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2.1 The five priorities the EU pursues in its External Action

The Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy has become an important reference framework since its inception in June 2016. The Strategy suggested approaches to examine how the prioritization of the EU foreign policy takes shape, how it relates to existing policies and whether the proclaimed priorities are adequate to safeguard EU interests.

Through the Global Strategy, the EU proclaimed a set of priorities the Union pursues in its external action:

First and foremost, major priority is the security of the Union in the comprehensive sense, implying a credible European defense and security cooperation to provide for internal and external security, as well as policies to address terrorism, hybrid threats, economic volatility, climate change, and energy insecurity. By placing the wide-ranging security paradigm first on its agenda, the EU declares readiness to step in, and perform better, in areas that traditionally were fiercely guarded prerogatives of national security policies;

Second, the EU declared preparedness and willingness to invest in the resilience of states and societies to help them withstand and more quickly recover from conflict and crisis. This priority is broadly defined, acknowledging the existence of different paths to resilience, also via the EU enlargement policy and the European Neighbourhood Policy;

Third, the EU proclaims as its priority the integrated approach to conflicts and crises. The EU engages in a practical and principled way in peace building. Wherever and whenever possible the Union is ready to act early to prevent conflict and save precious human lives. Unlike some other external actors, the EU also stays engaged in the aftermath of conflict to ensure that peace is deeply rooted in society;

Fourth, being a regional entity of (almost) continental scope, the EU has an understandable pre-disposition to promote cooperative regional orders. The EU knows from its own experience of peace and development that regional governance makes it easier to manage security concerns, reap economic gains, and project influence. This rationale motivates the EU to work with regional organizations around the world, to encourage regional integration as a stepping block towards global connectivity and interdependence;

Fifth, finally yet importantly, the Strategy articulates the EU's vision about the global governance for the 21st century. This perception does not only call for reform and strengthening of the international system but predicts the gradual progress towards international community in the world. The EU supports rules-based order that ensures human rights, sustainable development, and access to global commons for everybody. A strong UN is the bedrock of the multilateral order, and the Sustainable Development Goals will become cross cutting theme on the international development agenda, just as peace and security or gender equality.

At a first glance, the EU foreign policy priorities form a paradigm that is unusual, and, do not easily compare to the template of national priorities that a state usually follows in its behavior on the international arena. However, a more substantial study of the content of the EU priorities, and what they entail as common positions and joint actions of the Union and its Member States, will indicate the existence of similarity and parallelism. Both sets of the European and the national priorities are based on interests (survival, access to and control of resources, pursuit of prosperity for the citizens), and/or on identity pre-dispositions.

Any European Union policy is produced on the basis of EU treaties in the course of interaction between the Member States and the Union and its institutions. The EU foreign and security policy is not exception in that sense but is the result of the application of the Union's methods and decision-making procedures.

This entails that the EU FP actions, including priorities, should be observed through a telescope of various lenses: the level of consensus among Member States and between them and the EU institutions (the European Commission (EC)); the potential or actual overlapping of competences (e.g. "mixed" agreements); the availability, or absence of, applicable EU instruments, that, in turn, have prioritizing criteria of their own for budget appropriation and execution; compatibility between mid- and long-term actions and short-term initiatives of the rotating presidencies of the Council of the European Union; the understandable tendency to build-on a successful FP act, rather than on failures, and – at times – to showcase good practices from success stories of relatively limited importance, etc.

For obvious reasons, EU FP analysis attracts the attention of practically each and every theoretical school of thought and the respective IR theory it stems from. Most notable is the omni-presence of realism or neo-realism that informs the mainstream research while the divide between realism and liberalism remains in existence and manifests itself. The balance of power, arguably the oldest and most recognizable philosophy of international relations, could serve as an example. The McGill University Professor T. V. Paul suggests that some states, imitating the EU, have instead engaged in 'soft balancing', whereby great powers are restrained by their weaker adversaries through international institutions, informal alignments and economic sanctions.

Constructivist approaches also preserve exploratory power with regard to the EU FP analysis, nourished by the notable success to explain the importance of normative basis for emerging international community. For instance, Walter

Carlsnaes suggested as useful analytical tool a model to monitor and examine the foreign policy act as the building block of international relations by examining its intentional phase, identity pre-disposition, and, the reaction of the structure (the international system), that boomerangs back to the agency and impacts it.

From constructivist perspective, what matters most for EU FP priorities ranking would be whether the specific foreign policy has a transformative potential. Such set of criteria assumes the existing normative power of the European Union as the dominant terms of reference, and therefore, attributes to the EU's relational foreign policy actions either little or no particular significance. However, constructivists remain helpful, as they focus on the very nature of the EU foreign policy and try to extract from there and assess its unique components, with long-term lasting effect. In an ideational sense, the EU's predicament is to change the entire international system profoundly.

2.2 Nature of the EU Foreign Policy

Most scholars define EU foreign policy as multifaceted, multi-method and multilevel. It has peculiar foreign policy architecture. Its multifaceted nature derives from the fact that it comprises of Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP), external action, and, the external dimension of internal policies. All these four forms of foreign policy venues are intricately intertwined.

Both the intergovernmental open coordination and the Community methods are used in the decision-making on international affairs, at various stages of the process, in a consecutive or parallel manner.

The scope of foreign policy actions can be described as panoramic or kaleidoscopic, entailing the national, European and international levels. In view of the involvement of many institutional actors, the study of EU FP should take into consideration also legal components related to the division of competences among the EU institutions and between them and the Member States (MS).

The EU foreign policy is subjected to various areas of tension: European integration versus Atlantic solidarity; civilian versus military power; intergovernmental versus Community method; external versus internal objectives. Understanding the evolution and nature of EU foreign policy requires insight into such areas of tension, which loom over discussions on European foreign policy. They are also recurrent themes in publications concerning the famous 'capability-expectations gap' and the EU's '(strategic) actorness', or 'presence' on the international arena. They have a major impact not only on the macro-picture of treaty changes and EU foreign policy's evolution but also on the micro-picture of responses to specific foreign policy dossiers.

“Single in name, dual in policy-making method, multiple in nature - this is the Union's institutional framework in a nutshell”. The Dutch researcher Stephan Keukeleire offers this short definition. Like other authors, he believes that an overarching single institutional framework' exists only on paper, but in practice, the powers and responsibilities of the EU's foreign policy actors are determined through interaction through various policy-making methods.

