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The EU as a Global Actor and the Emergence of ‘Third Generation’ Regionalism

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The EU as a Global Actor and the Emergence of ‘Third Generation’ Regionalism

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Abstract

After a first generation of regionalism that focussed primarily upon trade and economic integration, a second generation – often referred to as ‘new regionalism’ – broadened integration to internal policies and regulations. Today, a ‘third generation’ of regionalism is emerging that emphasises the role of regions as global actors. This article examines the role of the EU as a ‘global actor’ on several dimensions (trade, development, security and the implementation of global regimes) that are usually attributed to ‘new regionalism’. Next, it will be explored how the EU can also be regarded as a prototype of the emerging ‘third generation’ regionalism that emphasises the role of regions as global actors within the global institutions such as the U.N. This ‘third generation’ regionalism can lead towards a new kind of inter-regional relations and a new ‘regional world order’ that is not post-Westphalian but rather neo-Westphalian. Viewed from a U.N. perspective, this opens possibilities to re-think multilateralism into what Hettne (2003) has called “multiregionalism”.

1. From First to Second Generation Regionalism

Regional integration and globalization are the two phenomena challenging the existing global order based upon sovereign states at the beginning of the XXIst century. Regional integration has acquired several meanings as a process of interacting influences that have both a historic and geographical dimension.

On the path towards building a coherent classification of the complex phenomenon comprised under the name of ‘regionalism’, the academic literature has paid attention to two dimensions: (1) the chronological one and (2) the qualitative one. Most of the literature mixes a primarily chronological approach (identifying several successive ‘waves’ of regionalism) with a qualitative one (making the difference between ‘old’ and ‘new’ regionalism). From a purely chronological perspective, part of the academic literature 1 distinguishes two waves of regionalism, taking into account only the regional agreements developed world-wide after the end of WWII, while other authors 2 see three distinct periods of regionalism, by including also in their calculations the experiments carried out between the two World Wars. The difference between ‘old’ and ‘new’ stems from the fact that ‘we are dealing with a qualitatively new phenomenon’ 3. Hettne describes this qualitative difference as follows:
‘Some notable differences between the ‘old’ and ‘new’ regionalism are thus that current processes of regionalization are more from ‘below’ and ‘within’ than before, and that not only economic, but also ecological and security imperatives push countries and communities towards cooperation within new types of frameworks. The actors behind regionalist projects are no longer states only, but a large number of different types of institutions, organizations and movements. Furthermore, today’s regionalism is extroverted rather than introverted, which reflects the deeper interdependence of today’s global economy. ‘Open regionalism’ is thus one way of coping with global transformation, since an increasing number of states realise that they lack the capability and the means to manage such a task on the ‘national’ level. One of the defining characteristics of the New Regionalism is, finally, that it takes place in a multipolar global order, whereas old regionalism was marked by bipolarity’.

In order to better grasp the complexity of regionalism one could speak of ‘generations’ rather than ‘waves’. This helps to underline the coexistence of several kinds of regional agreements different in quality/content, while meanwhile also acknowledging that some forms of regionalism build upon previous ones. The use of ‘generations’ avoids the strict separation in ‘chronological clusters’ as we are still witnessing today the birth of ‘first generation’ agreements, which develop themselves next to more updated ‘second’ generation regional constructions, such as the EU, ASEAN, MERCOSUR. This idea has also been underlined by Söderbaum (2002) who finds ‘the identification of new patterns of regionalization (co-existing with older forms) more relevant’ than a strict chronological separation between them. Speaking in terms of generations also allows avoiding the dichotomy between ‘old’ and ‘new’ regionalism: is ‘new regionalism’ after all these years still new? It seems that a ‘neo’ new regionalism or ‘third generation’ regionalism with greater ambitions in global governance in general and the UN institutions in particular is gradually shaping up.

1.1 First Generation: Economic Regionalism

The ‘first generation’ of regionalism is based upon the idea of a linear process of economic integration involving the combination of separate (national) economies into larger economic regions. This process begins with a free trade area - in which states agree to remove all custom duties and quotas on trade between them keeping however the right to determine unilaterally the level of custom duties on imports coming from outside the area - and moves through successive stages of integration (customs union, common market) until it reaches the point of an economic union. Mattli defines economic integration as ‘the voluntary linking in the economic domain of two or more formerly independent states to the extent that authority over key areas of domestic regulation and policy is shifted to the supranational level’, underlining therefore the transnational aspect of the new economic ties created.

The classical example of this linear evolution of economic integration is offered by the evolution of Western Europe after WWII: the creation of the European Economic Community with the Treaty of Rome in 1957 removing the tariffs and quotas on intra-EEC trade, the achievement of a Customs Union in 1968 with the establishment of a common external tariff (CET), the creation of a Single European Market in the mid-1980s eliminating the barriers still existing to trade and the establishment of the ‘four freedoms’ of circulation (persons, goods, services and capital). The economic union is in the process of being completed following the
creation of the single currency, although, even in the EU, unification is still needed in important fields such as fiscal policy.

