

The EU as a Multilateral, Multifaceted Global Actor:  
*Searching for a Holistic Approach to the Study of the EU as a  
Security Actor<sup>1</sup>*

Working Draft

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<sup>1</sup>This working paper is to be considered as a first draft, based partially on previous research made at UNU-CRIS by the present author, Tânia Felício, in collaboration with Francis Baert. The objective of this first draft is to collect further comments for the development into a future co-authored publication on this subject.

## Introduction

The EU is gradually developing into a global actor in many fields of governance. Although slower than in other dimensions, its role in security governance is growing and being acknowledged by its pairs around the world. This is a multifaceted role, that encompasses a diverse network of instruments, from military to financial, development aid, democracy-building and capacity building; and it is a role that is clear not only through its activities in its own region but also across virtually all other regions of the world.

The EU is partnering with the most powerful state-actors - the US, China or Russia – e.g. doing mediation in the most difficult conflicts such as the Israeli-Palestine case, or the Iranian and North Korean WMD crisis. At the same time the EU is partnering with *other* regional organisations - with the AU and NATO on Sudan; with OAS in Haiti through its assistance in democracy-building; with ECOWAS on capacity building for conflict prevention in the region. Above all, the EU is partnering with the global organisation responsible for global security - the UN, in its commitment to multilateralism and to help the UN to tackle more efficiently the security challenges at hand.

And in each of these relationships, the EU acts as an equal partner, while in fact this is an entity that has both similar and different characteristics to a state, a regional organisation and a global organisation. This broadly publicised *sui-generis* nature of the EU brings immense challenges for its study under the discipline of international relations. As the EU is not a state, it is difficult to understand its actions solely through the lenses of realism, pluralism, or constructivism. On the other hand, regional integration studies have failed to ask the important questions related to the ability of the EU to act in international relations, looking only at internal integration process, or comparing it with other regional integration processes.

In security, the role of the EU is not to be seen in its internal dimensions, as the EU has already achieved regional peace and is now looking outside – aiming for global peace and security. Notwithstanding, its instruments are not solely military, but all-encompassing, and therefore relate not only to its external relations structures (intergovernmental in nature) but also to its more integrated structures, requiring different theoretical lenses. Its multifaceted actions in security are even more complex if studied in the context of triangular cooperation cases, such as the one of Sudan – where the EU is cooperating with national, regional (AU, NATO) and global actors at once, using different instruments in each partnership.

In order to understand the role of the EU in security, a new theoretical approach to the study of the external relations of the EU and of the concept of security is needed. I propose a concept that tries to merge IR and Regional Security Studies in such way that it encompasses EU's different 'faces' and its role in security, based on multilevel approaches to the study of security and governance. The concept I am proposing is the one of Multilevel Security Governance. Through this concept I hope to find an eclectic approach to different theoretical disciplines (International Relations, namely the pluralist institutional approaches, and multilateralism; and regional security theory) in order to present an all-encompassing view of the multifaceted 'actorness' of the EU in global security.

## 1. FACTS: EU's International 'Actorness' in Security

UK Foreign Secretary David Miliband, recently called for an open, global Europe, and for the EU to become a leader in "addressing the great global challenges we face", as prosperity and security are under threat if member states do not tackle the major issues, "from preventing conflict and terrorism, to addressing climate change, energy insecurity and religious extremism". He adds that "these threats provide a new *raison d'être* for the European Union. (...) Nation-states, for all their continuing strengths, are too small to deal on their own with these big problems, but global governance is too weak. So the EU can be a pioneer and a leader".<sup>1</sup> This recent statement is totally in line with the current evolution and transformation of the EU. Since the mid-1990s significant steps have been taken towards more effective structures of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) of the EU<sup>2</sup>. For instance, since 2003 not less than 16 civilian and military missions were carried out in the Balkans, the Middle East, Asia and Africa. It is definitely true that "the European Union has crossed a Rubicon in its development as a global security actor"<sup>3</sup>.

Also very recently, the EU Commissioner for External Relations stated that: "All over the world, from Georgia to Burma, from the DRC to Peru, we are working to tackle ongoing crises and prevent future conflict" with a motto of "no forgotten crisis". The aim is to "ensure that the EU lives up to its goal of global security being sure it can't do it alone"<sup>4</sup>.

So the EU is developing a global reach in security – and it is doing so as a multilateral, multifaceted, and multilevel actor in a multilevel framework of governance. The EU cooperates at different levels and with different faces, according to its different partners: states, regions, regional and global organisations.

Seen from the perspective of bilateral relationships with single states, the EU has a long-standing relationship with the United States through the transatlantic partnership and NATO, with Russia, Japan and Canada and more recently with emerging powers like India, China, South Africa and Brazil. The European Commission plays a key role in the implementation of the EU's foreign and other policies, relying heavily on its over 120 Delegations and Offices around the World.