The EU actors are numerous: In CFSP/CSDP, the Council, under the strategic leadership of the European Council, dominates all stages of policy-making, supported by the High Representative and the European External Action Service (EEAS). On the EU's external action (such as trade policy and development cooperation) and the external dimensions of internal policies (such as environment and energy), the Commission proposes, the Council decides (alone, in co-decision with the European Parliament (EP), or after consultation with the EP) and the Commission implements, controls and manages budgets. In this case, the acts are legally binding on the Member States, and the Court of Justice (ECJ) provides judicial oversight.

The EEAS is responsible for the running of the approximately 140 Delegations of the European Union around the world. The Delegations are called upon to play a vital role in policy coordination within the EU system and with other donors in the countries of accreditation as well as in building local networks and partnerships. The coordination process in the field may have a substantial impact for prioritizing the EU bilateral relations with the third country in which the EU Delegation operates.

The overarching formula of a 'single institutional framework' belies a much more complex reality. To understand the interaction that takes place inside the Union, observers have to assess correctly the varying strengths and weaknesses of the actors involved in delivering and coordinating the foreign policy. The Member States, also principal actors in EU foreign policy, ought to be analyzed on par with the European institutions.

It was the Member States that determined the structure and purpose of the EU's foreign policy system to the extent that they agreed to hand over control of this policy area to other actors. However, as the number of Member States sitting around the policy-making table grew, so did the breadth of issues to be debated. Even in those areas in which Member States wished to retain full control, they have been forced to delegate responsibilities to common actors and smaller configurations of Member States.

In the post-Lisbon circumstances, there remain some “residues” from the earlier practices of priorities selection by the Rotational Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

Despite the fact that ninety to ninety-five percent of the EU FP agenda for the brief span of six-months EU Council Presidency are pre-determined by the dynamic torrent of the international events, i.e. by the external environment, or are inherited as “business in progress” from the previous Presidency, the presiding Member State usually attempts to select specific priorities in areas where the country has accumulated expertise and feels self-confident in performance. Moreover, the current practice of concerted 18 months programming sets a requirement for the trio of consecutive presidents to reach an agreement on their common priorities. A Trio Presidency Program is a common program developed by three consecutive Council presidencies to ensure continuity in their actions. For example, a greater degree of attention was paid to the Western Balkans during the

2017/2018 presidencies of the “troika” Estonia - Bulgaria – Austria”, not least because of the geographic location of the latter two EU Member States.

The overview of the EU foreign policy's objectives and principles reveals essential features of Union's foreign policy in general. This policy is not only about reacting to international crises and conflicts in relation to other international actors. It is also about structuring the behavior and mindset of other actors in international politics.

On the other hand, the dilemma external objectives versus internal objectives is related to the very nature of the EU foreign policy. These objectives are not always self-evident and transparent. The EU foreign policy goals are often not only steered by external objectives aimed at influencing the external environment, but also by various internal objectives. In turn, internal objectives can be classified broken into three categories: inter-relational objectives (aimed at managing member states' mutual relations); integration objectives (aimed at affecting European integration); and identity objectives (aimed at asserting the identity of the EU). The EU foreign policy has multiple internal functionalities.

The inter-relational dimension of European integration implies that the EU's foreign policy or specific foreign policy actions can target the management of internal EU relations as a principal goal. Conversely, it can also imply that Member States agree not to handle a foreign policy issue within the EU framework out of fear that doing so would revive mutual tensions and augment internal disagreement and distrust. In addition, foreign policy initiatives can stem from two other types of internal objectives: Member States can promote foreign policy initiatives designed to prove that the process of European integration is progressing (integration objectives). In other cases, the goal may simply be to illustrate a European approach to international issues in order to differentiate themselves from other international actors (identity objectives).

In the globalizing context in which EU foreign policy takes place, the European Union is the world factor that stands for normative and predictable international environment. In this sense, amongst all other theoretical schools of thought in IR, constructivism offers the most comprehensive and clear analytical framework to analyze EU foreign policy.

EU foreign policy is not only about shaping or managing relations with other actors. On a more ambitious level, this foreign policy is also about influencing the structures that determine how other actors behave. This concept resonates with the capacity to shape the organizing principles of the international system, the rules of the game and to determine how others will play that game.

The universally acclaimed success of the European Union was its Enlargement Policy regarding Central and Eastern Europe in the 1990s and toward the Western Balkans in the 2000s. The substance of this accomplishment was the structural transformation of these regions. An example of the opposite is the (largely) failed structural impact of the EU's European Neighborhood Policy, in particular the lack of a footprint in the Mediterranean region.

There are two key aspects of the qualification 'structural': structures and sustainability. First, the purpose of a structural foreign policy is to influence or

shape structures. Second, the objective is to produce sustainable effects. The purpose is not simply to shape or influence structures, but to do so in such a way that these structures develop an enduring character and become relatively permanent, including when external pressure or support disappear.

Both material and immaterial factors can contribute to the sustainability of structures. This suggests the potential relevance of the EU, which through its Association and Cooperation Agreements, financial instruments, and technical and legal expertise has a major toolbox to materially support structural reforms. A structural foreign policy is beyond the capacity of most individual states, and that is why the EU is a potentially interesting locus for Member States to develop such a policy.

Whether changes to structures are sustainable also depends on immaterial (or ideational) factors: the extent to which the structures are seen as legitimate and are (or are becoming) part of the belief system, culture or identity of the people concerned (population as well as elites). Structures or structural changes have more chance of becoming internalized when they are perceived as desirable and legitimate, not just as the result of external pressure or of a purely rational cost-benefit calculation (acquiescing in order to avoid sanctions or gain economic support, for example).

Globalization is a major contextual factor for EU foreign policy. Globalization brings about deepening impact of patterns of social interaction and inter-regional flows of people, information, technological knowledge, ideas, values and norms. These are facilitated by physical infrastructures for connectivity and communication, but also by normative and symbolic factors.

Member States find themselves to be increasingly irrelevant in addressing the challenges of globalization through their traditional foreign policy. They turn to the EU to respond to questions they are incapable of answering alone. Vulnerability in traditionally domestic or internal policy fields, such as health, the environment, energy or migration, explains the current pressure to gradually elaborate an EU foreign policy in these fields.

