Although disinformation is by no means an unprecedented issue, the beginning of the EU's collective response to the current disinformation environment dates back only to 2015, when the self-styled 'European approach' began to take shape. Within this approach, the EU has taken on a normative and security role which produces (potentially exportable) standards and benchmarks and to ensure internal and external security. This section aims to report on how the EU has defined and addressed disinformation, focusing on its official narratives and security practices, exploring what constitutes threats, what to protect, priorities, red lines and solutions, and seeking to reveal the subtexts and connotations on which its discourses – as systems of representation and practices – are based and which are validated by them.

How does the EU define disinformation?

The EU provides its definition for the first time in the document 'Tackling online disinformation: a European Approach' (European Commission, 2018d, 3-4):

verifiably false or misleading information that is created, presented and disseminated for economic gain or to intentionally deceive the public, and may cause public harm.

This same definition is reproduced *ipsis verbis* in the ‘Action Plan against Disinformation’ (HRUFA&SP, 2018) and in the ‘EU Code of Practice on Disinformation’ (European Commission, 2018c) and appears with minor differences in ‘A multi-dimensional approach to disinformation’ (DGCNCT, 2018, 3) the European Commission set up a high-level group of experts (“the HLEG”, where it reads as follows:

all forms of false, inaccurate, or misleading information designed, presented and promoted to intentionally cause public harm or for profit.

In the first three documents, disinformation includes three key elements: nature of the information (misleading/false), intentionality/motivation (economic gain or misleading the public) and result (harmful). However, even if all three are part of the equation, they do not all have the same relevance. A hierarchy exists between them in terms of the need for verification in order to label something as disinformation. While the first two are a necessary condition for a particular piece of information to be considered disinformation, the third – causing harm – is not (Ó Fathaigh, Helberger and Appelmann, 2021, 6) rather than illegal content. However, EU member states have recently been making disinformation illegal. This article discusses the definitions that form the basis of EU disinformation policy, and analyses national legislation in EU member states applicable to the definitions of disinformation, in light of freedom of expression and the proposed Digital Services Act. The article discusses the perils of defining disinformation in EU legislation, and including provisions on online platforms being required to remove illegal content,

which may end up being applicable to overbroad national laws criminalising false news and false information. (Fathaigh, Helberger and Appelman, 2021). There is therefore content which, even if it does not cause harm, may be considered disinformation under this definition, provided it constitutes misleading or false information and is generated and disseminated for the purposes of economic gain or deceiving the public.

However, in ‘A multi-dimensional approach to disinformation’ (DGCNCT, 2018) the European Commission set up a high-level group of experts (“the HLEG”, harm is already included as an equal part in the definition. It includes the same three fundamental elements with equal relevance: nature of the information (misleading/false) and intentionality/motivation combined with results (economic gain or harmful result for the public). Despite this nuance, in truth ‘misleading the public’ in the public sphere can be seen as harmful in itself, in the EU normative context, since for democracy to work and the best decisions to be taken – in collective terms in the different areas of society (e.g. environment, education, health, security, etc.) – it is essential that citizens have access to plural and reliable information.

In operational terms, the EU recognises that, while disinformation threatens fundamental European values, it can originate both internally and externally (HRUFA&SP, 2018), with public and private actors (individual or collective), within the EU or in third countries (DGCNCT, 2018; European Commission, 2018) including misleading or outright false information, is a major challenge for Europe. Additionally, social media is central to the dissemination of disinformation and computer technology is its right-hand man (European Commission, 2018e; DGCNCT, 2018; European Parliament, 2016), as they enable the production and dissemination of disinformation with different types of investment and sophistication, thereby making it accessible to a large number of groups (HRUFA&SP, 2018).

However, disinformation from third countries can involve ‘traditional media, social networks, school programmes and political parties, both within and beyond the European Union’ (European Parliament, 2016). In terms of actors, there are explicit references to ‘Kremlin propaganda’, particularly in the context of ‘Russia’s annexation of Crimea’ or the ‘Russian-led hybrid war in the Donbass’ (European Commission, 2018b; HRUFA&SP, 2018) and to ISIL/Daesh’s use of disinformation on Twitter and Facebook to advance its propaganda and to recruit (European Commission, 2018b).

The frame of reference of the approach: identity and security

In its approach to disinformation, the EU gives priority to two frames of reference on the basis of which it constructs its narratives and proposals to tackle disinformation. They are identity and security, and as we shall see, the two are interconnected.

From an identity perspective, the EU embodies the liberal project of representative democracy, market economy, human rights and the rule of law so aligned with the metaphor of the ‘Global North’ (De Sousa Santos, 2014; Araújo, 2021). Ignoring the contradictions and weak points of the liberal project, the EU presents it as its banner, identifying it directly:

The essence of the European Union is its defence of democracy and democratic values ... [which] [a]long with the rule of law and fundamental rights ... is part of ‘who we are’ and defines our Union. (European Commission, 2018b: 1)

or presenting it as opposites, such as when it places ‘European conscience’ in opposition to ‘totalitarianism’, for instance (European Parliament, 2016, 1). It is from this standpoint that the EU perceives

disinformation as a threat. This construction is done explicitly and implicitly, mixing identity and security rhetoric, often constructed in a mutually supportive way. The EU labels disinformation a threat as it perceives it as a source of insecurity. This is because the EU believes that disinformation deprives democratic societies of the possibility of plural public debates based on reliable information, with potentially damaging impacts on the political decisions taken by decision-makers and citizens, and that it can also foster distrust, social tensions and polarisation (European Commission, 2018e, 2018c; DGCNCT, 2018; HRUFA&SP, 2018) including misleading or outright false information, is a major challenge for Europe. Similarly, disinformation is seen as an element that increases the EU's vulnerability to third party influence. These third parties, through the production and dissemination of disinformation, are able to politically influence election campaigns, control public debate on certain issues, groups or events within the EU, or even interfere with its public diplomacy within and beyond its borders and successfully aid terrorist groups in recruiting young Europeans to their causes (European Parliament, 2016). The point is clearly made by the EU: 'Any attempt to maliciously and intentionally undermine and manipulate public opinion ... represents a grave threat to the Union itself' (HRUFA&SP, 2018).

In this situation, the EU seeks to protect four fundamental principles: democracy – political processes and values – the rule of law, human rights and the European project itself. Following on from these, the EU identifies many others, in a wide variety of official documents, such as: 'integrity of elections', 'freedom of expression', 'freedom of the press', 'objective information', the 'quality and ethics of journalism', 'free and independent media', 'freedom of opinion', 'freedom to receive and impart information or ideas without interference', 'national security', 'social fabric', 'trust in the information society', 'confidence in the digital single market', 'democratic, social

and economic potential of technological progress’ and ‘open public sphere, secure in its protection from undue influence’ (European Commission, 2018c; DGCNCT, 2018; European Parliament, 2016) In January 2018, the European Commission set up a high-level group of experts (“the HLEG”. Disinformation is a source of insecurity in that it also threatens democratic identity. By conveying false narratives, disinformation mortally wounds its core values and principles.

The securitisation of disinformation within the EU is thus done through two perspectives: one focuses on third parties, while the other focuses on itself and what disinformation represents, specifically in terms of its effects. In both cases, disinformation is a threat both to European identity and values and to its security – within and beyond its borders. This dual vision on disinformation constitutes the reference that informs the vision and policies that the EU has developed around the phenomenon, as well as the expectations that exist around the creation of standards that allow the digital space to be aligned with economic prosperity, democracy, the rule of law and human rights.

Narratives and lines of action from EU discourses

From 2015 to 2022 (with the year 2018 being particularly prolific), the EU’s journey in combating disinformation was focused on consolidating an approach formulated in light of the identity and perceptions of European security.⁹ In this context, the EU’s proposals on its response to disinformation have been developed and defined within what we will call guidelines, which identify priority values and entry points, as well as red lines, which, having been crossed,

⁹ The role that disinformation played in 2016 in both the US and the UK led to the issue of disinformation occupying a prominent place on the EU agenda.

are considered a dangerous point of no return from which the security and integrity of the EU may no longer be guaranteed. Under the former, the EU paints a strong ‘democratic resilience’ as paramount (European Commission, 2018b), in addition to avoiding the trap of opting for simplistic solutions (HLEG, 2018) and emphasises that the balance ‘between maintaining the fundamental rights to freedom and security, and encouraging innovation and an open market’ should not be neglected (European Court of Auditors, 2020, 4). Under the latter, it identifies any form of ‘public or private censorship’, ‘online surveillance’, violation of ‘freedom of expression’ and ‘data privacy’ (DGCNCT, 2018) the European Commission set up a high-level group of experts (“the HLEG” or the technical malfunctioning of the internet.

It is between these two beacons – essential and red lines, which combine identity, ideological and pragmatic elements – that solutions to combat disinformation have been presented, discussed and put into practice, as we shall see. They also provide a framework for two types of action – direct, active, dynamic combat (where the EU itself directly and offensively/reactively combats disinformation) and indirect, essentially preventive combat (where the EU creates the conditions for other actors to combat disinformation) – distributed over four focal points, specifically responding to threats to the East, in response to hybrid threats, building a broad ‘European approach’, and responding to the heightened vulnerability around elections.

Direct combat, essentially Eastward facing

Active countering combines all EU actions aimed at a direct, dynamic and reactive/offensive approach to disinformation. It is realised through strategic communication that identifies, exposes and refutes false content and promotes positive narratives about the EU to third countries in an attempt to defuse the shaping potential

of anti-EU disinformation. That is, and in its own words, it aims to ‘put out its positive message about [the EU’s] successes, values and principles with determination and courage’, through information, but also ‘popular culture’ and ‘entertainment-education’ (European Parliament, 2016). In terms of narrative, the choice of words highlights the production of a wider hierarchy between the EU and other actors, which finds a tangible expression here, in the field of disinformation. Accompanying this production of hierarchy, there is also a certain contradiction between the fight against what is called ‘disinformation’ and the promotion of public diplomacy outside the EU, as if these were two sides of the same coin and not the adoption of double standards to evaluate the same phenomenon and where the only difference is whether it is or is not the EU.

In operational terms, the Union’s first steps to fight disinformation emerged as a direct reaction to the recognition of potential external interference in European democratic systems (Monti, 2020), in other words, as a reaction to a threat to a core principle of identity. Specifically, the first step was the creation of the *East StratCom Task Force* in 2015, focused on disinformation originating from countries outside the EU, with a not entirely unsurprising focus on countries in the Eastern neighbourhood, particularly Russia, highlighting its geopolitical reading of the digital space. The stated aim was to identify, analyse and expose cases of disinformation allegedly developed by Russia with countries such as Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine (EUEAS, 2019). One of the East StratCom Task Force’s flagship projects is EUvsDisinfo, a fact-checking platform which, through data analysis and media monitoring in 15 different languages, identifies, collates and disseminates disinformation ‘originating in pro-Kremlin media’ both within the EU and in Eastern Partnership countries (EUvsDisinfo 2022). The choice of the expression ‘pro-Kremlin’ reflects its political and security-oriented reading of these threats. On its website (with social media accounts

on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and YouTube, which therefore give it a wide reach), EUvsDisinfo offers a public database on disinformation with examples alongside the weekly *Disinformation Review* publication outlining current trends, of studies, and reports, and of games and quizzes, underlining the public diplomacy dimension of this project, rather than the counter disinformation dimension.

In 2015, the ‘Action Plan on Strategic Communication’ (Valenza, 2021) was published and the in 2016 European Parliament adopted the ‘Resolution on EU strategic communication to counteract propaganda against it by third parties’ where it explicitly mentions Russia and ISIL/Daesh as vectors of disinformation, with an emphasis on Russia, which the EU accuses of a ‘subversive campaign to weaken EU cooperation and the sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of the Union and its Member States’ (European Parliament, 2016), presented as principles to be protected.

There is also another dimension that falls into the ‘direct combat’ category, which is related to hybrid threats in which disinformation plays a central role.¹⁰

Indirect combat: multi-level, diversified and comprehensive

Disinformation threats are part of a broad, complex, opaque – by opportunity, outcome or definition – and constantly evolving ecosystem, which requires the EU to develop joint efforts to make the digital environment, as it states, ‘more transparent and intelligible’ for all actors – citizens, businesses, civil society (DGCNCT, 2018) the European Commission set up a high-level group of experts (“the HLEG”, mirroring its liberal and cooperative understanding of international relations. It is from this perspective that most of

¹⁰ See EC&HRUFASP, 2016 and European Commission, 2018a.

the Union's indirect combat efforts are developed: coupled with the idea of creating conditions to bring all the main actors on board in the fight against disinformation in a cooperative and participative manner. Indeed, the EU itself states that its role is essentially one of coordinating efforts and policies and establishing guidelines with transparency, diversity, credibility and inclusion as the basis of its approach to disinformation (European Commission, 2018d).

