

THE BUMPY ROAD TOWARDS THE EU'S COMMON FOREIGN POLICY



CREDITS

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POLICY PAPER

The Bumpy Road Towards the EU's Common Foreign Policy

While the foreign policy makers in Brussels and in the Member States (MS) agree that the European Union (EU) needs to play a bigger role in the world, there is still no agreement on either what this bigger role is, or how to get there. The EU's lack of a unified position on recent issues such as a stance on Jerusalem, an approach to Venezuela or the conclusions on the EU-Arab League summit, is becoming a serious practical and diplomatic handicap undermining the EU's role on today's global stage.

This policy paper aims to look at the institutional evolution of the EU and the expansion of its competencies accompanying its successive treaty reforms, which equipped the EU with more tools for its role as a Global Actor. Finally, the goal is to propose some steps towards a credible EU Foreign Policy, including the role that Central Europe could play in shaping a joint foreign policy.

EU'S ROLE ON THE GLOBAL STAGE AMID A PROCESS TO "REIMAGINE EUROPE"

After the decision of the UK to withdraw from the EU, EU leaders and policy makers started to seek solutions for renewing the European project. EU foreign policy has been an inherent part of those discussions. For example, in March 2017, the

European Commission (EC) outlined in its White Paper on the *Future of Europe* five scenarios for how its foreign policy could look in the future¹. For example:

"CARRY ON"	"NOTHING BUT THE SINGLE MARKET"	"THOSE WHO WANT MORE DO MORE"	"DOING LESS MORE EFFICIENTLY"	"DOING MUCH MORE TOGETHER"
<p>PROGRESS IS MADE ON SPEAKING WITH ONE VOICE.</p> <p>THE EU27 MANAGES TO POSITIVELY SHAPE THE GLOBAL AGENDA IN A NUMBER OF FIELDS SUCH AS CLIMATE, FINANCIAL STABILITY AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.</p>	<p>SOME FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES ARE INCREASINGLY DEALT WITH BILATERALLY. THE EU27 FAILS TO AGREE ON COMMON PRIORITIES.</p>	<p>AS IN "CARRY ON" EXCEPT FOR A GROUP OF COUNTRIES WILLING TO DEEPEN THEIR COOPERATION ON SPECIFIC AREAS OF FOREIGN POLICIES.</p>	<p>THE EU SPEAKS WITH ONE VOICE ON ALL FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES IF IT DECIDES THAT IT CAN HAVE ADDED-VALUE, OR IT IS ABLE TO DELIVER ON PROMISES.</p>	<p>AS IN "DOING LESS MORE EFFICIENTLY", THE EU SPEAKS WITH ONE VOICE ON ALL FOREIGN POLICY ISSUES".</p>

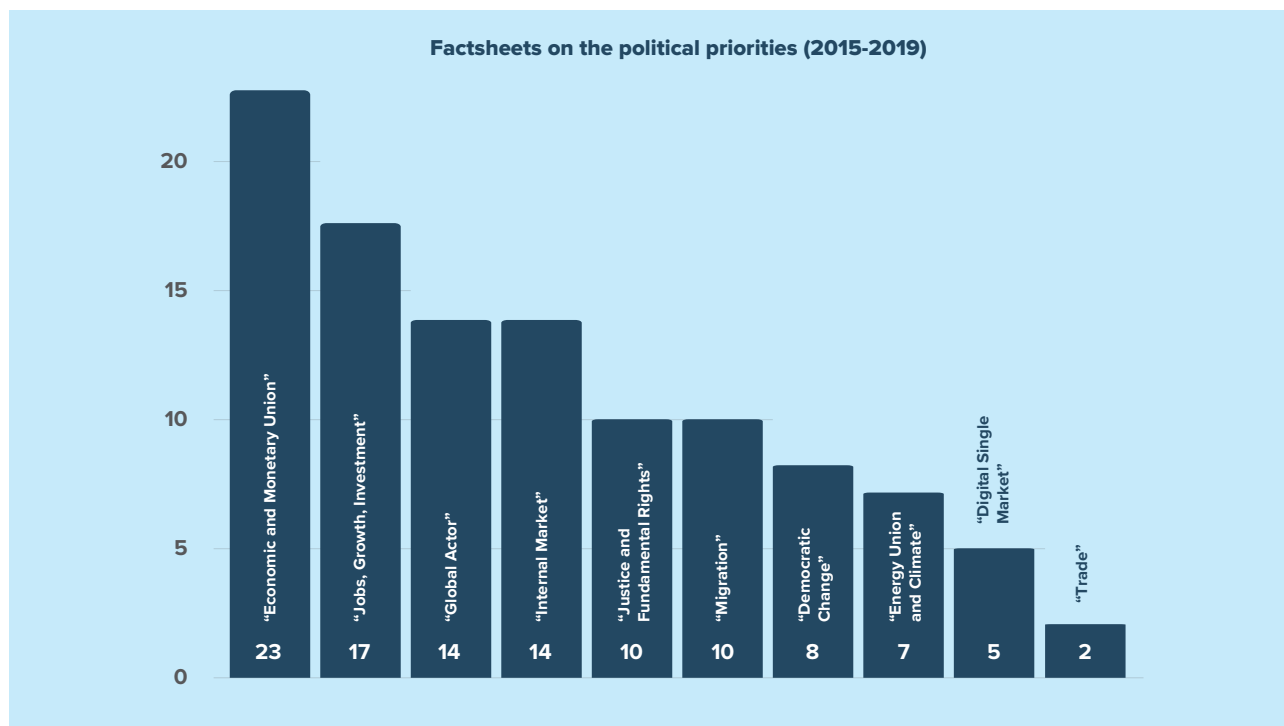
Source: *White Paper on the Future of Europe*

Additionally, since 2015 the EC published factsheets on its political priorities, which were meant to give food for thought on topics such as the Western Balkans enlargement, the EU's partnership with Africa and the Sahel, the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, the qualified-majority voting or the future EU budget for external actions². In total, there are

so far 110 different factsheets, out of which 14 are devoted to the EU's role as a Global Actor. This could mean that the EU's ambitions on the global stage are treated equally (at least in theory) to other priorities such as job creation or reforms of the European Monetary Union.