2.3 Principles and Objectives

The principles as well as objectives of the EU's action on the international scene are spelled out in Article 21 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU), which is one of the few articles that cover both CFSP/CSDP and external action, thus also including trade and development policies:

The Union's action on the international scene shall be guided by the principles which have inspired its own creation, development and enlargement, and which it seeks to advance in the wider world: democracy, the rule of Law, the universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for human dignity, the principles of equality and solidarity, and respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law.

The EU thus takes its own principles-driven history as a point of departure for promoting these virtues to the rest of the world. One of the reasons why the EU has been labeled a 'normative power' is this focus on values as constitutive feature of

the EU and its foreign policy. This concept refers to the EU's 'ability to shape conceptions of "normal" in international relations'. However, there are some critical observations about the EU as a normative power.

For example, Ian Manners suggests that the EU normative power has its origin in the EU hybrid political system and its constitutional focus on fundamental human rights. That is the reason why the EU is also predisposed to act in a normative way worldwide. These norms include five 'core norms' (peace, liberty, democracy, rule of law, and human rights and fundamental freedoms) as well as four more contested 'minor norms' (social solidarity, anti-discrimination, sustainable development and good governance). Manners demonstrates how the EU increasingly seeks to redefine international norms in its own image'.

The concept of normative power has become a central theme in the analysis of EU foreign policy. A considerable body of work has applied the concept to the EU's stance towards a multitude of geographic regions and thematic issues, with findings varying widely over regions and issues. The concept has also been criticized: for being ambiguous to serve as a basis for rigorous policy; for focusing too strongly on ideational factors and neglecting material factors and the impact of changing power relations on the global level; or for taking easily European or Western norms as a basis of the analysis.

The Lisbon Treaty defines in Article 21(2) TEU a list of eight objectives. The first goal - safeguard the Union's values, fundamental interests, security, independence and integrity - can be seen as the overarching general objective for the EU's foreign policy. However, it requires further elaboration of what are the EU's 'fundamental interests', and on the meaning of the safeguards of the EU's security and integrity.

The second objective is to pursue the principles which are set out in the first paragraph of that article: democracy, rule of law, human rights and the principles of international law.

The third to seventh objectives refer to the core goals of major components of the EU's external policy: 'preserve peace, prevent conflicts and strengthen international security' (CFSP/CSDP and external action); 'foster the sustainable development of developing countries, with the primary aim of eradicating poverty' (development policy); 'encourage the integration of all countries into the world economy' (trade policy); 'improve the quality of the environment and the sustainable management of global natural resources' (environmental policy); and 'assist populations, countries and regions confronting natural or man-made disasters' (humanitarian policy). Finally, the eighth objective reflects the overarching objective of promoting an international system based on stronger multilateral cooperation and good global governance.

The assessment of these objectives invites several comments: First, the Treaty provisions are general principles to which Member States could easily subscribe but nevertheless preserve very different views on the appropriate action in the pursuit of these goals. A well know example illustrates this point: the objective of eradicating poverty sounds attractive, but it hides different views on how to

achieve this - primarily through development aid or through the promotion of free trade.

Second, Article 21 TEU does not set priorities, giving the impression that all objectives are equally important to the EU. This is deceptive, although, as the legal competences, budgetary instruments and institutional set up that the EU has at its disposal are very different for each of these objectives. They determine the importance that can de facto be attributed to the various Treaty objectives. The result is that a hierarchy unavoidably imposes itself. For example, the EU's exclusive competences and the well-developed trade policy toolbox explain why the EU will act more firmly in this field than in others.

Third, self-evident and generally accepted as the objectives may be, they are not always compatible in practice. For instance, initiatives to promote human rights and democracy in third countries may lead to a deterioration of relations with those countries. The proclaimed goal of 'consistency between the different areas of the Union's external action and between these and its other policies' is, in practice, difficult to attain.

Key Issues in EU Foreign Policy

There is an emerging agreement among scholars of EU foreign policy that the four key FP issues for the Union are: human rights and the rule of law; conflict prevention, crisis management and peace building; non-proliferation and control of arms exports; and the fight against terrorism. These four issues do not provide an exhaustive list of key priorities of EU foreign policy but still may indicate priority areas.

Human rights, Democracy, Rule of Law

The promotion of human rights, democracy and rule of law is both one of the main self-declared objectives of EU foreign policy and a constitutive element of the EU as a self-declared value-driven international actor. The bulk of CFSP diplomatic actions, particularly the demarches, are devoted to these topics. Specific human rights dialogues and consultations were established with third countries, including major powers such as China, Russia and, less obviously, the US (in relation to the continued use of the death penalty in certain US states). Civilian crisis management operations increasingly focus on actively supporting the rule of law. The EU also promotes the rule of law on a global scale through its actions in support of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and other international criminal tribunals.

The EU has established four sets of instruments (toolboxes) for these purposes. First, the Council adopted specific 'EU human rights guidelines for a limited number of priority areas: the death penalty; torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; rights of the child; children and armed conflicts; the violence against and discrimination of women and girls; the protection of human-rights defenders in third countries; and the promotion of international humanitarian law. In addition to these priority areas, the EU has also developed policies to address the so called 'new' fields of concern such as the fight against prosecution based on a sexual orientation.

A second important toolbox consists of the political framework agreements with third countries, such as Association Agreements and Partnership and Cooperation Agreements, and the related geographic financial instruments: the European Neighborhood Instrument (the ENPI/ENI), the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) and the European Development Fund (EDF). These agreements generally include political conditionality in the form of human rights clauses as an 'essential element'. In the framework of support for institution building and good governance, the ENPI and - to a lesser, degree- the EDF and DCI include funding for targeted projects to promote the rule of law and democracy. They are dependent on the consent of the third country's government.

A third toolbox is more focused and flexible, allowing the EU to work directly with NGOs and international organizations rather than with governmental actors. For instance, the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) finances 'EU Election Observation Missions' and smaller 'Election Expert Missions'. However, the limited scope and political relevance of such projects have at times made EU policy look more symbolic than substantive. Additional instruments are the Civil Society Facility and the European Endowment for Democracy.

Some internal policies with external dimensions constitute a fourth toolbox. A good example in that regard is the fight against the trafficking of human beings in which field a special EU Strategy was elaborated.

The EU's mixed performance during the Arab uprising, in mid-2012, illustrated the need of greater coherence not only with other EU policies, but also in the scope of the rule-of-law domain itself. The Council adopted the EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy, which incorporates nearly a hundred actions in this field. Moreover, to complement this top-down approach with a bottom-up approach, the EU Delegations worldwide were tasked to produce tailor-made strategies for each country. Their aim was to account for realities on the ground and to overcome the EU's traditional 'one size fits all' approach.

