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Introduction

Scope, Rationale and Relevance of the Book

This book is about the foreign policy of the European Union (EU). Applying a broad understanding of what EU foreign policy is, this book does not limit its analysis to foreign policy *sensu stricto*, namely the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), but examines EU foreign policy *sensu lato*, which also considers areas such as trade, development, enlargement or external environmental policy as an inherent part of foreign policy.

As we will explain in detail in Chapter 1, we argue that EU foreign policy is ‘multifaceted’ (comprising the broad range of areas such as CFSP, CSDP, trade, enlargement, etc.), ‘multi-method’ (combining various policy-making methods, some with the member states and others with supranational institutions like the European Commission in the driving seat) and ‘multilevel’ (entailing the national and the European levels). The rationale behind taking such a broad perspective is that the whole picture of EU foreign policy can only be fully understood and explained if one takes into account these various ‘facets’, ‘methods’ and ‘levels’.

We thus adopt a broad view on EU foreign policy, which we define as the area of European policies that is directed at the external environment with the objective of influencing that environment and the behaviour of other actors within it, in order to pursue interests, values and goals.

Considering the EU as a constantly evolving political system, the book discusses the opportunities and the constraints faced by the EU in developing a genuine foreign policy and becoming a fully-fledged global actor. It looks at what the EU can mean in international politics, how it aims to contribute to shaping the world order and what it actually achieves. It also opens the ‘black box’ of the EU: it examines how the EU functions internally when it acts internationally and what consequences this has for the EU’s external performance. The book gives an overview of the main areas of the EU’s foreign policy, its challenges and shortcomings, its driving forces as well as the political dynamics behind it.

When observing the foreign policy of the EU, one is often confronted with puzzling observations. They include, among others, the following questions. While the EU has established nearly 30 military and civilian crisis management operations and missions, why is it that the UK and France took the lead in a NATO operation in Libya in 2011 and that

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France sent combat forces on its own to Mali in 2013? As the EU aims at encompassing strategic partnerships with Russia or China, why are the member states simultaneously sidelining the EU by concluding bilateral agreements with those countries, for instance on energy issues? Why does the EU not have the right to speak with a single voice in most international organizations despite the fact that the EU has a Delegation in a majority of third countries? And, while the EU has achieved remarkable success in stabilizing and restructuring Central and Eastern Europe after the end of the Cold War through its enlargement policy, why is its relevance as a foreign policy actor still so often questioned? This book offers insights that contribute to a better understanding of these puzzles.

Why should we care about EU foreign policy? There are historical, empirical and analytical reasons why it is relevant to study the foreign policy of the EU. A first reason is indeed *historical* (see also Chapter 2). From its very start, European integration *was* foreign policy. The EU and European integration more generally are in themselves the product of successful American and French foreign policy in the 1950s, launched to embed West Germany within a broader supranational European framework: the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), which was later complemented by the European Economic Community (EEC). The goal was to limit national sovereignty and transfer power over crucial policy domains (at first coal and steel) in order to fundamentally resolve the enmity between European nations, which had led to two world wars and to tens of millions of casualties.

Since its early days, European integration not only focused on internal policies, but it also had an important external relations dimension. External trade policy, development cooperation, and establishing international agreements with third countries and other regions in the world have been a cornerstone of the EU's track record since the Treaty of Rome (1957). However, the very concept of 'foreign policy' was only explicitly included in the EU's range of activities in the Maastricht Treaty in the early 1990s, when the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) kicked off. The CFSP remained under the control of member states and it only modestly developed in the following years. After a British–French initiative at the end of the 1990s, the EU went a step further, launching its own Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). The entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009 included new changes to further increase – at least on paper – the coherence, effectiveness and visibility of the EU's foreign policy, including the creation of a European External Action Service (EEAS).

