



Multilateralism at the Heart of the European Security Strategy

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Working Paper N° 13

June 2010





UNIVERSITY OF
GOTHENBURG



EU-GRASP

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Abstract

In December 2003, the European Council published the first ever European Security Strategy (ESS), which clearly confirms the EU's commitment to multilateralism. Ideally all member states would agree on a common position and thus speak with one voice, in multilateral fora, and also in bilateral cooperation with external states. Although many fora are mentioned in the ESS, special attention is given to the UN. Following is an examination of the EU's experience with other multilateral organizations, both in policy practice and practical action. Considering the preference shown to the UN in the ESS, and the fact that it remains the largest and most broad multilateral forum, the EU-UN relationship will be explored in depth. The EU's experience in a few other organizations will also be outlined, to put the UN experience in perspective. Finally suggestions will be made as to how the EU can further develop the ESS and its practical approach to external states, in order to build on the principle of multilateralism.

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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Multilateralism in the ESS.....	2
Multilateralism in the context of the UN.....	4
Policy Practice: Institutional constraints and initiatives	5
Practical Action: giving funds and taking orders.....	8
Other multilateral fora	10
Furthering multilateralism in the future	12
Conclusion	14

Multilateralism at the Heart of the European Security Strategy

Sven Biscop & Siobhán Gabriella Gibney

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Introduction

In December 2003, the European Council published the first ever European Security Strategy (ESS).¹ This document came after a tense period of public divisions among European leaders over the invasion of Iraq. It demonstrated that at the very least, there is a desire to agree on common security goals and threats. Though admittedly vague, this document was significant as the first security strategy to emerge from Europe as one unit. More than half a decade on, it is evident that the ESS has not had as much of an impact as many would have hoped. Though it is often referenced, it is rarely consulted as a go-to guide for European security issues. This is in part due to its vague nature, and in part due to member states continuing to pursue a national foreign policy, using the European forum only when it suits. A Report about the Implementation of the European Security Strategy in 2008 evaluated the changes to the security environment in the five years that had passed since the ESS was released.² While this project was useful, it leaves the European security strategy vague and difficult to implement or apply directly to arising scenarios.

However, one thing that can be said of the ESS is that it confirms the EU's commitment to multilateralism. Ideally all member states would agree on a common position and thus speak with one voice in multilateral fora, and also in bilateral cooperation with external states.

The European Union itself is the product of multilateral cooperation that led to the creation of one strong and permanent forum, with several institutions. These are held together by an extensive bureaucratic framework, that produces common laws and directs, as well as encouraging certain norms and values. Its members, who a little over half a century ago were engaged in a war with one another that wreaked terrible destruction, have firsthand understanding of the benefits of

¹ See European Council (2003).

² See European Council (2008).

multilateralism and interstate cooperation. They have transformed their relationships with each other from the worst possible scenario, namely full out war and attempted destruction, to a much more peaceful scenario, namely intense economic integration to the extent that what harms one state's market, harms the others' as well. Therefore it is most appropriate that the first European Security Strategy stresses the importance of multilateral efforts.

Accordingly, this chapter will firstly review exactly what the ESS says about multilateralism. Although many fora are mentioned in the ESS, special attention is given to the UN. Thereafter follows an examination of the EU's experience with other multilateral organizations, both in policy practice and practical action. Considering the preference shown to the UN in the ESS, and the fact that it remains the largest and most broad multilateral forum, the EU-UN relationship will be explored in depth. The EU's experience in a few other organizations will also be outlined, in order to put the UN experience in perspective. Finally suggestions will be made as to how the EU can further develop the ESS and its practical approach to external states, in order to build on the principle of multilateralism.

Multilateralism in the ESS

The ESS begins by reflecting on the violent history that necessitated Europe's integration project, and addresses the changed attitude evident across member states. Now, *'European countries are committed to dealing peacefully with disputes and to co-operation through common institutions'* (European Council 2003: 1). American dominance is acknowledged, with the warning that *'no single country is able to tackle today's complex problems on its own'* (Ibid). This mantra explains and drives the EU's preoccupation with multilateralism. Today's key threats, including terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, regional conflicts, state failure, and organized crime (European Council 2003: 3-4) are not confined to national borders. As these issues potentially affect all states, it is logical that states work together to find a solution.