In this regard, several observations deserve attention:

First, there is a great variation in the extent, to which a third country respect for the rule of law is a defining factor for the EU's relationship with that country. For instance, failure to respect human rights resulted in sanctions against Cuba and Myanmar, but not against Saudi Arabia and other oil-exporting Gulf states.

Second, the EU has been at the vanguard of several campaigns that are in fact aimed at transforming the governance structure of the international relations through the political and operational support for the ICC and other international criminal tribunals. Yet, the EU foreign policy does not show the same kind of activism about all human rights issues. The fight against forced labour is an issue that has not received a high level of attention. However, with estimations of more than twenty million victims worldwide, this 'slavery of our times' affects much more people than, for instance, the death penalty. Moreover, the EU generally attaches greater importance to civil and political rights than to economic and social rights, the latter being considered to be part of the development paradigm.

Third, the EU's democracy promotion policies receive less attention than human rights policies. This reflects the fact that democracy - in contrast to human rights - is not enshrined as a principle of international law, which makes it harder to legitimize intervening in third countries to promote the democracy cause. On the other hand, the EU often prefers to highlight the goal of 'good governance' and 'rule of law'; these terms are often politically more acceptable to partner countries and they also further the EU's economic interests, creating a stable legal administrative and legal framework for trade relations and investments.

The EU's support for democratization processes was and is outspoken in its enlargement policy in Central Europe and the Western Balkans. However, in the EU neighborhood the expected positive spill over from cooperation and assistance did not materialize.

Conflict Prevention, Crisis Management and Peace building

In conflict management, the EU has developed a policy to deal with various overlapping stages of the conflict cycle: conflict prevention, crisis management, peace-making, peacekeeping, post-conflict stabilization and peace building. The toolbox available to the EU is spread over various policy domains, financial instruments and institutional actors. It allows the EU to adopt a comprehensive approach towards crises and conflicts, but it equally explains the complexity and at times, the inconsistency of the EU actions.

CFSP and CSDP

The diplomatic capacities provided by the CFSP are the EU's first major tool. A considerable part of the declarations and activities developed within the CFSP is related to defining the EU's position towards an actual or potential crisis and - to a lesser extent - undertaking concrete actions. The High Representative / Vice President, EU Special Representatives and senior EEAS officials, often in close interaction with the Member States, have been involved in crisis mediations, or have provided an EU contribution to international mediation efforts. Examples include crises in Georgia, Ukraine, Iran, the Middle East and, particularly, the Western Balkans.

The EU's diplomatic activities can be underpinned via military and civilian crisis management operations conducted through the CSDP, involving the deployment of soldiers, police officers and judges from EU Member States. CSDP missions can fulfill a variety of tasks: 'joint disarmament operations, humanitarian and rescue tasks, military advice and assistance tasks, conflict prevention and peace keeping tasks, tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peacemaking and post-conflict stabilization'. Through its CSDP operations, the EU is or was involved in crises in the Western Balkans, the South Caucasus, the Middle East, sub-Saharan Africa and Asia. In view of the size and relevance of the missions, the EU prioritized crises areas in Europe (particularly the Western Balkans) and Africa (DR Congo, the Horn of Africa and the Sahel).

With regard to the EU's CSDP missions, two observations are pertinent: First, a relatively limited number of missions were effective at short-term crisis management or conflict prevention. In these instances, the EU helped prevent

further escalation of a conflict. Examples include Operations Artemis and EUFOR in DR Congo or the EU Monitoring Mission (EUMM) in Georgia.

Second, a major part of the CSDP missions, corresponds to structural foreign policy. The EU aims to contribute to establishing security and governance structures over a longer term through several rule-of-law, security sector reform and capacity-building missions. Examples include the large EULEX Kosovo mission, which plays a leading role in establishing a justice, police and customs administration in Kosovo.

Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP), African Peace Facility (APF) and mainstream long-term instruments

Whereas the CSDP enables the EU to be involved directly in conflicts, the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (formerly known as Instrument for Stability (IfS)) and the African Peace Facility (APF) allow the EU to support the intervention or mediation of other actors in crises and conflicts.

The IcSP, launched in 2007, is considered complementary to geographically oriented instruments such as the European Development Fund (EDF), ENPI and DCI, providing a financial basis for interventions when circumstances in a third country make normal cooperation and assistance impossible. The IcSP's budget for 2007-13 was around € 2 billion, three quarters of which was spent for over 200 actions responding to crises and conflicts worldwide.

The IcSP serves to strengthen the EU's capacity in two respects. First, it facilitates the short-term crisis response by the EU. Specific examples may illustrate how the EU utilizes the IcSP to reach this end: the transition processes in Tunisia; the reintegration of ex-militants in Nigeria; the establishment of a truth-and-reconciliation process in Colombia.

Second, the IcSP long-term component is a tool to handle global and trans-regional challenges with a security or stability dimension. It finances activities of non-EU actors, such as UN agencies, other international organizations and NGOs. Foreign policy through IcSP is thus foreign policy by substitution, and, essentially, the EU acts via its chequebook. This can reflect a lack of agreement or capacities within the EU to take up a more direct, active role. However, it can also indicate a sound assessment of other actors' legitimacy, which holds great potential in effectively dealing with some aspects of a crisis.

The fact that IcSP finances small projects scattered around the world leads to the criticism that the financial means are not really used strategically. However, relatively small financial contributions can also play the role of “trigger money” providing the lever needed to allow relevant third parties to intervene and make a difference. The geographic pattern of IcSP spending indicates a clear EU strategic prioritization. Currently, the Middle East, Northern Africa and sub-Saharan Africa take up around three-quarters of the budget for crisis response.

The African Peace Facility (APF) is a key instrument for implementing the Africa-EU Partnership on Peace and Security. It is designed to provide the African Union (AU) and other African regional organizations with resources to mediate crises and to mount effective peacemaking and peacekeeping operations. Since its creation in 2004, more than €1 billion has been channeled through this instrument,

with the largest part devoted to financial support for African-led peace operations, mainly in Somalia. Funding is also provided for developing management capacities of the AU and other sub-regional organizations in the context of the African Peace and Security Architecture.