Against this background, and although the East and, specifically, Russia, have not ceased to be a central concern in this matter, the European approach has also focused on broad processes of multifaceted combat against misinformation since 2017. These processes take place within the scope of technology regulation and the promotion of media and digital literacy among citizens, arising as a result of an extended and cumulative cooperation framework that has been established between political representatives, expert groups, task forces, researchers and companies such as large online platforms or media groups, as well as in public consultations with citizens (Durach, Bârgăoanu and Nastasiu, 2020). An initial proof of this extension beyond direct combat was the adoption by the European Parliament of the 'Resolution on online platforms and the digital single market' where it takes stock of and analyses the possibility of legislative interventions to combat disinformation, emphasising responses of investment in technology and promotion of literacy, which demonstrate its liberal values.

Many documents have since been published that reinforce and extend this approach, of which the following four are most notable:

'A multi-dimensional approach to disinformation'¹¹ which summarises what the EU considers to be the best and most appropriate responses in the fight against disinformation.

¹¹ See DGCNCT, 2018the European Commission set up a high-level group of experts ("the HLEG").

‘Tackling online disinformation: a European Approach’¹² where the EU presents what it calls the ‘European approach’ to disinformation and which essentially gravitates around four principles: transparency, diversity, credibility and inclusion.

‘Code of Practice on Disinformation’,¹³ adopted in 2018, following a multi-stakeholder forum of operators against disinformation in which online platforms (such as Google), social networks (such as Facebook and Twitter) and the advertising industry participated. It is a soft law document¹⁴ and relies on voluntary self-regulation which, recognizing the differences and specificities of each signatory in terms of purposes, technology and audiences, identifies together with them some strategies and practices to prevent the spread of disinformation. In particular, ways to dilute the visibility of fake news and avoid financing their factories through advertising, ensure transparency of advertising content, improve access to trustworthy content, remove fake accounts and regulate bot activities on platforms (Monti, 2020). This code was signed by Facebook, Google, Twitter, Mozilla, Microsoft and Tik Tok, among others.

‘Action Plan against Disinformation’¹⁵ which identifies four key pillars for a ‘coordinated response to disinformation’: improving the EU institutions’ capabilities to detect, analyse and expose disinformation; strengthening joint and coordinated responses to combat disinformation; mobilising the private sector; and raising awareness and improving societal resilience.

As the European agenda on disinformation broadened and became more complex, concern about disinformation in the specific context of election campaigns also grew. The European Commission

¹² See European Commission, 2018e.

¹³ See European Commission, 2018d.

¹⁴ No legally binding force or value.

¹⁵ See HRUFA&SP, 2018.

published ‘Commission Recommendation (EU) 2018/234 of 14 February 2018 on enhancing the European nature and efficient conduct of the 2019 elections to the European Parliament’ (European Commission, 2018e). In the same vein, the Commission has established a set of measures aimed at ensuring ‘free and fair’ European elections, including the requirement for greater transparency in online political propaganda and the possibility to impose sanctions where, in the context of election campaigns, personal data is illegally used to deliberately influence the electoral outcome (European Commission, 2018b).

The COVID-19 pandemic situation also required particular attention in terms of information/disinformation. The main document governing the EU’s fight against disinformation in this context is ‘Tackling COVID-19 disinformation – Getting the facts right’, which analyses the situation and presents a set of concrete actions to be taken (European Commission, 2020).

Still under construction is the promising (but not consensual) *Digital Services Act* which, by April 2022, already had the agreement of MEPs on a set of measures to combat illegal content, ensure platforms are accountable for their algorithms and improved content moderation, and combat the spread of misinformation. The European Commission’s ‘Action Plan for Human Rights and Democracy 2020–2024’ should also be mentioned, in which the fight against disinformation occupies a prominent place and which consists of an update on the need to do more in the face of large-scale disinformation (Harrison, 2021). According to the Commission itself, the aim of this document (and within this timeframe) is to improve the Union’s current instruments for combating ‘foreign interference’ in the European public sphere; to transform the current Code of Practice on Disinformation ‘into a co-regulatory framework of obligations and accountability of online platforms, in line with the upcoming Digital Services Act’

and to ‘set up a more robust framework’ for the implementation of the Code of Practice.¹⁶

Common denominators, buzzwords and standpoint

In the documents produced by the Union we can identify a selection of the words or ‘buzzwords’¹⁷ that currently constitute the lexicon of disinformation from the EU’s standpoint. The words transparency, diversity, credibility and inclusion, identified as fundamental by the Union, are present across the board in the lexicon on disinformation.

On transparency, the EU states that it intends to act ‘regarding the origin of information and the way it is produced, sponsored, disseminated and targeted’ (European Commission, 2018d). This presupposes ‘contributing to the development of fair, objective, and reliable indicators for source transparency’ (European Commission, 2018c), ‘increas[ing] the transparency of online news’ (DGCNCT, 2018) the European Commission set up a high-level group of experts (“the HLEG”; ensuring ‘the identification of the source of disinformation by ensuring its traceability throughout its dissemination’ (European Commission, 2018c), and ‘ensur[ing] transparency about sponsored content, in particular political and issue-based advertising’ (European Commission, 2018c).

¹⁶ See https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/new-push-european-democracy/european-democracy-action-plan_en [28.04.2022].

¹⁷ Key words, buzzwords or expressions from a given subject area that have become fashionable and circulated in academic, cultural, political or media circles, and which may be accompanied by conceptual vagueness as to their substantive and operational meaning or because they represent, to borrow from the philosopher W.B. Gallie (1956), inherently contestable concepts. In other words, these terms combine general agreement about the abstract notion they represent with endless disagreement about what they might mean in practice.

Ensuring the diversity of information to be circulated is another priority and involves, in their eyes, ‘safeguard[ing] the diversity and sustainability of the European news media ecosystem’ (DGCNCT, 2018) the European Commission set up a high-level group of experts (“the HLEG”, support for ‘high quality journalism, media literacy, and the rebalancing of the relation between information creators and distributors’ (European Commission, 2018d), and ‘strengthen[ing] media plurality and the objectivity, impartiality and independence of the media within the EU and its neighbourhood, including non-state actors’, alongside ‘promoting the EU values of freedom of the press and expression and media plurality’, including through ‘supporting persecuted and imprisoned journalists and human rights defenders in third countries’ (European Parliament, 2016).

The guarantee of credibility of information is sought through a set of measures aimed at strengthening the quality of the information that circulates and that includes the creation of ‘trusted flaggers’, ‘traceability of information’ and ‘authentication of influential information providers’ or the establishment of ‘a dense network of strong and independent fact-checkers ... [operating] on the basis of high standards, such as the International Fact-Checking Network *Code of Principles*’; the ‘life-long development of critical and digital competences’, investment in ‘quality journalism’ and strengthening ‘trust in the key societal and democratic role of quality journalism’ (European Commission, 2018d).

Finally, the EU aims for the cooperation and participation of all stakeholders in the dynamics of disinformation (DGCNCT, 2018) the European Commission set up a high-level group of experts (“the HLEG”. This encompasses ‘raising public awareness’, achieving ‘more media literacy’ (European Commission, 2018d); ‘develop[ing] tools for empowering users and journalists to tackle disinformation’; the accountability of different actors (DGCNCT, 2018) the European Commission set up a high-level group of experts (“the HLEG” and fostering ‘the cooperation of public authorities, online platforms,

advertisers, trusted flaggers, journalists and media groups' (European Commission, 2018d) and NGOs alongside EU cooperation with the European Endowment for Democracy, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the Council of Europe (DGCNCT, 2018) the European Commission set up a high-level group of experts ("the HLEG" and NATO (European Commission, 2018a).

The trajectory of the term 'disinformation' in the EU is associated with its own agenda and standpoint. Like the buzzwords relating to 'development' (Cornwall, 2007), those relating to the regulation of (dis)information sanctify the justness of this enterprise and can be understood as words that admit no negatives and encode seemingly universal values. The Union's (dis)information lexicon still tends towards exclusive and rapidly changing vocabulary and a number of code words, such as media literacy or empowerment, which may be unintelligible to sections of its population and beyond its borders.

The apparent universality of the lexicon of (dis)information can also mask the identification of a standpoint and the locality of its origin in the Global North and present itself as 'trans-ideological'. However, terms like disinformation gain their meanings in the contexts of use; and these meanings are relative to the other words that surround them. Raymond Williams points out that particular combinations of words 'establish one set of connections while often suppressing another' (1976, 25). The EU's locus of enunciation in the fight against disinformation is then composed of a 'chain of equivalence' (Laclau, 1997), of variable geometry, making the term 'disinformation' dependent on other words in the chain.

The untold stories and acknowledged progress on the EU's digital agenda on disinformation

The EU has been much referenced as an actor committed to regulating the digital sphere in a way that simultaneously ensures

human rights and the free market. However, much of the added value of the so-called ‘European approach’ have turned out to be its own Achilles heel, as Harrison (2021) puts it.

Definition

The definition of disinformation adopted by the EU provides a reference and a starting point for the development of EU policy action in terms of producing both standards and practices to fight disinformation. While politically useful, this definition is hardly productive from a legal point of view, as it is extremely broad and leaves much room for interpretation, while presenting harmonisation challenges when it comes to the national legislation of Member States within the EU (Ó Fathaigh, Helberger and Appelman, 2021) rather than illegal content. However, EU member states have recently been making disinformation illegal. This article discusses the definitions that form the basis of EU disinformation policy, and analyses national legislation in EU member states applicable to the definitions of disinformation, in light of freedom of expression and the proposed Digital Services Act. The article discusses the perils of defining disinformation in EU legislation, and including provisions on online platforms being required to remove illegal content, which may end up being applicable to overbroad national laws criminalising false news and false information. From an operational perspective, this lack of an exhaustive definition does not allow for transparent content moderation, increasing the concerns that the privatised application of content moderation raises vis-à-vis human rights protection, while also inhibiting ‘effective action to fulfil commitments as well as impeding a proper evaluation of the Code’s effectiveness’ (Harrison, 2021). Furthermore, the definition of disinformation adopted by the EU does not provide tools to deal

with the potential tension that exists on this issue between different human rights, seeing as

freedom of expression includes respect for media freedom and pluralism, as well as the right of citizens to hold opinions and to receive and impart information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers. (European Union, 2012)

Regulation

The EU has been engaged in a regulatory and capacity building effort when it comes to disinformation, offering actors and the system the predictability and certainty that regulation provides. But regulation never exists in isolation from its context. As Shaw states, ‘law is that element which binds the members of the community together in their adherence to recognised values and standards’. In other words, there is always a contextual and political logic to regulation. The context, the actors and the correlation of forces at a particular moment in a society determine the norms that are desired, approved or discarded. This is why legal orders that in other centuries allowed slavery are today seen as aberrant, for example. The Union’s relationship to its regulation of disinformation is no exception to this dynamic. It is in an attempt to be successful from a regulatory as well as a political point of view that the EU is committed to a comprehensive, participatory, inclusive and organic perspective on what disinformation means and the best ways to combat it. However, although the methodology of producing the norms is positive, from a practical point of view and regarding the implications of some of the options, they are not without their problems.

The EU regulation on disinformation is fundamentally a soft law regulation. It is not legally binding and can only be interpreted as

a set of recommendations, having a voluntary and self-regulatory basis, i.e. ‘the possibility for economic operators, the social partners, non-governmental organisations or associations to adopt amongst themselves and for themselves common guidelines at European level (particularly codes of practice or sectoral agreements)’ (European Union, 2003, 321/3). Underpinning this choice of self-regulation is an argument found in several EU documents that claims to protect freedom of expression, the market and free enterprise.

The voluntary nature of the Code of Practice, for example, ultimately creates the possibility of what Harrison calls a ‘regulatory asymmetry’ between signatories and non-signatories to the Code, in other words, a situation where sources of disinformation can continue their practices on platforms that are not signatories, hurting the Code in its effectiveness and undercutting the progress on disinformation that Code signatories have achieved (2021, 23). Furthermore, from the point of view of content filtering in order to fight disinformation, the option for self-regulation does not remove the issue, but rather shifts the onus of this fight from the public to the private sectors (Giussani, 2020), replacing the selection/censorship of the State with the selection/censorship of the private sector. While the main mission of the State and public institutions is to guarantee and protect the public interest, the commitment of private actors is to guarantee their profit. Of course, as Giussani (2020) emphasises from the text of the code of practice itself, technology companies are expected to make commercially responsible efforts, however there is no expectation that they will necessarily act against their economic interests, particularly in a model where they enjoy their share of the monetisation of disinformation. The balance between these two points still remains very discretionary. Also in *The Platform Society*, Van Dijck, Poell and De Wall (2018, 55-56) warn that ‘platform datafication ... means that the technological standards and economic models of platforms shape professional values and

sectoral activity'. This imbalance leads us to the second point that Giussani (2020, 34) also identifies and that is that these measures do nothing to change the 'political-economical infrastructure and the informational ecosystem at the basis of disinformation, what has been labelled as the economy of attention'. It is public attention, as a scarce commodity, that is at the heart of the economic valorisation model of both platforms and many producers of disinformation. As long as this overlap of interests exists it is hardly likely to pull the rug out from under those producers, no matter how much goodwill a particular company may demonstrate, particularly in a fiercely competitive ecosystem.