¹ White Paper on the Future of Europe, the European Commission, 1 March 2017, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/white_paper_on_the_future_of_europe_en.pdf

² Factsheets on the political priorities from the European Commission, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/factsheets-political-priorities_en?field_core_tags_tid_i18n=377, accessed March 2019.



Source: Factsheets on political priorities of the European Commission.

Two years after the EC's publication of the White Paper's scenarios, it is still hard to say which of the five is the most probable. However, the current state of play suggests that the EU is leaning more towards "Carry on" rather than "Doing less/more more/less efficiently" as the EU can't speak with one voice on foreign policy. There are examples where the EU voice in external relations is unified, those are for example trade or climate policy. Finally, there are also some examples where "Those who want more do more" such as the case of the "Berlin process" with Western Balkans or "16+1" format of cooperation for China with Central and Eastern European Countries. Fortunately, "Nothing but the single market", which is a scenario that needs to be prevented at any cost, is not probable as of today.

It is worth mentioning that, despite the differences in the approaches to the future shape of the EU that come from its different corners (such as the Franco-German couple, the New Hanseatic League, the V4 capitals or the EU itself), all the voices agree in the face of mounting environmental, economic, and political threats that the EU must play a stronger role in global affairs. Even more, with the United States' current administration withdrawing from international institutions, the UK involved in internal crisis related to Brexit, Russia's revisionism and China's strategic expansion, the EU should seize

the unoccupied political space and play a bigger geopolitical role. As Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, leader of Germany's ruling Christian Democrats, recently said, if the EU does not want its future to be determined by the strategic decisions of China or the United States, it must become stronger, including "urgently" improving the EU's ability to act in foreign security policy³. It's a task that so far has not been easy.

TOWARDS MORE COHERENT EU FOREIGN POLICY

The debate on EU foreign policy and the EU's role as a Global Actor has been part of the EU integration process since the end of the Cold War, with moments of particular interest always coinciding with crises. The result was heightened awareness of the inherent weakness of the EU to act as effectively (rapidly, precisely, with one voice) as other actors amid crises (Balkan wars, Iraq war)⁴.

Failure to unify has also been a discussion parallel to the institutional evolution of the EU and the expansion of its competences accompanying successive treaty reforms. The EU's Common Foreign Policy, which is part of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) was formalized

³ Helen Collis, "Germany's CDU chief sets out European vision, responds to Macron". Politico, 10 March 2019, <https://www.politico.eu/article/germanys-cdu-chief-sets-out-european-vision-responds-to-macron/>

⁴ E. Lazarou, Presentation, Europe as a Strong Actor in a More Complex World Order, <https://www.globsec.org/events/eu-foreign-policy-differentiated-cooperation-in-action/> accessed on April 2019.

by the Maastricht Treaty in 1991. Despite significant upgrades and improvements in the Treaty of Lisbon (2009), CFSP is still one of the least advanced ‘common’ policies and remains inter-governmental rather than supranational.

The EU’s ultimate decision-making body in foreign policy is the European Council that consists of the leaders of the EU Member States. In practice, the CFSP is led by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, who is ex officio a Vice-President of the European Commission (HR/VP)⁵. The Lisbon Treaty granted also the President of the European Council the authority to represent the EU on issues of common foreign and security policy at the level of the presidents and prime ministers of non-EU countries. This responsibility implies a limited but still symbolic role in the foreign policy domain. To carry out the EU’s foreign policy, the High Representative is supported

by the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI)⁶. While the EEAS is the EU diplomatic service whose role is to facilitate European foreign policy, the FPI is a service of the European Commission, of which the main responsibility is to run a number of EU foreign policy activities and to manage operations, including their financing. These include: Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (to help third countries prevent conflicts or responds to actual crises); Partnership Instrument (to cooperate with partners around the world); election observation missions (to support the right to participate in free and fair elections). The FPI’s task is also to manage the foreign policy regulatory instruments such as sanctions; the Kimberley Process (to address the trade in ‘conflict diamonds’); anti-torture measures (to stop torture and abolish capital punishment include measures to prevent the trade in certain goods).

EU FOREIGN POLICY

The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy & Member States



→ **The European External Action Service (EEAS) = the EU diplomatic service which includes Brussels’ office (1990 as of 2017) and a network of 140 EU Delegations (2,077 as of 2017).**

→ **The Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI) = operational side of EU external action, which is a service of the European Commission.**

Source: *EEAS Annual Activity Report 2017*.

Apart from the HR/VP, who plays the central role in EU foreign policy role in the European Commission,

there are at least four other commissioners whose portfolios have something to do with external issues.

Commissioners (2014-2019) responsible for related external issues:

- 1. Johannes Hahn**, European Neighbourhood Policy & Enlargement Negotiations
- 2. Cecilia Malmström**, Trade
- 3. Neven Mimica**, International Cooperation & Development
- 4. Christos Stylianides**, Humanitarian Aid & Crisis Management

Source: *The European Commission*⁸

⁵ Article 10 C TEU

⁶ EEAS was established by the Council Decision of 26 July 2010 and came into being on 1 January 2011.

⁷ Annual Activity Report 2017 from European External Action Service, https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/3625/eeas-annual-activity-reports_en, accessed on March 2019.

