



UNITED NATIONS  
UNIVERSITY

**UNU-CRIS**

Institute on Comparative  
Regional Integration Studies

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

**United Nations University**

**Institute on Comparative Regional Integration Studies**



# United Nations University

Institute on Comparative Regional Integration Studies

## 2021 Annual Report

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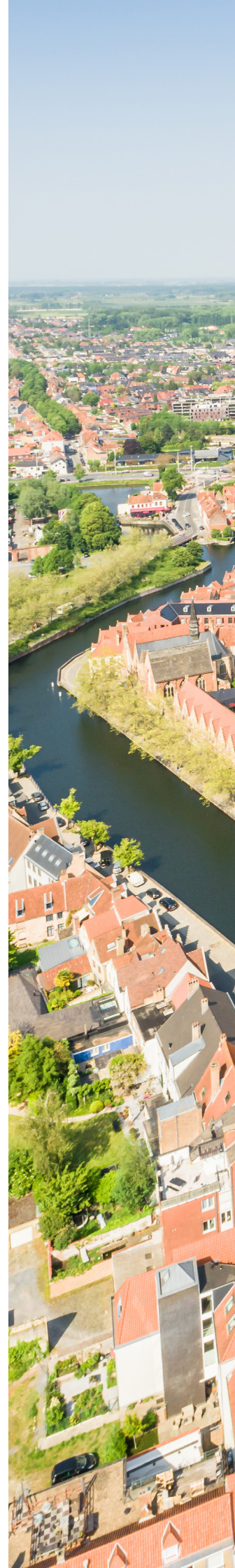
United Nations University Institute on Comparative Regional Integration Studies  
Potterierei 72, 8000 Brugge, BELGIUM

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Produced by Andrew Dunn

Director: Philippe De Lombaerde

UNU-CRIS is grateful to the following stakeholders for their core support:









# Director's Welcome

At the moment of writing this introduction, the dark clouds of the COVID-19 pandemic are slowly drifting away, at least so it seems. Not to make space for bright blue skies, however, but to be followed by the dark clouds of the war in Ukraine, happening only 1400 km from Bruges, where UNU-CRIS calls home. Several of our collaborators have family, friends or colleagues in the region, and/or work on aspects of Eurasian regionalism in their respective research projects.

These recent developments, adding to the other ongoing crises and conflicts in different parts of the globe, are likely to worsen even further the already severely impacted human development indicators and perceived human security worldwide (Special Report on New threats to Human Security in the Anthropocene - Demanding Greater Solidarity, UNDP, 2022). Both crises, if they serve any purpose at all, show once again the importance of regional cooperation and regional stability, and show that their absence leads to greater human suffering and loss of life. Nothing more is needed to motivate our work.

UNU-CRIS has and continues to contribute to the discussion on regional health governance by producing think pieces and analyses in different formats: blogs, policy briefs and working papers (see pg. 40, 43, 56). UNU-CRIS produced, for example, a report on post-COVID-19 recovery in Latin America for UNDP (to be published in the new year) and a policy brief on Regional Collective Action to Address COVID-19 and Prepare for Future Pandemics as input for the G20 summit. Researchers

also conduct research related to Eurasian regionalism.

However, these two lines of research constitute only a fraction of the rich research that was conducted at UNU-CRIS under each of the research programmes and clusters that were introduced a year earlier, these being 'Regional Public Goods' (RPGs) with clusters on migration and social policy, economic interactions, digital governance and nature, climate and health; 'Regional Integration Knowledge System' (RIKS); and the 'Regions and Cities Governance Lab' (Re-LAB). The nature, climate and health and Re-LAB clusters are now led by two senior research fellows who joined UNU-CRIS in August 2021, Nidhi Nagabhatla and Frank Mattheis, respectively. The evolving nature of the world around us is reflected in the merging of our previous climate and natural resources cluster with that focussed on health, to sharpen our focus on the intersection and interplay between the two, giving life to the nature, climate and health cluster, and the incorporation of the security cluster into Re-LAB, reflecting the challenge of security that requires coordination across the levels of governance, and showing the conflict-cooperation dichotomy. The outputs and impact of the activities in each cluster can be discovered in this report.

Some of the highlights of 2021 include UNU-CRIS's impactful presence at the Annual International Studies Association (ISA) Convention in April, the organisation of the EU in International Affairs Conference in May (in collaboration with



the VUB, ULB, the University of Warwick , and the Egmont Institute), the launch of the indicator-based local SDG Monitor in October (in collaboration with IDEA Consult), and projects conducted for UNDP and for the Scottish Association for Marine Science (SAMS), to name just a few. UNU-CRIS also contributed with two policy papers to the Think20 Summit, the academic arm of the G20 (one on regional health governance, the other on return migration) and organised a panel on the Future of Global Health Governance at the UNU-WIDER Development Conference in September. As in 2020, COVID-19 severely hindered the organisation of in-person events. The Summer School on Comparative Regionalism in a Changing World (in collaboration with Universitas Airlangga and Higher School of Economics of M. Narikbayev KAZGUU University) in June, the School on Modern Diplomacy (in collaboration with the Diplomatic

Academy of Vienna), and the Doctoral School on Latin American, European and Comparative Regionalism (in collaboration with Universidad Andina) were all held virtually. This was also the case for regular research seminars and invited lectures, while the majority of internships and visiting research fellowships were conducted virtually too.

2021 also marked the end of a five-year cycle for UNU-CRIS, governed by a Memorandum of Understanding between United Nations University, the Flemish Government, Ghent University and Vrije Universiteit Brussel. 2021 was, therefore, an evaluation year in which UNU-CRIS was externally evaluated on behalf of the Flemish Government. Overall, the results were very positive for UNU-CRIS. The evaluators and the international expert panel found that UNU-CRIS had performed well during a turbulent period and that



Andrew Dunn / UNU-CRIS



most of its strategic and operational goals had been achieved. They confirmed its good reputation in the relevant academic fields and among policymakers. They pointed to the synergetic relationship with the Flemish universities and UN institutions, thus creating value added for all its stakeholders. Overall, they found that the thematic relevance of UNU-CRIS remained very high and recommended to continue funding the Institute (Evaluation of UNU-CRIS 2014-2021, Technopolis Group, October 2021).

Following this positive evaluation, the Flemish Government decided to renew its commitment towards UNU-CRIS for a new period of five years at the Flemish Council of Ministers on 17 December, a decision for which we are very grateful. Our two partner universities also renewed their strong commitment to support UNU-CRIS. A new Memorandum of Understanding between the same four stakeholders was negotiated at the end of 2021 and is to be signed in 2022.

This assures that UNU-CRIS will be able to operate on a stable foundation for another five years, and further consolidate its position as a unique research institute with a global mandate, conducting policy-relevant research on regional and multi-level governance to improve lives of the peoples of the Member States of the United Nations. A strategic planning exercise will be conducted in 2022 to further refine the Institute's research agenda, taking stock of our growing and diverse expertise, and to define priorities for the quinquennium.



**Philippe De Lombaerde**  
Director

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Philippe De Lombaerde'.



# Financial Outline:

Investment in Better Governance and Integration

**€1,989,598**

Total Budget 2021

**50.3%**

Core Funding  
Flemish Government

**25.7%**

External Project Funding\*

**18%**

Ghent University

**6%**

VUB

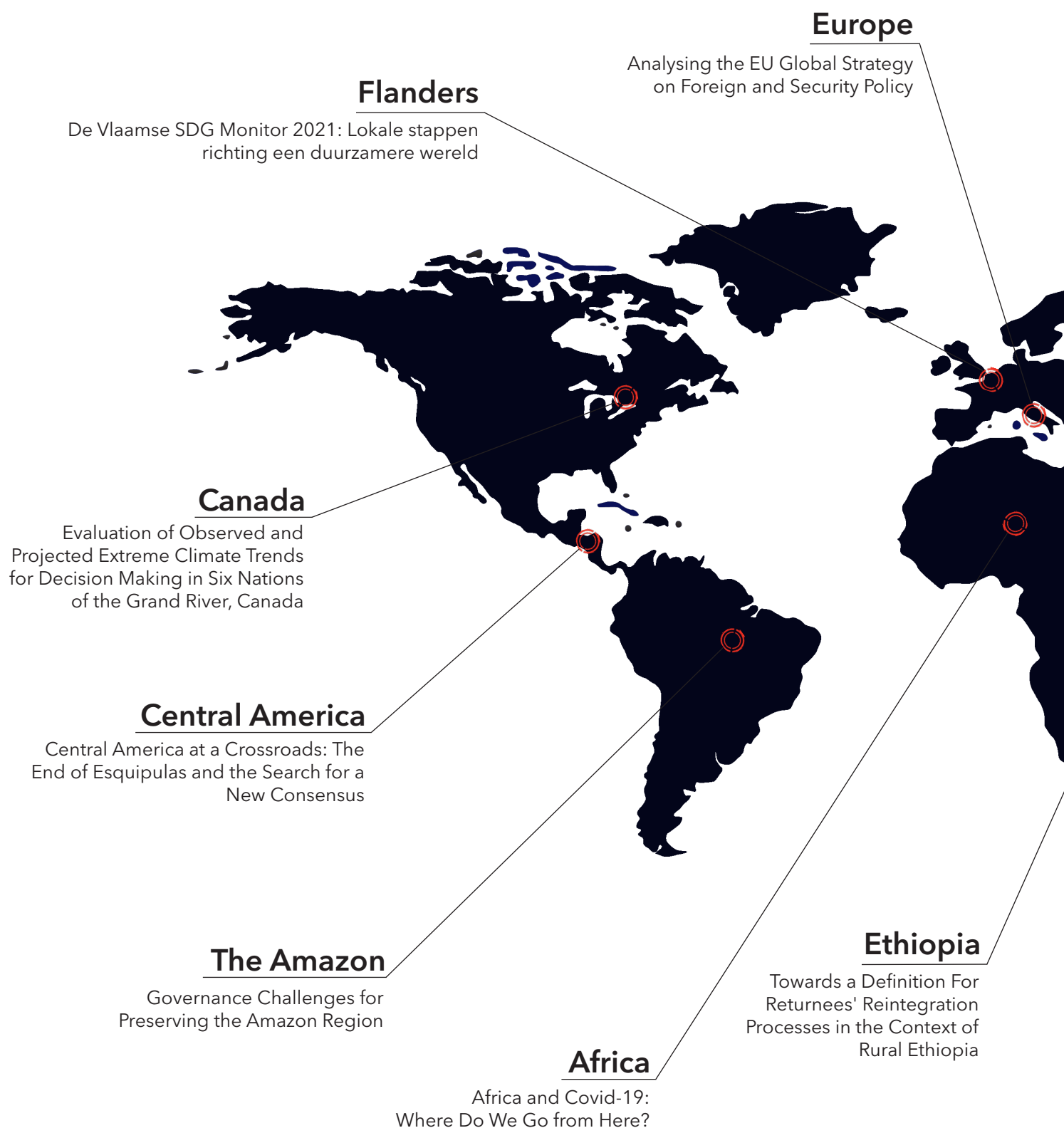
\*These include FWO (via UGent); BOF-DOS (via UGent); Network for Advancement of Sustainable Capacity in Education and Research in Ethiopia - Nascere; Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Addis Ababa/Oromia Regional State Government (Ethiopia)/Africa Studies Centre Leiden (ASCL); La Caixa Fellowship; EXCELLENT SCIENCE - Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions; China Scholarship Council Programme at the VUB; Scottish Association for Marine Sciences (SAMS); Microsoft (via VUB); Microsoft; UNDP

External project funding corresponds to 51.1% of core funding from the Flemish Government.