There are nevertheless numerous other examples worldwide of first generation regional agreements placed at different levels of the above-mentioned spectrum of economic integration. The European market integration has become a trigger for the creation of similar common markets and free trade areas in the Middle East, Africa, the Pacific and the Americas during the 1960s and early 1970s. First generation regionalism is still nowadays a booming phenomenon and has expanded its geographical scope to all the continents of the world. According to the WTO Committee on Regional Trade Agreements, by July 2003, only three WTO members (Macau China, Mongolia and Chinese Taipei) were not yet parties to such agreements. The surge in these agreements has continued since the early 1990s. By May 2003, over 265 had been notified to the WTO (and its predecessor, GATT). Over 190 are currently in force; another 60 are believed to be operational although not yet notified. Judging by the number of agreements reportedly planned or already under negotiation, the total number of regional trade agreements in force is now approaching 300.8

Although a purely economic process, the original intentions behind first generation regional agreements can be political. This is the case with the predecessors of the European Union: the driving force between the idea of linking the economies of France and Germany was security and the prevention of war.

1.2 Second Generation: the ‘New Regionalism’

The development of the political dimension is nevertheless the main characteristic of ‘second generation’ Regionalism, which coincides with what is generally referred to as ‘new regionalism’: a “multidimensional form of integration which includes economic, political, social and cultural aspects and thus goes far beyond the goal of creating region-based free trade regimes or security alliances. Rather, the political ambition of establishing regional coherence and identity seems to be of primary importance”9. ‘New Regionalism’ is based on the idea that one cannot isolate trade and economy from the rest of society: integration can also imply non-economic matters such as justice, security, culture. The more economies become integrated, the more there will be a need for common policies on fiscal and social matters as well and political integration.

The emergence of the ‘New Regionalism’ can be historically related to a series of transformations of the world. Schultz et al. summarized in 2001 the trends observed by previous studies: “(1) the move from bipolarity towards a multipolar or perhaps tripolar structure, centred around the EU, NAFTA, and the Asia-Pacific, with a new division of power and new division of labour; (2) the relative decline of American hegemony in combination with a more permissive attitude on the part of the United States toward regionalism; (3) the restructuring of the nation-state and the growth of interdependence, transnationalization and globalization; (4) recurrent fears over the stability of the multilateral trading order, hand in hand with the growing importance of non-tariff barriers (NTBs) to trade; (5) the changed attitudes towards (neo-liberal) economic development and political systems in developing countries as well as in the post-communist countries”10.

Telò calls this “the post-hegemonic regionalism”11 as a component in a new emerging and turbulent world system. The collapse of the communist regimes not only ended the ‘Cold War’ and produced an enormous geographical zone of political
uncertainty and instability, it also destroyed the international system that had stabilised international relations since World War II. While until the end of the Cold War regional co-operation was largely a hegemonically imposed phenomenon, it has gradually become propelled by internal factors. From this perspective, ‘New Regionalism’ can be seen as an attempt by states to react to the complex impact of financial, technological and market globalisation on their traditional territorial state power by strengthening regional control when traditional centralised national sovereignty no longer functioned and to bargain collectively with extra-regional patterns.

Second generation regionalism has therefore several important characteristics: a) deep economic integration plus political elements; b) multi-level governance; c) devolution within states; d) strong international legal framework; e) cooperation along many dimensions. At the same time, the “new regionalism” aims to promote certain “world values” as security, development, ecological sustainability, better than globalism the “new regionalism” aims to promote certain “world values” as security, development, ecological sustainability, better than globalism.

The European Union is the most developed case of second generation integration. It rests upon the principles of pooled sovereignty and the creation of a series of institutions, including a system of political representation. The EU is exemplar of that new regionalism as it has managed to develop a model of integration that incorporates political elements in a deep economic integration. What is happening in Europe is quite innovative: we now have a complex multi-level governance system with a deep co-operation between states, with firm devolution of power within states and a strong international legal framework. This has created a political model that challenges assumptions about governance all over the world. Of course, European integration cannot be seen as the ‘model’ for the rest of the world. But the underlying idea of multi-dimensional integration that implies co-operation along a number of different dimensions such as culture, politics, security, economics and diplomacy deserves to be taken serious in all political and economic efforts to achieve stability and prosperity in a given region.

2. The EU as a Global Actor from ‘New Regionalism’ Perspective

Second generation regionalism or ‘new regionalism’ is therefore a multi-faceted phenomenon, which touches a much wider number of policies than the ‘old trade-based regionalism’ did and has developed a role of regionalism in global governance. One can see at least eight important functions which are fulfilled by ‘new regionalism’ and which can have an impact on one region’s ‘global actorness’: a) the strengthening of trade integration in the region; b) the creation of an appropriate enabling environment for private sector development; c) the development of infrastructure programmes in support of economic growth and regional integration; d) the development of strong public sector institutions and good governance; e) the reduction of social exclusion and the development of an inclusive civil society; f) contribution to peace and security in the region; g) the building of environment programmes at the regional level; and h) the strengthening of the region’s interaction with other regions of the world.

The eight functions enumerated here can be grouped under four main headings: trade, development, security and the implementation of global regimes. Below, the role of the EU as a ‘global actor’ from the perspective of these four main
functions will be analysed: i) the EU as a global actor in trade; ii) the EU as a global actor in development policy; iii) the EU as a global actor in peace and security; and (iv) the EU as a global actor in the implementation of global regimes. Next, it will be highlighted how Europe could be considered as a prototype of ‘third generation’ regionalism.