⁸ The Commissioners from the European Commission, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/2014-2019_en, accessed on March 2019

The CFSP's policymaking takes place in the Political and Security Committee (PSC) that consists of ambassadors from the Member States. The PSC contributes to the definition of policies by delivering opinions to the Council at the request of the Council, or of the HR/VP, or on its own initiative. As mentioned before, most foreign policy decisions require the agreement of all EU countries at the PSC⁹.

The European Parliament (EP) and the European Court of Justice (ECJ) have some influence but their role in conducting EU foreign policy is limited. For example, the ECJ's role is important in relation to sanctions as it reviews the legality of decisions mandating them (Treaty of Lisbon Article (240a)). Any individuals or entities who think that they have been wrongly targeted by restrictive measures can appeal to the ECJ. As for the EP, its foreign policy activity takes the form of non-binding resolutions (subject to majority voting). The EP has also significant budgetary tools at its disposal for instance, it approves the EEAS's budgetary and staff changes). What is more the EP decides for example on the amount of money that would be available to various areas of foreign activities, such as allocation of EU accession funds to candidate countries, as well as development policy¹⁰.

EU FOREIGN POLICY IN ACTION

The EU has been declaring its main objectives in foreign relations since the late 1980s. Those included, for example, strengthening multilateralism, preserving international peace and security, strengthening democracy, human rights, and good governance, as well as contributing to conflict prevention and settlement. But it was 2003 (the invasion of Iraq that divided Member States), when the exercise of specifying the EU's goals became more serious. That same year, the European Council adopted the European Security Strategy (ESS) that identified three core strategic objectives. Those were: addressing security threats, enhancing security in the EU's neighbourhood and promoting multilateralism. It is worth mentioning that the ESS, which was reviewed later in 2008 (*2008 Report on the Implementation of the ESS*), was a first step toward defining common strategies, assessing tactics, and deciding what price the bloc is willing to pay for particular actions. The ESS was thus both a European response to external challenges and a way to demonstrate internal unity.

Priorities for EU external action in the EUGS:

- 1. Contributing more to “Europe’s collective security” through five lines of action: Defense and Security, Counter-terrorism, Cyber Security, Energy Security, Strategic Communication.**
- 2. “Building state and societal resilience to the East and South of the EU”, contributing to peace-building and stability in neighbouring countries, including Enlargement Policy, and more effective migration policy.**
- 3. Contributing to “an integrated approach to conflicts and crises”: pursuing a multi-phased approach, acting at all stages of the conflict cycle and engaging all actors on the local, regional, national and global levels, primarily in the EU’s closest neighbourhood but also beyond. Dimensions: Pre-emptive Peace; Security and Stabilisation; Conflict Settlement; Political Economy of Peace.**
- 4. Promoting and supporting “cooperative regional orders global governance for the 21st century” including in the most divided areas.**
- 5. Contributing to “global governance for the 21st Century”, including actively participating in UN reform and investing in UN peacebuilding, implementing EU commitments on sustainable development and climate change, pursuing comprehensive free trade agreements (a new generation); widening the reach of international norms, regimes and institutions.**

Source: *European Global Strategy*

Due to a changing internal environment (such as for example EU enlargement (2004), the eurozone debt crisis (2008), the deficiencies of the Dublin Regulation that proved to be inappropriate to handle

external migration (2015)), as well as evolving external conditions (among other the rise of the BRICs, the revisionist policy of Russia, the growing instability in the neighbourhood after the Arab Spring, and the

⁹ Article 38 TEU.

¹⁰ Susi Dennison and Paweł Zerka, “The 2019 European election: how anti-Europeans plan to wreck Europe and what can be done to stop it, European Council on Foreign Relations, February 2019, https://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/EUROPEAN_PARLIAMENT_FLASH_SCORECARD_online.pdf, accessed on March 2019.

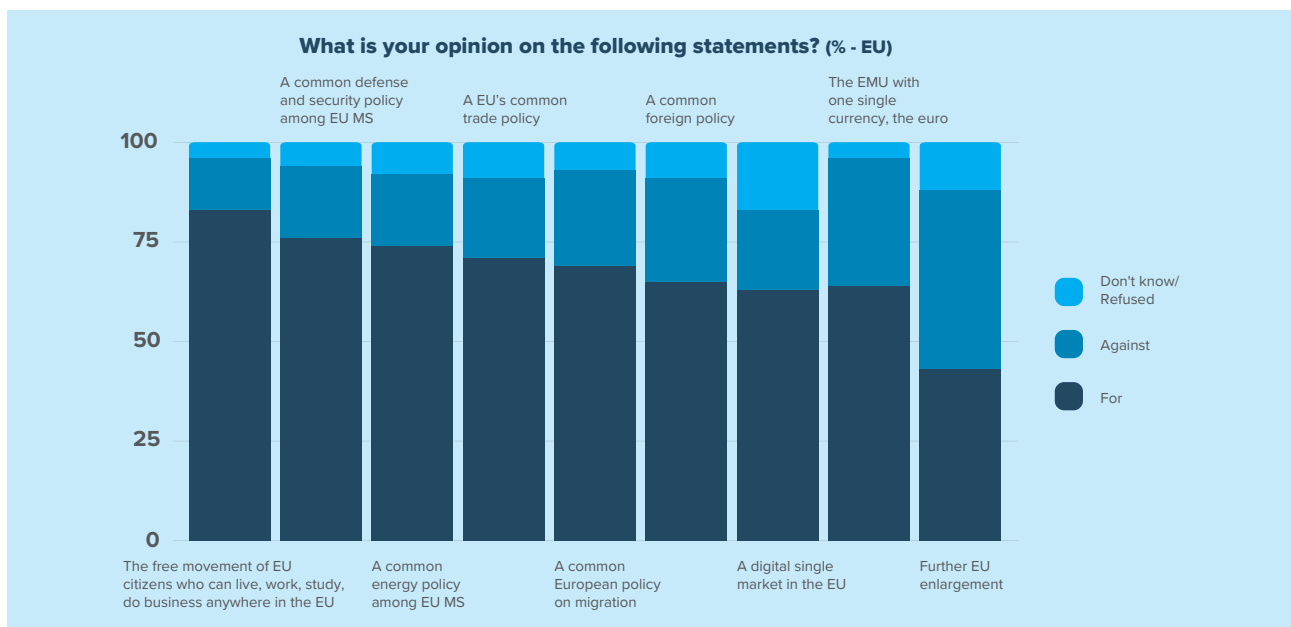
economic penetration of China into the European sphere of interest), the EU decided to “upgrade” the EES to the Global Strategy for European Foreign and Security Policy (EUGS). Germany and the UK were particularly unenthusiastic about the creation of a new strategy but in July 2012, the foreign ministers of Italy, Poland, Spain and Sweden initiated the ‘European Global Strategy’ project, tasking think tanks to start brainstorming about the issue. In the end, the ESG was published in 2016 and one of its biggest innovations was to call for the coordination of the various aspects of the EU’s external activities in areas such as: energy, cultural and economic diplomacy, internal and external security, security and development policy, as well as human rights and gender issues.