# Knowledge For All:

## A Snapshot of Our Research Around the Globe





## **Georgia**

Inclusion in EU-Georgia Trade Relations: A Critical Institutionalist Analysis of the Georgian Domestic Advisory Group

## **China**

The EU and China: Sanctions, Signals, and Interests

## **Central Asia**

Between the EU, Russia, and China - Cultural Diplomacy Competition in Central Asia

## **Vietnam**

'A Force for Good': The Narrative Construction of Ethical EU-Vietnam Trade Relations

## **ASEAN**

Sustainable Value Chain for the Seaweed Industry in Malaysia and the ASEAN Region: A Roadmap for Policy Formulation

## **Pakistan**

Gender, Pakistan and UN Peacekeeping

## **Australia**

COVID-19 and The Relentless Harms of Australia's Punitive Immigration Detention Regime

## **India**

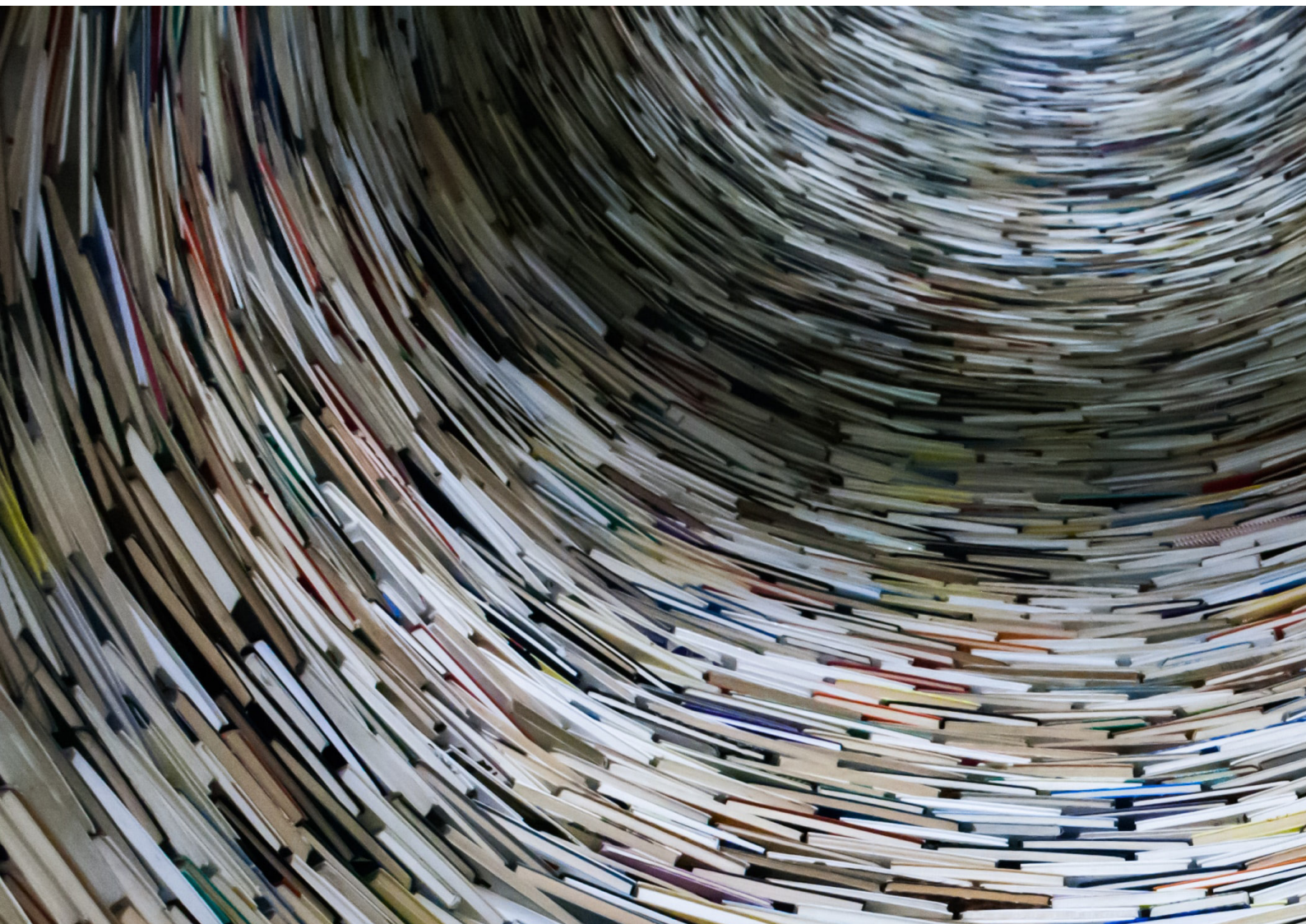
EU-India Relations in the Multi-Vector Matrix of Science Diplomacy and Asia-Europe Meeting



Research

# Cluster Reports

Our clusters create spaces for exchange, interaction and development - they are the heart of our knowledge generation. Hear from the coordinators about the developments in their clusters in 2021.







Ilysaender Yuen / Unsplash



# Regional Integration Knowledge System

**Samuel Standaert**

Coordinator



In 2021, we expanded the research team of the RIKS-cluster with two new doctoral students. Justine Miller (MA in Human Geography and MA in Advanced Studies in Economics) will use RIKS data in her PhD in order to analyse the problem of the *Spaghetti Bowl* in regional integration agreements. Using social network analysis tools, she will provide a more nuanced understanding of the severity and evolution of this problem and estimate its impact on trade. The results of these analyses will be used to study if and how the Spaghetti Bowl acts as a building or stumbling block in the path towards multilateralism. Second, Maria Rodriguez Alcàzar (MSc in African Studies) joined the RIKS team, with the gracious aid of a La Caixa Fellowship. Her research will focus on how citizen participation in regional integration agreements influences their effectiveness. Starting with a more general analysis of the incorporation of citizen participation in the underlying treaties, she will proceed to a more in-depth qualitative study looking at the implementation of citizen participation in two regional integration organisations in Latin America.

Further, we have continued to improve the functionality of the RIKS-platform ([www.riks.cris.unu.edu](http://www.riks.cris.unu.edu)), both in terms of the capabilities of the platform itself and of the underlying databases. The launch of the renewed platform has been delayed due to COVID-19 related issues but is set for the upcoming months. In the meantime, there has been a significant improvement in the quality of the data used to compute the indicators of integration. On the one hand, we have incorporated the UNCTAD-data on bilateral foreign direct investment up to 2020. On the other hand, an even more significant improvement concerns the data on bilateral migration flows. Having implemented a major imputation exercise, the RIKS-platform now includes yearly estimates of the stock of migrants for over 200 countries from the 1960s onwards, a ten-fold increase relative to the next best available database. In addition to the data used for the calculations for the indicators, we also have information on the net- and gross-flows of migrants, which can be used for future research.

Following the publication of our feasibility study on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)-index for Flemish Cities in 2020 we have engaged in a partnership with the Brussels-based IDEA Consult to measure and analyse the progress of Flemish municipalities towards sustainable development. In October 2021, we presented the updated version of the SDG-index and monitor during a launch event in Brussels, together with an online platform ([www.sdgmonitor.be](http://www.sdgmonitor.be)) providing interactive access to the data. The latter allows municipal administrations to visualise and analyse the SDG-goals where they are leading or lagging, allowing their efforts to be better targeted.

The City of Bruges has kindly contracted us to carry out an analysis of their SDG-performance using our index and monitor. Further, Glenn Rayp and Koen Borghys, Researcher at IDEA Consult have carried out an international comparison of SDG-monitors at the local level around the world.

Finally, the RIKS-cluster engaged in a number of outreach activities aimed at different audiences, including the presentation of the RIKS-platform and a large UN Simulation Game in which students were debating the distribution strategies of COVID-19 vaccines.



## Working Paper

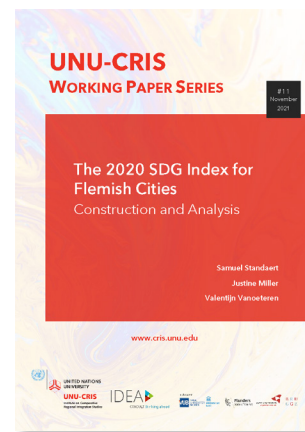
### The 2020 SDG Index for Flemish Cities: Construction and Analysis

This working paper by Samuel Standaert, Justine Miller and Valentijn Vanoeteren explains the construction of a set of indexes that summarise the performance on the SDGs for all 300 Flemish municipalities.

It outlines the improvements the 2020 edition of the SDG monitor offers on its predecessor, including an expanded set of indicators, the use of the newly released household survey data, as well as the ability to track the scores over time.

This data is used to construct indexes comparing the performance of the municipalities relative to the top and bottom performances in Flanders. Having constructed the indexes, the authors then try to distinguish and explain the patterns that can be identified in the overall score, as well as the score on the individual SDGs.

Specifically, they look at geographical, demographic and economic characteristics of the municipalities, offering policy-makers different ways to understand the performance of their municipalities.

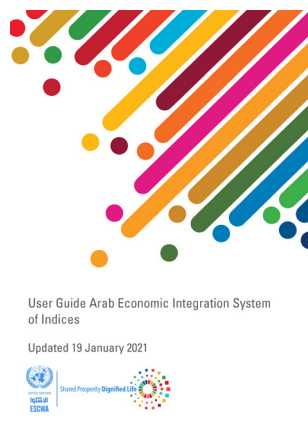


## Resource

### User Guide Arab Economic Integration System of Indices

This User Guide, co-authored by Philippe De Lombaerde, accompanies the Arab Economic Integration System of Indices (AEISI) developed by the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), and is designed to clarify the methodology behind the indices to facilitate their interpretation and comparison with other indicator systems and/or composite indices of regional economic integration.

The Guide explains the context for the construction of Arab regional integration indices at ESCWA, presents the structure and characteristics of the indicator system and the calculation of the composite indices, and provides further guidance on the interpretation of the results, illustrated by the most recent iteration of the indices.



## Training

### Simulation Game

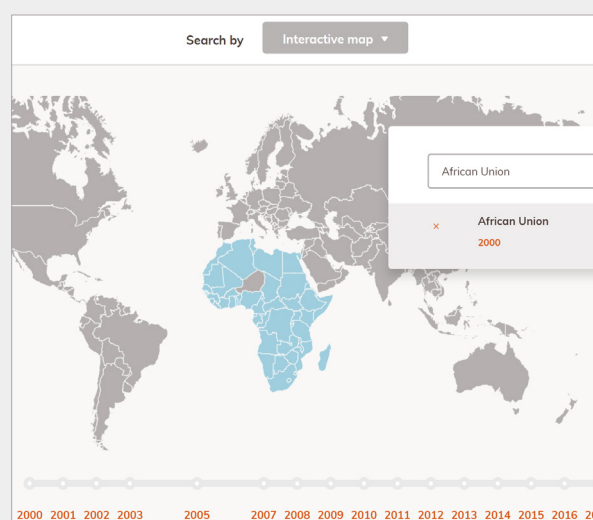
As part of the Economic Globalisation Master course at Ghent University, the RIKS cluster organised a simulation game on the topic of the distribution of COVID-19 vaccines in low- and middle-income countries in April.

A total of 44 students represented 10 countries and the United Nations, as they simulated an emergency general session to discuss the organisation of the procurement and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines.

Each country provided a position paper before the simulation, before undertaking several rounds of negotiation, both bilaterally and in a plenary setting, ending with a vote on a final agreement.

The simulation game was the first foray into the world of the United Nations processes for many of the students, with UNU-CRIS bringing a piece of New York to the lecture theatres of Ghent University for the day.

[www.riks.cris.unu.edu](http://www.riks.cris.unu.edu)



The RIKS Platform offers users numerous ways to access its vast database, including searches by country, organisation and on its interactive map.





# Migration and Social Policy

**Ine Lietaert**  
Coordinator



The Migration and Social Policy Cluster unites researchers investigating peoples' mobility within and across nations and regions, the regimes, infrastructures and practices developed at national, regional and global level that govern their mobility and support migrants. The research on social policy follows the same two-pronged approach of increasing understanding of social needs of individuals and groups, in interaction with access to welfare services and welfare policies developed at the national, regional and global level. The clear junction between these two fields, both experiencing pressure of the contemporary conditions of globalisation and evolving amidst calls for more cooperation and coordination at the regional and global level, together with the obvious mutual interplay between welfare and mobility, creates a leeway for innovative cross-fertilisation. Within the cluster, special attention is attributed to the most vulnerable categories of people to decentralising the debates on migration governance and social policy by bringing in perspectives from the Global South and non-state actors.