Fact-checking or counter-propaganda?

Fact-checking methodology is one of the main tools that the EU has in the direct fight against disinformation, namely through its EUvsDisinfo project presented as a direct, desirable, rigorous and objective result of an actor that promotes and protects democracy and human rights and that seeks to ensure that citizens have access to reliable and plural information so that they can make the best decisions. It makes use of fact-checking processes (EUEAS, 2021), where facts are understood as statements that correspond to objective reality and are therefore non-contestable, apolitical and aggregated into two bipolar categories: lie or truth. However, there are two problems with this approach by the Union. First, by having as one of its objectives 'to promote EU policies in the Eastern Neighbourhood' (EUEAS, 2021), its independence and commitment to what it calls 'the truth' hurts its fact-checker authority from the outset (Giussani, 2020). Secondly, and without falling prey to Graves' criticism that questioning the epistemology of fact-checking may amount to assuming that in politics all claims have equal merit

(Graves, 2017), the truth is that facts – and our reading of fact – are not dissociable from the narratives that relate them nor can they exist outside political and ideological visions.

Fact-checking can encompass a variety of dubious methodological practices (Uscinski and Butler, 2013), such as removing ambiguity, treating facts as self-evident, taking a statement containing several facts as if it were a single fact, or categorising as accurate or inaccurate predictions of events that are yet to occur. Such practices tacitly disqualify the possibility of genuine political debate on the facts, because the facts are presented as unequivocal and outside the scope of interpretation. In this regard, Uscinski and Butler (2013) argue that there is little reason to think that by consolidating the notion that there is no ambiguity, fact-checkers are doing us a service. In this context, the EU's efforts to fight disinformation tend to fall more under counter-propaganda efforts which the EU itself claims not to do.¹⁸

Conclusion

The terms and outlines of the EU's discussions and proposals on disinformation value human rights across the board as well as the relevance of plural and diverse information for the construction of representative and inclusive democracies. This establishes an important benchmark for debate when it comes to international regulation on this matter, with potentially emancipatory impacts at regional and national levels. Similarly, the participatory and consultative methodology that the EU has adopted faced with the complexity of causes and impacts of misinformation is productive, as

¹⁸ See https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/questions-and-answers-about-east-stratcom-task-force_en#11261 [18.01.2022].

it allows for dialogue between different sets of knowledge, perspectives, interests and dynamics. However, alongside the potential and the multiplicity of voices to which the EU has provided a platform, there are several limits and silences which we can identify and which can even be seen as obstacles to ensuring and safeguarding an emancipatory European project.

Many conceptualisations and characterisations of disinformation that originate in academia focus on the frameworks of disinformation production and the intention of its producers, to delineate types of information disturbance. However, it is also possible to identify perspectives that look at the frames of reception of the content and the varying impacts of misinformation. The EU approach fits into the latter perspective more than it does the former, since it has opted for a definition of disinformation that emphasises the impacts and associates the concept with the threat, particularly to itself, which legitimises a security slant in the measures it proposes to regulate the information ecosystem.

The EU's approach is characterised by essentialist and universalising features in the way it has approached and framed disinformation, favouring the elimination of ambiguity and the bipolarity between true and false. Beyond the definition itself, official documents on disinformation present chains of equivalence – and associations of words that codify the normative, political and economic model of the Union, but which are presented as universal and unquestionable, thus taking on a positioning and a standpoint of moral authority. Moreover, they also link information issues to a 'chain of equivalence' composed of buzzwords that evoke technicality, objectivity and modernity, which create a subtext that implies that anyone who does not follow the EU occupies a lesser or inferior position, replicating the international hierarchies identified by Cox and Grosfoguel. This construction highlights a silence that the EU has insisted on not recognising and which relates to the socially

and politically constructed and situated character of the definition of and approach to disinformation. It is also important to highlight the difficulties experienced in transposing EU references and regulations in this area into concrete and binding regulatory measures, and the silence on the economic models of the platforms that encourage the dissemination of disinformation. On the other hand, by engaging in fact-checking activities – it positions itself as an arbiter of truth and engages in dubious methodological procedures that nullify ambiguity and disqualify public debate on facts presented as incontestable.

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**EUROPEAN SPACE ARCHITECTURE:
A POSTMODERN SECURITY
AND DEFENCE CONSTELLATION**

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Abstract: In a context of rapid evolution of the space field, marked by a new expanding space economy with a growing number of actors becoming involved, various states, organisations and private actors have strategically adapted to compete for a share of space power. Europe is an active candidate in this second space race as it seeks to assert itself as a relevant regional actor in search of autonomous capabilities that would ensure both a secure access to space and the protection of its economy, its environment, and its way of life. This chapter focuses on the atypical nature of the European space architecture, defined by a close cooperative relationship between the ESA and the EU, as well as by the increasing integration of the security and defence field. Based on the premise of a postmodern European foreign policy (Smith, 2003), in which a post-sovereign dimension is added to existing national foreign policies, this chapter shows how the current European space architecture results from an assemblage of post-sovereign

national policies and a network of shared infrastructure resources, which combine to form a constellation of innovative institutional arrangements, in a configuration that ultimately contributes to making the EU's actorness in security and defence more robust.

Keywords: EU, ESA, Space Policy Security, Defence

Introduction

The geopolitical context in space is evolving rapidly. Long gone are the years of the first space race led by the two great powers, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) and the United States of America (USA), in an extraplanetary extension of the bipolar competition that incited them during the Cold War. In recent years, a set of new actors, new dynamics and challenges have substantially changed the understanding and configuration of international relations with regard to the space sphere.

Among these new trends is a strongly expanding new space economy, led by a generation of entrepreneurial individuals and start-ups with the capital and commercial ambition to develop competitive technology capable of setting up a private sector space industry. The absolute increase in spending and activities related to the different space sectors has been exponential in the twenty-first century. Following an average annual growth of 6.7% between 2005 and 2017 – almost double the growth rate of the global economy (De Concini and Toth, 2019) – it is estimated that by 2021 the overall space economy totalled \$370 billion, of which \$337 billion relates to the space market, which includes commercial space revenues and government procurement for its space activities contracted from the private sector. The remaining \$33 billion concerns government organisations' spending on internal costs, research, and development. The space economy is expected to grow by 74% to reach \$642 billion by 2030 (Euroconsult, 2022).

At the same time, the number of nations developing their own space programmes has also increased, accompanied by the establishment of national space agencies of fairly modest dimensions, proportional to each one's resources. Currently, more than sixty states on five continents have their own space programme (cf. for example Angola, Brazil, Indonesia, Portugal, Qatar, to name but a few), focusing mainly on the civil use of satellite technology, on which human societies depend in their daily lives through its multiple applications such as telecommunications, navigation and air, land and sea transport, meteorology and agriculture, security, intelligence and defence. A practical consequence of this wider competition is that in low and medium orbit around planet Earth, where most satellites are located, space is highly overcrowded and congested, which also has implications for space security. Space is indeed related to a number of insecurities, threats and risks that pose serious challenges to states, such as collisions between satellites, disputes over orbital routes, space debris left behind by retired satellites, or the potential weaponisation of space (Al-Rodhan, 2012, 3).

Today, the world is experiencing a 'second space race', dominated by space economics and (national) security issues. In this race, China has taken the lead, which has, moreover, been a source of concern for the potential influence of authoritarian values that could strategically impact access to space and its resources by other nations (Goswami, 2022). Space has indeed become a more crowded and contested field than ever before, a field of potential conflict, but also of cooperation and diplomacy, where large, medium and small powers seek to achieve national prestige, innovate their economies, explore and secure new resources, promote the peaceful use of space, advance scientific knowledge about the universe and planet Earth, and promote their security and defence. In this last field, space is an increasingly common strategic area, alongside land, air, naval and cybernetic segments.

Europe is no exception; it too is actively participating in this second space race. Whereas the 2000s saw a growing number of accessions to the European Space Agency (ESA) in a wave of ‘Europeanisation of space’ (Sagath et al., 2018, 112) supported by a sharp budgetary increase, since 2016 the EU itself has been operating an ambitious space agenda in which security and defence have occupied an increasingly prominent place, notably in industrial terms, which is crucial for the achievement of the much desired strategic autonomy and resilience. This chapter seeks to better understand this almost intrinsic relationship between European integration in space and the field of security and defence. As the political-institutional reality of Europe today is the predominance of the EU and its unprecedented level of integration on the international scene, it is therefore highly relevant to think about European space policies and question a European space identity that is especially geared towards European defence. Not only does it bring an additional level of complexity to the integration phenomenon, but it also offers the possibility of an innovative reading of the international dynamics of space policies.

Despite the spectacular successes of European economic integration since the 1950s and space fitting perfectly with Jean Monnet’s definition of an ideal field for advancing European integration – i.e. it was too large a field for nation states to act individually – cooperation in the fields of space navigation, satellites, research, and exploration lagged behind, somewhat, and developed late. Space is also a new policy field, comparable to that of nuclear research under Euratom, of which Jean Monnet was very much in favour (Hörber, 2016b, 53). From a traditional theoretical perspective, the integration of the space domain at the European level can be seen in the context of neofunctionalism as another incremental step in deepening integration, the result of an almost natural and expected evolution in the face of social pressures, and the relatively consen-

sual success of integration in areas such as the economy, finance, and agriculture. Interest groups, political and bureaucratic elites are mobilised in a spillover process so that the loyalties of national bodies are transferred to supranational ones, in which they compete to pursue new interests (Ramos and Vila Maior, 2007, 105). One aspect to be highlighted in relation to the neofunctionalist reading of regional integration is indeed the fact that it is conceived as a phenomenon independent of the will of national governments, taking place autonomously through the agency of the supranational entity, without the initiative of the member states (*idem*, 107). However, this approach is not necessarily the most appropriate for devising the relationship between European space policies and security and defence, since each state defines its own space strategy, its relative investment and its own national defence strategy, which reflect its national interests.

Only very recently has the interaction between space policy and security policy in the EU been addressed based on the argument that defence and security issues should be studied for a better understanding of space projects in their historical, political, economic, legal and social context (Hörber and Forganni, 2020). This chapter looks specifically at contributing to a better understanding of this interaction through a historical, institutional and political approach that frames the evolutionary process of the security and defence field within the European institutions that play a leading role in European space integration, these being the ESA and the EU. Based on the premise of a postmodern European foreign policy in which a post-sovereign dimension is added to existing national foreign policies (Smith, 2003), this chapter will show how, unlike the classical areas of European integration, the current European space architecture results from a collection of post-sovereign national policies and a network of shared infrastructure elements. These interact to form a constellation of novel institutional arrangements,

in a configuration that ultimately helps to make the EU's 'actorness' more robust in the areas of security and defence.

In the next section, the historical role of the ESA will be reviewed. It is an intergovernmental civil and scientific organisation formally independent of the EU but which shares the vast majority of its Member States with it, and it is responsible for developing a coherent European space policy. In the second section, the specific EU space policy at the level of its strategy, governance, programmes, and instruments will be detailed. In addition, the connection between European space policy and the areas of security and defence will also be discussed in more detail.

The role of ESA

Historically, European space policy predates the creation of the EU proper since it emerged at the height of the Cold War in the 1960s, from a bilateral cooperation initiative between France and the United Kingdom. This cooperation gave rise in 1962 to the *European Launcher Development Organisation* (ELDO) with six member states, which was charged with developing a European launcher. That same year, the *European Space Research Organisation* (ESRO) was created with ten Member States;¹ its first satellite was launched in May 1968 with the help of a rocket from the *National Aeronautics and Space Administration* (NASA), the US space agency. ESRO was the first attempt to bring together the various European programmes into a common entity, which was eventually divided into three satellite development areas, these being, telecommunications, air traffic control, and meteorology.

¹ Belgium, Denmark, France, West Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

France had been the first European power to develop its space programme with the creation of its national agency, the *Centre National d'Etudes Spatiales* (CNES) in 1961, under the presidency of Charles de Gaulle. It was in this context that the Ariane programme was set up in 1973 and the first Ariane rocket was launched in 1979, making Europe an independent space power. The CNES has encompassed both civilian and military areas since its inception, with the aim of developing the actual space launch vehicles for defence and deterrence purposes (ESPI, 2019, 14). If the inability to compete in isolation with the US and USSR initially impelled them to join forces, in the 1970s France and the UK no longer only cooperated with the US, but also competed with it (Hörber, 2016a).