SUCCESSSES AND SUPPORT FOR THE EU FOREIGN POLICY

Over time, thanks to the crystallization of EU foreign policy priorities that was backed up by institutional changes, the Union has become a more vocal and active foreign policy player. Apart from the enlargement policy, which was perhaps the EU’s most positive foreign policy, the EU has scored a few more success stories. For example, it delivered in achieving a breakthrough in the talks between

Kosovo and Serbia (2013) as well as contributed to successfully fighting piracy around the Horn of Africa (2014). And despite Russian President Putin’s best efforts, all 28 EU countries have stayed remarkably united behind the sanctions imposed on Russia after its annexation of Crimea and invasion of eastern Ukraine in early 2014. Above all, the EU helped secure a nuclear deal with Iran in 2015, which most probably would not have happened without it, working through an alliance of Britain, France and Germany. Recently, the EU contributed to the new opening towards Cuba (2016)¹¹.

In general, EU citizens support the EU common foreign policy. Almost two-thirds (65%) are in favour of “a common foreign policy of the 28 Member States of the EU” and only 25% are against, according to the latest Eurobarometer polls¹². What is more, the overwhelming majority of citizens (78%) see the EU as a place of stability in today’s troubled world, which is a 10% increase in comparison with the results in 2016. As expected, EU foreign policy is not considered to be one of their EU top five priorities at the moment. According to EU citizens, foreign policy took only sixth place among ten political priorities for the EU, according to the same pollster. Interestingly, on average in the EU, more people are against further EU enlargement (45%) than in favour of it (43%).



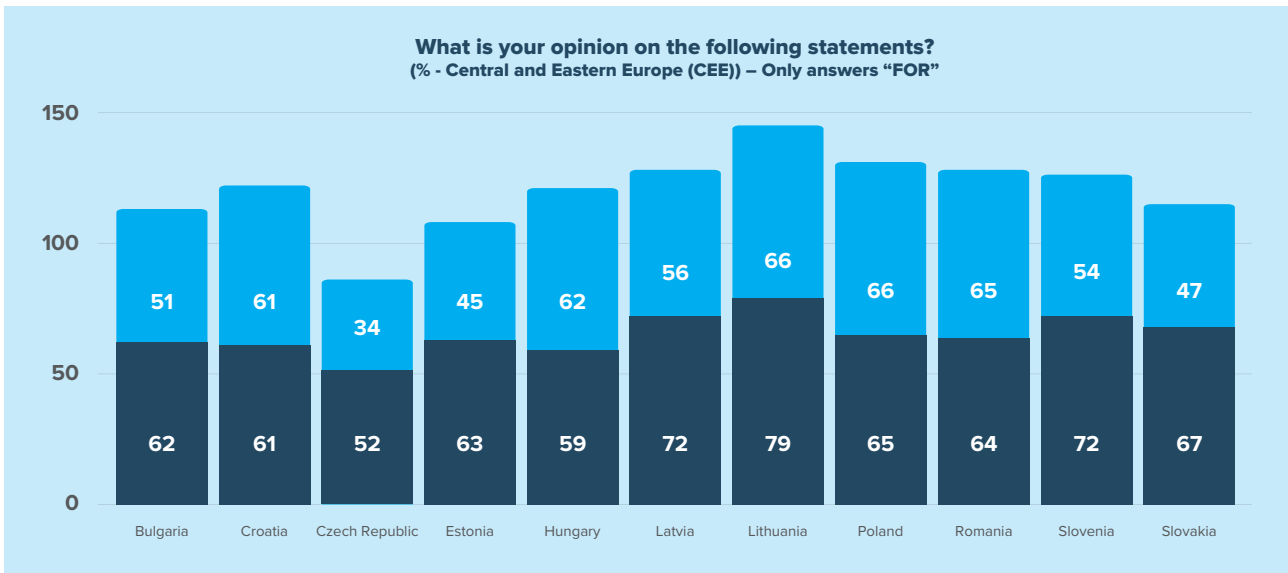
Source: Standard Eurobarometer 90, Autumn 2018

¹¹ Qualified majority voting: a tool to make Europe’s Foreign and Security Policy more effective from the European Commission, 2018, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/soteu2018-factsheet-qmv_en.pdf, accessed on March 2019 and Revisiting Scenarios For Europe: Central and Eastern European Perspectives, GLOBSEC, January 2018, <https://www.globsec.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Future-of-Europe.pdf>.