2.1 EU as a Global Actor in Trade

Trade has been from the inception of the European Communities their main instrument of global actorness. The EC/EU’s role as a global trade actor has considerably grown with the evolution from the ‘old’ trade regionalism to ‘new regionalism’. As underlined by Gavin and Van Langenhove (2003), ‘old regionalism’ theory was based on the concepts of trade creation and trade diversion derived from a partial equilibrium analysis of the welfare effects of tariff elimination, while ‘new regionalism’ theory integrates also the dynamic effects of economic integration, the interaction between trade and investment, and the role of institutional arrangements as incentives for regional integration. The development of economic integration in the European Community from the late 1950s to the 1980s has followed the path of the ‘old’ economic regionalism with a removal of the tariff barriers and the creation of a Customs Union. This has resulted in an increased intra-EC trade but the persistence of an important number of non-tariff barriers was still considerably affecting the economic exchanges. The evolution towards the ‘new regionalism’, following the achievement of the Single Market determined by the structural changes in the global economy of the 1990s imposed by globalisation, has brought an important impetus for the increased importance of Europe as a global trade actor.

A good example in this regard is the impetus brought by the achievement of the Single Market project to external trade relations with partners like Japan, positively influenced by the perspective of trading with an economic entity with a unified set of rules and standards. The Japanese traditional fear of the “fortress Europe” (which symbolized the ‘old’ protectionist European trade regionalism) started gradually to vanish, with a considerable increase in trade during the period 1993 and 2001. According to Debroux, Japan’s exports to the European Union increased “by over 40% between 1993 and 2001 from 50.1 billion euro to 72.3 billion. However, the European exports to Japan almost doubled from 28.8 billion euro to 53.7 billion euro during the same period”.

The EU is at present the ‘world largest trading entity’ with a share of global imports and exports around 20%. But the importance of the EU as a global trade actor from a ‘new regionalism’ perspective is not only to be measured through its weight in economic terms. More importantly, this global actorness is also shown by the use of EU’s weight as a trade entity in order to promote and support trade regionalism world-wide, while still remaining one of the strongest supporters of multilateralism. The European Union has encouraged during the last decades both through political declarations and financial support regional trade integration in Latin America (i.e. MERCOSUR, CAN), and in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific through the ACP process.

Although this might seem paradoxical, the consolidation and the promotion of trade regionalism are, in EU’s vision, compatible with multilateralism. As stated by the former EU Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy, the EU trade policy works in the context of the Doha Round on two complementary levels: the bilateral/regional level and the multilateral level, through the WTO:
“The basic assumption of our trade policy is that: i) unilateralism is not an option for us, ii) we have two options in order to integrate successfully into the world economy: multilateralism and regionalism. […] regionalism and multilateralism are not mutually exclusive but complementary: regional arrangements are governed by the multilateral rules and disciplines of the WTO. How do we strike a balance between the bilateral/regional level and the multilateral level? The multilateral level, through the WTO, provides the set of rules that international trade requires and a level playing field. More importantly, this is the framework that gives the EU the best means to influence global governance and to negotiate balanced arrangements. Achieving the objectives of the Doha conclusions remains therefore our top priority for the next few years. Our bilateral or bi-regional relations with third countries are a reflection of our priority to multilateralism and our commitment to regional integration.”

The EU has therefore taken a proactive role in the wide debate on whether regional trade agreements are ‘building blocks’ or ‘stumbling blocks’ in the way of trade multilateralism reflected in the WTO, by clearly promoting the ‘new’ trade regionalism globally. This position seems to be justified by recent academic research on this topic, which concluded that “what characterizes policy development in dealing with the regulatory issues in trade and investment regimes is a multi-level process rather than a choice between regional and multilateral approaches. Regional agreements represent one aspect of this multi-level process. The question should therefore be about what role regional agreements play in this multi-level process.”

As shown by Woolcock (2005), who has looked in detail at the interaction between the regional and the multilateral trade and investment rules in a range of policy areas (rules of origin, agriculture, food safety, intellectual property and services) at least during the ‘second generation’ of regionalism, the interaction has to date been benign if not positive in the sense that regional and multilateral initiatives and agreements have been complementary: “Apart from rules of origin, the other case studies suggest that rulemaking has (at least to date) been the result of a complex interaction between different levels of rulemaking. Regional rulemaking seldom went beyond the WTO rules or agreed international norms and the degree of regional preference had not been very pronounced. In other words the costly duplication and frictional trade costs that are implied by the spaghetti bowl analogy, did not really apply. The trade and investment regimes therefore looked more like layers of rulemaking, i.e. more like Lasagne than spaghetti.”

Europe brings also an ‘institutional model of actorness in the economic field by having the first truly ‘regional’ representation at the WTO through the European Commission. Europe’s ‘global actorness’ in the economic field was also helped by the existence of a unitary representation at the WTO, through the European Commission, and the acknowledgement of the importance of supporting a fully-fledged Common Trade Policy placed under the First Pillar using with success the ‘community method’.