Six decades after six European countries began supranational integration with the establishment of the ECSC, the EU has developed into a political system with 28 member states and with powers over a broad range of policy fields. Today, European integration *is* still foreign policy, as is witnessed in the incorporation of the former communist countries

from Central and Eastern Europe in the mid-2000s. That European integration is foreign policy also appears in the EU's current support for the transformation of the countries that emerged from the wars in the Western Balkans, which in mid-2013 resulted in Croatia joining the EU. However, the EU is no longer simply the product of foreign policy; it also *has* a foreign policy, which is conducted through various channels and toolboxes. It is also recognized by other actors as an important international player in many respects.

A second reason why examining EU foreign policy is relevant relates to the fact that there is a range of both political and economic *empirical* indications that the EU is in some cases an important and influential international actor. Brussels today ranks second – following Washington, DC – on the list of cities hosting the highest number of diplomatic representatives worldwide. The EU itself currently has diplomatic delegations in nearly 130 countries all over the world. Whereas the EU was absent on a number of major battlefields, such as Iraq or Afghanistan, it does play a role in some of the world's most dangerous and sensitive, yet often less visible crisis areas, such as in Somalia or Mali. Since 2003, the EU has deployed almost 30 EU military operations and civilian missions on three continents, ranging from involvement in the Western Balkans, to anti-piracy operations near the Somali coast, to military training missions in Mali and Niger to help these countries in countering Jihadist forces. The EU closely cooperates in these areas with other international organizations such as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the United Nations (UN) or African regional organizations.

Equally important, the EU is a major economic actor, being the world's largest trading bloc. The EU today accounts for almost one-fifth of world trade in goods and even more when trade in services is included. Likewise, responsible for more than half of global development aid, the EU and its member states are the world's largest providers of development aid. With an annual spending of more than €1 billion it is the world's second largest humanitarian aid donor. In many other domains such as the environment, it clearly has global leadership ambitions. In the last decades, the EU has grown considerably as international actor. Foreign policy is today a remarkable area of European integration, especially given the fact that it goes to the heart of member state sovereignty.

A third reason why it is pertinent to study EU foreign policy is an *analytical* one. As we explained, the EU is *in se* also the product of the foreign policies of its member states. This book thus studies the foreign policy of a newly emerged political system, the EU, that is in itself also the result of the foreign policy of European countries. That the EU consists of member states which have decided to share some of their foreign policy powers but which also still continue to pursue their own foreign

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policies makes it extremely interesting to study from an analytical point of view. The EU is not an actor that behaves autonomously from the member states, but these member states are an inherent and crucial component of the EU and its foreign policy. This, again, triggers interesting questions. To what extent are the member states, for instance, an impeding or reinforcing factor in the EU's foreign policy? Indeed, since member states can support, sideline or even undermine the EU in its external relations, the multilevel nature of the political system of the EU can in some cases hinder but in other cases also strengthen the foreign policy activities of the EU. This book will present insights about whether, when and how the multilevel nature of the EU matters for its foreign policy.

The Changing Context of EU Foreign Policy

Since the end of the Second World War and the beginning of the European integration project, the context in which the EU conducts its foreign policy has evolved considerably. Depending on the perspective one uses or the argument one aims to present, multiple milestones can be identified in the evolution of the EU's foreign policy. Here, we use three episodes to illustrate this changing context. In each of these three episodes, two crucial subjects of foreign policy came together: conflicts and structures.

Our first episode took place at the very beginning of the European integration project. Immediately after the Second World War, Western European countries were confronted with increasing tensions with the Soviet Union, leading to an arms race between the West and the East. But, simultaneously, the threat of conflict and military disputes in Western Europe declined considerably. Because of the process of European integration (institutionalized today in the EU) and the process of transatlantic cooperation and solidarity (NATO), the political, economic and societal structures of the countries in Europe that were each other's enemies in the first half of the twentieth century became so interrelated that military conflict between them is now very unlikely. Indeed, the integration of the European countries was above all a peace project for Europe.