¹² Standard Eurobarometer 90 from the European Commission, <http://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Survey/getSurveyDetail/instruments/STANDARD/yearFrom/1974/yearTo/2019/surveyKy/2215>, accessed on March 2019.

Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) stands out in this regard, as almost all countries (except Czech Republic) favors EU enlargement. On average, 55% of Central and Eastern Europeans would welcome new EU Member States, which is 10% above the EU average. The most pro-enlargement countries are: Poland and Lithuania (66% each), Romania (65%),

Hungary (62%) and Croatia (61%); least favourable are Czech Republic (54% are against), Slovakia (41% against) and Slovenia (36% against). Central Eastern Europeans are positive about the EU’s common foreign policy. The most favorable are citizens of Lithuania (79%), Latvia and Slovenia (each 72%). The most citizens against are in Czech Republic (39%), Hungary (37%) and Croatia (33%).



Source: Standard Eurobarometer 90, Autumn 2018

When asked about the positive results of the EU integration project, EU citizens rank their political and diplomatic influence in the rest of the world rather low (21%), according to Eurobarometer polls. The two most positive results of the European Union according to Europeans remain the same, still far ahead of the others: “The free movement of people, goods and services within the EU” (59%) and “peace among the Member States of the EU” (55%).

CHALLENGES TO EU COMMON FOREIGN POLICY

There is no doubt that the EU’s Common Foreign Policy has been strengthened considerably over recent years and it would be wrong to write off European-level activities in the area of international relations. However, the EU has consistently failed to turn its economic power into foreign policy influence and has relied on pro-activ powers like the UK and France to increase the Union’s effectiveness as a foreign policy actor. Brexit potentially will make things worse for both sides: the UK will be more autonomous but less influential and the EU will be more united but less active.

Other challenges to the EU’s role in world affairs include, first, that the EU is still slow in reacting to global events, and often cannot often speak with one voice. Since the beginning of cooperation in foreign and security policy, Member States have had a dilemma between efficiency and “speaking with one voice” and the maintenance of national sovereignty.

The first group has opted for a more unified ‘European’ foreign policy machine that would provide “the famous telephone number that Mr Kissinger mentioned” (particularly small and new Member States, and to some extent Germany). The second group has been calling for maintenance of national sovereignty in this policy area (e.g. France, the Netherland and Britain). The division was seen for example, during the European Convention which drafted the Lisbon Treaty. At that time there was no consensus for using the title of “Union Minister for Foreign Affairs” for the EU High Representative which resembled state-like elements in the EU institutions or equipping the EU delegation.

What is more, Member States did not agree to give the EEAS a consular role for exactly the same reasons. Moreover, in many cases there is no consensus on speaking for the Member States in international

organizations (even though some exceptions like in the WTO and the UNFCCC exist)¹³. For example, while Germany insists on the EU having a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council, France rejects Germany's wish for replacing France as the EU representative at UN Security Council¹⁴.

Finally, the EU decision making process is often paralyzed. The EU cannot react quickly to the rapidly changing international environment as decisions under the CFSP have to be taken in unanimity such as, for example, imposing sanctions on countries or individuals or suspending accession negotiations with third countries. This became evident while forming common positions on: the war in Iraq, the Kosovo conflict, tensions in the South China Sea, human rights in the People's Republic of China, moving embassies to Jerusalem, and supporting the leadership in Venezuela.

Second, not all Member States participate actively in shaping the EU's foreign policy. Most of the countries would rather limit themselves to being vocal about only their own priorities without taking a more holistic approach. For example, while Central and Eastern Europe actively shape the EU's policy in areas such as relations with Russia, cooperation with the Balkan countries, and the Eastern Partnership, they have offered little in the way of support for the EU's efforts to improve ties with Latin America, East Asia and its southern flank, most notably the Mediterranean Union, mobility partnerships or civilian Common Security and Defence Policy missions in Africa. None of the CEE countries, even Poland, the country with the biggest demographic and economic potential, actively shape the European Global Strategy¹⁵.

Third, the EU is unable to expand after both enduring "enlargement fatigue" and losing its appeal for prospective new Member States. To put it simply, due to internal challenges that the EU is facing and the worrisome developments, for example in Hungary, Poland, Romania, the EU is not ready to enlarge further in the short or medium term (post 2025 period). Some Member States even regret giving a green light too fast for the "big bang accession" between 2004-2007. Therefore, today there is

a core group of member states striving to keep enlargement policy on the agenda, while others are skeptical or indifferent. On the other side, the 2018 Balkan barometer shows that the Western Balkans' enthusiasm towards the EU is now low¹⁶.

With the accession process lasting for nearly two decades now and further accessions not being imminent or offering even a distant perspective for certain (potential) candidates, people are becoming more frustrated by the diminishing opportunities for joining the EU.

Fourth, the EEAS lacks both the legitimacy and the means to lead a comprehensive European foreign policy that integrates diplomacy with trade, energy and other areas of the Commission's competence. While the Member States should be coordinating their positions and actions internationally (according to the provisions in the Lisbon Treaty), consequently enabling the EEAS to negotiate on their behalf as a block, in practice it is not happening. The European diplomats lack clear mandates from both Member States and the Commission. Partially is it because bigger Member States who have already direct access to decision makers in big countries (United States, China or Russia) are not willing to delegate responsibility to the EU. To sum up, the EEAS and the network of delegations are, instead of pursuing traditional diplomatic functions, "being of service to EU member states"¹⁷.