In May 2021, a first full UNU-CRIS panel from this cluster was assembled and selected for *The European Union in International Affairs Conference*. In line with the core focus of the cluster, we brought interdisciplinary insights into return governance, return migration and reintegration processes by contrasting the EU approach towards return with the realities and perspectives from The Gambia, Ethiopia and Cameroon.

We had a successful PhD defence on the socioeconomics of international migration decisions and outcomes by Chinedu Obi Temple, while new colleague Tancrede Pagès started a PhD on solidarity movements for illegalised migrants in Paris and Rome and its interaction with municipal policy. This new project wonderfully combines a focus on migration and social policy at the city level, raising similar questions about citizenship, belonging and city governance practices as other colleagues are doing for cities in the global South (e.g. Ulaanbaatar and Addis Ababa). Since the ongoing research in this cluster preliminary focusses on the African and Post-Soviet regions, 2021 also finally opened up opportunities again to go to research sites and reconnect with data collection. Visits were made to Uganda, The Gambia, Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova resulting in very interesting new working papers and academic publications. The research cluster also supported three internships.

Although the pandemic still prevented people from joining us in Bruges, being in different countries and regions while connecting online provided an interesting opportunity for UNU-CRIS and the interns to collect necessary data. Such hybrid constellation allowed us for example to collect data on the relation between drugs use and return experiences in Georgia, resulting in a report requested by a Belgian NGO. The conflict in Ethiopia on the other hand greatly endangered the research of other colleagues and of course the lives of people living in the northern part of the country.



## Working Paper

### Domestic and International Migration Intentions in Response to Environmental Stress: A Global Cross-Country Analysis

Environmental stress is expected to increase in the future and the implications of climate change are likely to affect migration patterns around the world. Despite the size of the literature, a consensus on the migration response to environmental factors has not been reached.

This working paper by Els Bekaert, Ilse Ruysen and Sara Salamone contributes to our understanding of environmental migration patterns across countries, drawing on the unique Gallup World Poll to conduct a cross-country individual-level analysis of the impact of self-reported exposure to environmental stress on people's migration intentions and their destination choice.

The authors find that self-reported exposure to environmental stress increases the probability to intend to migrate both domestically and internationally in the coming year.

## Article

### Contextualizing and Conceptualizing Reintegration Processes in the Context of Return

This special issue of *International Migration*, edited by Ine Lietaert and Katie Kushminder, is the first special issue on reintegration in the field of return migration studies.

Based on a collection of papers from a variety of return countries including Afghanistan, Armenia, Dominica, DR Congo, Ethiopia, Georgia and Senegal, the collective contribution of this special issue is to critically assess reintegration from a conceptual and contextual perspective.

This special issue can be viewed as a reflection on reintegration that can inform future developments in this field.



## PhD Defence

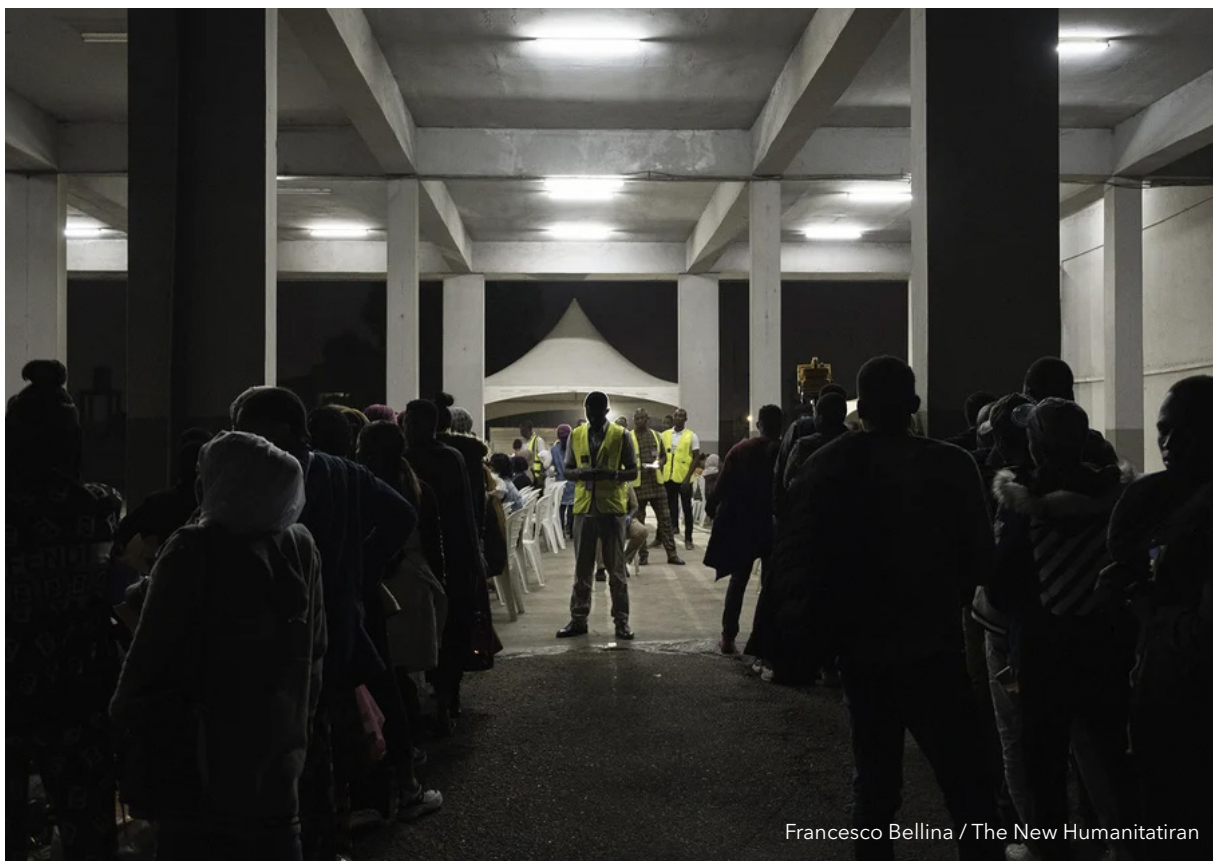
### Nigeria-Italy Migration Corridor

In March, Chinedu Obi Temple successfully defended his PhD entitled *The Socioeconomics of International Migration Decisions and Outcomes - Exploring the Nigeria - Italy Migration Corridor through a Capability-based Migration Framework*. (Promotors: Fabio Bartolini, Marijke D'Haese, Gianluca Brunoni; Ghent University – Università di Pisa)

In this dissertation, the author argues that there is a need to study why some people migrate and others do not, and why some migrants contribute to their households' welfare while others do not. These questions were addressed by researching the socioeconomics of migration decisions and outcomes of a specific group of people before and after migration. The neoclassical migration theories, upon which previous research is based may be inadequate in undertaking this comprehensive investigation.

Hence, the study adopted a novel capability-based migration framework and addressed three research questions: 1) how do capabilities influence migration decisions; 2) what are the capability-depriving constraints faced by migrants in the host countries, and 3) how do migrants contribute to capability improvement in their home countries?

The research explored the Nigeria to Italy migration corridor and collected data from Nigerians before migration and after migration to Italy. A mixed-method approach was adopted in the research, including systematic review, secondary data analysis and qualitative and quantitative analyses of primary data.



Francesco Bellina / The New Humanitarian





# Economic Interactions

**Glenn Rayp**  
Coordinator





The main activities in the Economic Interactions cluster were the start of two new PhD research projects, respectively on the direct and indirect effects of regional trade agreements and the effectiveness of regional organisations (ROs).

The first project aims at a better assessment of the impact of preferential trade agreements by taking into account and estimating its indirect effects in addition to the direct effects on which the literature exclusively focuses. This project simultaneously analyses the impact of PTAs, BITs, and BLAs on bilateral trade, investment, and migration flows in a seemingly unrelated regression (SUR) model. This will allow to disentangle the direct and indirect effects of each integration agreement and identify the three-way linkages between trade, migration and FDI- flows in the presence of PTAs, BITs and BLAs. In the next stage, the project analyses the contents of the agreements (PTAs, BITs, and BLAs) by means of text-as-data analysis. By mapping the heterogeneity of the agreements in depth, the mechanisms behind their impact are disentangled. Moreover, the text-analysis of the contents as such will provide valuable input for further research on the effectiveness of international policy making. Finally, by examining the contents of PTAs, BITs, and BLAs, and incorporating the heterogeneity of these agreements into a SURE-model of structural gravity equations, will be identified through which provisions, in what kind of agreements, and under what circumstances, the bilateral trade, FDI and migration flows are most affected.

This project will enhance our knowledge of the effects of international agreements on economic flows and provide valuable policymaking insights for transnational regional integration. It was granted FWO research funding in August. A first important achievement last year was the finalisation of the programme coding for the estimation of the simultaneous system of trade, investment and migration flows. The first estimation results of the direct and indirect effects of regional integration agreements are scheduled to be presented at the European Trade Study Group (ETSG) conference in September 2022.

The second research project on the effectiveness of regional organisations aims at measuring RO effectiveness and identify its determinants. First, a comprehensive measure of de jure integration between countries will be provided that will include both the institutional structure and the policy scope of regional organisations. This work is done jointly with Anja Jetschke (University of Göttingen) and Patrick Theiner (University of Göttingen) using the CROP database (Comparative Regional Organisations Project). The indicators of de jure integration will be used in a structural gravity analysis to assess their impact on the de facto integration of the region. By incorporating indicators of de jure integration along various dimensions, the dimensions of de jure integration that are the most effective at raising the level of de facto integration will be identified. A recent body of literature has focused on the role of trade policy uncertainty in explaining the effects of PTAs. We will extend this analysis to incorporate RO effectiveness and uncertainty about agreement compliance. The determinants of RO effectiveness will be identified, using an empirical test of the determinants of the effectiveness of ROs, based on a simple theoretical framework that extends a tariff game between two countries with a monitoring cost of the rules stated in the agreement.

With the estimation of an indicator of the policy scope of the agreements, the first stage in constructing an index of de jure integration was completed in June 2020. The results were presented at the workshop *Conceptual and Empirical Perspectives on the Performance of Regionalisms in the Global South: From State Fragility to Africa-EU relations*, and beyond. held at the Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz. In the second part of the year, a comprehensive indicator of the institutional strength of the RO was developed. At the ISA Annual Conference in April 2021, a new version of the de jure integration index was presented that includes both policy scope and institutional strength.



## Policy Brief

### Towards a Triple Win: Transforming Circular Migration into Circular Skill Mobility Schemes

Expanding legal migration pathways is often framed as a panacea to curb irregular migration and mitigate the effects of population ageing in immigration countries, while also fostering source countries' economic development and immigrants' income. Yet, policy initiatives to expand migration have not gained significant momentum, and available migration windows tend to prioritise highly skilled workers leading to a mismatch between legal admission policies and the average profile of irregular migrants.

In this policy brief produced for the Think20 summit in Italy, Afaf Rahim, Glenn Rayp and Ilse Ruysen propose expanding legal pathways for all skill levels by transforming circular migration into innovative schemes that combine vocational training in home countries with work-related migration opportunities for selected trainees.



## Article

### Immigrants' Demand for Informal and Formal Education: Evidence from US Time Use Data

Through studying the time devoted to educational activities, this journal article by Nicola Daniele Coniglio, Rezart Hoxhaj and Hubert Jayet in the Journal of Demographic Economics uses US time-diary surveys to study the allocation of time to informal as well as formal learning and educational activities by immigrants and natives. It finds that immigrants are more likely to engage in informal and formal education and conditional on participation, they allocate more time to these activities.