2.2. Europe as a Global Actor in Development Policy

A second governance field where the EU’s ‘global actorness’ is particularly visible, and which is also closely interlinked with trade policy, is development policy. As underlined by Hettne, one of the main ‘world order values’ that new regionalism can promote better than globalism is development: “the new regionalism is more political than economic, and the economic approach is much broader than the
exchange of goods. Its approach to free trade is cautious, far from autarchic but more selective in its external relations and careful to see to the interests of the region as a whole. Such interests include wider economic issues such as infrastructural development, industrial policy, sustainable resources, management and so on." As underlined by Mistry (2000), while first generation free trade areas, customs unions and preferential trade areas have generated only limited tangible or unequally shared benefits in terms of economic and broader development of the member states, second generation regional integration agreements (RIAs) between developing countries have the potential to bring development quantified in both economic and non-economic terms, if these agreements are coherently designed and implemented. This important role played by "new regionalism" for developing countries as a tool for economic development has been widely analyzed in recent academic literature and acknowledged by the global institutions such as the World Bank and UNCTAD.

As the most updated regional integration scheme, the European Union reflects in its internal policies all the aforementioned benefits in terms of development brought by ‘New Regionalism’. At the same time, the EC/EU has developed into a fully fledged ‘global actor’ in its external policies the field of development cooperation. In 2004, the EC and member states accounted for 56% of world aid amounting to 36 billion Euros and the first donor of humanitarian aid (513.3 million Euros in 2004). Moreover, since the drafting of the Treaty of Rome (1957) and the creation of the European Development Fund (1958), the EC has continuously extended it’s policy of cooperation with the countries from sub-Saharan Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific, through the Yaoundé (1963-1974) and Lomé Conventions (1975-2000) and the ongoing Cotonou Agreement (2000), becoming a major actor in North-South relations.

While an in-depth analysis of the history of the EU-ACP partnership would widely overpass the focus of this chapter, three aspects are important to be underlined for the focus of this chapter. First, the EU’s development policy has evolved from a philosophy of development fostered by preferential market access offered to ACP countries under the Yaoundé and Lomé Conventions to the conditionality of aid based on political criteria, as comprised in the Cotonou Agreement. Through the promotion of democratic governance and market reforms, the ‘third generation’ EU-ACP agreements can be considered as a ’genuine act of foreign policy’ considerably strengthening EU’s global actorness.

Secondly, the EU is strongly convinced of the benefits of ‘new regionalism’ for achieving the main goals of its development policy “to reduce and, eventually, to eradicate poverty”. Accordingly, the support for regional integration has been included among the six priority sectors of EU development policy, next to trade and development, transport, governance and institutional capacity building, sustainable rural development and food security, macro-economic policies and access to social services. The EU has clearly acknowledged this link between regional integration and development in its policy towards African countries comprised in the ACP group by including regional integration among the three focal priorities for poverty reduction mentioned in the Cotonou Agreement, concluded in 2000. In this context, the support for regional cooperation is meant to bring benefits in a wide variety of functional and thematic fields including infrastructure (transport, communications and ICTs), the environment; water resource management and energy, health, education and training, RTD, regional initiatives for disaster preparedness and mitigation, and other related fields. Beyond the purely economic advantages related to benefits brought about by the creation of economies of scale, the promotion of regional
cooperation aims to develop regional political dialogues in the areas of conflict prevention and resolution; human rights and democratisation; exchange, networking, and promotion of mobility between the different actors of development, in particular in civil society.

In order to achieve these goals, the Cotonou Agreement introduced a new tool, the WTO compatible Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) between the EU and ACP states comprising, next to free trade areas, trade in services trade, intellectual property, labour standards and environment. EPAs represent a major turning point in the EU-ACP relations. Considering that the old model of trade relations based on preferences for ACP countries, that was facilitated by EU protectionism, is no longer sustainable and it is not compatible with WTO rules, the EU now proposes comprehensive trade agreements based on progressive liberalisation to replace three decades of non-reciprocal trade preferences. Central to the EPA negotiations will be market access: how to provide greater opening of the EU market for the exports of ACP countries and the extremely sensitive question of what the ACP countries should offer in return. But EPA negotiations are also about trade liberalisation among ACP counties themselves as a means to increase South-South trade thereby facilitating smooth integration of ACP countries into the global economy. The EPAs are more than purely trade agreements, and this focus has been particularly emphasized by the current EU Trade Commissioner, Peter Mandelson who considers that EPAs: “should become explicitly what they really are: trade and development tools. They are not classical, hard nosed, free trade agreements of the sort that developing blocks negotiate between them.”

The EPAs are also based on a regional philosophy: the EU negotiates these agreements with existing regional groups of ACP countries which will be considerably reinforced by the financing of capacity and institutional building at regional level. The EU has launched in 2004 EPA negotiations with the six ACP sub-regions: East and Southern African states, the Caribbean, the Southern African Development Community, and the Pacific islands. Negotiations with Central and Western Africa regions had already started in October 2003.