Interestingly, the smaller or new member states have benefited from "Europeanisation" of its foreign policy, exactly for the same reasons. The Central and Eastern European countries have benefited from the EU joint position towards Russia or the EU representations in the countries which are not their "usual suspects" in their foreign policy such as Latin American countries.

Finally, EEAS resources, and therefore its reach, are limited. The EEAS's budget is just under 700 million EUR, about the size of the defence budget of Lithuania¹⁸. Even though the EU (512.6 million people) has a network of 140 delegations and employs 4,067 people (2017), including 1568 in

13 Heidi Maurer, Jost-Henrik Morgenstern-Pomorski, "The quest for throughput legitimacy: the EEAS, EU delegations and the contested structures of European diplomacy", *Global Affairs*, 21 December 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23340460.2018.1535252>, accessed on March 2019.

14 France rejects German wish for EU seat at UN Security Council, *Deutsche Welle*, 29 November 2019, <https://www.dw.com/en/france-rejects-german-wish-for-eu-seat-at-un-security-council/a-46513931>, accessed on March 2019.

15 Revisiting Scenarios For Europe: Central and Eastern European Perspectives, *GLOBSEC*, 28 January 2018, <https://www.globsec.org/publications/revisiting-scenarios-europe-central-eastern-european-perspectives/#e4RU006hfimHVGqL.99>, accessed on March 2019.

16 According to the pollster, Serbia remains the region's frequently Eurosceptic (even though its economic and political ties with the EU continue to grow), Serbian public is influenced by the narratives hostile towards the EU. In Kosovo* and Albania, there is much enthusiasm but accession prospects remain bleak. Bosnia and Herzegovina's public remains the most depressed in the region. [in:] *Balkan Barometer 2018*, <https://www.rcc.int/download/docs/PUBLIC%20OPINION%20-%20RCC%20Balkan%20Barometer%202018.pdf/b56d30eb1af53ab00d6eb30cfcbad304.pdf>, accessed on March 2019.

17 Heidi Maurer, Jost-Henrik Morgenstern-Pomorski, "The quest for throughput legitimacy: the EEAS, EU delegations and the contested structures of European diplomacy", *Global Affairs*, 21 December 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23340460.2018.1535252>, accessed on March 2019.

18 Defence Expenditure of NATO Countries (2011-2018) from NATO, 10 July 2018, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2018_07/20180709_180710-pr2018-91-en.pdf, accessed on March 2019.

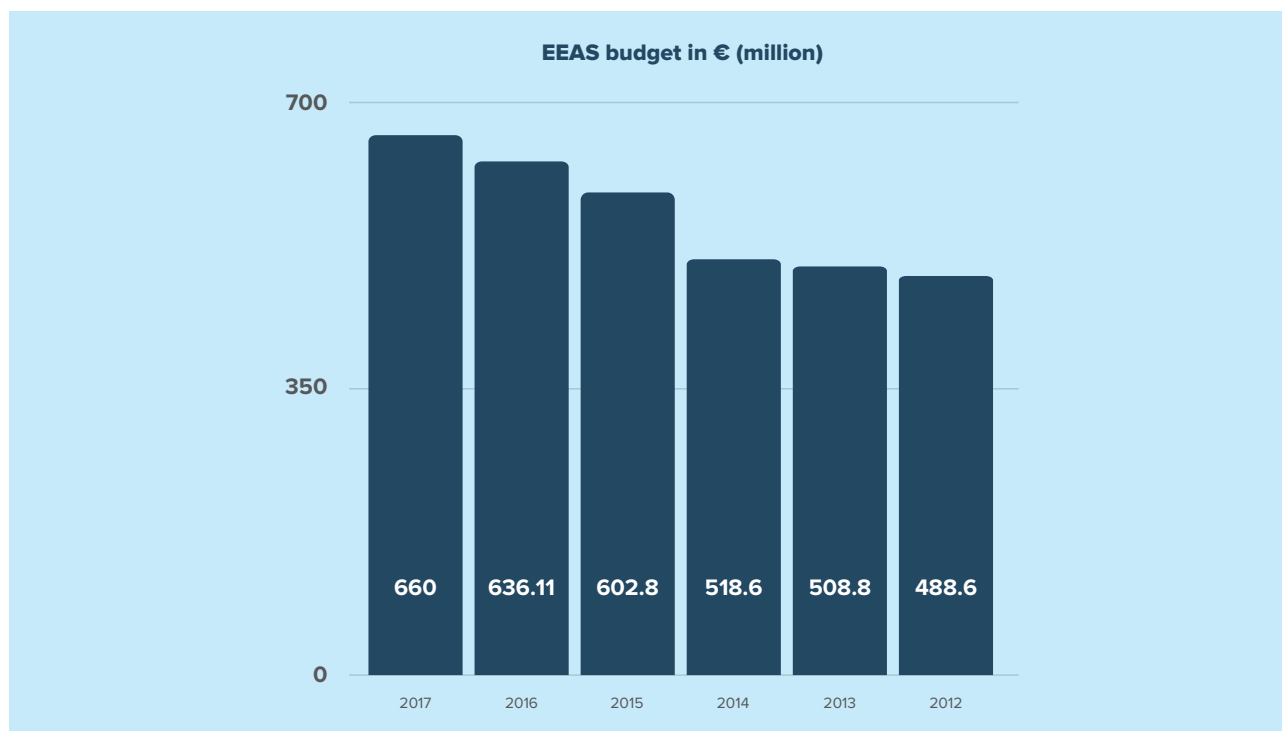
Brussels and 3137 in foreign delegations, its reach is limited. To compare, Poland (38 million people) with 95 embassies employs only 500 people less. To be precise, the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs employs 3,681 people (2017), from which 2,417 form a part of Poland's foreign service and an additional 1,264 employees work at the embassies.¹⁹ The

United States (327 million people) has established diplomatic relations with 191 countries in the world while they have 170 Embassies. The U.S. State Department employs 75,755 people, from which 13,764 form part of their foreign service²⁰.