In the ESS, the principle of multilateralism is applied to a few threats in particular. As regards proliferation, it calls for the strengthening of the International Atomic Energy Agency, and confirms a European commitment to securing universal adherence to multilateral non-proliferation treaties (European Council 2003: 7). As far as regional stability is concerned, the EU identifies joint efforts with the US, Russia, and NATO in promoting stability in the Balkans (European Council 2003: 8). The ESS promotes a two-state solution to resolve the Arab/Israeli conflict, but stresses that its

implementation will need united support from a number of key international partners, namely the EU, the US, the UN, and Russia (European Council 2003: 8).

Cooperation with Mediterranean partners is also discussed. Whereas the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) provides a framework for bilateral cooperation and tailor made plans of action for each participating state, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) deals with Mediterranean states as a bloc. Although progress is sometimes slowed down by disagreements between participating Mediterranean states (Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories are both members), this framework enables the EU to promote regional cooperation and to stress the importance of multilateral cooperation to the Mediterranean members.

The ESS calls for an *'international order based on effective multilateralism'*, stating its objective as *'the development of a stronger international society, well functioning international institutions and a rule-based international order'* (European Council 2003: 9). The United Nations Charter is recognized as the primary framework for international relations, and the role of the UN Security Council (of which two EU member states are permanent members) as the primary upholder of international peace and security is confirmed. Other multilateral groups are also acknowledged and supported, including economic organizations such as the WTO, and regional organizations like the OSCE, Council of Europe, ASEAN, MERCOSUR, and the African Union.

Recognizing that multilateral structures are not always respected or used to their full potential, the ESS states that the further development of International Law, strengthening the UN, and expanding membership of organizations such as the WTO, while still maintaining high standards, are European priorities. Developing International Law, for example, means that new laws must be made in response to the previously mentioned new borderless threats. One major way to show that the EU is serious about ensuring that international fora are used and respected, is for EU members to take action when their rules are broken (European Council 2003: 9).

The ESS presents an undeniably strong commitment to multilateralism. However, it remains a mere document, and not a legally binding or greatly detailed one at that. The remainder of the chapter will shift its focus away from the rhetoric of the ESS, and examine actual multilateral efforts made by the EU, and consider what more the Union could do to further their cause and match their words with actions.

Multilateralism in the context of the UN

The ESS states that *'the EU should support the United Nations as it responds to threats to international peace and security'* (European Council 2003: 11). Indeed it should. But do EU member-states act on this assertion? *'The EU is committed to reinforcing its cooperation with the UN to assist countries emerging from conflicts, and to enhancing its support for the UN in short-term crisis management situations'* (European Council 2003: 11). This section will explore the degree to which the EU adheres to these statements, beginning with an examination of institutional constraints and progress, and then discussing practical application in the field.

However, another rhetorical issue must first be addressed. While the ESS is firm in its conviction that the UN is the primary forum through which effective multilateralism can be achieved, it fails to specifically say that the EU is not to engage in coercive military action without a UN Security Council mandate. In the 1990s, international actors intervened in Kosovo without a Security Council mandate; so perhaps this caveat was left out on purpose, to allow for such circumstances. Regardless of this, other EU documents such as the *EU Strategy against Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction* call for all coercive measures to be first sanctioned by the Security Council (European Council 2003a: 6). The *EU Paper for Submission to the High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change* also stipulates that military action beyond self-defence must be carried out with formal Security Council approval (European Council 2004: 8, 12). Evidently, the EU values the legitimacy of a Security Council mandate, even though it's not explicitly documented in the ESS.

One key event that redefined the EU's position towards the UN was the crisis over invading Iraq - the same event that inspired member states to commission the European Security Strategy. In the absence of Security Council approval, UK and US forces invaded Iraq. This sparked mass protests by citizens worldwide, but also by UN members, and in particular permanent Security Council member France, and key EU member state Germany. The French and Germans voiced their strong disapproval of the invasion even before it took place, and urged the British and Americans to deal with Iraq within the UN framework. However, the US and the UK proceeded anyway, knowing that France would use its veto to prevent any mandate on the invasion.