The main drivers are economic incentives, mostly in the early phase of working life, and the differences between natives and immigrants persist across generations. It also finds that differences between immigrants and natives are generally larger in informal education than in formal education.



## Article

### Safe and Risky Sovereigns in the Euro Area Capital Market: Financial Drivers of Fiscal Policies in Germany and Italy

Market perceptions of sovereign creditworthiness, as grounded in national political economies, cause a persistent segmentation of the euro area capital market between peer countries regarded as safe or risky.

As a consequence, cross-border capital flows have an asymmetric effect on the public and private finances of creditor and debtor countries, adding to the asymmetric impact from their economic growth models.

This article by Ad van Riet in *German Politics* extends the literature on the varieties of capitalism within the Economic and Monetary Union of Europe with an analysis of the financial drivers of fiscal policies in creditor and debtor countries from the euro crisis up to the coronavirus pandemic, with a focus on Germany and Italy.

## Article

### Trade and Infrastructure in the Belt and Road Initiative: A Gravity Analysis Based on Revealed Trade Preferences

Does the intensity of trade between a pair of countries changes when they experience improvements in their infrastructural systems, and how so?

This journal article by Cristina Di Stefano, Lelio Lapadra and Ilaria Salvati analyses countries participating in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), a project specifically designed to promote infrastructural connectivity and therefore boost trade among the countries involved, using a particular specification of the gravity model, allowing the authors to estimate bilateral trade intensity without resorting to the traditional “size” variables of the gravity model, taking the entire network of multilateral trade into account.

They find that bilateral preferences among BRI countries will intensify inasmuch as they succeed in coordinating their infrastructural projects.





An abstract digital graphic on a dark blue background. On the left, a hand is formed by a white wireframe of triangles, with the index finger pointing towards the right. On the right, a globe is depicted with a grid of white dashed lines and dots. A bright blue light flare is at the point where the finger points at the globe.

# Digital Governance

**Jamal Shahin**

Coordinator



UNU-CRIS supported the creation of the VUB Foundation Chair in Digital Sovereignty, which emerged as one of the key pillars of the Digital Governance Cluster's activities in 2021. The Chair will unpack the dynamics of the transformations we are currently undergoing in the digital transition, which is affecting all regions of the world. Interdisciplinary research and engagement is required with the new actors active in promoting the digital transition in societies across the world. The research focuses on evaluating and assessing contemporary developments. It is driven by a desire to help forge a better understanding of how a pluralist new world order can emerge that will ensure sustainable development for all. The major objective of the Chair is to reflect on the emergent and divergent meanings of sovereignty in the 21st Century. It will specifically focus on the role of technology in affecting and effecting change in political institutions. It aims to achieve this through educational and research outputs, practitioner engagement through timely events (workshops and seminars) and a series of visiting researchers who will be invited to Bruges in the course of 2022 (or when COVID restrictions will allow physical travel again). UNU-CRIS has directly been involved in the research and practitioner engagement activities of the Chair in 2021.

The GREMLIN Project enjoyed its fourth and penultimate year in 2021. This project, which set out to understand the complexities of Global and Regional Multistakeholder Institutions particularly in the field of Trade and Internet Governance, saw many developments, despite a second year of COVID restrictions. Diana Potjomkina finalised her PhD manuscript on *Multistakeholderism in the European Union's Trade Policy-making: Analysing Domestic Advisory Groups*, which was submitted and approved by an international jury in an internal defence in December 2021. Nadia Tjahja continued to work on multistakeholderism in internet governance, and took the decision to focus largely on the UN-organised Internet Governance Forum in her PhD research. Both Nadia and Diana were active in international conferences and in publishing, along with other members of the GREMLIN team from both partner universities, the VUB and Ghent University.

Due to continuing COVID restrictions, many events organised by the Digital Governance Cluster took place online. Of particular note are the *Furthering Debates on Digital Sovereignty* series of events, organised by the Digital Governance Cluster in the context of the Chair on Digital Sovereignty. These events brought together a large number of academics with practitioners from both industry and the technical community, in order to discuss how we should conceptualise approaches to understanding digital sovereignty as it emerges in (mainly European) policy discourse. Members of the GREMLIN team participated in over 30 events in 2021, with a vast majority being presentations of ongoing research work at international conferences.

In addition to a number of written outputs, two major publications (peer-reviewed articles) emerged from the combined work of the Digital Governance Cluster. Both appeared in the journal *Telecommunications Policy*, a high-impact academic journal focusing on the impact of digitalisation in the economy and society. One article was co-authored by cluster members Nadia Tjahja, Trisha Meyer, and Jamal Shahin, and focused on *What is civil society and who represents civil society at the Internet Governance Forum?* The second article was published in the same journal, and was co-authored by cluster members Trisha Meyer and Jamal Shahin, along with Roxana Radu and Matthias Kettemann. This editorial article launched the special issue of *Telecommunications Policy*, which was the first to systematically address the activity we call "normfare" - the assiduous development of norms of very different character (public and private, formal and informal, technically mediated and directly implemented) by different actors (platforms, standard-setters, states) as an answer to the wide range of challenges facing internet governance.

In addition to the Chair and GREMLIN projects, the Digital Governance Cluster also received project support to organise the *Furthering Digital Sovereignty Events* (see above, with funding received from Microsoft) and a project contract from the EU's Cybersecurity Agency (ENISA) to support their work on the creation of a *Research and Innovation Annual Report*.



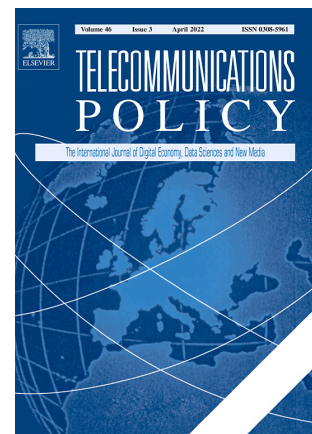
## Article

### Normfare: Norm Entrepreneurship in Internet Governance

This special issue of *Telecommunications Policy* edited by Roxana Radu, Matthias C. Kettemann, Trisha Meyer and Jamal Shahin is the first to systematically address the activity the authors call “normfare” - the assiduous development of norms of very different character (public and private, formal and informal, technically mediated and directly implemented) by different actors (platforms, standard-setters, states) as an answer to the wide range of challenges facing internet governance.

It brings together contributions from leading anthropologists, technologists, political scientists, legal and communication scholars exploring how norms underpin the new ordering of the internet, whether in explicit or implicit forms.

Through various theoretical lenses, contributions to the special issue analyse the impact of platforms, states, civil society, expert groups and key individuals on restructuring the normative order of the internet, and present empirical evidence for instances of norm creation, legitimization, contestation and opposition. Valuable new insights for norm development processes come from case studies, ethnographies, legal and discourse analysis and interdisciplinary approaches locating agency and power plays.



Joshua Woroniecki / Unsplash

## Article

### What Is Civil Society and Who Represents Civil Society at the IGF? An Analysis of Civil Society Typologies in Internet Governance

For 15 years, the UN-mandated Internet Governance Forum (IGF) has brought different stakeholder groups together to engage in debate and discussion on public policy issues relevant to Internet Governance, but who are the 'civil society' that is treated as one of the cornerstones of the IGF?

This paper by Nadia Tjahja, Trisha Meyer and Jamal Shahin aims to provide two contributions to discussions on norm entrepreneurship in internet governance, through contributing to the growing body of literature on multistakeholderism, notably by furthering debates on the role of civil society in institutions of global governance (in this instance, the IGF, and through contributing to the debates on the future of the IGF(+), by digging into the civil society stakeholder group to try to understand who is actually present in the discussions.



## Event

### Beyond Hype: What Does Digital Sovereignty Actually Mean?

What lies behind the use of the term digital sovereignty, and what does it mean for global digital cooperation and interdependence?

States have been increasingly using this term to frame national and regional policy debates without a critical reflection on the implications for control over our digital space. Digital sovereignty cannot simply be about translating a traditional understanding of sovereignty into cyberspace.

It is at worst an oxymoron, and at best, a fluid concept that can have serious implications for all stakeholders in the digital economy. However, the fact that there is no real universal agreement on the key tenets of digital sovereignty, means that different approaches emerge.

UNU-CRIS, in collaboration with the Georgia Institute of Technology School of Public Policy and the Vrije Universiteit Brussel, organised a Town Hall at the Internet Governance Forum which provided an opportunity for different stakeholders to raise key issues associated with the consequences of the use of the concept in policymaking.





# Nature, Climate and Health

**Nidhi Nagabhatla**

Coordinator



2021 was an active year for this cluster, with a suite of activities, including research synthesis, knowledge catalysis, events, collaboration and fostering partnership with experts and agencies in UN and UNU networks. We shaped a new flagship project - the United Nations University Climate Resilience Initiative (UNU-CRI), working together UNU-MERIT and UNU-EHS in response to the European Flood in July 2021.

Next, as part of the renewed research direction, the cluster is looking into complexities that influence regional water governance, with particular focus on cross-border/transboundary water systems. In 2021, the cluster members produced three peer reviewed publications focusing on the water related conflicts and migration pathways in the Congo basin, conceptualising cascading risks from climate change crises in addressing sustainability goals and targets, and community research for amplifying climate services in Grand River, Canada. In addition, a suite of book chapters focused on conceptual and empirical research pointing to SDG6, 11, 13, 14, 16 and 17. The cluster contributed to around 10 events, including webinars, online conference sessions and guest lectures, each with more than 50 people, of which more than half were women. They were organised with agencies such as UNEP, UNESCO, and other institutions from both the Global North and the Global South, including an event on World Environment Day, June 5th, 2021. We jointly implemented a multi-party project with the Scottish Association for Marine Science working towards an agenda to ensure the sustainable future of the rapidly expanding global seaweed aquaculture industry. In 2021, two policy briefs and a book chapter were compiled from this partnership along with two webinars, jointly organised with national and regional institutions and experts in the UK, Asia and Africa.

In addition, we provided strategic inputs for the UN Decade on Ecosystems Restoration as task force members, working closely with UN and international organizations (FAO, UNEP). that brought together over 100 experts from all ecosystems around the world. A core output for 2021 was the coordination of a Global Survey on the capacity needs of member states to implement the agenda outlined in the Decade, where we collected and analysed 1331 responses, to help define, accelerate, and upscale key knowledge products and capacity development initiatives of the Decade at the regional and national levels. The report is available on our website.

Another key achievement was the contribution to a UNESCO-led multi-stakeholder report and position paper on taking stock of progress towards gender equality in the water domain, 25 years after the Beijing Declaration. These outputs are channelled to governments, international organisations, professionals and policymakers in the water sector, academia and NGOs to join forces to accelerate the achievement of gender equality in water for a more just, sustainable and peaceful future. Together with the trade cluster, a research synthesis on an environmental impact assessment (EIA) of international trade agreements is in progress, showcasing active collaboration with Ghent University and the VUB. We also worked closely with the CliMigHealth Network at Ghent University, conducting a joint training programme (focusing on water-migration nexus) for experts and professionals, partnering with an Indian University, and setting a common research agenda for building climate resilience, with a specific focus on mental health risks from climate crisis/disaster settings and response measures for mainstream and displaced communities.

Finally, the cluster continued to grow and add new expertise, as we welcomed new professionals, scholars, and interns both from Global North and Global South who contributed/are contributing to implementing its mandate.



## Report

### Global Capacity Needs Assessment for the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration

UNU-CRIS contributed to the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration through its membership of the Best Practices Task Force.

This Task Force focuses on shaping the knowledge component of the UN Decade, including capacity development efforts and capitalisation as well as sharing and dissemination of good practices for restoration in all ecosystems. In November, the *Global Capacity Needs Assessment: Key Gaps and Capacity Priorities for Restoration to Support the United Nations Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030* was published.