Development of EEAS | Human Resources

	Officials	Temporary Agents	Seconded National Experts	Junior Professionals in EU Delegations	Contract agents	Local agents	Total	Average size of EU Delegation
2017	1241	324	449	41	420	2230	4705	22
2016	1273	336	445	39	397	1082	3572	14
2015	1234	351	434	38	357	1107	3521	14
2014	1256	355	407	46	347	1070	3481	14
2013	1246	335	371	29	336	1057	3364	13
2012	1297	212	326	37	323	1144	3249	13

Source: Annual Activity Reports EEAS



In 2017, additionally the EEAS received a contribution of 185.6 M€ from the Commission for the administrative management of Commission staff in the network of EU Delegations.

Source: Annual Activity Reports EEAS

¹⁹ Number of civil servants in Poland, 2017, https://dsc.kprm.gov.pl/sites/default/files/zal_1_zatrudnienie_w_sluzbie_cywilnej_w_2017_r_1.pdf, accessed on March 2019.

²⁰ HR Fact Sheet Facts about Our Most Valuable Asset – Our People (as of 31/12/2018) from U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Human Resources, <https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/284259.pdf>, accessed on March 2019.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It would be naïve to think that Member States' foreign policies, given the profoundly divergent interests rooted in still fresh historical experiences, become entirely consistent. It has also often been true of relations with Russia. The CEE countries generally take a tougher line than older members. Even on China, internal differences have persisted over whether to end the EU's arms embargo. The Lisbon Treaty's improved procedures and institutions and the European Global Strategy defined the priorities for EU external action, but they cannot substitute for the political will and leadership of Member States which play a key role in decision making processes. This trend is however with us to stay still for some time. For example, Member States would probably not agree to voting on a proposal by the European Commission to switch from unanimity to qualified majority voting (QMV) in responding to attacks on human rights, applying sanctions, and launching and managing civilian security and defence missions. Even though this innovation would make it easier for the EU to be more consistent on the international scene, and to react in a more timely manner on the challenges coming from its wider neighborhood or beyond, Member States are expected to block it for fear of being pulled into EU actions that they oppose (i.e. small Member States but also France or Italy). Introducing QMV could potentially have an opposite effect than expected. Instead of unifying Member States, it has the potential to divide them apart even further²¹.

If the EU wants to play an active role in shaping the rules of future global governance, respond timely to the crises in its neighborhood, project its values, promote multilateralism or contribute to peace and prosperity in the world, the EU Member States should look for the policy areas which unite them and defend their success stories. For example, supporters of the Western Balkans enlargement argue that further enlargement is in the EU's interest and can be seen as a stress test for the EU's ability to act as a global player. Perhaps the idea of Enrico Letta, a former prime minister of Italy, who suggested two decades ago to form an intermediate forum of associate membership could be back on the table. This form could be better for the Western Balkans than a choice between full membership or nothing.

The EU should however act fast. It would be a dangerous illusion to believe that the EU has plenty of time in the Western Balkans. Other powers such

as China, Russia and Turkey, are yearning to extend their influence in the region. If the EU does not act more decisively, it will thus (further) lose its leverage in the region²². As for the success stories, the EU will probably fight hard to defend the Iranian nuclear deal and to stick to a common line over Russia.

On the other hand, the EU and its MS should avoid situations, which exploit even further European divisions on foreign policy. For example, the Polish-US Middle East conference in Warsaw, held in February 2019, demonstrated a lack of coordination of the policies of the EU with the guarantors of the Iran deal (such as France, Germany and the UK). Another example is the EU-Arab League (February 2019) summit that took place in Cairo, which again exposed Europe's inability to present a cohesive and unified front on the issues relevant to both regions (i.e. Member States were unable to sign off on a joint political declaration at a meeting between European and Arab foreign ministers in Brussels, despite Arab agreement on a draft version). What is more, the EU should keep looking for consensus in its policy towards Israel that has continuously divided the EU. The decision by the Czech Republic and Romania to follow the US's moving its embassy to Jerusalem (instead of abiding by the EU' position not to move embassies) does not help.

Additionally, Member States should invest more, and take more advantage of, the EEAS, for example by learning the lessons from the UK. The UK was always skillful in using the CFSP as complementary to its national foreign policy. What is more, London was successful in persuading other EU member-states to follow the UK lead in areas where few except Britain had any interests. The large Member States, that for years were unwilling to give up their networks and know-how in third countries, could also start delegating responsibility to the EU for most of their diplomatic relations with major powers such as the U.S. or the BRIC countries. On the other hand, the small, new Member States should start paying attention to the regions with which they traditionally had no close ties, such as Africa or Latin America. Member States should also call for an increase of EEAS' budget in the new Multiannual Financial Framework. If EEAS does not receive a considerable increase in financial or human resources, it will remain trapped in a role dependent on unanimous acceptance by Member States.

Finally, to avoid a stalemate, Member States could eventually agree on allowing its members for

21 Sophia Besch, Ian Bond, Agata Gostyrńska-Jakubowska, Camino Mortera-Martinez and Sam Lowe, "Europe without the UK: Liberated or Diminished?", Center For European Reform Insight, 13 March 2019, <https://www.cer.eu/insights/europe-without-uk-liberated-or-diminished>, accessed on March 2019.