In the aftermath of the invasion, European member states re-assessed their common goals and values, the results of which are evident in the ESS. The EU also emerged from its self-assessment as *'one of the staunchest supporters of multilateralism'* (Biscop & Drieskens 2006: 117). This is evident in the common strategic documents, communications, and declarations produced in the

following months and years, as well as in its support for the recommendations of the High-Level Panel and former Secretary General Kofi Annan in the run up to the 2005 Millennium+5 session of the UN General Assembly (Biscop & Drieskens 2006: 117).

EU support for the UN and the legitimacy it gives to Security Council mandates has indeed improved and solidified since the crisis over Iraq in 2003. But a question that remains is one that has been posed before, namely, has the EU managed to convert strategic support for the UN into policy practice and practical action (Biscop & Drieskens 2006: 118)? As Biscop and Drieskens point out, there are institutional constraints on effective multilateralism, particularly as regards the UN Security Council.

Policy Practice: Institutional constraints and initiatives

Although two member states (France and the United Kingdom) hold permanent seats on the Security Council, the EU does not hold its own seat. The French and British chairs are not sufficient, as these two big member states are notorious for acting according to self-interest within the European Union, so will undoubtedly do so outside the EU context as well. Former High Representative for CFSP Javier Solana already advocated a single EU seat on the Security Council in 2003, suggesting that ‘the lesson we learnt is that Europe is losing influence when it does not speak with one voice’ (Solana as quoted in Biscop & Drieskens 2006: 119). EU presence in the Security Council is important, because presence infers an ‘ability to exert influence, to shape the perceptions and expectations of others’ (Allen & Smith 1990). Without such presence, the EU relies on the UK and France to first agree with each other and the rest of the Union on a common position, and then promote it over their national interests. As cases such as the Iraq war have shown, this is not a procedure that can be relied upon.

Furthermore, the EU does not even have legal competence to act as one unit representing twenty-seven member states at the UN General Assembly nor in the Security Council. Although obtaining permanent status on the Security Council seems out of question, this means that the EU cannot even be a rotating member or formal observer.

In the General Assembly, unified voting cannot be taken for granted. All twenty-seven member states do not always vote the same way, with most splits resulting from France and the UK voting against the mainstream EU opinion, and instead voting in line with the US. This is largely due to their stances on nuclear weapons. Since the mid-90s, these two countries have been the member states, who diverge most from the core EU bloc, which includes Belgium, Denmark, Germany,

Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, and Spain (Luif 2003, as quoted in Allen & Smith 1990). In 2003, the Commission issued a statement reprimanding the UK and France, stating that 'while in the past the practical implications of such split votes have generally been marginal, their impact on the EU's credibility is disproportionate – particularly in cases where there are established CFSP Common Positions on the issues in question' (European Commission 2003). The Commission was accurate in its assessment. The EU takes every opportunity to state the necessity of multilateralism, and to praise multilateral institutions. But when it comes to its member showing solidarity in such institutions, there is certainly room for improvement.

However, these blockages do not mean that the EU is bitterly divided and doomed not to have any representation at the UN. A number of initiatives have been introduced to overcome or at least minimize these constraints. EU legislation provides some formal guidance to member states in the Security Council. Article 138 of the Lisbon Treaty encourages member states to present a united front, stating that member states on the Security Council should attempt to reach mutual agreement, and keep other members adequately informed of their positions and activities. As permanent members, France and the UK are more forcefully instructed to ensure the EU's positions and interests, without neglecting their responsibilities as set out by the UN Charter. Of course it is up to member states to adhere to such regulations – the EU is not exactly in the habit of reprimanding its members for promoting national interests in their national posts on the Security Council.

New structures were created to enforce Article 19 (2), in order to minimize member states' selective information sharing. Previously, France and the UK had applied a minimalist interpretation to the requirement that they share information about developments in the Security Council with other EU member states. They developed a habit of holding weekly sessions with the EU heads of mission in New York, during which the permanent representatives of the other member states could pose questions (Luif 2003, as quoted in Biscop & Drieskens 2006: 123). However, this created the obvious problem that the outsiders could only obtain information by asking questions. In other words, Security Council members could neglect to mention relevant developments or discussions, as long as nobody asked about them.