Third, the EU’s global actorness in the field of development is particularly visible in the support of the UN sustainable development policies and its commitment to achieving the UN Millennium development Goals. One of the outcomes of the Johannesburg World Summit on Sustainable Development has been the acknowledgement of the importance of the macro-regional dimension in implementing sustainable development policies, with the clear message that both the UN Regional Commissions and regional organizations need to reorient their activities to pursue the goal of sustainable development. The European Union had already issued in June 2001 at Gothenburg, a ‘European Strategy for Sustainable Development’ making sustainable development a long-term goal to be achieved hand-in-hand with the Lisbon Strategy and comprising a cross-sectoral set of measures in the fields of the fight against climate change, public health, a more responsible management of human resources, the reduction of poverty, the improvement of transport and land-use. These structural changes involved the integration of sustainable development in all Community policies and the participation of all stakeholders. Next to the implementation of sustainable development internally, the EU has also become committed itself to promoting sustainable development at global level considering that the “European Union is well placed to assume a leading role in the pursuit of global sustainable development. It is the world’s largest donor of development aid, the world’s biggest trading partner, and a major source of direct private investments. It has developed and promoted a great number of clean
technologies. Throughout its own evolution, the European model of integration has been based on pursuing mutually supportive strategies for stable economic growth, social development and environmental protection.\textsuperscript{32}

The EU has actively engaged in the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and has updated its strategy in 2005, in line with the enlargement to 25 member states and the latest developments on the international scene.

2.3 Europe as a Global Actor in Peace and Security

The increasing role of regional integration organisations as an instrument for peace and security in the 1990s is another characteristic feature of the ‘new regionalism’. This evolution was due to the change of the nature of security threats in the aftermath of the Cold War. In the aftermath of the Cold War, the security agenda has shifted from a bipolar confrontation to the spread of regional and local “low intensity conflicts”. At the same time, the security threats are no longer linked only to the military conflicts but also to political, economical, social and even environmental concerns, expressed in the term of “societal security” coined by the Copenhagen School at the beginning of the 1990s.\textsuperscript{33}

This shift in the content of security has brought a change in the nature of international action, mainly UN-led, from classical operations of peace keeping (mainly interposition between parties in conflict) to second and even third generation operations, focusing on peace building after the end of conflicts and peace enforcement. The new security agenda became “considerably less monolithic and global, and considerably more diverse, regional and local, in character than the old one”.\textsuperscript{34}

Aware of this transformation of the security agenda, several regional initiatives have extended their functions from economy to cooperation in security related problems. The EC/EU is a good example in this sense, as it has followed the path towards achieving a political union building on the European Political Cooperation launched at the end of the 1970s, and created with the Treaties of Maastricht and Amsterdam a Common Foreign and Security policy pillar aspiring to give Europe the opportunity to act as a fully-fledged ‘global actor’. But this was not an easy task even for a strong regional integration scheme like the EU. As shown by its ‘low profile’ in Yugoslavia and the Middle East crises, the EU was confronted to a capabilities-expectations gap\textsuperscript{35} brought by the lack of a valid military capability to support its policy goals. Following the 1998 Saint-Malo Declaration, which removed the UK veto on defence letting ‘the genie out of the bottle’\textsuperscript{36}, the Cologne and Helsinki summits have drawn the main lines for the achievement of the ‘headline goal’ of creating a European Rapid Reaction Force. In practice, the emerging ESDP has been confronted with several problems such as the problem of resources\textsuperscript{37}, the lack of cooperation between the European defence industries\textsuperscript{38}, the need of avoiding duplication, and, most of all, the need of clarifying the relationship with NATO.\textsuperscript{39}

Given the difficulties in the building-up of the military capabilities, and the widening of the concept of security, the EU has also set up after the 2001 Gothenburg Council a Conflict Prevention and Peace Building Capacity and, in the same time, has widened the scope of such actions extending crisis management beyond the purely military and police measures.

The difficulties in using efficiently the complex mechanisms of the CFSP, and the lack of the necessary defense capabilities, made the ‘realist’ and ‘neo-realistic’ academic literature to predominantly present an image of the EU as a ‘payer’ rather
than a ‘player’\textsuperscript{40} in global peace and security. The EU is perceived as a rather ‘civilian power’\textsuperscript{41} unable to exert strong military power when conflicts are rising, but rather successful when working in peace building and stabilization after the wars. Nevertheless, from a ‘New Regionalism’ perspective, the dichotomy between ‘civilian power EU’ and ‘weak political/military power EU’ seems less relevant. As underlined above, in the aftermath of the Cold War, security has become a considerably wider concept going much beyond the purely military aspects relating to conflicts. Political, economical, social and even environmental aspects of security are nowadays as important as the military ones. This has been acknowledged at global level by the UN, which went even further, by promoting new security concepts such as ‘human security’, and underlined the decisive role of regional integration agreements in these areas. Telò (2005) has pointed very accurately that ”the concept of ‘civilian power’ can be an original contribution to twenty-first century international relations and not a sad euphemism, synonymous with semi-sovereign power, weakness and lack of capacity”.\textsuperscript{42} In other words, as put by Breherton and Vogler “any conclusion that the EU is a significant actor in global politics must accept the assumption that civilian power matters”.\textsuperscript{43}

The EU has acquired during the last decade a global leadership status in non-military areas or ‘soft security’: international trade, development aid, environmental negotiations, and the promotion of regional cooperation. Cristopher Piening was referring already in 1997 to a ‘global Europe’ while assessing the EU’s external role as “partner, trader, competitor, benefactor, investor and paradigm for countries and emerging regional groupings throughout the world”\textsuperscript{44}. The EU is promoting ‘economic diplomacy’ through the association agreements concluded with different countries and the preferential agreements concluded with other regional groupings. Next to its important role in the North-South relations through the EU-ACP associationism, the EU has successfully used political conditionality as a weapon also in its policy concerning neighbouring areas: the enlargement to the East (Europe Agreements) requiring the respect of Copenhagen criteria, the Euro-Med Partnership in the South, the Stabilisation and Association Agreements in the Balkans (in the framework of the Stability Pact for South East Europe). At present, the strategy is going even further with the European Neighbourhood Policy which aims to create a ring of friends around the borders of the new enlarged EU in order to share peace, stability and prosperity.