Probably the most important manifestation of EU's external presence is in its role in trade issues. In trade, the EU acts as a bloc and negotiates with single states, with blocs of states and within international agreements such as GATT and at the WTO. In what security is concerned, and as previously mentioned, the Israeli-Palestine case, Iran or North Korea can be seen as examples where the EU cooperates next to the greatest powers such as the US, Russia or China.

As a regional actor, the EU has set up over the years special relationships with its neighbours: candidate countries, non-EU member states (EEA EFTA states), the Eastern neighbours (ENP) and the southern ones (EMP). The EU is generally seen as a natural supporter of other regional initiatives. The EU's inter-regional relations can be traced back to the Yaoundé Convention of the sixties with the ACP countries and during the last decades strong relations were established on all continents (in Africa: ACP, AU, ECOWAS; in Asia: ASEAN, SAARC, ASEM, TACIS; in Latin America: Rio Group, EU-LAC, MERCOSUR, CAN; in the Middle East: GCC)<sup>5</sup>. The EU is undoubtedly the biggest initiator of interregional agreements, having strong interregional links with ASEAN, through the ASEM process; with Latin

America through MERCOSUR, and more recently through opening of negotiations with Central America and the Andean Community. Additionally, the EU is also further developing its relationship with the ACP countries through the negotiation of the EPA agreements with the 6 ACP sub-regions. Promoting regionalism and interregional relations not only justifies and enhances the EU's own existence and efficiency as an actor in IR, but the strategy also promotes the legitimacy and status of other regions – the further development of regional integration in these regions and the development of regional identities and regionhood<sup>6</sup>.

Most of these EU-promoted interregional arrangements encompass not only trade and economics but also political dialogue, development cooperation, cultural relations and security cooperation. Furthermore, and especially in what relates to interregional dialogue, and EU's cooperation with other regions, a new dimension of the EU's nature is clear – its role as a model – as the most successful experiment in regional cooperation (and development of a region of peace). Therefore, the EU cannot be studied as an actor or as a model isolated.

On the global stage, the EU is collaborating with G7/8, WTO, IMF, and the World Bank and over the last several years, the EU has presented itself as a reliable, even a vital partner of the UN. Recently, EU-UN cooperation has gained new impetus as common ground between the two organisations has expanded – notably through the rapid development of the CFSP – to cover matters concerning not only trade and development, humanitarian aid and protection of the environment, but also the promotion of human rights, the fight against terrorism, conflict prevention, crisis management and peacebuilding. The UN has generally responded positively to this *rapprochement*. Given the present workload of the world organisation, it can well use an able and willing regional partner to alleviate its financial and logistical burdens, to provide political/diplomatic support for the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals or the environmental agenda, or to assist in crisis management.<sup>7</sup>

The EU's commitment to multilateralism is a defining principle of its external policy. The European Union's Communication of September 9, 2003, underlines Europe's attachment to multilateralism and to the UN, as the pivot of the multilateral system – highlighting two aspects of its contribution to the effectiveness of multilateral legal instruments and commitments, established under UN auspices that could be further developed. First, the EU's ability to act as a front-runner in developing and implementing multilateral instruments and commitments. And second, support where necessary for the capacity of other countries (and regional organisations) to implement their multilateral commitments effectively<sup>8</sup>.

Furthermore, this relationship between the EU and the UN is also developing in the context of a broader cooperation – between the UN and regional and other intergovernmental organisations. Already in 1992 the Secretary General's report *An Agenda for Peace* had called for a greater involvement of regional organisations in the UN activities regarding peace and security. Both the 'Agenda for Peace' and the 'Supplement to an Agenda for Peace' highlighted the advantages and potential for the division of labour in using *regional arrangements* for the different mechanisms like preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping, peacemaking and post-conflict peacebuilding. Since then, a formal cooperation between regional organisations and the UN has also started.

UNSG Kofi Annan has considerably brought forward the dialogue between the UN and regional and other intergovernmental organisations (as a critical part of the reform effort of the UN, confronted with a crisis in multilateralism). The joint statement of the 6<sup>th</sup> High-level Meeting between the UN and Regional Organisations (July 2005) concluded that a more

structured relationship with regional and other intergovernmental organisations needs to be developed "creating a truly interlocked system that guarantees greater coordination both in policy and action, building on the comparative strengths of each organisation". These ideas were taken up and discussed at the 2005 Summit, which concluded on the need for a stronger relationship between the UN and regional and subregional organisations pursuant to chapter VIII of the UN Charter.

In October 2005, a UN Security Council resolution was endorsed concomitantly pointing in the direction of further developing the idea of a regional-global security partnership<sup>9</sup>. Furthermore, the Council noted the growing contribution of regional and sub-regional organisations for international peace and security and recognised the need to support capacity-building and cooperation at regional and sub-regional level in this area, namely in conflict prevention, peaceful settlement of disputes, peacekeeping, crisis management, post-conflict stabilisation, and also on the areas of counter-terrorism and illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. These developments show that regionalism is indeed finding its way in the theatre of international relations, collective security and multilateralism<sup>10</sup>.