In 2001, weekly Article 19 briefings were established. Chaired by the EU Presidency, EU Security Council members take turns reporting to the permanent missions of the member states on Security Council business of the week. There is also a forward-looking element, as information is given about the upcoming agenda and draft resolutions. During the Iraq crisis these briefings were held on a

daily and even hourly basis.. While helpful, these meetings do not provide a great deal of new information, and more importantly, they are about information, not coordination. (Biscop & Drieskens 2006: 124). If the goal is to coordinate an EU-wide position, there will firstly need to be more assurance from France and the UK that they will actually promote such a position in the Security Council.

Another issue in regard to the Security Council is that although the structure is not a formal one, the member state holding the rotating EU Presidency is generally invited to attend most scheduled Security Council debates, participating as direct representation of the EU. During such meetings, this member state typically presents the EU's position in a statement. Member states, often joined by candidate countries and members of the European Free Trade Association and the Stabilization and Association process, align themselves with these statements. In this manner, the EU presents a united front and has presence in the Security Council, even though it has neither voting power nor veto.

Of course, the advantage this function gives to the EU should not be overestimated – most draft resolutions are negotiated behind the scenes in caucusing sessions or informal meetings. Incidentally, Germany and Spain did try to give the EU a stronger presence on the Security Council by offering the EU Presidency a seat within their delegation in 2003-2004, when the two countries held Security Council memberships (Biscop & Drieskens 2006: 123). Unsurprisingly, France and the UK blocked the move, a recurrent theme in the EU's quest for representation at the UN.

As for solidarity in the General Assembly, despite some British and French blockages, the EU still manages to show a more united front. All twenty-seven member states are on equal footing with each other and the remaining UN members. Voting records demonstrate increasing voting cohesion, demonstrative of a common EU position, and in effect giving the EU one voice on a number of matters. In the second half of the 1980s, voting cohesion was at 74%, rising to 95% by the second half of the 1990s. (Wouters 2001, as quoted in Biscop & Drieskens 2006: 121).

To sum up, as far as multilateral policy practice in the UN is concerned, most member states make a real effort to present a unified European voice, by voting according to common positions in the General Assembly, and by associating themselves with statements made by the EU Presidency at the Security Council. Unfortunately, France and the UK are the only two EU member states that hold permanent Security Council seats, and also seem to be the most inclined to put national interests

above European interests, both by refusing to allow the EU to take advantage of the their seats in the Security Council, and by voting against the bloc in the General Assembly.

Practical Action: giving funds and taking orders

The EU and the UN both compliment each other as fundamental frameworks through which states can collectively address matters of international peace and security. Public statements and declarations by the EU on UN issues are great in number, often surpassing fifty per month.³ Some declarations are quite practical in nature, outlining frameworks for cooperation in crisis management missions. In particular, one can look to the *Declaration on EU-UN co-operation in conflict prevention and crisis management*, adopted at the Göteborg European Council in June 2001. This declaration confirms joint EU and individual member state commitment to UN conflict prevention and crisis management objectives. While the UN is recognized as having primary responsibility, the EU pledges to cooperate on such missions. Coordination on substantive issues as well as concrete needs is a key element here, and one that will of course increase with the evolution of the ESDP.

Specific details are also given in the 2001 Declaration. For conflict prevention, cooperation will take place in the form of mutually reinforcing approaches, exchanging information and analyses on current and potential crises, coordinating diplomatic activities and statements, coordination on the field and on training, and more cooperation in monitoring and assisting with elections. As far as the civilian and military aspects are concerned, there is a commitment to ensuring that the EU's developing capabilities are of genuine added value to the UN. With regard to regional interests, the Western Balkans, Middle East and Africa, especially the Great Lakes, Horn of Africa, and West Africa, are listed as priority areas for EU-UN cooperation. In order to facilitate this cooperation, allowances are made for meetings at many levels, including EU ministerial meetings with the UN Secretary General, and meetings between the EU High Representative with the UN Secretary-General and Deputy-Secretary General (European Council 2001).