Second, the end of the Cold War at the end of the 1980s and early 1990s put a stop to the latent East–West confrontation and the related military threats that left their mark on international politics for over four decades. This episode also meant the political reunification of the European continent, whereby the EU assisted the former communist countries from Central and Eastern Europe to reshape their political and economic structures. Step by step, those countries became modern democracies and shifted their economic structures from a planned

economy to a free market one. This was largely triggered by the prospect of EU membership and was made possible by the EU's active involvement, demonstrating that the EU's enlargement policy is probably its most effective foreign policy tool. However, developments in the Western Balkans, and particularly in former Yugoslavia, were largely denied and a horrible conflict took place in the EU's backyard. Only with the help of non-EU actors, including NATO, could peace be established in the region. This allowed the EU to aim to restructure the relations between and inside the Western Balkan countries.

Covering events in the EU's southern neighbourhood, at the global level and inside the EU, a third episode occurred at the beginning of the current decade. In the southern neighbourhood, the Arab revolts and the subsequent events in countries like Libya, Syria and Mali have generated regime changes as well as armed conflicts and military interventions in the EU's neighbourhood. In addition to this military dimension, the question that is even more crucial is what political, economic and societal structures in these countries will look like when the storm of the revolts has calmed down. Will the EU be successful in supporting the creation of new legitimate structures in the Mediterranean and convince the population and elites of the EU's added value, or will the Gulf states and Islamic movements be more successful in exerting structural power in the region? Moreover, another shift in the balance of power at the global level is taking place. China and other emerging powers are assuming a stronger stance in international politics, diplomacy or even financial systems – often at the expense of the EU's position on the international scene. Finally, the financial and sovereign debt crisis in the eurozone is confronting the EU with probably the worst and most challenging crisis in its history. One of the consequences is the fact that the EU is rather increasingly focusing on solving its internal problems than on foreign policy. Hence, whereas the EU is focusing on internal crises and developments in its neighbourhood, a global shift is taking place, which is probably even more important for the EU's future aspirations as foreign policy actor.

These three episodes in European integration and international relations demonstrate the complexity and diverse character of EU foreign policy. Moreover, they show that the context in which EU foreign policy takes place has fundamentally changed. But they also make clear that (the analysis of) foreign policy always has to deal with two facets: the avoidance, management and solution of conflicts on the one hand, and the structuring of societies, states and regions on the other. Whereas the former receives much attention in scholarly analyses of foreign policy, the latter is largely overlooked. One of the aims of this book is to contribute to filling that gap.

Objectives and Approach

This book has two major objectives. The first objective is to provide an overview and analysis of EU foreign policy. For purposes of clarity, the book is organized in a rather conventional way, including a historical chapter, three chapters on actors, institutions and policy-making, one chapter on key issues in EU foreign policy, four chapters on the main facets of EU foreign policy (the CFSP; the CSDP; the EU's external action, including trade, development and humanitarian aid; and the external dimensions of internal policies, such as external energy, environment or migration policies), and finally three chapters on the EU's foreign policy towards other parts of the world and towards multilateral organizations. In every chapter, we present the formal and legal bases of the issues discussed, an analysis of how they function in practice, followed by a critical evaluation.

The second objective relates to the argument presented in the previous section. It aims to reappraise the nature of EU foreign policy and of foreign policy more generally. It looks beyond the narrow focus of foreign policy analysis (FPA) on states, crises and conflicts by focusing also on what we term structural foreign policy. This conceptual approach (elaborated in Chapter 1 and returned to in the assessment of theoretical approaches in Chapter 14) provides a vehicle for understanding how foreign policy seeks to shape and influence structures and long-term processes.

This book takes more of an 'inside-out' than an 'outside-in' approach. While we do evaluate the output of EU foreign policy, not least by taking a geographical perspective in Chapters 11 and 12, we can only provide a snapshot of the actual impact of EU foreign policy. Likewise, although the majority of relevant issues and geographical locations are discussed to some extent, we cannot consider the EU's policy with regard to every region of the world or every issue on the international agenda.