The task force conducted this needs assessment through the wide dissemination of an online survey to identify the “system-wide capacities” for enabling and empowering people, strengthening organizations, networks and partnerships, and fostering the enabling environment in order to achieve the goals of the Decade and sustain its efforts beyond 2030. The results of this assessment, which collected and analysed 1331 responses, will help define, accelerate and upscale key knowledge products and capacity development initiatives of the Decade. Furthermore, at the regional level, collective discussions will be promoted to internalise and translate findings into action plans.

The survey was developed in collaboration with seven member organisations of the Task Force on Best Practices: Forestation International, the World Resources Institute (WRI), the Global Landscapes Forum (GLF), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies (WOCAT) and FAO.



## Article

### **EU Climate and Energy Governance in Times of Crisis: Towards a New Agenda**

The EU has long pursued relatively ambitious climate and energy policies, often against the backdrop of what has been termed the EU 'polycrisis'.

This article by Ingmar von Homeyer, Sebastian Oberthür and Andrew J. Jordan introduces a special issue of the *Journal of European Public Policy* which seeks to develop a better understanding of why, how and with which consequences the polycrisis and EU climate and energy governance have influenced each other.

It draws on a novel framework of five broad crisis trends underlying the polycrisis. Most of the contributions suggest that EU climate and energy governance have advanced significantly despite, and sometimes even because of, the crisis trends. The countervailing effects of the trends and the effectiveness of actors' strategies to advance EU policy against opponents go a long way to explaining this puzzling finding.

As the EU seeks to fully decarbonise itself by 2050, interactions with the crisis trends are likely to intensify in ways which future research could fruitfully investigate.

## Article

### **Water, Conflicts and Migration and the Role of Regional Diplomacy: Lake Chad, Congo Basin, and the Mbororo Pastoralist**

The Congo Basin is a vital water artery in Central Africa and holds more than 50% of Africa's surface water. Despite the abundance of natural and human resources, the region faces a multitude of social, political, and governance challenges exacerbated by the climate crisis and water stress settings.

These conditions severely impact native communities and pastoral populations living in vulnerable conditions with millions displaced or forced to migrate. The shrinking of the Lake Chad Basin (LCB) has had multifaceted consequences both directly and indirectly, including forced displacement, violent conflicts, and political instability across the Sahel.

The 'complex loop' of water-migration-conflict and climate change impacts is influencing regional governance strategies, particularly those related to cross-border agendas of water management, governance operations, and water sharing.

This article by Nidhi Nagabhatla, Martha Cassidy-Neumiller, Nabintu Ntugulo Francine and Neil Maatta delves into some of the key aspects and provides refreshed insights to guide the current and future regional discourse on hydrodiplomacy, utilising the LCB and the Congo Basin as a case study to examine the multifaceted spill over effects of conflict and migration in a complex sociocultural context.





# Regions and Cities Governance Lab

**Frank Mattheis**

Coordinator



In 2021, the Regions and Cities Governance Lab (Re-LAB) began its second year as the UNU-CRIS research cluster dedicated to the governance of regional organisations and region-building processes so as to inform the single-case and comparative work on the institutional dynamics of regionalisms at the institute and beyond. Whereas the Regional Public Goods clusters focus on specific policy areas, the Re-LAB cluster is transversal and focuses on institutions and their dynamics. This is not limited to the most visible signs of regional integration, such as the agreements reached at summits of heads of states, as the cluster takes on a more comprehensive approach to regional actorhood within and beyond regional organisations. Re-LAB studies both horizontal interregional interactions between distinct or overlapping regionalisms and vertical interactions between different levels of governance, including the emerging non-traditional modalities of diplomacy that this involves. To cover these non-traditional actors that engage vertically in transnational projects, such as provinces and cities, UNTRAD (Unit on Non-Traditional Diplomacy) was founded in 2021 within the cluster.

In terms of horizontal interactions, Re-LAB puts particular attention on two interregional relationships: Africa-Europe relations as well as relations between the European Union and its Eastern neighbourhood, with a specific focus on Russia. In addition, a new geographic area emerged regarding the Atlantic Ocean as a maritime space for human security governance. Re-LAB publications and events throughout the year reflect both the interest in producing more knowledge on the inner working of integration within specific regions and the necessity to engage in comparative studies to reinforce the theoretical development. To foster the latter, a handbook is under way on *Regional Cooperation and Integration* (Edward Elgar), as well as a special issue on *Disintegrations* (Comentario Internacional).

Following the floods that hit Western Europe in the summer of 2021, the cluster also started to engage in cooperation with other institutes of the United Nations University. Together with the Nature, Climate and Health Cluster, Re-LAB contributes to the UNU Climate Resilience Initiative, a joint initiative with UNU-MERIT and UNU-EHS. Re-LAB contributes by investigating the governance of cross-border cooperation to ensure climate-resilient development.

In combination with the RIKS platform, the cluster is also concerned with the translation of the SDGs into level-specific objectives. To this end, the cluster thus considers the world and the regions composing it as a laboratory of continuous institutional adaptation to transnational challenges, from security to climate change.



## Book

### Principled Pragmatism in Practice: The EU's Policy towards Russia after Crimea

As the EU's relations with Russia remain at an all-time low and continue to be in a state of paralysis, marked by de-institutionalisation, inertia and estrangement, the EU's policy towards Russia seems up for review.

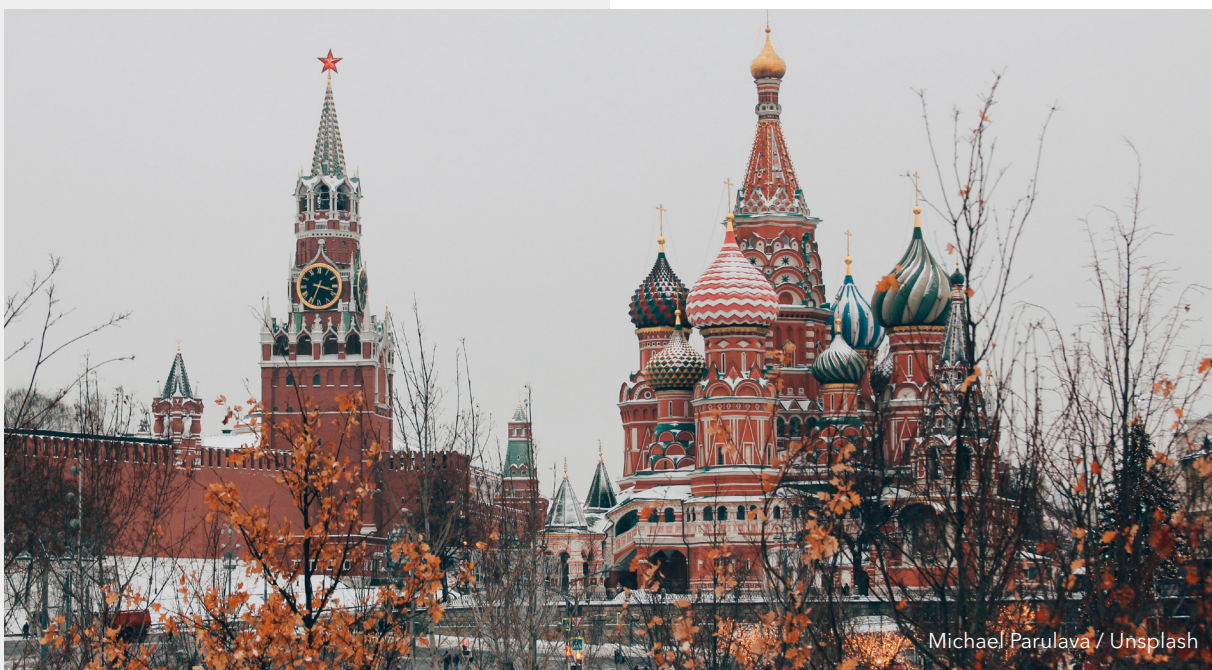
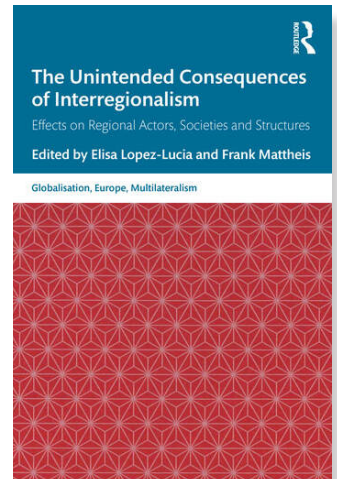
By taking stock of the implementation of the EU's Global Strategy and the five principles that are guiding EU-Russia relations, this volume provides a forward-looking angle and contributes to a better understanding of the current EU-Russia relationship and the prospects for overcoming the existing deadlock.

## Book

### The Unintended Consequences of Interregionalism - Effects on Regional Actors, Societies and Structures

What are the unintended consequences of interregional relations?

Edited by Elisa Lopez-Lucia and Frank Mattheis, this book satisfies the need to go beyond the consideration of the success or failure of international policies. It sheds light on complex interactions involving multiple actors, individual and institutional, driven by various representations, interests and strategies, and which often result in unintended consequences that powerfully affect the socio-political context in which they unfold.

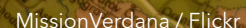


## Trends of Convergence and Divergence in EU-Africa Relations

These virtual events brought together experts to discuss their respective perspectives on how Euro-African relations are evolving in light of the profound changes occurring on both sides.

## Regional Organisations and UN Reform: Towards a Flexible Interaction Mechanism

It underlines the dynamic trends that already exist, going beyond a mere continuity with the past and addressing with courage the current deficits in multilateral legitimacy, representation and efficiency.





Impact

# Sharing and Engagement

Taking our research and expertise beyond the pages and into the minds of those bringing about change in the world.





Pascale Vantorre / UNU-CRIS



## EUIA Conference

The EUIA Conference is a platform for academics and policymakers to debate and discuss the role of the European Union in the dynamic realm of international affairs. After its postponement in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the seventh edition of the EUIA Conference was held virtually from 26 – 28 May 2021 and was themed Assessing the EU's Capacity to Act.

EUIA2021 featured a keynote address by Margrethe Vestager (right), Executive Vice-President of the European Commission, highlighting the role of sovereignty, democracy and law in defining the course of EU policymaking. The conference also included several high-level policy-link panels and an editors' debate of leading academic journals in European studies. Additionally, it comprised more than 60 academic panels during which scholars presented their state-of-the-art research on EU foreign policymaking.



UNU-CRIS was well represented at EUIA 2021 as an institutional partner organising and contributing to multiple sessions on topics such as return migration, the energy transition, the EU's trade legitimacy, EU development policy and the EU's climate change policies. The first day of the EUIA Conference featured the high-level policy link panel, EU and UN: Shared Challenges, Same Vision? organised by UNU-CRIS. Chaired by Director Philippe De Lombaerde, the session brought together representatives of the UN, European Commission, EU Member States, and academia to explore the multi-faceted relationship between the UN and EU. In doing so, it answered key questions on multilateralism and on-the-ground coordination at the global and country levels while highlighting views on the future strategies and perspectives for EU-UN relations.



## School of Modern Diplomacy

From the crisis in Afghanistan to the implications of COVID-19, the School of Modern Diplomacy 2021 explored the role of diplomacy in today's tumultuous and interconnected world. Organised by UNU-CRIS and Diplomatische Akademie Wien - Vienna School of International Studies, the two-week-long summer school (23 August - 3 September 2021) combined theory and practice to present the multi-faceted and multi-actor art of diplomacy shaping global ideas and policies.

The diverse cohort comprised diplomats, scholars, entrepreneurs, and policymakers from over 25 nationalities across 6 continents. The programme was designed to emphasise the broadened definition of modern-day diplomacy, comprising new modalities, actors, and policy areas; to "go beyond secret circles and ivory towers" as put by one of the speakers.

The participants heard from speakers such as former European Commissioner for Trade and Home Affairs Cecilia Malmström, Fellow in Economics at Oxford University and Head of the LSE Economic Commission Linda Yueh, Chief of Staff at the OACPS Secretariat Andrew Bradley, and Lead Migration Expert and Chief Strategist, Intergovernmental Authority on Development Mehari Taddele Maru, among other distinguished diplomats, academics, and policymakers.