While the EU single-handedly produced this declaration outlining what it would do to facilitate practical EU-UN cooperation, a *Joint Declaration on UN-EU Cooperation in Crisis Management* was issued two years later. This Declaration recognized existing cooperation, but introduced more mechanisms to deepen and strengthen ties. Again, it is agreed that the UN holds primary

³ See "EU policies and declarations on UN-related issues," available at http://www.eu-un.europa.eu/articles/articleslist_s17_en.htm

responsibility for international peace and security. A number of areas are identified where progress can be made. Planning can be enhanced by increased contact between mission planning units, especially pertaining to resource allocation and equipment interoperability. To cooperate further on training, joint training standards and procedures for personnel are to be established. Communication is to be increased between situation centres, as is desk-to-desk dialogue via liaison officers. Finally, exchanges of information and experiences will determine best practices, to everyone's benefit (UN-European Council 2003).

Many declarations and mechanisms have been introduced since 2003, but these two documents are among the first that set the stage for real EU-UN cooperation. Nowadays, EU and UN representatives are in contact almost daily, proving that the quest to increase communication and be mutually aware of each other's actions has indeed been actively pursued. Good diplomatic relations is not the only sign of effective concrete EU-UN multilateralism. Consider EU contributions to the UN peace-keeping budget. About 40% of the money used by the UN for peacekeeping missions comes from EU member states (European Union 2004). While the number of troops committed is considerably smaller, at 6.8%, these figures only reflect missions under direct UN command. In fact, the EU contributes much more to EU and NATO missions, which have been mandated by the UN.

In effect, the EU contributes to the UN by committing a sizeable amount of money, and a modest number of troops, but also by carrying out missions itself at the request of the Security Council. The first autonomous military mission carried out under the ESDP framework was in fact at the request of the Security Council. Code-named ARTEMIS, this short-term mission to the DRC was authorized by Resolution 1484 at the end of May 2003. Thirteen days later, the mission to provide security to civilians and humanitarian aid workers in Bunia began. About 2000 troops were involved, and though the mission only lasted three months, it was deemed a success. A problem that was identified however was that authority was given for intervention, the specific task was carried out, but that the foreign troops then immediately pulled out (Homan 2007). While this mission demonstrated EU commitment to the UN, it also raised some operational issues. France, the leading nation was initially hesitant to share complete information about the deployment. The EU did report on the mission, but was careful not to allow the Political and Security Committee to be subordinate to the Security Council on the implementation of the mandate (Biscop & Drieskens 2006: 127).

Considering the policy practices and concrete actions evident in the EU-UN relationship, a few trends are evident. Firstly, both organizations agree that the United Nations has primary responsibility, above all other fora worldwide, to promote and preserve international peace and security. Secondly, there is a genuine desire, in both organizations, to cooperate with one another in order to carry out tasks, such as crisis management and conflict prevention missions more efficiently and effectively. An important caveat is that these desires tend to stem from bureaucratic officials and departments, and are not necessarily shared by member states themselves. This brings us to the third point: when cooperation breaks down or is not fully pursued, in both policy and action, the fault can usually be traced back to individual member states.

Though it is the multilateral forum with the widest global membership, the UN is not the only important multilateral body in which the EU is involved.

Other multilateral fora

The ability of the EU to act as a unitary power within multilateral fora depends largely upon the degree of competence granted to the European Commission to act on behalf of member states. Consider trade, for example. In the World Trade Organization, the Commission has the authority to negotiate on behalf of member states on most trade issues. Disputes over competences in the 1990s led to a ruling by the European Court of Justice in 1994 that gave the Commission sole competence to conclude international agreements on trade in goods, but competences are shared with member states when dealing with trade in new sectors. Since then, subsequent rulings have granted the Commission further exclusive competences. The Lisbon Treaty steers the process in a slightly different direction, giving more power of scrutiny to the European Parliament (Meunier & Nicolaidis 2005).

The model of unitary action in trade multilateralism is admirable because while it presents a united front, several mechanisms allow for member states to negotiate and monitor what the EU position will be. The first step is approval of the negotiating mandate. The Commission proposes the position that will be taken at international negotiations. This is examined by an Advisory Committee and its sectoral expert sub-committees, who advise the Commission on what will be acceptable to member states. Accordingly, the proposition is amended and eventually agreed upon by the Council of Ministers by QMV. The second step is the actual negotiations, which are carried out by Commission officials. Member states may observe but not speak at WTO sessions. Behind the scenes, however, they oversee progress via Committee 133, which meets simultaneously to

evaluate whether or not the Commission is negotiating within the limits of their mandate. The third step is ratification. For pure trade agreements, the Council must agree the agreement reached by QMV. For mixed agreements, and those concerning services and IPRs, the agreement must be adopted by the Council but ratified by the member states, typically through their national parliaments. The final stage is implementation and enforcement, in which both member states and the Commission play a role (Meunier & Nicolaidis 2005).