Outline of Chapters

Chapter 1 points to the main themes and questions to be tackled in this book by focusing on the particular nature of EU foreign policy. The multifaceted (comprising CFSP/CSDP, external action areas such as trade or development, and the external dimension of internal policies such as external environmental or energy policies), multi-method (using an intergovernmental and a Community policy-making method) and multilevel (based on the interaction between member states and the EU) nature of EU foreign policy is explained here in detail. The chapter also portrays the various areas of tension which influence this policy, and it presents the principles and objectives which inform the EU's foreign

policy. The ‘structural foreign policy versus relational foreign policy’ framework is introduced as an approach to analyse the various dimensions of EU foreign policy. Finally, we situate the analysis of EU foreign policy within the context of globalization.

Chapter 2 gives a historical overview of the ambiguous relationship between European integration and foreign policy from the end of the Second World War to the present day. Analysing the various steps that have been taken, we show that considerable progress has been made in developing a foreign policy at the European level. The chapter also demonstrates how the roots of current discussions on European foreign and security policy are to be found in early debates and policy choices.

Chapter 3 provides an in-depth analysis of the actors and procedures of EU foreign policy. We explore the divergence between a single institutional framework on paper, and the practice of different policy-making methods and competences. The main actors are then analysed: the European Council (bringing together the heads of state and government of the member states); the Council (where ministers of foreign affairs or other sectoral ministers – or their representatives – of the member states meet); the Commission (playing a key role in defining and defending the common interest); the High Representative/Vice-President and the EU’s diplomatic service (European External Action Service); the European Parliament (directly elected by the European citizens); and the Court of Justice of the EU (providing judicial oversight); as well as some actors beyond the traditional institutional framework (such as agencies, banks and private actors). Examining who or what is behind the façade of each of these actors, the chapter also provides an evaluation of their functioning and their contribution to EU foreign policy.

In Chapter 4, we proceed to analyse the policy-making process that takes place between the actors presented in the preceding chapter. We provide an overview of the distribution and the nature of the formal competences in the area of foreign policy. The various decision-making procedures are analysed, first from a formal point of view, in order to focus next on the broader policy-making processes as they occur in practice. Both are essential to understand the nature, opportunities and constraints of EU foreign policy as well as the complex web of intra-institutional, inter-institutional and interstate interaction and bargaining that it involves. We argue that on paper, the decision-making processes seem unworkable, but that in practice the EU’s various foreign policy actors have developed ways to overcome this complexity. The chapter also discusses the issue of financing EU foreign policy. Finally, it addresses questions regarding the consistency of the EU’s foreign policy.

Chapter 5 aims to analyse the national level of foreign policy-making and its relationship with the European level. National foreign policy actors indeed play an important role within each of the policy-making systems analysed in the previous chapter. The chapter examines the

constitutional set-up and foreign policy-making mechanisms of the ‘big three’: the UK, France and Germany. In the multilevel foreign policy system, member states position themselves in terms of power, interests, world-views, role conceptions and special relationships, which has significant ramifications on policy at the EU level. This chapter offers a critical assessment of the ‘Europeanization’ debate as well as of arguments that are traditionally invoked to explain the limits of EU foreign policy, particularly ‘the lack of common interests’ and ‘the lack of political will’.

Chapter 6 discusses four key issues of EU foreign policy: human rights, democracy and the rule of law; conflict prevention, crisis management and peace-building; non-proliferation and control of arms exports; and the fight against terrorism. These key issues are tackled through policies adopted in the context of CFSP, CSDP and the EU’s ‘external action’, which are discussed in the following chapters. The chapter explains the goals and priorities set by the EU and clarifies the range of instruments available and actors responsible. It then evaluates the EU’s actions in the light of its declaratory objectives and external impact.

Chapter 7 focuses on the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). A preliminary legal and political assessment of CFSP’s basic principles and instruments provides the grounding for analysis. It becomes apparent that cooperation between member states is at least as important as common actions or positions and that, often, unilateral action continues to prevail. The chapter analyses the scope of CFSP, which has widened greatly in the last two decades. It also assesses the extent to which the EU’s declaratory policy has been complemented with an operational foreign policy.