The EU has quite an impressive toolbox to deal with crisis management and peace building, and, even for conflict prevention, the latter understood as a middle term pro-active operational or structural strategy implemented with the aim of defining and creating favorable conditions for stable, predictable and more secure international environment. The EU mainstream long-term instruments underpin initiatives to defuse a crisis or can foster stability during periods of political transition. The EU's sanctions and conditionality instruments can be employed to discourage or encourage actors in crisis or post-crisis situations. From the point of view of prioritization of objectives, the conflict management area of EU activities demonstrates that the EU is well equipped to tackle various goals in temporal sequence. It is the needs assessment that set the priorities at a given moment of time and define the instrument the EU will utilize.

2.4 Non-Proliferation and Control of Arms Export

Since the establishment of CFSP, the EU has had in place a non-proliferation policy with both a structural foreign policy component that bolsters the various international non-proliferation regimes, and a relational foreign policy component that deals with countries that pose a threat in terms of nuclear proliferation. However, the EU's policy suffered from the outset due to Member States' widely diverging views about the role of nuclear deterrence, with the UK and France as nuclear powers on one side and the rest of the Member States on the other.

The enduring debate within EU is focused on the priority issue of how to tackle specific nuclear proliferation challenges - mainly the nuclear capabilities and ambitions of Iraq, Iran and North Korea. There exist various answers to the question how to calibrate and balance the necessary mix of diplomacy, sanctions and use of force.

The empirical evidence fluctuates considerably. The 2003 pre-emptive military operations against the regime of Saddam Hussein in Iraq led to the deepest CFSP crisis to date, with the UK and the France-Germany duo leading the two antagonist camps within the EU. In contrast, the three countries together with the EU High Representative worked jointly in their intensive diplomatic efforts to deal with Iran's nuclear program within the EU/E 3+3 talks. Although the EU participates in the international sanctions against North Korea, it is a rather marginal diplomatic player on this issue. Neither the EU nor individual European Member States participate in the Six-Party Talks with North Korea.

The EU faces a serious credibility problem as it pressures third countries to sign and respect the Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT), to renounce their nuclear ambitions and to accept non-proliferation provisions in contractual relations with the EU, while the UK and France refuse to forfeit their own nuclear privileges. This reinforces criticism of EU double standards. However, perhaps the most important weakness the EU and its nuclear powers face in terms of power politics

is that, unlike the US, they are unable to provide credible security guarantees to third countries, which often pursue nuclear capability as an answer to their precarious security situation.

In addition to nuclear-specific security concerns, the EU has also developed a wider EU Strategy against the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction in the wake of the various terrorist attacks in the early 2000s. This strategy incorporated awareness of threats beyond nuclear weapons, including the proliferation of biological, toxin, radiological and chemical weapons and ballistic missiles, acknowledging the various concrete threats these weapons pose to European security.

The EU's Strategy to Combat Illicit Accumulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons provides a platform for addressing another type of arms proliferation. This strategy attempts to prevent weapons falling into the hands of non-state actors and fuelling violent conflicts. The EU worked to develop national, regional and global mechanisms to counter the spread of small arms and light weapons (SALW). Most notably, it has mounted an active campaign in favour of the 2013 Arms Trade Treaty (ATT), which is the first legally binding instrument establishing international standards for the transfer of conventional weapons.

The EU has dealt with the problem of weapon exports since its 1998 Code of Conduct on Arms Exports, which was replaced in 2008 by the Common Position defining common rules governing control of exports of military technology and equipment. These initiatives had a positive effect on the gradual development of a common approach, increasing transparency and defining more stringent criteria for arms exports. However, they still leave application of criteria established in these agreements to the discretion of Member States who, on a case-by-case basis, decide to transfer or deny the transfer of military technology and equipment to a third country.

The Fight against Terrorism

The close relationship between external and internal security both within the EU and within third countries has turned the fight against terrorism into another priority area for EU foreign policy. Although in the wake of the terrorist attacks against the US in September 2001 the EU treated terrorism more as an international problem, the Madrid (2004) and London (2005) bombings were an abrupt realization that 'home-grown' terrorism was equally on the agenda. The existence of ' sleeper cells ' within the EU, composed of EU citizens or legal residents but trained abroad in ' failed ' or ' fragile ' states and belonging to loose international terrorist networks, threw up a new array of challenges relating to issues as diverse as the integration of immigrant communities and foreign policy choices.

However, most instruments for countering terrorism lie with the Member States, not with the EU. Protecting its population is one of the core *raison d'être* of the state, and tools to handle the terrorist threats, including intelligence, judicial and law enforcement systems, go to the very heart of national sovereignty. This also explains why the EU's counter-terrorism policy was always considered a complement to national efforts. Moreover, EU Member States indicated different

perceptions about the nature of terrorism, the urgency to deal with it and the need to tackle this issue at the EU level.

The 9/11 attacks on the US and the bombings in Madrid and London precipitated a burst of activity at the EU level, with agreements reached on issues where divergence had previously proved insurmountable. At the institutional level, a Council Working Party on Terrorism was established, Europol and Euro just were strengthened, and the position of Counter-Terrorism Coordinator was created, albeit with only limited powers and resources to act effectively. In terms of policy, following the 2001 EU Action Plan on combating terrorism, the EU adopted a Counter-Terrorism Strategy in 2005 composed of four strands: prevention; protection; pursue; and response. The EU adopted a common definition of terrorism, list of terrorist organizations, an EU-wide arrest warrant, and legislation against money laundering and asset seizure.

As the list above indicates, the largest part of the EU's response to terrorism has been internal. However, many of these measures also require international cooperation. Counter-terrorism therefore became incorporated across the whole gamut of the EU's relations with third parties and gradually became a strategic priority of the EU foreign policy.

In line with its professed 'choice for multilateralism', the EU has actively sought to develop cooperation in international fora. It has thrown its weight behind the adoption of the 2005 UN Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism and the 2006 UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy; contributed to the sanctions regime against Al-Qaeda and other terrorist organizations; encouraged third countries to ratify and implement the existing anti-terrorism related UN Conventions; and supported international initiatives, including those constructed under other non-proliferation regimes

The EU attempted to streamline cooperation against terrorism in its foreign policy towards other countries. It included capacity building initiatives directed to Pakistan, the Sahel States, Yemen and the countries of the Horn of Africa. The often-limited interest of and cooperation by the third country, however, time and again prove to be a significant hurdle.

2.5 The geographic foreign policy priorities of the European Union

The geographical priorities of the EU external relations do reflect acknowledgement of special circumstances and historical legacies that underpin the enduring interest of the European countries harbor towards countries in their immediate vicinities with which most EU Member States have entangled histories.