Problems sometimes arise, especially for other negotiating parties, because the Commission is given a narrow mandate and thus has no flexibility to make deals and concessions. Some within the EU view this positively, saying that it in fact gives the Commission more power because it is legally bound to be firm and unwavering on its demands (Meunier & Nicolaidis 2005). Regardless of this, the example suggests that when the proper mechanisms are in place, the EU can succeed in participating in multilateral fora as a unitary actor. However, as already mentioned, this is feasible because trade competences fall largely on the side of EU institutions. Security and defence, on the other hand, are often viewed as the 'last bastion' of national sovereignty. Member states are hesitant to give up power in this field, especially when it comes to external negotiations related to such issues.

The EU-NATO relationship demonstrates the complexity of this field. Solidarity among EU members of NATO in NATO debates is rare and difficult. As regards policy development, a number of factors make it difficult for the EU to be effective within NATO. Firstly, not all EU members are NATO members, and vice versa. This means that it is difficult for the EU to devote time and energy to build a common position for NATO-related issues, since it is not a matter that concerns all member states. 'Neutral', or more appropriately 'military non-aligned' member states such as Ireland and Austria may be sensitive or hostile to the idea of the EU discussing this military alliance at length within a formal EU framework.

Secondly, the dominance of the US within NATO not only makes it difficult for member states to act together, but also means they will not be effective in challenging the power of our American counterpart unless they do so. As the top provider of military resources to NATO, and consequently as the security-provider of the European continent since the end of the Second World War, the US tends to dominate NATO discussion. It is widely perceived that if the US wants to intervene somewhere, or does not, NATO will also act in the same way. Some member states, such as newer Central and Eastern European ones gravitate towards aligning with the American position within NATO, in order to stay close and be loyal to the power they relied on to protect them from the

Soviet Union. Other member states also have strong transatlantic loyalties, such as the UK, a state that considers itself to be a bridge between Europe and the US, despite the fact that the US no longer sees it as its most important ally, and the fact that Europe neither needs nor wants the UK to provide this service.

Unfortunately, these national interests prevent the EU from living up to its full potential. If EU member states were to develop common positions prior to engaging in formal NATO negotiations, they could act as a real counterpart to the US, and shape NATO in the image they desire. However, aside from the problem of strong American loyalties getting in the way, there is also the issue that not all EU member states share the same vision for NATO. Current discussions about the NATO's new strategic concept, expected in late 2010, indicate that there are at least three groups of thought on the future of NATO. The US would like NATO to go global, and if it does not, this once vital military alliance will be deemed irrelevant in the eyes of many Americans. Another group, including Germany, France, Spain, and Italy, would like NATO to return to its founding purpose: territorial defence on the European continent (Noetzel & Schreer 2009). While many other countries may well prefer an option closer to the second, they fears that to disagree with the US' missions would lead to NATO's demise.

Thus, EU solidarity within NATO seems highly unlikely, but the ability of any European state to have a strong voice in the forum, while speaking alone, seems equally unlikely.

Furthering multilateralism in the future

The EU remains committed to multilateralism, and fora through which this aim can be pursued. It is clear that a lot more can be done to prove this commitment. Firstly, the EU must consider the changing world environment. Secondly, it must assess the advantages it holds in this environment. Thirdly, the EU must make use of its strategic partnerships. Finally, member states must learn to act together.

Admittedly, it is extremely challenging to assess the current world order and to anticipate in what direction it is heading. A world of unipolarity with the US as the sole dominating figure is subsiding, as new powers such as India and China emerge. It seems that many states will emerge in a strong position, in a system one might describe as 'interpolarity' (Grevi 2009: 24). This term acknowledges that there will be more than one pole, but also accounts for the deep and essential interdependence that will mark the relationships between these said poles. Though these powers will be competing

against each other, interlinking economies and shared global threats and challenges mean that cooperation will be necessary. In such a world, inability to cooperate will threaten the prosperity, political stability, and even the survival of actors in the system. As a result, 'the ability to shape multilateral cooperation or lead collective action in addressing international challenges becomes a central feature of power' (Grevi 2009: 24).