Kim Haughton / UN Photo



## Feature

# Think20 Summit

By Ana Amaya, Associate Research Fellow

I was honoured to represent UNU-CRIS at the Think20 Summit in Milan, Italy. This Summit was the culminating event of several months working on the Global Health and COVID-19 Taskforce of the Think20 Group (T20), the official engagement group of the Group of Twenty (G20). The T20 congregates leading think tanks and high-level experts to provide research-based policy recommendations to the G20 governments. As part of the work in the group, I co-authored a policy brief with Philippe De Lombaerde and Agnes Binagwaho, former Minister of Health of Rwanda, titled *Regional Collective Action to Address COVID-19 and Prepare for Future Pandemics*. The brief highlighted the need for greater regional cooperation to ensure improved health equity and access to vaccines. Researchers from UNU-CRIS were also involved in the Migration Taskforce and published a policy brief titled *Towards a Triple Win: Transforming Circular Migration into Circular Skill Mobility Schemes*. The recommendations from the taskforces have fed into multilateral discussions and negotiations to address the COVID-19 pandemic and the final communiqué was presented at G20 Leader's Summit in Rome at the end of October.

After a year and a half of virtual conferences, it was inspiring to attend a meeting in person again. Arriving to Italy was no easy feat. Given that it was my first international business trip and first time traveling to Europe since the pandemic began, I double checked that I had complied with all the requirements to enter the continent. Italy had stringent travel rules compared to other European countries and understandably so given the effect COVID-19 had on the country early in the pandemic. Their continued efforts have resulted in a highly vaccinated population (over 70% at the time of writing) which is commendable. Since I was traveling from the USA, I had the added advantage of not having to quarantine upon arrival as long as I was fully vaccinated, had a negative COVID-19 test, and filled out an EU contact tracing form. Luckily, I received my negative test hours before my flight (issues with testing in the USA have been widely documented) and there were no problems at immigration upon landing in Milan. However, it was not lost on me how traveling from another country would have made everything much harder. As a public health expert, it was reassuring to see how the T20 Summit organisers highlighted safety at every step of the way, starting from their invitation letter to the event itself, where there were COVID-19 vaccination checks at the door and mandatory mask use.

On the three days of the T20 Summit, the excitement was palpable in the air with participants from all over the world congregating to hear the final recommendations



from the taskforces and from high-level speakers, which ranged from a Nobel-prize winning economist, a former Prime Minister, to an astronaut. Our co-author, Agnes Binagwaho (right), spoke in the health section of the Summit where she discussed the importance of equitable global access to the COVID-19 vaccine and the role of pharmaceutical companies in making this a reality. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the Director-General of the World Health Organization, also addressed the Summit, appealing to G20 leaders to act immediately to tackle the pandemic. Kristalina Georgieva, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), discussed the upcoming Annual Meeting of the World Bank Group and IMF. Similar to the aforementioned speakers, she made a strong case for intersectoral action to overcome the unequal effects of the pandemic and greater support from high-income countries.



As a grouping of diverse countries with significant power, the G20 is in a unique position to agree and implement decisive actions to address the next phase of the recovery in an equitable manner. As we await the results from the G20 Summit and see whether evidence-informed recommendations are taken forward, it is important to remember that any agreements made at that time will only be the first step in a much longer process to address the sequelae of the COVID-19 pandemic. We will be watching whether bold decisions are made for a fairer response, and that these are coupled with targeted, measurable actions.







Daria Annikova / Pexels

## ISA Conference

Held virtually between 31 March and 9 April, the Annual International Studies Association (ISA) Conference themed *Globalization, Regionalism and Nationalism: Contending Forces in World Politics*, saw UNU-CRIS contribute to a number of high-profile sessions, on topics such as globalisation, health policy, regionalism, international political economy, the financing of regional organisations, and climate political economy.

UNU-CRIS was represented by Glenn Rayp, Samuel Standaert, Lukas Rabaey, Philippe De Lombaerde, Ana Amaya, Timothy Shaw, Frank Mattheis and Gaspare Genna.

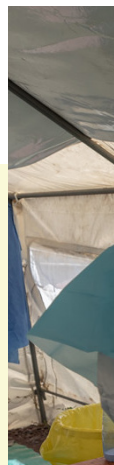




Photo: UNICEF Ethiopia

## WIDER Development Conference

*The Future of Global Health Governance*, a parallel panel of the UNU-WIDER Development Conference in September, brought experts together with professional backgrounds in Africa, Asia and Latin America to reflect on the lessons that can be drawn from the worldwide COVID-19 crisis about global health governance.

Co-chaired by Philippe De Lombaerde and Ana Amaya, the discussion addressed how we should evaluate the global health governance structures in terms of their effectiveness, efficiency and equity, and reflected on the role regional organizations could or should play within a logic of multi-level health governance.



Photo: UASB

## Ninth Doctoral School on Latin American, European and Comparative Regionalism

The Ninth Doctoral School saw the convergence of early-career researchers and world-class experts to spark new linkages within the dynamic realm of regionalism.

The week-long programme, co-organised with the Universidad Andina Simón Bolívar Sede Ecuador, was held virtually from 20-24 September and ranged in discussion from healthcare to trade, to digitisation and politics. The school comprised a series of lectures and tutorial sessions by leading experts on the regional developments shaping the 21st century.



## Feature

# SDG Monitor

The SDGs form an internationally shared framework of goals towards a more sustainable world. Municipalities have a vital role to play in achieving these goals, with the Sustainable Development Network (SDSN) estimating that 65% of the success of the SDGs depends on the immediate and active involvement of local governments.

To help municipalities monitor and achieve their sustainability goals, IDEA Consult launched the SDG monitor ([www.sdgmonitor.be](http://www.sdgmonitor.be)) in 2020, which translated almost 100 indicators into a score that gives municipalities insight into their position in the area of poverty, employment, and climate, among others.

In October, a second version of the monitor was launched, a collaboration between IDEA Consult and UNU-CRIS, providing new insights and allowing to follow the evolution of a municipality through time for each of the 17 sustainable development goals.

The data was analysed in a policy brief, published by UNU-CRIS in December, and from this analysis emerged a hopeful picture. Three out of four municipalities improved their SDG scores. In particular, the goals on industry, innovation and infrastructure (SDG 9), responsible consumption and production (SDG 12) and climate action (SDG 13) improved strongly, however the scores for SDG 16 were of concern, with Flemish municipalities losing, on average, 8.5 points for their peace, security and strong public services score.

A clear trend in the scores of cities and urbanised municipalities emerged, which are confronted with a number of collective challenges such as social and economic mobility, quality of education and quality of governance. Nevertheless, the analysis showed a positive evolution with cities ultimately showing the greatest improvement, scoring highly in the areas of climate action and clean water.

The analysis also highlighted considerable differences between regions, with the Kempen and East Brabant scoring particularly highly. The analysis found that the most important explanation for the differences between municipalities and regions is financial prosperity. A statistical analysis showed that 25% of the differences between municipalities and regions can be explained by the average income. There is one interesting exception to this rule: climate. Here, the data shows the richer the municipality, the worse it scores on the climate objectives.

What the SDG Monitor ultimately demonstrates is the power of the local to affect the global, demonstrating that achieving the SDGs is not only dependent on what happens in New York and at summits across the globe, but on the buy-in and initiatives taken by our neighbours in local communities.

Selecteer een gemeente uit de lijst

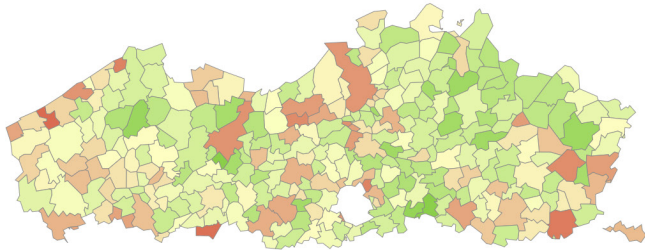
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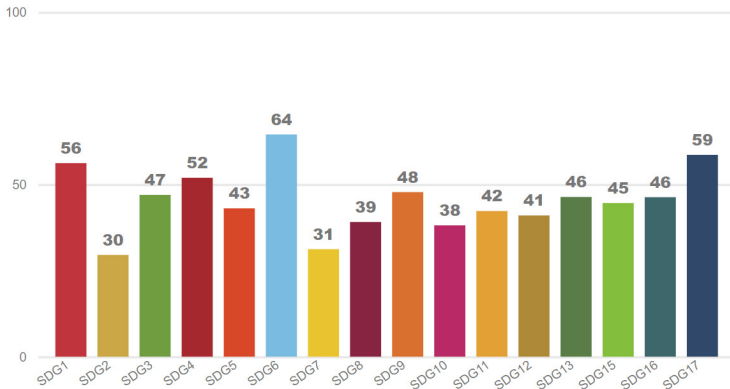


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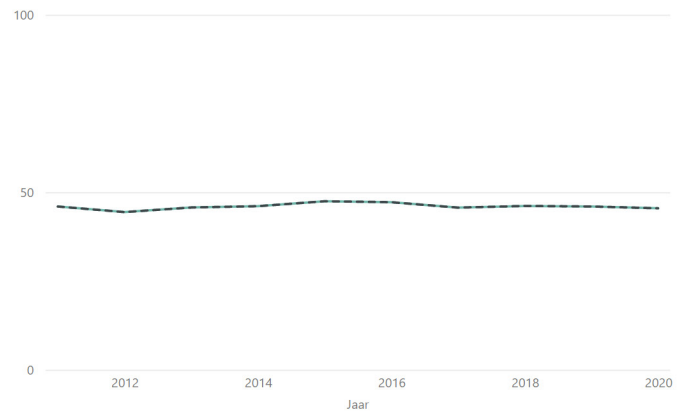
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Lionel Callewaert / Wikimedia Commons





Samia Rehman / MONUSCO

## Gender, Pakistan and UN Peacekeeping

Multi-dimensional peacekeeping is central to the maintenance and promotion of peace and security around the world. For 70 years, peacekeeping operations have navigated the path from conflict to peace; wherein the emergence of a gender-responsive agenda has been especially crucial.

In March, Marvi Memon, former Federal Minister and chairperson of the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), shared insights from her new book, *Gender, Pakistan and UN Peacekeeping*. The webinar traced the evolution of UN Peacekeeping, while using the case of Pakistan to untangle the link between gender, conflict and peacekeeping measures.





## EuroDIG

The European Dialogue on Internet Governance (EuroDIG) is an open multi-stakeholder platform to exchange views about the Internet and how it is governed. First organised in 2008 by several organisations, government representatives and experts, it fosters a multistakeholder dialogue and collaboration with the Internet community on public policy for the Internet – culminating in an annual conference that takes place in a different European city every year.

Taking place virtually from 28 until 30 June, Nadia Tjahja hosted a studio to foster the dialogue between relevant stakeholders.



## EUI Young African Leaders Programme

As part of the inaugural Young African Leaders Programme organised by the European University Institute in Florence, Philippe De Lombaerde delivered a lecture on Indicator-Based Monitoring of Regional Integration and Andrew Dunn gave a science communication and social media training session.



## Feature

# GlobalSeaweedSTAR

Over the past four years, the GlobalSeaweedSTAR programme has worked to support the sustainable development of the global seaweed industry.

Funded by the Global Challenges Research Fund (UK Research and Innovation) and UNU-CRIS, GlobalSeaweedSTAR brought together an international team of experts in science, policy and economics from nine partner institutions across the United Kingdom, Philippines, Malaysia, Tanzania and Belgium.

The programme addressed key challenges faced by the industry and provided practical solutions to them, while also growing the research and innovation capacity of developing countries engaged in seaweed farming.

The culmination of this project was the finale event, held in November, in which the final policy brief was presented, produced by UNU-CRIS. It warned that the multi-billion-dollar seaweed farming industry, which has overseen rapid growth in recent years, must balance economic profitability with environment, human and organism health to ensure its long-term survival.