In 1975, ELDO and ESRO merged to make way for ESA, with the same ten Member States, in what was a first step in the European space integration process. Hopes of seeing ESA evolve into a supranational institution quickly faded because of the obvious links and origins of space programmes with the aerospace and defence industries (idem, 27), as in the case of France. In particular, scientists at the time strongly believed that European research organisations had to avoid collaborating with the military and its restrictive practices of confidentiality (Krige, 1992, 4). And as stated in its 1975 Convention, the ESA's founding orientation towards strictly civil and peaceful purposes was rightly understood as an integrative element, since its Member States were former war foes who were just 'beginning to rebuild trust', making military cooperation something that was not yet imaginable (Klimburg-Witjes, 2021, 3).

The ESA administers peaceful scientific and industrial cooperation between its member states. It is a classic, conventional intergovernmental organisation, with features such as the right of veto in many matters, exclusively national funding, and the concept of *juste retour*, whereby most funding from member states flows back to space companies in the same country in the form of industrial

contracts (Hörber, 2016b, 53). Although controversial, this concept can be understood in light of the significant disparity in financial contributions from the 22 current ESA members,² which are proportional to their respective GDP. Moreover, there is the fact that their member states are not all EU members – and therefore these are more distant from the financial system and supranational logic that characterise the EU dividend. Three groups of members can in fact be distinguished according to the importance of their contribution (Giannopapa et al., 2016, 176), thus: among those with a budget of over €200 million, such as France and Germany which now exceed €1 trillion; and between €50 and €200 million, such as Norway, Switzerland, and Sweden; and between €10 and €30 million such as Portugal and Greece. Still on the budgetary level, the total ESA budget for 2022 is 7.15 billion euros, compared to 6.49 billion euros in 2021. The largest contributors are France, Germany, and Italy, which between them account for 60% of the funding of the 22 member states. Around 20% of ESA's funding has been provided by the EU itself in recent years; in 2022 that share represents 28.4% of the total budget,³ which clearly foreshadows the importance of cooperation between the two organisations.

In terms of governance model, a typical feature of the ESA is the sharing and/or delegation of responsibilities and budget for space by various ministries. Traditionally, the ministries of science and education are responsible for ESA-related space activities – as is the case of Portugal, through the Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT). Other ministry(ies) might have secondary responsibilities,

² Currently, the 22 Member States of the ESA are Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. In addition, Canada has a specific cooperation agreement, as do Bulgaria, Slovenia and Lithuania, and others.

³ Budget figures are available on the ESA's official website at: https://www.esa.int/About_Us/Corporate_news/Funding

usually the ministries of economy, industry, or innovation, but also environment, energy, transport, telecommunications or defence (Giannopapa et al., 2016, 181; Sagath et al., 2019, 45). It should be noted, by way of illustration, that while it is the ministries of defence and education that are responsible for the French space programme, none of the eleven smaller member states place this responsibility within the ministry of defence (Sagath et al., 2018).

Activities within ESA are divided between ‘mandatory programmes’ and ‘optional programmes’. While mandatory programmes involve basic activities related to science, research and education within the framework of the general budget, optional programmes focus on a wider range of actions related to satellites, launch facilities and transport systems – such as Earth observation, human spaceflight, navigation, telecommunications. All this is based on the choice of each Member State and the amount it wishes to contribute to that activity. Military domain programmes are outside any of these categories, since they are conducted independently at national level (ESPI, 2019, 11-12).

As a subject of public international law, ESA carries out actions and has responsibilities distinct from those of its Member States, which in turn has allowed European space cooperation to become permanent and institutionalised with a solid legal basis. It is a space agency that is essentially different from the agencies of the major powers because it acts as a facilitator and integrator of national programmes, as it creates, coordinates and manages space programmes on a European scale (ESPI, 2019, 10). And thanks to the pooling and centralisation of the resources with which it operates, the ESA ends up acting as a scientific and industrial lever for medium and small powers such as Portugal; its peaceful nature also ensures that its Member States are by extension promoters of the peaceful uses of space. ESA also has a policy-making power as it recommends space objectives, conciliates Member States’ policies

towards other national and international organisations and institutions, and coordinates the European space programme and national programmes (Sagath et al., 2019). ESA's current trends and priorities are geared towards firming up independent European access to space. This involves reducing production costs by 40-50%, for example, as well as developing smaller European launchers such as the Vega launcher, capable of putting small and medium-sized payloads into orbit and building a 'United Space in Europe' (ESPI, 2019, 51).

Apart from the debates on the securitisation of space – in particular by the EU, as will be seen below – the concern with security and protection issues is unavoidable in the ESA world. On the one hand, from a scientific point of view and linked to the planet's physical reality, it is a matter of protecting the Earth from various types of threat such as solar flares, asteroids, weather disasters, and the space debris that orbits in abundance, through mitigation, detection and prevention activities and missions that ensure reliable information, fast and up-to-date data, and secure communication services in cases of emergency. On the other hand, there is also a concern for man-made threats to actual space infrastructure, such as cyber-attacks on satellite ground control systems – as was recently the case at NASA and ESA.⁴ Therefore, within ESA, the notion of space security is intrinsically linked to both the idea of 'security in space' about the protection of space assets and systems against human and natural threats or risks, ensuring the sustainability of space activities, and to the idea of 'security from space', concerned with the protection of human life and the Earth's environment against natural threats and risks from space (ESPI, 2018). Constant innovations in space technology do indeed create ongoing opportunities

⁴ Information available at: https://www.esa.int/Safety_Security/Protecting_our_Pale_Blue_Dot

and challenges for national governments in terms of security, because of the considerable impact this technology has on everyday lives on the planet; human engagement is changing the way individuals, states and the international community think about their physical, intellectual and human security priorities (Al-Rodhan, 2012, 3).

Despite its peaceful civilian nature, the ESA has not escaped criticism for having moved from an interest solely in the peaceful purposes of space to an increasing securitisation of space and militarisation of its programme, through a linguistic adaptation in which ‘defence’ aspects have been assimilated by references to ‘security’ (Sheehan, 2009). The next section will discuss how the increasingly close cooperative relationship with the EU might have encouraged this trend.

The EU’s affirmation

ESA’s historical role in driving European integration towards the scientific, civilian and cooperative dimensions of space is undeniable. However, despite the cooperation agreement that has united ESA and the EU since 2004, and the fact that they jointly influence the policies of their respective member states, the EU has built its own space strategy and programmes with a much more supranational character than ESA (Sagath et al., 2019, 43). In addition to this clear difference of a political nature, these two organisations have distinct memberships, competences, rules, and procedures, which justify a connection that is also differentiated on security and defence issues – despite being convergent, as will be seen below. Moreover, unlike the ESA, the concern with space security within the EU not only refers to the protection of space resources and the planet itself, but also critically to a ‘political purpose’ which is related to a search for meaning within the EU

itself (Bickerton, 2010). In other words, it is suggested here that in addition to having a specific instrumental and material functionality, the EU's affirmation of a space policy also gives it the means to define itself as a political object with a stronger security and defence identity.

The EU space architecture consists of a very diverse institutional, organisational and infrastructural constellation, illustrating overall a pervasiveness of space in the highest priority policy areas for the EU. First, there is a comprehensive involvement of the various European institutions in the design and assertion of a European space policy, which is enabled by Articles 4 and 189 (TFEU) of the Lisbon Treaty (2009), which for the first time explicitly mention space as a direct and shared competence of the EU. More specifically, Article 4(3) (TFEU) stipulates that the EU's competence to undertake actions and implement programmes in the areas of research, technological development and space shall not prevent the Member States from exercising theirs. Article 189 (TFEU) specifies the objectives of the European space policy as being scientific and technical progress, industrial competitiveness, and the implementation of its policies, giving powers to the European Parliament and the Council of the EU to legislate on this matter according to the ordinary legislative procedure. The same article also states that the EU will establish the necessary liaison with ESA. At the institutional level, the European Parliament (Sigalas, 2016), the Council of the EU (Athanasopoulos, 2016), the European Court (Forganni, 2016) and the European Investment Bank (De Concini and Toth, 2019) are thus involved. However, it is the European Commission that is the most prominent; enjoying the right of initiative, and in its capacity as agenda-setter, policy entrepreneur, and guardian of the treaties, it is from the Commission that the fundamental spatial vision and strategic formulation of the EU comes (Marta and Stephenson, 2016, 98).

It was therefore the European Commission that adopted the ‘Space Strategy for Europe’ in 2016, which is based on four main strands: (1) maximising the space benefits for society and the EU economy; (2) competitiveness and innovation of the European space sector; (3) European autonomy in accessing a secure space; (4) developing and promoting international cooperation in space matters (COM (2016) 705). Two key areas appear to be elementary to achieving the objectives inherent in its Strategy, namely, research, innovation and skills development; and entrepreneurship and new business activities (ESPI, 2019, 55).

Since 2021, it is the new EU Space Programme Agency (EUSPA) that is largely responsible for the implementation and operationalisation of the European space programme and the operation of the various European space infrastructures (Copernicus, Galileo, Egnos, GOVSATCOM). Its mission stems from an approach geared towards European users and citizens, to promote the sustainable growth, security and safety of the EU.⁵ As a group, European institutions have played a critical role in promoting and popularising EU space policy, using a markedly liberal framework in which economic justifications predominate, as they aim for technological leadership and competitiveness that benefits European citizens and planetary security first and foremost (Council of the EU, 2011; De Concini and Toth, 2019; Sigalas, 2016). It is important to understand the importance of this argument in view of the significant financial resources that the EU allocates to the technological innovation required for this undertaking; the budget for space proposed for the period 2021–2027 is 14.88 billion euros, roughly three times the budget for the period 2007–2013.

⁵ EUSPA data consulted and taken from its official website: <https://www.euspa.europa.eu/>

In terms of infrastructure, Copernicus and Galileo are the EU's most emblematic and decisive programmes for its space architecture. Copernicus is the EU's Earth observation programme coordinated and managed by the Commission. It is based on observations from a set of satellites and *in situ* systems – ground stations with sensors on land, air and sea – and provides near real-time environmental data for six thematic groups: atmosphere, marine, terrestrial, climate change, security, emergencies. The main users of Copernicus services are 'policy makers and public authorities who need the information to draft environmental legislation and policies or make critical decisions in the event of an emergency such as a natural disaster or humanitarian crisis'.⁶ It is therefore noteworthy that in the field of security applications the Copernicus service provides critical information on border surveillance (by Frontex), maritime surveillance (by the European Maritime Safety Agency), and support to EU external action, under the remit of the EU Satellite Centre (SatCenUE). The operation and coordination of satellite data provision and the control of ground infrastructure are the shared responsibility of ESA and EUMETSAT, the European agency that operates the meteorological satellites. Copernicus thus ensures Europe's autonomous access to information about its environment and security.

Galileo is Europe's global satellite navigation system. Since 2016 it has provided the global positioning data essential for geolocation and timing, which is used in science, agriculture, transport systems and emergency response, for example. Previously, this type of satellite data used to be provided by the US through the *Global Positioning System* (GPS), and by Russia through GLONASS.⁷ Unlike both of these systems, Galileo is under civilian control. In the area of security and

⁶ Data on the Copernicus programme consulted and taken from the official website: www.copernicus.eu

⁷ Data on the Galileo programme consulted and taken from the EUSPA official website: <https://www.euspa.europa.eu/european-space/galileo/What-Galileo>

defence, data from Galileo are used in the Frontex framework and peacekeeping missions, in tracking and navigation operations for troops and land, sea and air vehicles, and also for cargo delivery, rescue, search and rescue, among other services (ESPI, 2018, 18).

The space for defence and the defence of space

The characteristics of the space architecture presented so far largely hint at quite a broad vision of space security that involves the need to protect the planet from external threats, and to protect a way of life and ensure the efficient performance of normal security activities carried out on Earth. The EU tends to be seen as a security actor par excellence, with an increasing range of activities associated with space security that require new and intensified levels of regional cooperation (Peoples 2011, 206). In fact, there have been numerous criticisms pointing to both the securitisation of space by the EU and the militarisation of the European space programme overall, even implicating ESA (Athanasopoulos, 2016; Klimburg-Witjes, 2021; Oikonomou, 2020; Ryan, 2020; Sheehan, 2009). However, these criticisms should be counterbalanced with the fact that the field of European security merely follows trends that are common to international security, whether at the conceptual level, the identification of threats, at the level of the space or cyber area. More specifically, this implies that current threats are global, transnational, often happen simultaneously and affect multiple targets (Legai, 2020). In this regard, the EU's space policy in fact aims to master security problems that are multidimensional, addressing them on various fronts and activities, to ensure its strategic freedom of action (*idem*).