In terms of geographic FP priorities, the EU attaches due attention to contractual relations and a comprehensive relational and structural foreign policy towards the adjacent regions in its Eastern and Southern neighborhood: The Western Balkans, Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus, the Mediterranean and the Middle East.

Most observers agree that the present status quo does not allow for definitive and unequivocal conclusions about the level of prioritization of these regions. It is generally accepted that the EU has gradually adopted policies to resolve conflicts

and military threats in these areas. In contrast to the ambitions raised in the late 1990s and early 2000s, the EU increasingly faces problems in further developing an effective structural foreign policy in its neighborhood. Not only the lack of a membership ‘trump card’ and the prospect of accession explain the complexity of the situation, but also the rise and the increasing presence of other structural powers in the EU's Eastern and Southern neighborhood.

The Western Balkans

The EU has close links with the countries of the Western Balkans that constitute potential candidates for EU membership. In anticipation of possible further enlargement in South East Europe, the EU aims to secure stable, prosperous and well-functioning democratic societies on a steady path towards EU integration.

The conditions for establishing contractual relations with these countries were first laid down in 1999, at the time when the Council launched the Stabilization and Association Process (SAP). The most substantial asset of the EU policy in the area was based on the eligibility of the countries of the Western Balkans for EU membership if and when they meet the Copenhagen criteria. The 2003 Thessaloniki Agenda for the Western Balkans mapped the way towards European integration for Montenegro and Serbia (that started membership talks); the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Albania (that are candidate countries); as well as other potential candidates for EU membership.

In the Western Balkans, the EU retains a key supporting role in stabilizing Bosnia and Herzegovina, through a military-led mission (EUFOR/Althea) and a police mission (EUPM). In Kosovo, the EU has deployed a mission to support the Kosovo authorities in upholding the rule of law (EULEX). CSDP missions have also been deployed in North Macedonia.

The European Commission issued a Communication, entitled: A credible enlargement perspective for and enhanced EU engagement with the Western Balkans. Despite the accompanying rhetoric on the EU policies towards the region, some observers continue to believe that there is a degree of pretence on both sides in the EU relationship with countries from the region.

The Eastern Partnership (EaP)

Launched in 2009 as a joint policy initiative, the Eastern Partnership (EaP) is a specific dimension of the European Neighborhood Policy. It aims to deepen and strengthen relations between the European Union, its Member States and its six Eastern neighbors: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine.

The EU and the EaP partners have committed to demonstrate and deliver noticeable benefits to the daily lives of the citizens across the region by focusing on achieving tangible deliverables in four key priority areas agreed at the 2015 Riga Summit: stronger governance (strengthening of institutions and good governance); stronger economy (economic development and market opportunities, particularly for small and medium size enterprises); better connectivity (interconnectivity, mobility), and stronger society, including people-to-people contacts. Discussions in EaP multilateral Platforms and Panels are meant to help exchange best practices across these areas and develop regional cooperation.

A joint staff working document "Eastern Partnership – 20 Deliverables for 2020" drafted by the Commission and the EEAS details the key priorities: modernized transport connections through the TEN-T network; increased energy efficiency; facilitated access to finance for SMEs; reducing roaming tariffs between partners; outreach to grassroots civil society organizations; and, support for youth and students exchange.

The Eastern Partnership aims at building a common area of shared democracy, prosperity, stability and increased cooperation. Additionally, bonds forged through the Eastern Partnership help strengthening state and societal resilience: it makes both the EU and the partners stronger and better able to deal with internal and external challenges.

The Southern Neighborhood

Whilst each of the enumerated priority regions presents specific challenges to the EU foreign policy, it is the Southern dimension that offers the best empirical data to monitor the trajectory of the EU actions, and the EU reaction to the feedback from regional environment. Several observations come to the forefront:

First, developing a successful structural foreign policy is problematic if related conflicts and crises are not resolved, and their impact – mitigated.

Second, the EU had wanted to apply to its relations with the Mediterranean the objectives and methodology that had proved so successful with the Central and Eastern European countries, though without being able to offer the prospect of accession. The economic liberalization process was to improve the economic situation, but the socio-economic situation of the weaker strata of society deteriorated.

Third, the attractiveness of the EU and of the structures the EU was promoting increasingly paled in comparison to those promoted by Islamist movements and parties, which paid more attention to the basic material needs as well as to the immaterial identity-related desires of the population.

The Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) was also unable to provide satisfactory answers. Launched at the initiative of the French President Sarkozy, it aimed to promote economic cooperation through specific projects (for example, related to energy and infrastructure), irrespective of political reforms in the Mediterranean countries. But it also failed to bring successful results.

The Arab uprising painfully proved that the ENP, just as the preceding UfM and EMP, had not contributed to prosperity, security and stability in the EU's neighborhood and had not diminished the feelings of exclusion in the partner countries. In his analysis of the EU and the 'Arab Spring', Peters emphasizes that human rights and democracy promotion ultimately lost out to a more urgent and competing set of European priorities in the region', including the need for stability and security in the region, control of the flow of illegal migration, and the protection of European economic interests.

The EU and its Member States at first hesitated and sent contradictory signals on how to react to the Arab upheaval. However, in March 2011 the European Commission and the High Representative proposed a 'Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean' aimed at building a

stronger partnership with people and civil society actors, at democratic transformation, tackling the inequalities and creating job opportunities. This proposal was the precursor of the revision of the ENP, based on the 'more for more' principle, the three 'M's' ('markets, mobility and money'), and greater differentiation.

The Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM)

To compensate for the relatively less mature cooperation the EU has with Asia, as compared to its own neighborhood, the Union initiated ASEM as a unique, informal platform for dialogue and cooperation between Asia and Europe on the big challenges of a fast-changing world, such as connectivity, trade and investment, climate change, but also broad security challenges such as counter-terrorism, migration, maritime security and cyber issues.

ASEM is conducted as an informal and flexible process on the basis of equal partnership, mutual respect and mutual benefit. ASEM aims to promote the exchange of ideas and best practices and thus act as a breeding ground for new policy ideas.

The EU Foreign Ministers agreed on ways to strengthen connectivity between Europe and Asia in a sustainable, comprehensive and rules-based manner; to a great extent this approach is also shared by Asian partners. The European and Asian partners decided to use all the potential for bringing Europe and Asia closer together, not only on the level of transport and infrastructure, but also on digital and economic links.