Chapter 8 on the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) takes stock of the efforts to provide the EU with military and civilian capabilities and to strengthen its crisis management capacities. Taking into account the EU’s relations with NATO, the chapter first discusses the military dimension of CSDP. We demonstrate that the EU’s military capabilities are not achieved by creating permanent European forces, but that they are based on the voluntary and temporary contribution of the member states. The chapter then analyses the civilian dimension of CSDP, which is focused on the deployment of non-military actors who contribute to security outside the EU. We present an overview of the EU’s record regarding CSDP military operations and civilian missions. The chapter offers analytical axes along which CSDP operations and future developments can be measured. Attempts to strengthen the industrial and technological basis of the European defence sector are also analysed.

Chapter 9 focuses on policy fields developed within the framework of the EU’s ‘external action’: trade, association and cooperation agreements, enlargement, development cooperation, sanctions, and humanitarian aid. These are essential for the foreign policy of the EU since they

provide its major instruments and have shaped the formation of EU foreign policy, yet paradoxically can hinder the achievement of some of its objectives. We demonstrate that the EU's attempt to protect strategic and trade interests in many cases prevail over and undermine its stated foreign policy goals.

Chapter 10 assesses the external dimension of some equally relevant 'internal' policy fields. We discuss how the EU acts internationally in the fields of energy, environment and climate change, and in the field of freedom, security and justice. We present the challenges the EU faces, the way it responds and the impediments it encounters. The EU's external activities in these areas have had a marked impact on its foreign policy as well as the way in which it is perceived by third countries and regions. In these policy fields, member states vary in their acceptance of common policies, despite the limited ability of individual states to tackle these inherently transnational challenges. The chapter ends by discussing two challenges for the EU on which it has no real external policy: health and demography.

Chapter 11, using the concepts developed throughout the preceding chapters, provides an overview and assessment of EU foreign policy towards its neighbourhood: the Western Balkans, Eastern Europe, the Mediterranean and the Middle East. For each region, as well as for the EU's European Neighbourhood Policy in general, we assess the extent to which the EU has moved beyond trade and contractual relations to developing a relational and structural foreign policy. We demonstrate that the EU has gradually and partially developed policies to help resolve conflicts, particularly in the Western Balkans. However, in contrast to the ambitions raised in the late 1990s and early 2000s, the EU increasingly faces problems in further developing an effective structural foreign policy. This can to some extent be explained by the rise of other structural powers, which is the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter 12 focuses on the EU's relationship with competing powers: global powers (such as the United States, Russia and China) and the group of emerging powers (such as India and Brazil). The chapter critically assesses the EU's so-called 'strategic partnerships' concluded with these states. We demonstrate that the EU is increasingly facing competition from Russia and China, particularly in regions like the Eastern neighbourhood or Africa. The EU also experiences that these powers do not always share the EU's foreign policy priorities and methods. Furthermore, the chapter turns to the increasingly influential structures under the umbrella term of 'Islamism'.

In Chapter 13, we look at the EU's self-proclaimed 'choice of effective multilateralism' and assess the great variety in the legal status, coordination and representation of the EU in international fora. A mixed picture emerges from the evaluation of the EU's policy in the UN, international financial institutions (such as the International Monetary Fund and the

World Bank), and the G7/8/20. Although the EU's participation in international organizations is often hindered by both external and internal legal constraints and by the divergences in member states' preferences on the desirability of European unity in international organizations, we also argue that the EU has established close relationships and practical working methods to engage in the global governance architecture. The usefulness of a 'single voice' and strictly coordinated EU positions in multilateral settings is also critically assessed. Furthermore, presenting the example of emerging power coalitions such as the BRICS (including Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) and expanding multilateral frameworks in the Southern hemisphere and the Asia-Pacific area, the chapter discusses the rise of competing multilateral settings, in which the EU is largely absent and wherein competing conceptions of multilateralism are promoted.

Finally, in Chapter 14, we consider the implications of our findings with regard to theories of international relations, European integration and constructivism and consider the state of the art of these theoretical schools in the light of our empirical findings. We conclude by assessing the use of the 'structural foreign policy versus relational foreign policy' which is used as an overarching framework in the analyses presented in this book.

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Note: page numbers in **bold** are major entries.

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