Within the EU, there is an apparent ambivalence regarding the relationship of space policies with the security and defence sector.

On the one hand, official EU texts and statements on European space policy tend to securitise space, exposing concern about identifying and responding to threats (Ryan, 2020). EU institutions have meanwhile invoked established US practices as a way to legitimise the expansion of the European space policy agenda towards militarisation. The European Parliament, especially, has been at the forefront of referring to the US and incorporating it into the rationale for developing a European space policy (Oikonomou, 2020). It is also possible to find ideological expressions in the different European institutions that describe space as a vital field of EU survival (Oikonomou, 2017; Sigalas, 2016). In particular, the European Commission has argued that space services strengthen both the EU's and the member states' ability to cope with security challenges, that space technologies, infrastructure, and services serve both civil and defence objectives, and that synergies between civil and defence areas help to cut costs while increasing resilience and efficiency (ESPI, 2018, 18).

But on the other hand, the evolution of European space policy, its governance and programmes, has been dominated by antagonism to defence sector involvement, as well as political antagonism, at least at the discursive level (Adriaensen et al., 2020). Historically, in fact, space activities have been coordinated at the *national* level, in close collaboration with national military space programmes (ESPI, 2018, 40). In view of the significant number of European states that are simultaneously members of the ESA, the EU, the European Defence Agency (EDA) and NATO (cf. France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Belgium, the Netherlands, Sweden, Austria, Poland, Luxembourg, Greece and Portugal), the challenge of reconciling the potentially antagonistic relationship between the securitisation of space in European strategy and the political and military antagonism shown by Member States is clear.

However, looking at what has actually been advocated at the strategic level and implemented at the institutional level, this antagonism appears to be determined mainly by the positions of some Member States, and not by the EU. According to Charles Michel, current president of the European Council, the development of the European space sector is essential to strengthen the EU's strategic autonomy, 'the main objective of our generation' (European Council, 2021). And here it is important to emphasise the notion of *strategic autonomy*, which is currently the guiding objective and ultimate goal of many of the EU's vital policies such as energy, the economy, technology and security and defence. The term has long been part of common EU jargon, having emerged in the field of the defence industry, and was for a long time reduced to security and defence issues. But such a conception is problematic, in the view of the current EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy – and also Commission Vice-President – Josep Borrell (2020). He explains specifically that the economic interdependence experienced today has become increasingly conflictual at the political level, and that Europe cannot continue to depend exclusively on its alliance with the US at a time when other powers such as China and India have become increasingly relevant on the international agenda. This means that strategic autonomy is not only 'a process of political survival', but also a way for the EU to be able to work meaningfully with the Biden administration and achieve effective multilateralism (idem). In other words, this implies that, despite the prominence of defence in the conception of strategic autonomy, this sector is nonetheless still considered interdependently with others, such as energy and the economy, in order to achieve strategic autonomy.

Nevertheless, the creation in 2019 of a new Directorate-General within the Commission dedicated to the defence and space industry, DG DEFIS, clearly points to the importance of an autonomous industrial capacity in the EU that produces its own space infrastruc-

ture and thus reduces costs and dependence on suppliers outside Europe. Also at the defence level, the EDA identifies space as one of five strategic areas in which capabilities must be developed, along with air, land, sea and cyberspace. The EDA recognises space as a ‘potential theatre of operations’, but also as a ‘strategic enabler in support of all other areas of defence’.⁸ Indeed, sensitive information used within the CSDP framework relies to a significant extent on a sophisticated space infrastructure (Hörber, 2016b, 60). The EU’s governmental satellite communications programme (GOVSATCOM) provides the EU and its member states with secure satellite communication links for critical missions and operations, on an equal basis. Its strong security dimension thus allows connections with remote sites requiring satellite communications, such as Pacific Islands, the Arctic, etc. that might rely on means provided by commercial operators, sometimes from third countries (ESPI, 2018, 20). And given the increasing reliance on space systems to conduct military operations, especially in a context of heightened international tension that includes the area of space, space assets are increasingly potential targets, in times of war and peace; there are in fact several states that carry out activities in a ‘grey zone’ (ESPI, 2020, 6). It is thus as much about using space for security and defence purposes as it is about defending and protecting space assets and systems.

In this context, in addition to the EU and ESA having already signed a framework cooperation agreement in 2003, from which joint space councils were established as a common practice aimed at developing an overall European space programme, the EDA has had a specific administrative arrangement with ESA since 2011. The aim is to deepen synergies between civilian and military applications of space assets as a way of strengthening European capabilities in

⁸ EDA data consulted and taken from the official website: <https://eda.europa.eu/what-we-do/capability-development/space>

crisis management and in the area of CSDP, thereby recognising the importance of industrial competitiveness and European non-dependence issues (EDA and ESA, 2011). For Nina Klimburg-Witjes (2021, 15), the ESA has overstepped its boundaries in collaborating with military parties such as the EDA, clashing with its own original principles; the author considers that ESA has gone too far in wanting to remain relevant and continue to receive EU funding, when in fact its members include states that do not even belong to the EU. The fact is that these elements, taken together, point to a *militarisation* of space, understood as the use of space for military purposes, not to be confused with the weaponisation of space, which consists in placing weapon systems in orbit around the Earth (Mutschler and Venet, 2012).

Finally, while autonomy is a general goal for all space actors, it cannot be achieved without coordination and cooperation between European countries (ESPI, 2018, 43), particularly in the area of security and defence, where it is the nation state that holds the ultimate prerogative. This means that the national security approaches of each Member State have interacted and evolved alongside all the elements of the intergovernmental and supranational content set out throughout this chapter. Within this field, however, the asymmetries and differences are considerable. Traditionally, larger European powers such as France, Germany and the United Kingdom – although the latter is no longer a member of the EU, it is a member of ESA – have always valued the importance of security in space in their national programmes, including in strategic defence documents, advocating a transparent and sustainable use of space. As mentioned earlier, France has always been strongly motivated by European non-dependence, involving space technologies in its decision-making (Sagath et al., 2019, 51). And currently, the ministries responsible for the French space programme are both the Ministry of Education and Research and the Ministry of the Armed

Forces, as Defence is one of the four fields of activity alongside Science, Observation, and Telecommunications. Mandated by the Ministry of the Armed Forces, the CNES is heavily involved in the development and operation of the country's military satellites, and acts as the contracting authority for most of the space components of defence programmes, making dual-use technology something that is in high demand (ESPI, 2019, 14-15). Accordingly, it has speeded up the adoption of national defence strategies for space; France has even implemented a space defence strategy since 2019, Germany established a new military space command in 2021, and the UK published its space defence strategy in February 2022.

However, even Portugal, a smaller Member State with more modest resources and a much more recently expanding space programme,⁹ which was initially more restrained in associating space with defence, has followed the trend. After an initial phase of its programme (2019-2020) in which links to the defence dimension were largely absent, except for the fact that the Ministry of National Defence (MDN) was one of the founding members, *Portugal Space* came to specify somewhat more visibly on its website from early 2021 that a division had been created to serve defence, security and safety needs, working for and with the MDN to meet the requirements of all defence branches. Also published in 2021 was the *National Defence Strategy for Space 2020-2030*, in a convergence with European expectations and trends. In this defence strategy for space, the geostrategic importance of the Atlantic is fundamental in drafting Portugal's responsibilities for sovereignty and jurisdiction over the Atlantic. Especially important was the surveillance and control of criminal activities that threaten national and Euro-Atlantic security, as well as the strengthening of NATO capabilities (MDN,

⁹ Despite being a member of ESA since 2000, the Portuguese space strategy and the national space agency *Portugal Space* date from 2018 and 2019 respectively.

2021, 2). It is also specified that the action of the Armed Forces should be strengthened through space exploration, particularly over the Atlantic where freedom to operate and autonomy should be guaranteed (MDN, 2021, 15). However, and unlike the CNES for instance, Portugal still follows a more traditional division of competences, preferring a close cooperation between the civilian and the military, rather than a complete fusion.

Conclusion

Although (more) delayed, European space integration has advanced exponentially in the twenty-first century. This progression has taken place non-typically compared to other areas; building on and closely linked to the ESA *acquis*, the EU has strengthened the political and financial dimension of European space integration for the benefit of its economy, its citizens, its security and its defence industry. Thus, today's European space architecture consists of different levels of membership by including non-EU members with whom it shares collective resources and infrastructure.

This chapter has chosen to explore the connection between European space policy and the security and defence sector, which does not, however, represent the entirety of the debates and relevant issues to be taken into account. The EU also stars, for example, an important space diplomacy initiative that outlines within the CFSP a Space Code of Conduct that sets good practices and standards for the behaviour of space actors in space, whose draft version was prepared by the Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the EU in 2007 (Lele, 2012).

The strength of the European drive for space was observed at the level of the important budget allocated to it, as well as at the level of the cooperative arrangements between European institu-

tions, their strategies, practices and discourses, whose securitising tendencies are often criticised for contributing to the militarisation of space and potentially to a more tense security environment. Initially, the EU popularised the space sector around a narrative centred on citizens' well-being and the socio-economic potential of civilian applications of space (Council of the EU, 2011), but in the meantime an increasingly contested space context at the global level and a strategic environment dominated by interdependence and volatility have triggered an extremely urgent need to converge towards an integration of space at the security and defence level, too. This trajectory eventually represents the evolution of many national space programmes in Europe. From a historical and cyclical point of view, the 1970s' reluctance to associate space programmes with the area of defence seems to have faded away, attesting to a strategic adaptation of both a functional and a political nature.

Today, this complex space architecture makes the EU a space power in the making, as it holds – or seeks to develop over time – the means to autonomously implement, operate and benefit from any space-related capability and thus support the achievement of its (supra)national objectives (Aliberti et al., 2019, 15), one of which is strategic autonomy. Given the scale of resources required for a minimally relevant and successful space programme, one European nation alone could hardly achieve substantial results, so this integration is not independent of the will of states. On the contrary, strategic autonomy depends to a considerable degree on the individual Member States, their political will, investment and national resources, and it is imperative for deep space integration. And given the asymmetry in means and capabilities between Member States such as France and Portugal, for example, the challenge is indeed significant.

However, with time and the investment foreseen in this field, it can be expected that the EU could join the exclusive 'space club'

(Paikowsky, 2017) of nations with greater capabilities, power and prestige, who can rise above the rest and become space explorers. The strength of the European space architecture comes from the sum of its member states and lies precisely in the set of post-sovereign national policies and a shared network of infrastructure. These hang together to form a constellation of new institutional arrangements, in a postmodern configuration that ultimately aims to make the EU's actorness in the areas of security and defence more robust.

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THE EU, INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS IN HAITI AND THE OBSTACLES TO PEACE

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Abstract: Haiti has been the scene of successive attempts to promote peace since 1993, when the United Nations (UN) staged its first intervention in the country. Justified on the basis that it would bring stability to the region, forces traditionally composed of actors who frame their practices according to the dominant logic of global interventionism found in Haiti a complex scenario, requiring broad structural changes. This chapter critically analyses the participation of one of these actors, the European Union (EU), in the peace missions implemented in the country. It addresses the contribution of Peace Studies to the foundation of peace operations that are currently carried out globally, the criticisms of this form of interventionism and the consequences of the international presence on Haitian soil for the construction of a scenario of positive peace in the country.

Keywords: Global Interventionism, Peace Studies, Haiti, Peace Missions, European Union

Introduction

Although the thinking behind peace studies aimed at emancipating peoples and bringing about a profound transformation of reality, the global dynamics of domination among international actors eventually eclipsed these ideals, which served as the inspiration behind the conception of contemporary peace missions. The standardisation of efforts to transform non-Western societies into modern, democratic societies with market economies, understood as the best way to avoid conflicts – the so-called liberal peace – also proved to be complex and problematic (Pureza and Cravo, 2005).

Despite being in crisis, in practice, the liberal peace model still guides the design and implementation of international missions by the most influential actors of the international system, such as the European Union (EU). The recognition of new types of crisis and emergencies, which are more complex and result from political action and the broadening of the concept of security, goes some way in explaining the broadening of objectives and the positioning and involvement in this area – including by the EU (Nascimento, 2022), which has progressively asserted itself as an international actor in terms of crisis management, conflict resolution and peacebuilding (Tercovitch, 2014). One of the most prominent dimensions at this level is the humanitarian one, an area in which the EU has asserted itself, particularly since the creation of ECHO, the Humanitarian Aid department of the European Commission. Given this context, Haiti has also become an illustrative example (Nascimento, 2022), as we shall see.