Seaweed cultivation is the most rapidly expanding sector in aquaculture production, accounting for more than 50 per cent of total global marine production, equating to around 34.7 million tonnes. Rapid growth in the past 50 years, meant the industry reached a value of USD 14.7 billion in 2019. The industry supports the livelihoods of over 6 million small-scale farmers and processors, many of whom are women, in predominantly low and middle-income countries.

The rapid expansion of the industry though has been in tandem with increasing pressures from warming seas caused by climate change and an over-reliance on certain species, which has seen the industry ravaged by pests and diseases.

The policy brief has outlined eight recommendations, ranging from developing new international policies and regulations to establishing a series of regional seaweed research networks to ensure policy improvements are aligned across the industry.

An additional policy brief focussing on a sustainable value chain for the seaweed industry in Malaysia/ASEAN was published in December, with more policy briefs focussing on the coping with climate change to safeguard the seaweed industry in Tanzania and building a more inclusive and sustainable red seaweed industry due in early 2022.







Elizabeth Cottier-Cook / SAMS



## Reimagining Environmental Revival

The UN launched the Decade for Restoration on World Environment Day on 5 June. A rallying global call to “Reimagine, Recreate, Restore” our degrading ecosystems, the decade focuses on holistic on-ground solutions for shared environmental challenges. To celebrate, UNU-CRIS organised the webinar *Reimagining Environmental Revival: How Can #GenerationRestoration Be Put into Action*.

A global group of experts including Nidhi Nagabhatla, Heidi Tuhkanen (Finland), Eduardo Mario Mendiondo (Brazil), David Katz (Israel), Aysegul Kibaroglu (Turkey) and Makasa Looking Horse (Canada) discussed the challenges, opportunities, and best practices linked to natural resource management across various regions of the world, and emphasised that innovation, participation, evidence-informed policy, and integration are the key enabling factors to prevent, halt and reverse the degradation of natural resources worldwide.



Sylvain Cherkaoui / Cosmos for ICRC

## Engagement with Local Schools

In March, Anthony Antoine gave a lecture at Hogeschool West Vlaanderen (HOWEST) within the framework of a lecture series on international organisations for students of the BA programme Social Work.

With the underlying purpose of enabling the students to identify the impact of international organisations in their daily lives, he introduced the United Nations and its relations with the European Union, before touching upon the SDGs and the various UN agencies, and how UNU and UNU-CRIS contributes to and fits within the broader UN system.

In October, UNU-CRIS personnel delivered a lecture to 200 final year students at Sint-Lodewijkscollege in Bruges.

Andrew Dunn introduced the origins and growth of the United Nations and the UNU before turning to UNU-CRIS, outlining how it works within the UN system and how it contributes towards the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals.

This introduction was followed by Els Bekaert, who discussed climate change and the different UN instruments and bodies designed to tackle the issue.



## The Summer School on Comparative Regionalism in a Changing World Order

Current debates provoked by, among other reasons, the erosion of liberal international order, are bringing to the fore the importance of regionalism projects.

Our inaugural summer school on Comparative Regionalism in a Changing World Order, co-organised with Graduate School of Universitas Airlangga and KAZGUU University Kazakhstan, brought together 59 participants from 23 countries to debate comparative regionalism in global arena in the context of emerging powers and shifting political/economic balances, a valuable opportunity for young researchers to improve their knowledge of regionalism and to build long-lasting academic networks in this sphere.

UNU-CRIS was represented by Ikboljon Qoraboyev, Philippe De Lombaerde, Amandine Gnanguenon and Jan Orbie.



## Bruges Triennial

Every three years, the Triennial Bruges brings contemporary art and architecture to the historic core of the city of Bruges in a unique setting as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The theme for 2021, TraumA, dived into the 'uncanny' history and reality of Bruges, using thirteen artistic and architectural interventions to bring the less attractive aspects to the surface and make them part of the city's image. The Grootseminarie, home to UNU-CRIS, hosted an installation by renowned German artist Gregor Schneider.

Capitalising on the hundreds of thousands of visitors over the Triennial's duration from May to October, UNU-CRIS opened its doors and welcomed hundreds of visitors to learn more about the Institute, its research, and the UNU and UN as a whole, as well as organising a guided tour for its personnel in September.

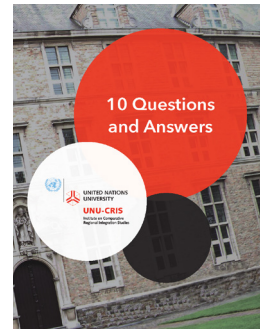
## 10 Questions and Answers

To answer questions of the history of UNU-CRIS, its work, how it fits into the broader UN system, and the story behind its beautiful premises in the heart of Bruges all in one place, a 10 Questions and Answers booklet was published in June.

It explores the origins of the UNU and its mandate, and summarises how, over 20 years, UNU-CRIS has grown and brought together experts in their fields to work towards the UN's goals, in service of its member states and peoples.

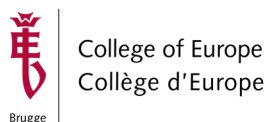
It was published in English and Dutch, to serve as an easy to digest overview for both Flemish and international audiences.

It can be downloaded from our website.



Andrew Dunn / UNU-CRIS

# Our Collaborators





## Output

# Selected Journal Articles



### Regional Cooperation is essential to combatting Health Emergency in the Global South

#### Authors:

Ana B. Amaya and Philippe De Lombaerde

**Globalization and Health** - The COVID-19 pandemic has had devastating impacts on human lives and global economies. While discussions on the subject have hailed an 'end of globalisation and multilateralism', the high costs of non-cooperation resulting in rapid transmission, a sub-optimal use of resources, and a significant loss of life are already visible. We argue that the involvement of regional organisations in driving specific mechanisms such as strengthening disease surveillance, mobilising supply chains, and facilitating trade, can boost international collaboration and contribute to positive health outcomes within countries as they cope with the implications of the pandemic.



### Domestic and International Migration Intentions in Response to Environmental Stress: A Global Cross-Country Analysis

#### Authors:

Els Bekaert, Ilse Ruysen and Sara Salomone

**Journal of Demographic Economics** - The aggravating implications of climate change and environmental stress are predicted to affect migration patterns around the world. Despite considerable literature, a consensus on the migration response to environmental factors is yet to be reached. This paper contributes to the understanding of environmental migration patterns across countries compares the nature of migration intentions and decisions across low-, middle- and high-income countries.



### Continuity and Social Support : A Longitudinal Study of Unaccompanied Refugee Minors' Care Networks

#### Authors:

Malte Behrendt, Ine Lietaert and Ilse Derluyn

**Journal of Immigrant and Refugee Studies** - Elaborating upon existing frameworks, this article examines continuities and disruptions in unaccompanied refugee minors' (URMs) social support networks, mental health impacts, and what these changes mean to the young people. The article discusses the dynamicity of social support networks, URMs' agency and acculturation, and the implications for practice, policy, and research.



## Higher Education Contributing to Local, National, and Global Development: New Empirical and Conceptual Insights

### Authors:

Maia Chankseliani, Ikboljon Qoraboyev and Dilbar Gimranova

**Higher Education** - Higher education offers the potential to support glonacal (global, national, and local) development. This study presents new empirical and conceptual insights into the ways in which higher education can help achieve and exceed the outcomes of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Juxtaposing the national and global development missions of universities, the paper raises questions on the possibility of delinking higher education from the immediate nation-state human capital and modernisation needs and transitioning to the global, on promoting freedom to cultivate intellectual curiosity and stimulating a holistic viewpoint on the developmental purposes of higher education and research.



## Evaluation of Observed and Projected Extreme Climate Trends for Decision Making in Six Nations of the Grand River, Canada

### Authors:

Tariq A. Deen, Altaf Arain, Olivier Champagne, Patricia Chow-Fraser, Nidhi Nagabhatla and Dawn Martin-Hill

**Climate Services** - Hydrometeorological events have been the predominant type of natural hazards to affect communities across Canada. While climate change is a concern to all Canadians, Indigenous communities in Canada have been disproportionately more affected by these extreme climate events. As the impacts of climate change intensify, it has become increasingly important that high-resolution climate services are made available for Indigenous decision makers to develop climate change adaptation plans. This paper examines extreme climate trends in the Six Nations of the Grand River reserve, the most populated Indigenous community in Canada. The climate information and data provide by this study will help Six Nations' decision makers in planning for climate change impacts.



## Adding Numbers to Complex Processes: Asian Integration Indicator Systems in Perspective

### Authors:

Philippe De Lombaerde

**Asia and the Global Economy** - Even if Asia shows a relatively low density of regional integration arrangements, the continent has been relatively active in designing indicator systems to monitor the ongoing integration processes. Organisations like the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, Asian Development Bank, Eurasian Development Bank, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, and United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia have been involved in such activities. This article reviews the indicator systems currently being developed or recently been developed, to monitor and analyse regional integration processes in Asia. These systems are set against the background of experiences with building indicators and indicator systems globally.





## Regional Integration Clusters and Optimum Customs Unions: A Machine-Learning Approach

### Authors:

Philippe De Lombaerde, Dominik Naeher and Takfarinas Saber

**Journal of European Integration** - This study proposes a new method to evaluate the composition of regional arrangements focused on increasing intraregional trade and economic integration. In contrast to previous studies that take the country composition of these arrangements as given, our method uses a network clustering algorithm adapted from the machine-learning literature to identify, in a data-driven way, those groups of neighbouring countries that are most integrated with each other.



## Trade and Infrastructure in the Belt and Road Initiative: A Gravity Analysis Based on Revealed Trade Preferences

### Authors:

Cristina Di Stefano, Lelio Iapadre and Ilaria Salvati

**Journal of Risk and Financial Management** - A part of the Special Issue International Trade Theory and Policy, this paper aims investigate whether and how the intensity of trade between a pair of countries changes when they experience improvements in their infrastructural systems. We carry out our analysis considering countries participating in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), a project designed to promote infrastructural connectivity and boost trade among the involved countries. Our empirical strategy relies on a specification of the gravity model, in which the dependent variable consists in an index of revealed trade preferences, calculated by comparing the actual value of trade flows between two countries with their expected value, proportional to the two countries' total trade.



## Participation of Civil Society in EU Trade Policy Making: How Inclusive is Inclusion?

### Authors:

Lotte Drieghe, Jan Orbie, Dian Potjomkina and Jamal Shahin

**Telecommunications Policy** - In response to growing contestation and politicisation of trade policy, policy makers are seeking to enhance the 'inclusiveness' of trade policy by the institutionalisation of deliberative forums in which civil society organisations participate. However, it is not clear whether these processes enhance inclusiveness. This article adds to our understanding of this question by, first, developing an analytical framework (the 'inclusiveness ladder') and second, applying it to the civil society mechanisms (CSMs) of European Union (EU) free trade agreements. Our results suggest differences between business participants, who seem largely satisfied with the lower steps on the 'ladder', and non-governmental actors who insist on policy impact. Finally, we outline avenues for further research and reflect on policy implications.



## Perspectives on Tipping Points in Integrated Models of the Natural and Human Earth System: Cascading Effects and Telecoupling

### Authors:

Christian L.E. Franzke, Alessio Ciullo, Elisabeth A. Gilmore, Denise Margaret Matias, Nidhi Nagabhatla, Anton Orlov, Shona K. Paterson, Jürgen Scheffran and Jana Sillmann

**Environmental Research Letters** - The Earth system and the human system are intrinsically linked. Anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions have led to the climate crisis, which is causing unprecedented extreme events and could trigger tipping points in the Earth system. While physical and social forces can lead to tipping points and cascading effects via feedbacks and tele coupling, the current generation of climate-economy models do not take them into account. Here, we show the importance of the interplay between human societies and Earth systems in creating tipping points and cascading effects and the way they in turn affect sustainability and security.