But, as underlined by Telò, in order to become a fully-fledged global actor in the security field, EU needs to clarify this ‘frustrating ambiguity’ about the choice between ‘civilian power’ and military power\textsuperscript{45}. Given the current weaknesses of CFSP/ESDP, one has to acknowledge that the EU doesn’t presently use to the maximum its potential of influencing world politics. Presence on the ground in military crisis increases the visibility and the efficiency of security actors. In Europe’s case, the achievement of a ‘package of capabilities’ combining ‘soft power’ and ‘hard power’ elements could allow the EU to promote a quite unique vision of international affairs, in which multilateralism should prevail over unilateralism, and a specific strategy of conflict prevention where civilian aspects prevail over the military. We are still a long way before such a package could be obtained, although EU’s good results in the first Rapid Reaction Force Missions in such as the FYR of Macedonia and operation Artemis in Congo are a good stimulus for future actions.

\section*{2.4 EU as a Global Actor in the Implementation of Global Regimes}
A third function of global actorness from a ‘new regionalism’ perspective is the increasingly important role of regional integration initiatives in the implementing of global governance regimes. Globalization has brought transnational flows and a number of challenges, which overpass the traditional functions of the states. Although there is a need of finding global solutions to global problems, there is not sufficient global support for global institutions and regimes dealing with such problems, and regional initiatives can play a leading role in the implementation of policies until such consensus is reached. This is especially visible in the EU’s actions with regards to the implementation of global environmental policies. A good example in this regard is the EU’s role in the implementation of the UN Climate Change regime.

Since the first conference on the Environment in Stockholm in 1970, the United Nations (UN) have played a leading role in developing a global approach to environmental problems and in creating common platforms of action on environmental issues. The UN pioneered the creation of a global climate change regime in 1992, with the Rio Earth Summit, which was a catalyst for public recognition of the planetary nature of environmental problems. The Rio Summit gave birth to the Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which aimed to stabilise CO2 emissions in industrialised countries at 1990 levels by the year 2000, to set up global monitoring and reporting mechanisms for keeping track of greenhouse gas emissions, and establish national programmes for reducing emissions. The UNFCCC entered into force in 1994 and under its framework the Kyoto Protocol (KP) was developed at COP-3 in December 1997, setting the target for the developed world to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions to 5% below 1990 levels between 2008 and 2012.

However, despite the ten Conferences of the Parties held until nowadays, the Kyoto Protocol has not yet become a global regime: it is not yet ratified globally and the rules of the game for reduction of greenhouse gases are still unclear. The collapse of the COP-6 I negotiations in The Hague in November 2000 and the repudiation of the Protocol by the US administration in March 2001 could have entirely compromised the move towards a global regime tackling global warming. Nevertheless, after the US withdrawal from the negotiations the EU has been catapulted into the role of global leadership.

In its internal Climate Change policy, the EU has tried to go even further than the obligations of the Kyoto Protocol by aiming to achieve a bigger cut in CO2 emissions, of 8% below the 1990 level, and through the European climate change programme (ECCP) launched in June 2000, it has worked towards implementing the three flexible mechanisms introduced by the Kyoto Protocol: the creation of an Internal Emissions Trading System through a ‘burden-sharing’ agreement between the Member States, the Joint Implementation of projects designed to cut emissions in other industrialised countries, and the Clean Development Mechanism (CDM) aiming help financially projects in developing countries. Despite the difficulties encountered in some member states for meeting the targets, the European example could be followed by other regions. As shown by Aidt and Greiner ‘This form of regional grouping has the advantage that national particularities can be taken into account more appropriately and differentiated obligations can be negotiated’.

In parallel with the implementation of the Protocol in its internal environmental policy, the EU has continuously strived to maintain the determination of the UNFCCC participants to work towards the implementation of the Kyoto Protocol. It has successfully pushed for the political commitment enshrined in the
"Bonn Agreements" adopted in July 2001, and for concrete results in the following technical negotiations in Marrakech COP-7 (November 2001) and New Delhi COP-8 (October 2002). In parallel, the EU has made important diplomatic efforts resulting in the ratification of the Protocol in November 2004, by the Russian Federation, a country accounting for 17.4% of CO2 emissions.