The aim of this chapter is to critically analyse the role of the European Union in promoting peace in Haiti since the early 1990s when the first UN peace operations were implemented in the country. First, the influence of peace studies in shaping current global interventionist thinking and practices is addressed. We then look

at the EU's role in promoting peace, paying particular attention to its action in Haiti. Finally, the article analyses the criticisms of the model and its consequences.

Peace studies and global interventionism

Two key points mark the relevance of the contribution of peace studies to the practice and theory of global interventionism today: the proposed redefinition of what is meant by peace and violence; and the identification of concrete ways of intervening in cases of violent conflict (Cravo, Lopes and Roque, 2018). Peace studies emerged in 1959 with the founding of the Peace Research Institute Oslo by Norwegian Johan Galtung. In contrast to security studies, Galtung's thinking rejects the idea that war would be a 'constant to be managed' in the relationship between states and violence, an 'inescapable condition' for the human being (Freire and Lopes, 2008). Galtung therefore founded a new concept of peace, with two distinct dimensions: negative peace (the absence of violence or war) and positive peace (the integration of human society) (Galtung, 1969).

Based on the assumption that one of the definitions of peace would be the absence of violence, Galtung argues that the concept of violence must be 'broad enough to include the most significant varieties' while simultaneously, 'specific enough to serve as a basis for concrete action' (Galtung, 1969, 168). The author therefore suggests that 'violence is present when human beings are being influenced so that their actual somatic and mental realizations are below their potential realizations' (1969, 168). Violence would thus increase the distance between the potential ('what could have been') and the actual ('what is').

Galtung began developing the concept of the violence triangle in 1990, a model applied to conflict analysis which represents one

of the author's major contributions to the theory of Peace Studies (Ramsbotham et al., 2011). Each vertex of the triangle would correspond to a dimension of violence – direct, structural and cultural. A notable difference between the three dimensions is the temporal relationship between them. Galtung (1990, 294) argues that direct violence would be an 'event'; structural violence, a 'process'; and cultural violence, an 'invariant' (or 'permanence'). In direct violence, forms of physical or psychological violence are directly perpetrated against a person. Structural violence is indirect, resulting from the social structure, a form of 'social injustice' (Galtung, 1969, 183). Cultural violence represents 'any aspect of a culture that can be used to legitimize violence in its direct or structural form' (Galtung, 1990, 291).

By applying these ideas to the practice of global interventionism, Galtung created the concepts of peacekeeping, peacemaking and, for the first time, the term peacebuilding. In his seminal 1976 text, 'Three approaches to peace: Peacekeeping, Peacemaking and Peacebuilding', the author describes peacebuilding as the most efficient way to reduce the likelihood of violence (Galtung, 1976, 297). Inspired by Galtung's theory, in 1992 the then Secretary-General of the United Nations (UN), Boutros Boutros-Ghali added post-conflict peacebuilding to the organisation's responses to international conflicts, alongside preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peacekeeping operations. In this document, the new form of action is defined as 'action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict' (UN, 1992). Underlying this is Galtung's proposal to strengthen efforts towards positive peace so that the absence of direct violence, or negative peace, would be consolidated (Cravo, Lopes and Roque, 2018, 172).

Although the United Nations has been responsible for institutionalising this kind of intervention model, it has ceded its 'monopoly'

to regional organisations, such as the European Union or the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), among others, which would have taken over 'the practice of the international promotion of peace and stability' (Cravo, Lopes and Roque, 2018, 173). According to the authors, a recurring characteristic in the EU's case, whether in its actions in the field of security or in supporting development, is that the Member States responsible for each mission are, generally speaking, former colonisers of the country to be protected. This particularity is justified by their in-depth knowledge of the region and its institutions, but it can also be understood as former powers showing each other respect by resorting to the old colonialist logic of staying away from other powers' areas of influence.

Peace operations were fundamentally supposed to provide technical assistance to local actors in war-torn countries. In practice, however, the missions promote in the territories 'a particular model of political and economic organization: liberal market democracy', a so-called 'liberal peace' (Paris, 2004, 13). Until the mid-1990s, the international community's primary concern following the outbreak of a conflict was humanitarian interventions. The limited success of this practice, among other factors, led to a change in strategy, this time focused on conflict resolution and post-war reconstruction (Duffield, 2001). Traditionally, modern peacebuilding operations include the promotion of civil and political rights, such as freedoms of expression, association, the right of movement and freedom of the press; the incentive to the creation of a constitution; training and education of professionals linked to the police and judiciary; the development of independent civil society organisations; the stimulation of a market economy and the growth of private enterprise; as well as the calling of elections, usually planned at the beginning of each mission (Paris, 2004).

The spread of liberalism as a major peacebuilding strategy has nevertheless been widely contested. Paris (2004) questions whether

this approach was based on hard evidence before it was adopted on a large scale and whether democracy and market economics actually created the conditions for stable and lasting peace in countries where post-conflict peacebuilding was implemented after the end of the Cold War. For Duffield (2001), attempts to establish a liberal peace have not only been controversial, but have been subject to 'marked unevenness and increasing patterns of regional differentiation' (2001, 12).

Behind this proposal to reform the model of governance of post-conflict societies, there is a sophisticated communication strategy on which the 'viability and legitimacy' of the project depends (Richmond, 2006). Presented as an ideal model, liberal peace may simply not be attainable or feasible in a given location (Richmond, 2006, 294). Its aim would be to transform 'dysfunctional and war-affected' societies into 'cooperative, representative and ... stable' entities (Duffield, 2001).

For Michael Doyle (1983), liberal democracies create what he calls a 'separate peace' among their peers. Alliances between societies that are not of the same liberal nature tend to be more fragile and unstable. It does call into question, however, the fact that research like Doyle's was carried out with traditional market economies, and not with economies that have adopted this pattern belatedly, as is the case with post-conflict societies. Studies that have been conducted on the behaviour of states that have had their political regimes substantially modified have found evidence that these transformations are regularly accompanied by an increase in violence (Paris, 2004, 45).

The proposal of this governance model has, as yet, only presented one direction: from the centre of the international system to its periphery. Contemporary peacebuilding would be, according to this view, the new 'mission civilisatrice', in an allusion to the justification of bringing 'civilisation' to barbaric peoples, much used

by European powers in the colonial era to subjugate 'New World' societies (Paris, 2002, 638). In this scenario, peace studies, which introduced a critique of the prevailing models of interventionism, as well as an emancipatory project, were associated with post-conflict reconstruction models and run the risk of 'instrumentalization' and loss of critical capacity (Pureza and Cravo, 2005). For nations that face conflict scenarios and receive foreign aid, such as Haiti, it can be seen that the project of building a positive peace grows more distant as the country submits to different political and military projects under international powers.

Haiti and its history of resistance

To foreign eyes, Haitian history is often perceived as a succession of tragedies linked to poverty, crime, conflict and natural disasters, traditionally associated with local roots. However, an analysis of this country's past, devastated by slavery and economically exploited by different powers over the centuries, highlights the decisive role of structural violence in consolidating oppressive and unequal structures. According to Farmer (2004), part of the process of legitimising the structures of inequality in Haiti was done with a Eurocentric vision, with the 'erasure or distortion of history' as a subtle resource of desocialisation. The strategy was essential for the emergence of the so-called 'hegemonic accounts', which were important for the creation of the narrative that Haiti needs protection and to get rid of the traces that pointed to the responsibility of European powers in the formation of Haitian society (Farmer, 2004, 307). The author argues that whoever looks only to the present to explain this misery will not be able to see how inequality in the country has been 'structured and legitimized' over time.

The Haitian Revolution (1791) culminated in the country's independence in 1804, following the defeat of Napoleon Bonaparte's troops at the Battle of Vertières. In spite of this victory, the local infrastructure had been destroyed over the course of the conflict and it is estimated that more than half the population was killed during the revolution. Moreover, the rupture did not bring with it the hoped-for autonomy and self-determination as France, the former metropolis, proceeded to immediately impose a massive indemnity on the new Republic. In 1892, the Haitian government still allocated fifty percent of its budget to debt repayment to France and French banks; by 1914, the proportion had reached 80% (Henao-Castro, 2018, 366).

As a result of the debt payment, resources that could have been invested in the country and in the well-being of its population were sent out of Haiti, and the amount that remained was concentrated in the hands of a few families, in military spending to counter the constant external threats to its independence and in the solidification of an economic structure based on monoculture and export-oriented agriculture. Additionally, and in this process, the Haitian public sector was dismantled and replaced by international non-governmental organisations and private donor groups. As Henao-Castro highlights, this 'continuous extraction of wealth', ensured by the collection of a 'crushing debt', created the conditions for the country's recognition, creating a cycle of 'perpetual indebtedness' for the former colony (Henao-Castro, 2018, 366).

Moreover, the United States only recognised Haiti as an independent nation in 1862, almost sixty years after independence. The symbolism that came with being the first republic in the world with a majority black population troubled the white elites and the men in charge of the powers of the time. The fear – encapsulated in the expression 'Haitianism', used frequently in Brazil as well as in European countries (Borba de Sá, 2016) – was that their groups or

areas of influence would be contaminated by revolutionary ideals and would threaten to subvert the established system of power. North Americans and Europeans, meanwhile, were the largest buyers of the agricultural commodities produced by Haiti under the plantation regime, a relationship which was never broken off (Farmer, 2004).

After the American Civil War (1861-1865), the process of expansion of North American interests in Central America, the Caribbean and the Pacific intensified. In Haiti, in addition to its expansionist objective, the US sought hegemony in the region, threatened as it was by the presence of European powers. In 1915, with the promise of humanitarian intervention, the American military occupation of Haiti began, lasting until 1934. During this period, foreign representatives in the country had veto power over government decisions and relied on the support of a local elite in exchange for maintaining their privileges (Matijascic, 2009).

After the withdrawal of troops, until 1956, Haiti underwent a period of political instability, with various presidents in quick succession. To defend its interests, the United States supported paramilitary and military governments, which neglected to defend the rights of the people. This went on until 1957, when the government of 'Papa Doc', or François Duvalier, came to power, whose armed wing was a bloodthirsty militia called the 'Tonton Macoutes'. His son Jean-Claude Duvalier, 'Baby Doc', succeeded his father and maintained a dictatorship until 1986 (INFOASAID, 2012). In a bipolar world, the Haitian autocracy favoured the Western bloc, as it repressed popular uprisings and the much-feared expansion of communism in the region. In 1986, however, the country began to undergo a crisis of representation. The feeling of revolt from different sectors that yearned for social and political change, in a setting where institutions had been weakened by corruption scandals, resulted in the government's overthrow, and a military junta took power. Between

1986 and 1990, attempts at elections failed and the country experienced a series of coups d'état.

In 1990, the Organization of American States (OAS) and the UN established a joint electoral observation mission to guarantee democratic elections in the country. The elected president, Jean-Bertrand Aristide, was overthrown eight months after taking office. In 1991, the OAS approved a comprehensive trade embargo on Haiti in an attempt to put pressure on the illegitimate government to accept a democratic solution. Different countries, including European powers and the United States, however, disregarded the decision and, within a few months, resumed the trade relations that had been suspended. It is against this backdrop that the involvement of the United Nations begins to take shape (Câmara, 1998). In a 1992 letter, Aristide himself called for UN intervention in the country, with what he called a 'multidimensional mission'. That same year, and again in partnership with the OAS, then Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali first sent a technical mission. In 1993, the United Nations Security Council unanimously approved the sending of a peace mission to Haiti (Câmara, 1998, 119).

Promoting security and peace in Haiti: from MINUSTAH to the role of the European Union

European involvement in Haiti began with the arrival of Christopher Columbus in 1492 to the island of Hispaniola, continued during the time when the then French colony was still called Santo Domingo and was far from gaining its independence, and remains evident to this day in the form of multilateral forums, such as the partnership sealed with the Cotonou Agreements (2000), signed in Benin, between the EU and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries and the UN itself.

Since the first UN peacekeeping operation in the country – the United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH), which lasted from 1993 to 1996 – members of the European bloc have participated in the multilateral discussions that shape the future of the Haitian people. Between 1996 and 2000, four UN peace operations were implemented in the country with the aim of training the Haitian National Police (PNH) to promote security without disrespecting human rights. Also in 2000, a new mission was implemented, but increased local conflicts resulted in its cancellation. In the same year, presidential elections were held, and Jean-Baptiste Aristide was elected for the second time in a vote marked by suspected fraud. The government, notable for its authoritarianism and persecution of opponents, confronted groups organised into armed guerrillas, plunging the country into civil war. In 2004, faced with an unsustainable political scenario, the president resigned from office and the UN began its direct intervention in the country (Guerra et al., 2017). The United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH) was then launched, which would be in operation from 2004 to 2017, with a broad mandate and a commitment to bring political and economic stability to the country.