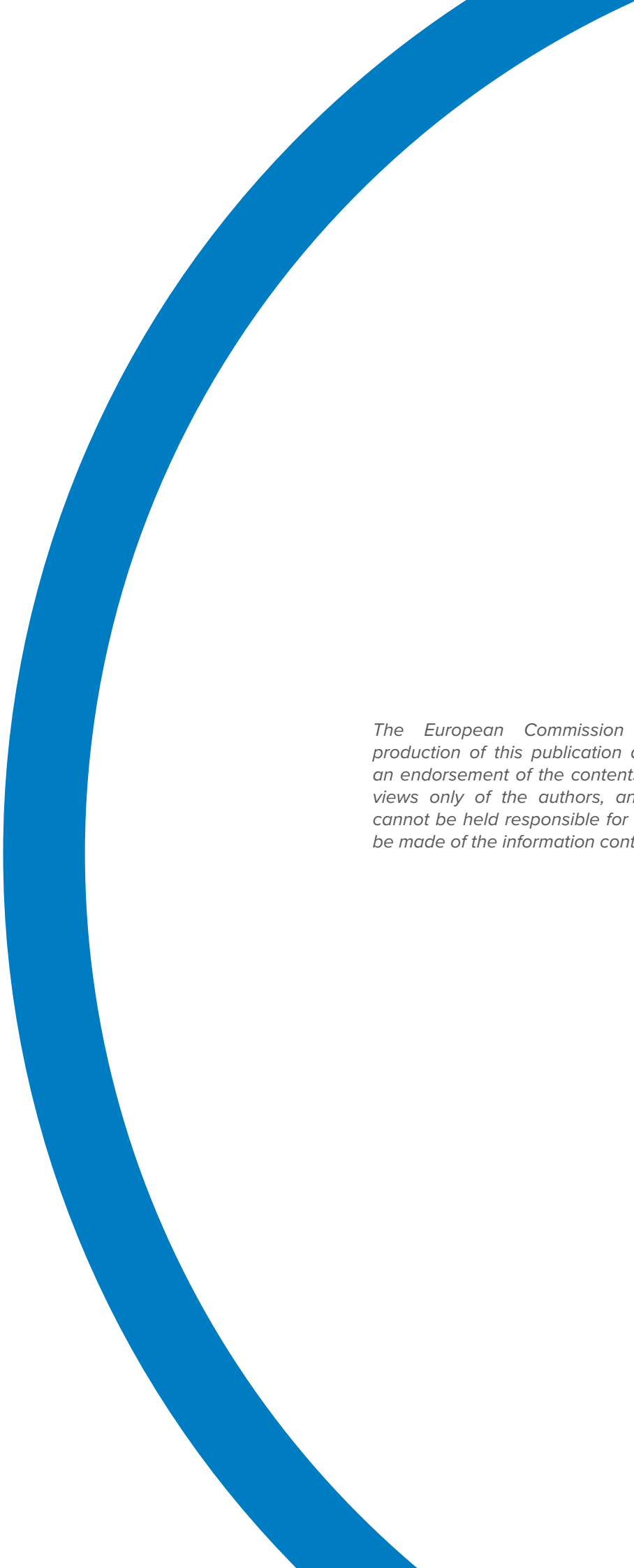
22 Theresia Töglhofer, EU Enlargement Policy in the Western Balkans: The Need for a New Sense of Urgency, <https://www.globsec.org/events/eu-for-eign-policy-differentiated-cooperation-in-action/> accessed on April 2019.

some degree of flexibility in foreign relation. The idea originally coming from the Maastricht Treaty included a “pillar structure” which attempted to create common foreign and security policies on an inter-governmental basis, without supervision or interference by the EU’s institutions. Something that is already taking place informally, for example, is the so-called “Berlin process” with the Western Balkans, in which Member States such as Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, France, Greece, Germany, Poland, Slovenia, the UK, Italy are involved. Another example is “16+1” format of cooperation between China and Central and Eastern European Countries (11 EU member states and 5 Balkan countries). The flexibility could be also reclaimed in a different way, by engaging non-members such as the United Kingdom after Brexit, more closely than before, without necessarily involving EU institutions or courts.

THE ROLE OF CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

- ▶ While realising that the EU’s ambitious foreign policy outlook is strategically in CEE’s interest, the region still lacks the resources of big diplomatic delegations like France or Germany. CEE countries need the EU to help face the challenges posed by the likes of Russia. Given that the United Kingdom was traditionally more receptive to the CEE priorities in the east, the region should also invest in building up the capacity to participate in the shaping and making of the EU’s post-Brexit foreign policy (personnel, budget, expertise, and readiness to lead in some initiatives, coalition building with other players such as Scandinavia or the Big Four, esp. Germany).
- ▶ CEE should also show a more ambitious, constructive and supportive approach to shaping EU foreign policy. If it wants the EU to speak with one voice on the implementation or renewal of sanctions against Russia, it would need to show more solidarity in “non-traditional” foreign policy areas such as commitment or financial support for the Southern Neighbourhood.
- ▶ In a world of global challenges, CEE should support the EU in strengthening its presence and status in international fora and organisations. Central and Eastern Europe can be heard on the global issues only if it stands together with the Union as it has been successfully heard in the trade and climate fora of WTO and UNFCCC.
- ▶ Discussions in the framework of the EUact project show that according to young people, for example in Bulgaria and Slovakia, the EU amplifies the voice of smaller members when it comes to foreign policy²³. Therefore, it is in the CEE’s interest that “Nothing but the single market” scenario is prevented at any cost.

23 The European Union in the lives of young people, Key Findings, GLOBSEC, EP Elections and Beyond: Active Participation of EU Citizens at All Levels, https://www.globsec.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/EUact_Key-findings-focus-groups-2019-1.pdf accessed in April 2019.



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