The Kyoto Protocol has entered into force on 16 February 2005 after at least 55 Parties to the Convention, incorporating Annex I Parties which accounted in total for at least 55% of the total carbon dioxide emissions for 1990 from that group, deposited their instruments of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession. Nonetheless, despite the EU’s efforts, some of the nations accounting for more than 40% of world emissions have not yet been considering participation to the Protocol. The recent United States-led initiative to work with Australia and major Asian nations to develop new technologies aimed at reducing greenhouse gases has been received with considerable reserve on the European side. As underlined by the UNEP37, there are no efficient alternatives to the Kyoto Protocol: this new agreement should not be a substitute for the Kyoto Protocol, which neither the US nor Australia have ratified. The weaknesses of the emerging global Climate Change regime are very important, but the United Nations will continue to be committed to this approach in the future, as will the EU given that there seem to be no other way of fighting against this universal problem.

3. The EU as a Global Actor from a ‘Third Generation’ Regionalism Perspective

The above brief view of how the EU deals with trade, development, security and the implementation of global regimes clearly shows that the EU has a presence as a global actor. There are attempts to speak with one voice in multilateral fora such as the WTO. There is a neighborhood policy and an outreach to the developing world. There are attempts to establish a specific security policy. Implementing global regimes is done as coherent as possible. And last but not least there are the ‘bilateral relationships’ with other regions and states. Taking all this together it is fair to say that no other regional organization has the same level of actorness. In that sense, the EU is different from any other second generation regionalism initiative. One interpretation, often promoted by the EU itself, is that the European regionalism is a casus sui generis. Another way to see it is that the EU is on the edge between second and third generation regionalism and this might open the path for other organizations to follow.

Even though second generation integration is still a very limited phenomenon, the EU shows that the contours of a third generation of regionalism are becoming apparent. It recognises that next to economic and internal political integration there is also integration in external policy possible, the ambition to participate in the global institutions and the promotion of inter-regionalism. Although ‘third generation’ regionalism is still a largely normative idea, the European Union could be considered as a prototype presenting some of the characteristics of a future ‘third generation’ regionalism.

Second generation integration or ‘new regionalism’ has already consequences for the rest of the world, but those consequences are only to a limited extent dealt with at the regional policy level. Third generation regionalism has three main characteristics, which distinguish it from the previous generations.

First, in third generation integration the institutional environment for dealing with ‘out of area’ consequences of regional policies is more present. As an example,
the European Constitution, which might become a reality despite the recent setbacks, would have given the European Union a legal personality and hence create the first ever regional organisation that is capable to act as a supranational organisation within the framework of the UN.

Second, in third generation integration regions become more proactive engaging in inter-regional arrangements and agreements which can affect more relations at global level. The European Union is undoubtedly the biggest initiator of inter-regional agreements. The EU has strong inter-regional links with ASEAN in the framework of the Asia-Europe Meeting, recently enlarged to 13 new members from Asia and Europe. It is currently in the process of negotiating an Interregional Association Agreement with MERCOSUR, and has prepared the ground towards the opening of negotiations on Association Agreements with Central America and the Andean Community. Additionally, as underlined above, the EU has also launched negotiations in the framework of the EU-ACP process for Economic Partnerships Agreements with the main regional organizations from the six ACP sub-regions. The intentions lying behind the promotion of inter-regionalism and its effects remain a much unexplored field of analysis. As highlighted by a recent issue of the *Journal of European Integration*: “Promoting regional and interregional relations not only justifies and enhances the EU’s own existence and efficiency as an ‘actor’, the strategy also promote the legitimacy and status of other regions. This, in turn, promotes further crosscutting regionalism and interregionalism around the world. Most of these EU-promoted interregional arrangements encompass not only trade and economic relations but also political dialogue, development cooperation, cultural relations and security cooperation.”

Thirdly, in third generation regionalism, regions become more actively engaged at the UN. The European Union’s commitment to multilateralism is a defining principle of its external policy. The European Commission Communication from 9th of September, 2003, ‘The European Union and the United Nations: The choice of multilateralism’ underlines Europe’s attachment to multilateralism – and to the United Nations, as the pivot of the multilateral system and highlighted two aspects, in particular, of the EU’s contribution to the effectiveness of multilateral legal instruments and commitments established under UN auspices that could be further developed: “First, the EU’s ability to act as a ‘front-runner’ in developing and implementing multilateral instruments and commitments. And second, support, where necessary, for the capacity of other countries to implement their multilateral commitments effectively.”

The communication also stated the need to lay the foundations for a wider EU-UN partnership going beyond development and build a co-operation in peace, security: conflict prevention, crisis management, peace-keeping and peace-building.

As stated by the UN Secretary-General Koffi Anan, the year 2005 represents a ‘fork in the road’ on the path towards UN reform. The 6th High-Level Meeting between the UN Secretary-General and Regional Organisations, organised on 25-26th of July 2005, has considerably brought forward the dialogue between the UN Secretary-General Koffi Anan and 22 regional organizations. The UN Secretary General stated at this occasion that strengthening the UN relationship with regional and other intergovernmental organisations was a critical part of the effort to reform the UN. The Joint Statement issued at the end of the meeting concluded that a more structured relationship between the UN and regional and other intergovernmental organisations needs to be developed “creating a truly interlocking system that guarantees greater coordination in both policy and action. This partnership should
build on the comparative strengths of each organization”\textsuperscript{50}. To that end, a number of specific organisational measures were put forward, such as creating a Standing Committee and setting future meetings \textendash; now on an annual basis \textendash; to coincide with the meetings that the Security Council holds with regional organisations. In order to increase co-ordination, it was decided to identify one high-level official in each organisation for the purpose of liaising with the United Nations and with one another.