The mission mandate, established by Resolution 1542/2004, provided for a series of interventions which, when questioned, proved to be a reproduction of a model that did not take into account local particularities, traditions or expressions of will by the population. In the document, the commitment to ‘foster principles and democratic governance’ and ‘organize, monitor, and carry out free and fair municipal, parliamentary and presidential elections at the earliest possible date’ (UNSC, 2004, 3) shows an attempt to replicate a Western model framed by the so-called liberal peace format, without consulting the population beforehand in order to assess other models of democracy that are more possible or viable in this context.

Given the actions carried out by international organisations in Haiti, Haitian author Franck Seguy concludes that, even today, ‘the country’s reality can be described, without exaggeration, as colonial’ (Seguy, 2014, 297). From an economic point of view, the foreign aid received and commonly directed in the first place to non-governmental organisations, which are mostly based in European countries and are not accountable to either the government or any Haitian institution, is called into question. Furthermore, the difference in pay between mission staff and local workers created an unequal environment surrounded by injustices in the world of work (Seguy, 2014). Once MINUSTAH had been implemented, it also became evident that the reconstruction plan for Haiti was aligned with guidelines rooted in liberal capitalism. In the document ‘Haiti: Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper’ of 2006, drawn up by the International Monetary Fund (IMF/IDA, 2006), proposals for economic growth focus on better inserting the country into the international market and a commitment to exports.

In 2010, after an earthquake measuring 7.2 on the Richter scale led the country to an even greater catastrophe, the Haitian government drew up the document ‘Plan d’Action pour le Relèvement et le Développement d’Haiti’ (Government of Haiti, 2010), in which it stressed that the reconstruction of the country should be supported on pillars such as a representative democracy and an internationally competitive economy, with emphasis on the textile and agricultural sectors, as well as on private initiative. These export-oriented choices would lead to a deepening of the country’s dependency on the international market, an increase in its ‘external vulnerability’, as well as the ‘deterioration of the population’s living and working conditions’, ‘marginalised from active participation in decision-making processes’ (Guerra and Blanco, 2017, 271). Guerra and Blanco thus argue that peace operations such as MINUSTAH reproduce a Western

outlook as a contemporary ‘mission civilisatrice’, which entails a civilising angle (Guerra and Blanco, 2017).

Ricardo Seitenfus argues that, in Haiti’s case, the international community ‘does not wish to understand’ or accept a ‘contradictory reality’, but rather

... simply stabilise an unstable political power, normalise an abnormal country and enforce the parameters of representative democracy. By disregarding Haiti’s sociological and anthropological roots, the mission becomes impossible. (Seitenfus, 2016)

But the 2010 earthquake also aggravated the existing humanitarian crisis and triggered a massive response from the international community, including many European countries, especially in terms of humanitarian aid. It is important to note that this intervention by the EU as a collective actor took place in a context that was different from other intervention contexts. It occurred not only against the background of a humanitarian crisis resulting from a natural disaster of enormous proportions that affected the Haitian population and infrastructure, but also with the presence of the entire international community in the territory as part of international peace missions (Nascimento, 2022, 84). The European Union’s response to this aggravated humanitarian crisis, in its capacity as an actor promoting security and stability in broader terms, has taken place at various levels, particularly in the reconstruction of basic infrastructure – housing, water and sanitation, food aid – allocating a very significant amount of aid, around EUR 100 million (ECHO, 2012). Despite some initial criticism regarding a lack of coordination, ECHO took over the process of coordinating EU countries’ humanitarian response through the European Civil Protection Mechanism, which also allowed for some alignment with the multilateral response agenda promoted by the UN. This intervention, in line with an integrated

agenda with short, medium and long-term objectives, also contributed to the creation of the Crisis Response and Operational Coordination Department in 2010 and the Crisis Platform in 2016 (Nascimento, 2022, 85; EEAS, 2016). In this context, and according to Nascimento (2022, 85), the EU ended up acting as a key actor for multiple areas of intervention within the broad objectives of peace promotion, including humanitarian aid, civil protection and post-crisis reconstruction. The post-crisis reconstruction dimension is very close to those that were part of the Common Security and Defence Policy missions, both collectively within the EU framework and in articulation with other international organisations and actors present in Haiti and with broader mandates.

The European Union's presence in Haiti in a way clearly demonstrates how the EU has sought to assert itself as an international actor that promotes an agenda of peace and security in different contexts, of varying geographical proximity.

Conclusion

As we have seen, the European Union is part of a small group of international actors responsible for shaping and influencing the mandates of contemporary peace operations today, including in Haiti, where the EU was particularly involved. However, successive attempts to 'stabilise' – a term that appears in the very name of MINUSTAH – or 'rebuild' Haiti along the lines laid out by these actors, have shown clear signs that the approach so far is not capable of achieving the desired results. Guided by the liberal peace model, the missions propose political and economic solutions that are imported from other countries with different realities. What is more, these solutions aggravate inequalities and an already excessive dependency, rather than offering hope for better days.

In order to move towards a more direct relationship between foreign aid and an improvement in the living conditions of vulnerable populations like those currently in Haiti, there must be a change in approach to international peacebuilding. There is an urgent need for more open dialogue with Haitian society, the creation of spaces for discussion and for drawing up joint solutions in different spheres. The Haitian population is the protagonist of its history and is in urgent need of a glimpse of a better future.

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CONCLUSION
THE EU AS A PEACE AND SECURITY ACTOR:
WHERE TO?

Maria Raquel Freire

There will be no peace in Europe if the States are reconstituted on the basis of national sovereignty ... The countries of Europe are too small to guarantee their peoples the necessary prosperity and social development. The European states must form a federation ... Jean Monnet, meeting of the French National Liberation Committee, 5 August 1943¹

Still in a context of war in Europe, Jean Monnet, adviser to the French government and inspirer of the European integration process, stressed the relevance of European states forming a union to foster peace and security. Jean Monnet believed that a Europe built around exclusivist sovereignties would limit the continent's capacity for reconciliation, and that a project was needed that would enable the convergence of European states, albeit with distinguishing features. The Schuman Plan, which would lead to the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community, embodies this ideal and

¹ Available at: <https://citacoes.in/autores/jean-monnet/> [21.04.2022].

advances a process of integration that brings us to the European Union (EU) of today. The spirit of peace and the worries about (in) security underlie the whole process of economic integration that started then. The EU as a political project would develop around the values of peace, democracy, stability, the protection and promotion of fundamental rights and freedoms, and the rule of law. These intrinsic principles were later sequentially referenced in treaties, official documents and declarations. And they continue, even today, to constitute a normative pillar essential to the identity of the process of European construction and integration.

Despite expectations and aspirations, the trajectory of this actor has been neither simple nor easy. The story of the signing of the Treaty of Rome establishing the European Communities in 1957 is proof of this. After a frantic train journey from Brussels to Rome, endless days preparing copies of the Treaty for signature with the aid of stencils and mimeographs in a damp basement, the copies ready to be signed by the six founding leaders, carefully spread out on the floor so that they could dry and the effects of damp could be prevented, are collected by the building's cleaning teams and discarded. On the day of the signing, the pressure of the moment leads to a creative solution: initial signature sheets are prepared, with the rest of the treaty text being just a set of blank sheets (Tavares, 2017). This story, only recently made public, is indicative both of the challenges this project has faced since its inception, and also of the creative capacity deployed to overcome them. This has been the story of the EU. And even more so today, in the context of the return of war to Europe when the challenges to peace and European security are enormous.

European integration was consolidated early on in the internal-external nexus, i.e. on the assumption that different levels of action involving the member states, the Community dimension, and external relations had to be dealt with. A key driver for the development of

the project was the enlargement policy that allowed the initial six states to become a Community of 28 states, which after Brexit (with effect from 1 January 2021) was recounted at 27 member states. This policy of geographical growth, with its many political, economic, social, and security nuances, among others, was accompanied by the institutional development needed to allow this body to function. The Maastricht Treaty and the Lisbon Treaty will probably be two of the great milestones in this trajectory, consolidating both the internal dimension of action, clarifying institutional weights and powers, and the external dimension in the new functions and bodies created to ensure the EU's external action. Thus, this has always been a project that is identified with the constant need to readjust between contexts and temporalities, reflecting the continuous aggregation between the various Member States, as well as the social interaction with its neighbourhood and beyond. The challenges to peace and security are huge and wide-ranging. There are internal ones that involve a range of economic, social, and security crises scattered on the path of the European journey, while external challenges abound, arising from a demanding international context in which the post-World War II order has been opposed. Furthermore, the European security order is clearly in disarray in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022. These are just some of the many issues at stake.

Domestically, the 2008 financial crisis whose effects are still felt, the social and political crisis it led to, including the consolidation of extreme right-wing political movements, followed by the pandemic crisis and now the Ukrainian crisis, all serve to mark an ongoing confrontation with issues that are difficult to manage and are aligned with an increasingly security-oriented narrative. This denotes a broad understanding of security closely linked to issues beyond territorial integrity and physical security, such as societal resilience, humanitarianism, migratory flows, or even climate

change. However, the current threat context, as clearly identified in the March 2022 Strategic Compass, the latest strategic document approved in the European security and defence framework, calls for a combined return to more traditional readings of security in view of the territorial threat that Russia presents. Hybrid security and defence gain space, and the resilience and pragmatism of principles underscore referential frameworks of action that crystallise the Union's identity. The summary of this document contains the following measures, considered fundamental to ensure security:

Boost intelligence analysis capacities; Create a hybrid toolbox and response teams bringing together different means to detect and respond to a broad range of hybrid threats; Further develop the EU cyber defence policy to better prepare for and respond to cyberattacks; Strengthen actions in the maritime, air and space domains, notably by expanding the coordinated maritime presences to other regions, starting with the Indo-Pacific, and by developing an EU space strategy for security and defence. (Strategic compass, 2022)

These words and measures definitely underline the inclusive narrative underlying the understanding of European security, as well as the hybrid reading, combined with more conventional means, the need to invest in cutting-edge areas such as cyber defence and a space strategy. The identification of threats, which evolves with contexts, thus becomes part of the broader message that legitimises policy options in certain directions. This pertinent and undisputed agenda is covered in this book through several studies which help to situate us in relation to what have been the most recent developments in terms of capabilities, policymaking and the challenges involved here, but also in terms of contextualising narratives and the EU actor's trajectory. Regarding the more theoretical-conceptual

discussion, the initial chapters proceed with the debates on the nature of this actor, its internal mode of operation and its external dimension. They also reflect on how the construction of narratives contributes to the affirmation of the EU itself in this internal-external nexus. This approach also lets us better understand the evolution of this actor and how it seeks to assert itself in this disputed international order. In a more pragmatic logic, the case studies are based on the most topical issues on the agenda, aiming to challenge us to critically reflect on the EU, its capabilities and limits, as well as the potential it offers. Core themes of this study include the cyber-security and disinformation dimension, the design of a space strategy, and different forms of intervention, including through civilian and military presences in peace operations, or through its regional policies.

From the reading of this volume, it comes clear that despite the many challenges it faces, the EU is a regional actor that has sought to position itself globally. The return of war to Europe has resized the more regional action as a priority, but without discarding its global agenda, which is very focused on trade and economic relations, but also carries a certain amount of political and normative baggage whose importance should not be diminished. Even with action more focused on its neighbourhood area, where current threats are more urgent, the EU is recognised as an international peace and security actor, which promotes an integrated approach to crisis management and response to the various challenges it faces, regardless of the restrictions it faces. The differentiated nature of the Member States' security cultures, the difficulty in agreeing on defence positions, and even a certain lack of institutional strategic vision reflecting proactivity and a vision of the future have been mentioned as aspects that limit clear options for action. Peace missions end up being a central instrument in these dynamics, giving visibility to the normative and political agenda of the EU, as well as

exposing the capacity for convergence between its member states. The more traditional criticisms associated with the neglect of the local dimension, or the lack of coordination on the ground, are old criticisms which reveal the political difficulty associated with these forms of intervention, as well as the actual socialisation of lessons learnt. The EU has come a long way in this regard since sending its first mission to the Balkans in 2003, with proven track records in dozens of civilian, military, and civil-military missions. If success is limited, it does not necessarily have to mean that the processes are insignificant. In fact, the EU is recognised as having the capacity to act, which mainly results from its comprehensive approach that lets it combine preventive diplomacy measures with the implementation of development cooperation projects, or reconcile negotiation processes with investment in the reconstruction of a State. The implementation of these mandates has allowed the EU actor to be seen in its more global dimension of action, requiring a constant rethinking and readjustment of its role as a producer of security, both internally and in the external scope of its action. Paula Duarte Lopes and Daniela Nascimento show this in their analysis. And they consider that the current context has led to greater cohesion within this actor, which has strengthened it as a security actor. Moreover, it has allowed greater investment in the area of defence, with some costs for its *actorness* in matters of peace, particularly when Europe is experiencing times of war. In a post-war phase the peace agenda will certainly be largely led by the Union, both in the reconstruction process and in the political processes that will follow and where the EU could and should play a key role.