On the eve of the 12 ASEM Summit in Brussels, in October 2018, the European Union adopted a new strategy on connecting Europe and Asia, building on a proposal of the European Commission and the High Representative. With financial, environmental, and social sustainability at the core of the EU's approach to connectivity, the EU's objective is to develop sustainable connectivity networks across the digital, transport, energy and human dimensions, as well as to strengthen partnerships at the bilateral, regional and international levels.

The initial ASEM partnership, which was inaugurated in Thailand, in 1996 consisted of just 15 EU member states and 7 ASEAN member states plus China, Japan, Korea and the European Commission. Today ASEM comprises 51 partner countries: the 28 Member States of the European Union plus Norway and Switzerland on the European side and the 10 ASEAN countries plus Australia, Bangladesh, China, India, Japan, Kazakhstan, the Republic of Korea, Mongolia, New Zealand, Pakistan and Russia on the Asian side. It also includes two institutional partners: the European Union and the ASEAN Secretariat.

2.6 Competition with Major Powers: the US, Russia, China, and the Emerging Powers

The paradigm of the EU's FP priorities needs to take account of the Union's foreign policy towards and relationship with other major powers. From constructivist point of view, it is important to assess the capacity of other powers to behave as a 'structural power'. Moreover, it is particularly informative to find out to what extent are the structures shaped or promoted by these other powers similar to

or compatible with those promoted by the EU? In so doing, the analysis may explore how the EU copes with the strategic opportunities and challenges emanating from the (manifest or potential) structural power of the other major players on the world scene.

The three most important 'strategic partners' of the EU for self-evident reasons are the US, Russia and China. The EU's 'strategic partnerships' includes also relations with countries such as India, Brazil and South Africa, other emerging powers, etc.

The EU strategic partnership with the United States

The United States is the actor with the most extensive structural power in today's international system, and, consequently, the EU's most important partner. The US and the EU share many common domestic features and international goals. However, these similarities can be deceptive, in the same way that the occasional highly publicized disagreements over foreign policy issues mask a more complex reality.

The European integration process is to a large extent a construct of a US structural foreign policy made operational through the Marshall Plan. The continued expansion of the European integration project has remained an objective of US foreign policy until the present day. Since the 1990s, transatlantic relations became increasingly institutionalized by several EU-US agreements, such as the 1990 Transatlantic Declaration, the 1995 New Transatlantic Agenda, the 1998 Transatlantic Economic Partnership or the establishment of the Transatlantic Economic Council in 2007. This process brought into existence a dense network of ministerial meetings, working groups, task forces, steering groups from both sides of the Atlantic, spanning over an incredibly diverse range of issues and policy fields.

The most visible transatlantic institution is the annual EU-US Summit, consisting of the President of the US, the President of the European Council, and the President of the European Commission, often assisted by the High Representative/Vice President and/or the Trade Commissioner. However, particularly on the side of the US, questions are increasingly raised about the continued usefulness of these summits, which have been described as 'grand but largely empty diplomatic occasions'.

In 2013, the parties launched talks on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) that aims to be a response both to the economic crisis and to the rise of China and other emerging economies.

In fields where there is clear EU competence, such as in trade, the US deals directly with the EU. However, in many other cases, the US prefers to structure its relations bilaterally with individual member states. This can be explained by the American preference to rely on like-minded countries or to work directly with the most powerful EU Member States, particularly about military interventions in the Middle East.

Together, the EU and US largely regulate the global economy. They also face similar challenges, such as recovering from the financial crisis, energy import dependency and competition from the emerging economies. Common concerns

and goals are shared on both sides of the Atlantic in terms of declining natural resources, fighting international terrorism and international crime, resolving conflicts, and promoting functioning democratic government.

However, beyond these broad brushstrokes, there lies a remarkable array of divergences, which go to the very core of the EU and the US relationship. The divergences are also played out in the different global structures that the two powers promote and in their approach to multilateralism. Whereas the EU is in general committed to multilateralism, negotiation and non-military power, the US is generally less reluctant to recur to unilateral action and coercive power. In general terms, the EU promotes a rules-based international order while the US tends to be highly suspicious of multilateralism, international rules and frameworks where these restrain its ability to act autonomously.

The existing multilateral architecture is to a large extent the result of American initiatives. Moreover, where the US has deemed it to be in its own interest, it has been significantly more effective than the EU in using multilateral structures such as the IMF and the World Bank to promote its objectives. In terms of choosing multilateralism, the US is thus highly effective, if highly selective. The fact that the US disregarded the EU at the climate change conference in Copenhagen and drafted the Copenhagen Accord with the emerging powers shows that this changed world order has implications for the transatlantic relationship and for EU foreign policy in concrete negotiations.

The EU Relationship with Russia

At the end of the Cold War EU-Russia relations were initially highly asymmetrical. The EU aimed to reshape Russia in its own image by promoting its principles and rules to trigger change in Russia's economic, political and legal structures. However, from the late 1990s Russia was no more willing to follow the example of the Central and Eastern European countries. Since the mid-2000s, there has been a resurgence in Russian assertiveness on the international stage.

The EU's relations with Russia are structured through the now rather old 'Partnership and Cooperation Agreement' (PCA) (since 1997), which has been extended through 'Common Spaces' since 2003. Negotiations on a new EU-Russia treaty (launched in 2008) and on the elaboration of a 'Partnership for Modernization' (2010) proceed very slowly. The EU-Russia PCA sets out the principal common objectives, establishes the institutional framework for bilateral contacts (including two summit meetings a year), and provides for cooperation in a broad range of policy fields. When the EU in 2003 launched the European Neighborhood Policy, Russia declined the EU's invitation to participate, refusing to be treated as just another third country and considering the positive and negative conditionalities therein unacceptable.

As an alternative to the ENP the EU and Russia agreed to focus cooperation on the long-term creation of four jointly agreed Common Spaces in the framework of the PCA: a Common economic Space; a Common Space of freedom, security and justice; a Common Space of external security; and a Common Space of research, education and cultural aspects. However, these Common Spaces in fact

concealed quite separate visions. The EU-Russia relationship has thus evolved into a much more symmetric relationship.

The EU and Russia increasingly saw each other as direct competitors in what Russia called its 'Near Abroad' and the EU - its 'European neighbourhood'. This competition between both structural powers was also leading to a 'clash of integration processes'. Russia's growing assertiveness can be considered a kind of counter-offensive to recover lost ground and avoid further chipping away at Russian influence in its immediate neighbourhood. Whereas Russia had failed to bring all parts of the former Soviet Union together in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), it now adopted a more pragmatic approach, including the launch in 2012 of a Eurasian Economic Union.