Also, following the several sets of proposals aiming to reform the functioning of the United Nations put forward by the High-Level Panel December 2004 report to the Secretary-General ‘A more effective United Nations for the twenty-first century’ have been discussed at the September 2005 World Summit, which has taken up the idea of a stronger relationship between the UN and regional and subregional organizations pursuant to Chapter VIII of the Charter.

4. Conclusions

This chapter has analyzed the global actorness of the EU from a ‘second generation’/’new regionalism’ perspective. It has emphasized the important role of the EU in the fields of international trade, development, security and the implementation of global regimes. Nowadays, ‘second generation’ regionalism is not anymore an exclusively European phenomenon, and has spread on the other continents through the creation of new organisations or the upgrading of previously existing ones: the African Union, the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), MERCOSUR and the Andean Community (CAN), are some of the most important examples.

But, as underlined above, there is evidence while analysing the ambitions of the EU that a ‘third generation’ of integration scheme could emerge in the next decades, with yet unknown consequences for global governance. According to Hettne (2001), this foreign policy strategy of the EU based on inter-regionalism has the potential to counter-act and offer an alternative model of world order to the unipolar \textit{Pax Americana}\textsuperscript{51}. Also, to the extent that ‘third generation’ regionalism could become more and more successful, with other regional organizations following the EU’s model through the development of ‘third generation’ characteristics allowing regions to act increasingly at the level of the UN, this would pose important challenges to the current multilateral system based on sovereign states as the main units of governance.

The effects of inter-regionalism on world order are still a relatively unexplored field of research\textsuperscript{52}. One could even picture the rise of a new world order based on the gradual transition from multilateralism to multirgeionalism. Multiregionalism (or multilateral regionalism) is a concept coined by Hettne that refers to a world order based upon a global regionalisation, implying systematic relations between all regional organizations, ultimately making up a form of global governance that makes multilateralism more effective and efficient than it currently is. Hettne distinguishes three levels of ‘interegionness’, among which ‘multiregionalism’ is the highest:

“\textit{Transregionalism}, refers in a general way to relations between regions, and these relations may differ in terms of comprehensiveness. By the concept of transregionalism I also, however, refer to less institutionalized forms of relations between regions, or countries within different regions. As formal macro-regions assuming a stronger political role emerge, there will necessarily also arise a need for more organized contacts between the regions as subjective actors. \textit{Interregionalism} is thus a more institutionalised and formal relationship, already possible to identify in
the empirical world in a few cases. This is the most significant arrangement as it may have long-term consequences for the structure of the world order. Multiregionalism, is still a rather speculative idea, a form of regionalized world-order, which may or may not become real. It is the end-point of the process.[…] Multilateral regionalism or multiregionalism would imply schematic relations between all regional organizations, making up a form of global governance, a “European world order”.

Multi-regionalism could play a major role in providing the necessary legitimacy for multilateralism, as it is a mechanism that (i) allows small countries to have a voice next to large countries and (ii) allows poor countries to integrate more easily in the world economy. Also, regional integration can be a way of harnessing the larger countries (superpowers) to recognize their responsibility in playing a constructive role in their region. This does not necessarily contradict the universalistic position of the United Nations. It may be considered, rather, as an attempt to “channel” globalization at an optimal policy level. Global governance structures need to foster more participation of developing countries in decision-making.

The essence of third generation regionalism is thus that a region sees itself as a fully fledged actor in the theatre of international relations. This implies that the region claims a position similar to that of a state in the multilateral organizations. It also implies that a region engages in ‘bilateral’ relations with other regions or states, again much as any other state would do; defined as such, one can say that third generation regionalism does not yet exist as such. But the EU seems close to it and it can not be excluded that one day this would happen. An EU seat in the Security Council would be a significant step in that direction.

If the EU consolidates this trend as an emerging ‘third generation’ regional organisation it could play a crucial role in the debate regarding UN reform during the next decade. Leonard (2005) advanced the idea that Europe’s goal should be “to create a Union of Unions that brings (the) regional organisations together” into a ‘Community of Regional Entities’ that would serve as the primary coordinating body of the UN. Such a vision seems to be difficult to realise, but as mentioned in Van Langenhove (2004), realising a multi-regional world order is not utopian, and it starts from today’s reality that, next to nations, world regions are becoming increasingly important tools for global governance. Such a regional world order could be called a neo-Westphalian world order a sit still builds upon nations, but also complements it with a role for regions as geopolitical entities that possess statehood properties.

Notes


8. WTO Committee on Regional Trade Agreements, *Regionalism: Friends or Rivals,* <http://www.wto.org/english/thewto_e/whatis_e/tif_e/bey1_e.htm>


17. Pascal Lamy, “Opening speech” (Fifth EC/Candidate Countries Ministerial Conference on Trade, Malta, 31 May-1 June 2002), 1.


44. Piening Cristopher, Global Europe: The European Union in World Affairs. 

50. “The EU as a Global Actor and the Role of Interregionalism”, Special issue of the Journal of European Integration 27, no. 3 (September 2005)
References