The institutional dimension has also been central to the process of European construction, where the Treaties have been a fundamental pillar. The interinstitutional dynamic and the way in which the Commission has sought to expand its powers in matters traditionally in the domain of the member states is very interesting.

As Isabel Camisão and Ana Paula Brandão argue, the Commission has capitalised on this global approach that the EU has promoted in terms of its external action, stressing that *global* refers not only to the geostrategic dimension of its action, but also to the sectoral areas, instruments and policies developed. A very clear example is that of trade policy, traditionally part of the internal dimension, and at the basis of this whole project, and which has increasingly become an instrument for projecting the EU in the world. The comprehensive approach, as it is commonly called, has made it possible to expand areas of action and impact, as well as institutionally giving the Commission space for this broadening of the agenda. When the current Commission President Ursula von der Leyen describes her Commission as geopolitical (von der Leyen, 2019) she is correctly marking an institutional positioning for the domestic audience, as well as emphasising the institutional positioning on external assertiveness. The European Parliament has also enhanced its importance through a more prominent role in the different phases of the political cycle, as it has become increasingly active in matters of human rights, promotion of democracy and the rule of law, and mediation and dialogue for peace. Naturally, the Council of the European Union and the European Council are the bodies that have retained greater decision-making power in matters of foreign security and defence policy, with the direct intervention of the member states in defining the agenda and policies. But these changes in the institutional architecture of the EU are interesting in the way balances are being drawn, and matters traditionally within the competence of the member states are taking on a new dimension.

Another fundamental dimension of action, and one which this volume highlights in particular, is that of security and defence. This combination has been shaping the European narrative and some fundamental debates such as the coordination between the capacities of the Atlantic Alliance and the EU, and the issue of strategic

autonomy, too, which is more comprehensive, but where the defence component has become significant. Thinking about peace in the framework of the EU, its contexts and its constituent principles has led to the development of a comprehensive conceptualisation of security, as mentioned, and to a perception of threats and responsibilities that has been readjusted in response to crises. Internal threats, such as transnational terrorism, and external threats, mostly around violent conflict and crisis management, have promoted the interventionist agenda – in deployed peace missions, for example. Alongside these developments the ‘resilience’ narrative has gained density, in rationales of local capacity building in response to differentiated crises, in contexts beyond the EU’s external border, often in cooperation with its international partners, and within the Union itself. The current context of war in Ukraine has brought a renewed sense of urgency to the EU’s capacity building in the area of security and defence, as well as to the need for concertation with Atlantic Alliance partners, renewing the debate on defence investments. The common threat identified by Western partners and embodied in Russian actions has allowed for an exemplary level of cohesion, with the adoption of several sanction packages and a fairly well-aligned position in opposing Russia and supporting Ukraine. However, this return of the United States to Europe after a period of clear disinvestment, particularly during the Trump presidency, and with an agenda that prioritises the Indo-Pacific, raises some questions. On the one hand, how far will strategic autonomy be able to be completed, overcoming some dependence on the United States, and on the other, what kind of defence-capacity building, driven by this new situation, will be effectively implemented once the imminent threat is overcome. The old defence issues seem to take on a new guise, argues Licínia Simão, although not necessarily definitively driving a renewed defence policy, with contours of great autonomy and European investment.

The issue of narratives thus becomes central to the analysis of the EU's evolution and action, since they help us understand the discursive trajectory, with lines of convergence and divergence, but also which narratives become dominant and why. The issue of defence illustrates the temporality and contextual dimension very clearly, with the Ukrainian emergency putting pressure on the defence-capacity building debate, and how this has implications for the reading of this actor. Alexandre Sousa Carvalho, Maria Raquel Freire and Clara Keating examine how narratives shape the EU's own positioning and its possibilities for decision and action. More concrete examples include the analysis of security strategies and discourses on the financial crisis, with a particular focus on the period between 2008 and 2015. The authors contend that the analysis of the documents clarifies a recontextualisation of the narratives, which allows this constant repositioning of the actor, not always revealing the expected consistency. The discursive change from 'transformative diplomacy' to 'resilience' dynamics or the introduction of the term 'principled pragmatism' are illustrative of these recontextualisations and the way the actor positions, repositions and discursively organises its agenda and objectives. The often-present tension between the normative and more material dimensions of EU action finds expression here. And once again, the references to Russia and the way it is reconceptualised in the context of the Strategic Compass (2022), in a harsher tone than in the Global Strategy (2016), and in a totally different way from the 2003 European Security Strategy, is again evidence of dynamics of narrative recontextualisation with obvious implication on practices. The narratives in the financial and crisis analysis dimension also show how their place of enunciation, their collective memories, and their intertextual and ideological porosity reflect differentials in the discourses circulating in the European space. The dominant narrative is

interpreted differently according to context and perceptions, making it a powerful element of analysis when interpreting the EU's decision, action and positioning.

If these internal dynamics reveal these modellings, at the external level the process tends to be much the same. The interventionism in different formats and contexts that has developed in terms of the EU's external action is a good example here. Teresa Almeida Cravo, Paulo Rupino da Cunha and Bernardo Fazendeiro draw attention to an expansion in the interventionist agenda beyond the more traditional principles of sovereignty or logics of power, even if it undermines the sovereign principle itself. The humanitarian or development narrative is an example of practices that may imply the limitation of sovereignty, with not very altruistic motivations. The attempt to impose institutional arrangements in contexts which are sometimes alien to them is identified by the authors as illustrative of the interventionist tradition, even if this was requested by the state in question. In a complementary illustrative logic, we should see the contribution by Renata Cabral de Sá Porto Barbosa on the intervention in Haiti, where the EU coordinates its efforts with other international actors in a mission led by the United Nations, seeking to project itself in a more global framework. This denotes another dimension of this interventionism, which takes on different formats and contexts. The development of new technologies and the dimension of cybersecurity and cyber defence, disinformation and fake news, adds new challenges to what are often old issues and brings a new dimensionality to the forms of intervention and limitation of sovereignty, as expressed by Almeida Cravo, Rupino da Cunha and Fazendeiro. This positioning allows interferences that are sometimes even subtle, but with potentially great impact on the policies of states. Interventionist practices have been around for a long time, have been intensified in these new contexts and in the face of new instruments, but they still maintain the challenge of

interference in state sovereignty, remaining a central issue in the analysis of the EU as a peace and security actor.

In the geography of the EU's external action the immediate neighbourhood has been identified as a key area of attention for the Union. In fact, in the context of the 2004 enlargement when ten new states became full members, the Neighbourhood Policy is discussed, reflecting a concern with the balance between managing the integration process of new members and the institutional dimension of the EU itself. Moreover, it reflects the principle that the EU cannot enlarge continuously, so defining a policy that looks after the neighbourhood area as a preferential area for the EU would serve two main purposes. On the one hand, it could offer comprehensive and diverse policies for deepening cooperation, translated into Partnership and Cooperation Agreements or into Association Agreements, for example, already deeper, in line with the assumption that greater cooperation will promote stability and prosperity. On the other hand, it offers the idea dear to the EU that deepening economic relations has the potential to promote security and could thus contribute to the creation of a 'ring of friends' around its external border. In a very simplified way, this rationale of stabilising the Union's southern and eastern neighbourhood area is perceived as fundamental to the EU's own security. However, as Vanda Amaro Dias explains, there are several aspects to be considered that limit these objectives. These include the different positions of the member states, including the relations with Russia (until the invasion of Ukraine), the different motivations and ambitions of the neighbouring countries, an increasingly security-conscious agenda for the neighbourhood, and the perception of the EU as an international actor by other actors, both in a complementary and competitive sense. The author argues that the return of war to Europe shows some carelessness in the analysis of external perceptions, with a clear impact on neighbourhood countries. Russia is naturally the main

target here. The way the EU has responded to the war in Ukraine, showing determination and unity, points to a stronger positioning vis-à-vis its neighbourhood area and the instability there. However, whether this reconfiguration will continue, affirming the EU as a promoter of peace and stability also in its neighbourhood, is still an open question.

In this context, the Russian Federation has clearly taken on the role of the 'enemy' which, contrary to what was intended, has generated cohesion and consensus within the western world against what is described as territorial aggression without any justification, and which clearly violates the basic principles of international law. At this level there are three fundamental lines of analysis in the EU-Russia relationship identified by Sónia Sénica. First, the fact that Russia repeatedly emphasises the post-Soviet space as a priority area and in its sphere of influence, even criticising the principle of 'shared neighbourhood' with the EU, and claiming the right to influence the policy choices of these states; second, the internal dimension in Russia, where the consolidation of Vladimir Putin's regime has been strengthened with the 2020 revision of the Constitution, and by the practice of limiting freedoms and human rights, and democratic principles; and, third, the challenge to the liberal international order embodied in what is seen as the hegemony of the United States and the permanence of NATO, read as a threat to Russia's security, but both of which are key elements of the Western democratic order. This scenario of rupture between Russia and the West plus the events in Ukraine do not allow much room for dialogue, and so confrontation has the dominant role in the relationship between Russia and Western actors. Russia is a 'giant' neighbour of the EU, and so this situation of enormous uncertainty and violence caused by its aggressive action is a fundamental threat to the European security order, to which the EU has not, and could not, remain indifferent. The response in the form of

sanctions and various limitations on relations with Russia is once again illustrative of the recontextualisation of the narrative, and of how contexts and temporality are so important in understanding political options and actions.

In this framework of high tension, the dimension of new technologies, of disinformation and fake news, and of propaganda, is also taken as fundamental in shaping the narrative, as already briefly mentioned. This dimension and impact of disinformation is dealt with by Sofia José Santos and Tiago Lapa. They argue that, if on the one hand, the way of dealing with disinformation highlights the EU's concern with democracy and pluralism, on the other hand, it reveals a discursive appropriation that points to the legitimisation of the security bias in the regulation of the information ecosystem. The authors contend that the EU has positioned itself as essentialist and universalising in its actions towards disinformation, adopting a dual approach between true and false, and positioning it as a moral actor in this matter. The dimension of the absences, particularly at the level of regulation, such as in relation to the economic models of the platforms that disseminate disinformation, shows this ambivalence. This warning points to the need to think of the EU as a security actor as promoting, in fora, agendas targeted at certain actors and/or policies, not always following an institutional logic based on the normative principles that constitute the definition of this actor. This points to the way in which the affirmation of the EU as a producer of security has also to go through the scrutiny of practices, not only in this area of disinformation, but also in others, as analysed.

Another dimension that has taken increasing prominence is that of European space integration, always identified in the narrative as being closely linked to the Union's economy, concern for citizens, security and the defence industry. This is a sectoral area that combines several narratives, thus bringing the more normative and the

more material dimension into the discussion. The evolution in the narrative shows how the space agenda has increasingly become associated with security and defence issues, in line with the principles of strategic autonomy already mentioned. Sarah da Mota argues that this is a strategic area already well identified by the EU, but that the difference in means and capabilities between member states, the necessary investment and political will in supporting concrete measures constitute a challenge. The development of post-sovereign national policies and a shared network of infrastructure resources in the definition and implementation of the European space architecture facilitates the possibility of strengthening the security and defence dimension of the EU actor, with a special focus on this area identified as strategic in this process of international affirmation.

This study on the European Union as an international peace and security actor, and the way in which narratives and practices support a specific positioning, results in several lines of reflection. The study calls on various political-institutional dimensions of analysis, various sectoral policies, and the incorporation of various instruments and spaces, as well as highlighting the importance of their implementation within the framework of the recontextualisation of narratives. It is clear that the normative narrative is always present, accompanied by pragmatic elements, which have been expressing discursive modellings concerning peace and security. On the trajectory of affirmation and recognition as an actor, the EU has faced several restrictions, whether of a domestic nature, such as the reconciliation of interests and commitments between member states, or the issue of resources and capabilities, or of an external nature, where the dynamics of competition in the international system amount to a fundamental factor in the expression of the EU's actorness. The new strategic document approved in March 2022 – Strategic Compass – and the war in Ukraine have repositioned the EU in a differentiated framework, where the response has been

more mobilising, more cohesive and more assertive. It seems clear that the EU is asserting itself as a peace and security actor, in line with its origin. However, whether the narratives and practices will converge in this consolidation of the actor, or whether in a differentiated context they might lose consistency, remains open, in line with the history and trajectory of this actor.

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