The question of how to handle a newly resurgent Russia has received contradictory answers within the EU, with Member States defending very diverse positions and interests. Particularly the Central and Eastern European Member States, along with the European Parliament (EP), are generally in favor of the EU adopting a more assertive attitude towards Russia. Other Member States prioritize their national economic interests or the need to gain Russia's strategic partnership in crucial foreign policy issues. Germany, France, Italy and Spain are determined to foster a special or strategic partnership with Russia and to underpin this with separate bilateral agreements.

The EU and China

The term used by the EU to qualify its relationship with China is that of a 'strategic partnership'. The EU initially saw China as a subject of its structural foreign policy but is increasingly confronted by China as a competing structural power. In 2006, the EU and China agreed to upgrade their contractual relations and to start negotiations on a single overarching Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA), which should replace the Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) of 1985.

China and the EU are strongly tied, both economically and institutionally. The EU is China's biggest trading partner and most favored destination of overseas direct investment, whereas China is the EU's largest source of imports and the EU's second largest trading partner (behind the US). In addition to the commitment to organize annual summits, frequent economic, political and trade dialogue meetings are also held. Over 50 sectoral dialogues and agreements are in place, covering sectors from environment and energy to human rights and international security. Interaction has been further upgraded through the establishment of a High Level Economic and Trade Dialogue (since 2008), a High-Level Strategic Dialogue (since 2010) and a High Level People-to-People Dialogue (since 2012).

In its approach towards China, the EU followed the rationale that the development of a comprehensive partnership and of intensive interactions would gradually lead China to adopt the structures which the EU promotes. However, such a 'unilateral socialization' - has little chance of success with a country as China.

China's rapidly growing economy has been the driving force behind its gradual emergence - or 're-emergence' - as a global power. China has succeeded in

developing this power by partially adapting itself to, and embedding itself within, the predominant 'global' economic structures, including through its membership in the WTO in 2001. This also has external implications, including for the EU's position in the Middle East, Africa and other parts of the world where China and the EU compete for the same resources, markets and political influence.

In the economic field, negotiations between the EU and China on the PCA became blocked on issues such as market access, intellectual property rights and state aid, with conflicts within the WTO also growing. Whereas the EU was mainly disappointed about the lack of Chinese concessions on the above-mentioned issues, China saw the EU's reluctance to grant China 'market economy status' under WTO rules as proof of the EU's inability to act strategically and treat China as a genuine partner.

There are signs of distrust and mutual misunderstanding. Particularly the meetings of various European heads of state or government with the Tibetan Dalai Lama resulted in China's temporarily freezing its relations with the EU Member States concerned. The EU arms embargo against China remains sore point in EU-China relations.

From constructivist perspective, it appears that the gradual rise of China as a competing structural power is a major concern for the EU. China successfully embodies a development model for other (developing or emerging) countries that seems more attractive than the model promoted by the EU. Moreover, there are conceptual gaps on global governance and multilateralism. Both the EU and China declare being committed to these principles, but their understandings of these concepts vary considerably. Multipolarity rather than multilateralism is what China is interested in. These different perspectives affect the positions of the EU and China in various international institutions and regimes.

Emerging Powers and EU Strategic Partners

Several other countries are also increasingly establishing themselves on the world scene, compelling the EU to find ways to deal with them strategically. The EU has launched 'strategic partnerships' with the newly emerging powers Brazil, India, Mexico, South Africa and South Korea, in addition to the partnerships it already had with Japan, Canada and others. In the Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy, the EU explained that it considers these strategic partnerships as building blocks of an effective multilateral order with the UN at its apex.

In general, the formal relations with the 'strategic partners' follow largely the same pattern. The legal bases for these strategic partnerships are long-term partnership and cooperation agreements or trade and cooperation agreements plus a dense web of institutional frameworks.

Not with standing that recurring pattern, the nature of the EU's relations with its strategic partners is very diverse as well as ambiguous. In most cases, the 'strategic partnership' with the emerging or re-emerging powers is rather a goal to be pursued through a gradual process of interaction than a reflection of reality.

Emerging powers manifest themselves as increasingly important players in South-South cooperation. They usually emphasize values as mutual benefit,

equality and non-interference in internal affairs - and thus generally oppose the EU's approaches such as political conditionality. Together, they become daunting competitors for the EU and its Member States in the search for markets, resources and political influence, which combined with their different approach towards South-South cooperation, implies that a partnership with the EU - let alone a strategic one - is not evident.

The EU as a factor for change of the international system

The European Union's commitment to effective multilateralism is a central element of the EU's external policy. The EU Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy proclaims the reasons why the Union is an agency for change of the existing anarchical international system:

"Without global norms and the means to enforce them, peace and security, prosperity and democracy – our vital interests – are at risk. Guided by the values on which it is founded, the EU is committed to a global order based on international law, including the principles of the UN Charter, which ensure peace, human rights, sustainable development and lasting access to the global commons. This commitment translates into an aspiration to transform rather than simply preserve the existing system."

The EU strives after strengthening multilateral processes where they already exist (e.g. trade, maritime security, and marine resources) and the expansion of fledgling international regimes in areas such as disarmament, arms control or international criminal law. The EU priorities also stress the need for global responsibility-sharing on migration and refugees, solving crises, sustaining peace, tackling terrorism and addressing climate change.

Each year the EU adopts priorities for its relations with the UN, to which the EU is the single largest financial contributor. The EU also seeks close cooperation with a multitude of other international organizations and entities, regional and multinational groupings. Ms Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, stated at the UN Security Council on 6 June 2016: "Stronger partnerships are the building blocks of our foreign policy...None of us, alone, can carry the weight of the world on its shoulders." Therefore, the EU mission, and by implication, its main foreign policy priority, is to bring about change and reform of the international system while preserving stability and continuity in the world order.

Control questions and tasks for self-control:

1. What are the five priorities defined in the Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy?
2. What are the four key issues in the EU's foreign policy?
3. What are the foreign policy objectives defined in Article 21 of the Treaty on European Union?
4. For what purposes does the EU apply the EC Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace?
5. Which geographic priorities of the EU's foreign policy do you know of?
6. Explain, why the European Union aspires after effective multilateralism in international relations?