If such a world system does indeed emerge, the EU should have a steady advantage, as its member states have extensive experience in an environment where their survival and political stability depend upon cooperation, as was the case following the two World Wars. Nowadays, integration is such that war seems unlikely, but the prosperity of member states still rests largely on their ability to successfully cooperate and act as a unit. This is the first advantage the EU has. A second major advantage is that the EU has no enemies in the current global environment. Although the continent is of course susceptible to terrorist attacks, (as are all regions of the world today), there is no single state with the desire nor intention to destroy Europe. While this may not seem especially significant today, it is quite a different scenario to the one member states found themselves in when the EU, NATO, and the UN were first created, in the previous world order.

The EU must reflect upon how it can best act multilaterally, both in fora and in bilateral cooperation with external states. For both avenues, the EU should act as a 'reconciling reform with increased effectiveness of EU representation' (Biscop 2009: 4). This balance should inform strategic partnerships with other global actors, notably the BRICs, which are often praised for their existence, though upon closer examination, are vague and empty in content. If revised, these strategic partnerships could truly be an instrument of effective multilateralism, but they must take into account the EU's regional, global, and institutional interests. Once these interests are defined, the EU can establish shared interests with its strategic partners and build a joint strategy accordingly (Biscop 2009: 29). By outlining common interests and related priorities, strategic partnerships can have purpose, meaning and concrete goals to be achieved. As for multilateral structures, they too must be reformed. 'To be effective and legitimate, the multilateral architecture must evidently be adapted to take into account the growing importance of the "emerging" global actors' (Ibid). The EU should evaluate how it can contribute to such reforms, but also how it can take advantage of reforms to carve out a stronger more unitary role for itself.

Finally, member states must learn to work together. Of course differences of opinion persist on many issues, and on the role of institutions such as NATO and the UN, or more specifically, what the EU's role within them should be. However, no state can deny that member states have a stronger

and louder voice when they speak as one in such fora. Not only does it increase the chances of them achieving an outcome that reflects their interests, but it boosts the legitimacy of the EU as an important international actor. Therefore, member states would do well to focus on what unites them, rather than what divides them. As the European Security Strategy made clear, member states are united behind a holistic approach to security. The aggressive use of force is frowned upon, and diplomatic and economic coercion is preferred over military coercion, which should only be used as a last resort (Biscop 2009: 19). Member states should make good on their joint claim that multilateralism is the ideal method of conducting international relations by presenting a unified voice in multilateral fora.

Conclusion

Produced in 2003, the European Security Strategy stresses a number of European values, the most prominent of which is multilateralism. The EU truly believes that international relations should be conducted by cooperation and coordination among states, ideally in the framework of an international forum such as the United Nations. The EU has devoted more energy to the UN than any other international organization, and has developed extensive policy and practical precedent for EU member states to act together within the UN, and for the EU to act with or on behalf of the UN in crisis management and conflict prevention missions. Troubles that arise in the smooth functioning of this policy can be largely blamed on member states reverting to national interests.

While the EU speaks a lot about multilateralism, there is much work that can be done to improve its actions. Strategic partnerships must be built or enhanced according to shared interests and priorities. Multilateral fora must be adjusted to account for emerging powers, but also to allow the EU to represent its member states. In order for this to happen, member states must also express the desire for such reforms. Rather than taking comfort in national interests and personal priorities, member states need to consider their shared past, and the way in which their own multilateral organization has saved them from possible mutual destruction. They must now focus on common and shared goals, and be an example of the benefits of multilateralism to external states and other multilateral fora.

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Changing Multilateralism: the EU as a Global-regional Actor in Security and Peace, or EU-GRASP in short, is an EU funded FP7 Programme. EU-GRASP aims to contribute to the analysis and articulation of the current and future role of the EU as a global actor in multilateral security governance, in a context of challenged multilateralism, where the EU aims at “effective multilateralism”. This project therefore examines the notion and practice of multilateralism in order to provide the required theoretical background for assessing the linkages between the EU’s current security activities with multi-polarism, international law, regional integration processes and the United Nations system.

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