## A Balancing Act? Inter-Ministerial Co-operation in the Work of the Cultural Attachés

### Authors:

Dimitra Kizlari and Domenico Valenza

**The Hague Journal of Diplomacy** - Despite the sharp rise in interest in the field of cultural diplomacy, the role of cultural attachés in foreign policy has not been the subject of scholarly research. This study is a comparative analysis seeking to map the ecosystem in which cultural attachés are embedded to develop a first-time narrative about their role. Interviews with practitioners from Italy, The Netherlands and Sweden indicate that the post of the cultural attaché is a field of responsibility primarily for two state actors. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Culture both have a vested interest in the work of these cultural operators. The findings suggest that there are two distinct organisational models in how Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Ministries of Culture co-exist and interact.



## Politics of Disease Control in Africa and the Critical Role of Global Health Diplomacy: A Systematic Review

### Authors:

Vijay Kumar Chattu, Andy Knight, Anil Adisesh, Sanni Yaya, K. Srikanth Reddy, Erica Di Ruggiero, Obijiofor Aginam, Garry Aslanyan, Michael Clarke, Rashad Massoud, Ashish Jha

**Health Promotion Perspectives** - Africa is facing the triple burden of communicable diseases, non-communicable diseases (NCDs), and nutritional disorders. Multilateral institutions, bilateral arrangements, and philanthropies have historically privileged economic development over health concerns. This focus has resulted in weak health systems and inadequate preparedness when there are outbreaks of diseases. This review aims to understand the politics of disease control in Africa and global health diplomacy's (GHD's) critical role.





## Migrants' Post Return Wellbeing: A View From the Caucasus

**Authors:**

Ine Lietaert

**International Migration** - This article presents a new lens for examining reintegration through a wellbeing analytical framework, since this approach captures contextual differences, self-chosen points of reference, and summarises a multitude of outcomes. Through a qualitative analysis of longitudinal data from interviews with assisted returnees to Armenia and Georgia, this article reveals which components were influential for changes in wellbeing in this geographical and social context. By doing so, it highlights social and individual meanings and priorities, and linkages with pre-and post-return context and personal trajectories. Exploring how these components ultimately relate to overall post-return wellbeing, this contribution highlights different connections, contrasts, and interactions between components and as such highlights the efforts that need to be done include elements such as agency, belonging, value priority and context specific or social meanings in measuring reintegration.



## How to Wield Regional Power from Afar: A Conceptual Discussion Illustrated by the Case of France in Central Africa

**Authors:**

Frank Mattheis

**International Politics** - What does it take to belong to a region and exert power over it? The scholarship on regional powers has elaborated sophisticated indicators to establish nuances of power, but the depiction of the region has remained vague. Most approaches are characterised by a narrow territorial interpretation that does not properly consider power wielded by geographically distant actors. Using the case of France in Central Africa this article argues that a distant state can a) hold a dominant share of military, economic and soft power, b) use this power for hegemonic behaviour and c) be recognised as a leader in the region by both internal and external actors.



## Forging Their Path in the Brussels Bubble? Civil Society Resistance within the Domestic Advisory Groups Created under the EU Trade Agreements

**Authors:**

Diana Potjomkina, Jan Orbie and Jamal Shahin

**Cambridge Review of International Affairs** - Academic and policy interest in civil society participation in the European Union's trade policy has been growing since the late 1990s. We analyse civil society's engagement with the Domestic Advisory Groups (DAGs)—consultation mechanisms established by the European Commission at the implementation stage of its free trade agreements. While the Commission's formal rationale for the DAGs is partnership with civil society, in fact this relationship involves a marked power and resistance dynamic. We focus on civil society's agency and resistance, develop a conceptual framework laying out different possible types of resistance, and empirically demonstrate the wealth of both overt and subtle resistance practices employed by DAG members. While showing that DAGs are deeply contested, this study also provides a nuanced analysis of resistance with particular attention for divisions between business and non-business members.



## Towards a Definition For Returnees' Reintegration Processes in the Context of Rural Ethiopia

### Authors:

Ashenafi Tizazu, Ilse Derluyn, Ine Lietaert

**International Migration** - Tizazu, Derluyn and Lietaert examine the meaning of successful reintegration in the context of forced return from Saudi Arabia to rural Ethiopia. As such, the target group of this contribution overlaps with the returnees included by Kuschminder and colleagues above yet focuses on the group of people returning to rural areas. Based on an extensive literature review combined with interviews with forced returnees and stakeholders working with this population, the authors highlight the link between social and economic reintegration and the way these two dimensions can be operationalised with attention for crucial environmental and social factors inherent to the rural geographies and characteristics. As such, the results illustrate the importance of contextualised, etic approaches, without at the same time neglecting the globalised nature of migration processes in its different phases and aspects. This contribution highlights for policy makers that returnees often see their reintegration as holistic and not necessarily in different spheres.



## The (Post)Politicisation of Timber Trade: (Un)Invited Participation in the EU-Vietnam Voluntary Partnership Agreement

### Authors:

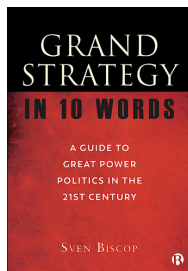
Elke Verhaeghe

**Forest Policy and Economics** - This article analyses the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) between the European Union (EU) and Vietnam as a form of post politicisation. In addition to their primary objective the governing of bilateral timber trade value chains, VPAs also entail an element of democratisation, as they are conditional upon stakeholder and civil society participation. Building on poststructuralist discourse-theory (PDT) and Erik Swyngedouw's notion of 'the post political condition', this article asks how (un)invited non-state actor participation in the EU-Vietnam VPA discursively (re-)articulates and (de)politicises problems and solutions. The article finds that invited participation in Vietnam was characterised by consensual and technocratic governance practices and a discursive foreclosure of problems and solutions. The research is based on 33 interviews with respondents in Vietnam and Europe as well as a document analysis of the VPA text and annexes, EU communications, NGO advocacy materials and media appearances by Cambodian NGOs.



## Output

# Books, Monographs and Edited Volumes



### Grand Strategy in 10 Words: A Guide to Great Power Politics in the 21st Century

**Author:**

Sven Biscop

**Published by:**

Bristol University Press



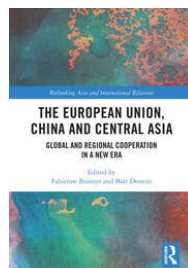
### Taxation, International Cooperation and the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda

**Editors:**

Irma Johanna, Mosquera Valderrama, Dries Lesage and Wouter Lips

**Published by:**

Springer



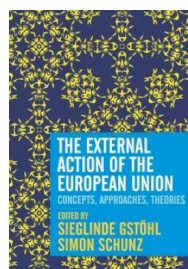
### The European Union, China and Central Asia - Global and Regional Cooperation in a New Era

**Editors:**

Fabienne Bossuyt and Bart Dessein

**Published by:**

Routledge - Taylor and Francis Group



### The External Action of the European Union - Concepts, Approaches, Theories

**Editors:**

Sieglinde Gstöhl and Simon Schunz

**Published by:**

Red Globe Press



### Contestations of the Liberal International Order: A Populist Script of Regional Cooperation

**Editors:**

Fredrik Söderbaum, Killian Spandler and Agnese Pacciardi

**Published by:**

Cambridge University Press

# Scholarly Output

## Publications in Refereed Journals

Amaya, Ana B. and Philippe De Lombaerde. 2021. Regional Cooperation is essential to combatting Health Emergencies in the Global South. *Globalization and Health*. 17(9).

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Dandoy Régis and Lorenzo Terrière. 2021. Caretaker Cabinets in Belgium: A New Measurement and Typology, *Politics of the Low Countries*, 3(1): 95-108.

Deen, Tariq A. M. Altaf Arain, Olivier Champagne, Patricia Chow-Fraser, Nidhi Nagabhatla and Dawn Martin-Hill. 2021. Evaluation of Observed and Projected Extreme Climate Trends for Decision Making in Six Nations of the Grand River, Canada. *Climate Services*. Volume 24,

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Drieghe, Lotte, Jan Orbie, Diana Potjomkina and Jamal Shahin. 2021. Participation of Civil Society in EU Trade Policy Making: How Inclusive is Inclusion? *New Political Economy*. 1-16.

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Froitzheim, Meike, Isabell Schierenbeck and Fredrik Söderbaum. 2021. Peace Research Meets Implementation Studies: The Role of Implementing Actors, *International Relations*.



- Gerards, Carsten, Simon Schunz and Chad Damro. 2021. Opportunity, Presence and Entrepreneurship: Why the EU Acts Externally on Higher Education. *Journal of Common Market Studies*.
- Hoxhaj, Rezart and Zuccotti, Carolina. V. 2021. The Complex Relationship between Immigrants' Concentration, Socioeconomic Environment and Attitudes towards Immigrants in Europe, *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 44 (2): 271- 292.
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# Human Resources

## Office of the Director

Philippe De Lombaerde - *Director ad interim* | Andrew Dunn - *Policy and Communications Officer* | Pascale Vantorre - *Management Assistant* | Noël Neven - *Financial and Administrative Officer* | Asjela Masovic - *Administrative Assistant* | Mini Dixit - *Communications Assistant*

## Cluster Coordinators

Samuel Standaert | Ine Lietaert | Glenn Rayp | Jamal Shahin | Nidhi Nagabhatla | Frank Mattheis | Anthony Antoine

## Professorial Fellows

Sven Biscop | Fabienne Bossuyt | Peter Claeys | Marijke D'Haese | Dries Lesage | Bernard Mazijn | Trisha Meyer | Sebastian Oberthür | Jan Orbie | Ilse Ruyssen | Stefaan Smis | Florian Trauner | Thijs Van de Graaf | Sven Van Kerckhoven | Luk Van Langenhove | Sarah Delputte

## Research Fellows

Ferran Davesa | Rezart Hoxhaj | Charlotte Scheerens

## PhD Fellows

Louise Amoris | Els Bekaert | Alix Debray | Rossella Marino | Domenico Valenza | Tancrede Pagès | Reinhilde Bouckaert | Killian Foubert | Gaëlle Le Pavic | Katsiaryna Lozka | Justine Miller | Chinedu Temple Obi | Alina Penkala | Diana Potjomkina | Lucas Rabaey | Dereje Regasa | Maria Rodriguez Alcazar | Adelina Sharipova | Nadia Tjahja | Ashenafi Tizazu | Elke Verhaeghe | Presca Wanki | Zonglyu Ma

## Visiting Research Fellows

Obijiofor Aginam | Mario Apostolov | Ana Maria Palacio Valencia | Jacques Pelkmans | Eric Piaget | Amal Sarsour | Mehari Taddele Maru | Hana Umezawa | Zi Yang | Jonathan Brosseau | Fabrizio Antenucci | Kutluhan Bozkurt | Andrea Franco Correa | Geert Haghebaert

## Associate Research Fellows

Ana B. Amaya | Andrew Bradley | Andrew Cooper | Ludo Cuyvers | Régis Dandoy | Dimpho Deleglise | Lorenzo Fioramonti | Gaspare Genna | Amandine Gnanguênon | Lelio Iapadre | Stephen Kingah | Eric Maertens | Doreen Montag | Philomena Murray | Nahuel Oddone | Ikboljon Qoraboyev | Simon Schunz | Joren Selleslachs | Timothy Shaw | Fredrik Söderbaum | Tatiana Skripka | Rodrigo Tavares | Ad van Riet | Jan Vandemoortele | Micha Wiebusch

## Interns

Emiel Buffel | Marco D'Attoma | Inès Francisco | Arla Mannersuo | Dan Orendain | Natalia Skripnikova | Servaas Taghon | Charlotte Van Wieren | Rita Barbosa Lobo | Cristina Salinas Abad | Caroline Verhelst | Manali Sethi | Tamar Zviadadze | Egeljin Munkhzul | Killian Conyngham | Emiel Buffel | Lina Galvis | Simon Gunst | Karl-Heinz O'Doherty | Batya Taveira | Paola Pozo Garcia | Jacques Willem Tromp Meesters | Carlota Morais | Stijn Eeckeloo | Redha Agadi | Sisir Bhandari | Sophie Hoogenboom



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