And in this multilevel regional/global mechanism the EU plays once again a role of special partner, acting as a builder of capacities in other organisations – through interregional cooperation – so that they can better cooperate with the UN in peace and security. Many observers think that the EU should play a leading role in this evolution. The EU is already doing so, as part of its partnership with the African Union, financing the peace and security capacities of the organization, while the UN is also focusing on a ten-year capacity building for African organisations.

However, and as acknowledged above, especially in what security is concerned, there is a power shift within the international system – from states to new actors; and a power shift to new systems: from the 'old world' to China, India. There is an increasing multipolarity that threatens further the already acute crisis in multilateralism. I will therefore take this as a starting point on the study of the EU as a security actor in the international system, in its relations with other old and new actors (through bilateral and multilateral relations). I propose to take further the study of the EU as a new actor with characteristics of both states and international organisations.

In this sense, the concepts of multilevel governance and multilevel multilateralism will come in hand. Multilevel governance is an emphatic attempt to break with the rigid imagery associated to a continuum running from loose intergovernmentalism to super-state (Marks, Scharpf et al, 1996; Marks, Hooghe and Blank, 1996; Richardson, 1996)<sup>11</sup>. Therefore, the concept of multilevel governance will be presented both as a way of explaining EU's actorness in international affairs in its internal structures, and also in explaining the new international system of which the EU is now part as a regional/global actor.

These different dimensions of EU's external relations must be studied in an inter-disciplinary form, using concepts from New Regionalism and Interregionalism, from International Relations and from European Studies, in order to study EU's actorness in the different multilateral forums.

The EU has increasingly been accepted as an actor in international affairs by states as well as by scholars<sup>12</sup>. Many governments and scholars initially found it difficult to accept that international institutions such as the EU, even if supranational in character, could participate

in international law and politics at a level playing field with states. With the growing number of multilateral treaties to which the European Community is a member in the 100s, and in the environmental sector alone standing at 44<sup>13</sup> and the institutionalization of a CFSP, doubts about the capacity of the EU to be an actor in international relations have diminished.

One of the reasons for continuing to call into question the actorness of the EU in international relations is the fact that the EU, unlike most states, takes many different forms. The European Commission appears as an actor representing the 'European Community' in various *fora*. On other occasions, the biannually rotating EU Presidency speaks for the EU. Moreover, on other occasions, the EU High Representative for CFSP acts as the organ of the Union. One interesting example is the High Level Meetings Process (previously mentioned), between the UN Secretary General and the regional and other intergovernmental organisations, where the EU is actually represented by all three bodies, seating three times at the same table. Finally, individual member states and groups of member states have retained their individual voices and may in some *fora* speak on behalf of participating member states. The UN Security Council is a good example (both positively and negatively).

This problem has been presented often but with little theoretical solution presented. I believe the solution is not in sticking to individual traditional theories, such as International Relations, Regional Integration theories or European Studies. The solution will be in breaking from a limited theoretical vision and adopting an eclectic multilevel approach that can be used as a loose theoretical framework to bring different theoretical pieces in that can be put together for a holistic approach.

## **2. THEORY: How the EU has been studied in its external security actorness**

It is an enormous effort to give an exhaustive overview of all the debates within this body of literature but there are several ways to give a snap-shot of the current state-of-the-art on this issue. For this exercise one can focus on several interesting entry points into this rapidly expanding literature, namely: policies, actorness, relations, polity and traditions.

The EU cultivates an increasingly rich palette of policies and each of these policies has been more or less thoroughly studied (from a EU studies perspective) in a generic<sup>14</sup> and a more fragmented way. For the latter, traditionally trade<sup>15</sup>, development<sup>16</sup> and enlargement<sup>17</sup> received more attention. In the last decade, policy domains like environment<sup>18</sup>, security and defence<sup>19</sup> received more attention. In the last years, more and more scholars have shown interest in the external aspects of EU internal policies: justice and home affairs<sup>20</sup>, immigration and asylum<sup>21</sup>, the internal market<sup>22</sup> or competition policy<sup>23</sup>. Research on single policy areas has by far been the most popular design, whereas comparative policy studies have been relatively rare.

A very common focus is the perspective of studying the EU as an international actor, exploring its identity, interests and policies.<sup>24</sup> In this sense, Christopher Hill's discussion of foreign policy cooperation attempts to conceptualize its role through a discussion of actorness and presence<sup>25</sup>, followed by Richard Whitman (1997), and Allen and Smith's discussion on the EU's presence in the international arena (exhibition of behavior and recognition of its presence by other actors), and Jorgensen, who brings in questions of epistemology and ontology (1992). In looking at actorness authors have also focused on the specificities in the relationship between the EU and its bilateral relationship with countries like the United

States<sup>26</sup>, Russia<sup>27</sup>, Japan<sup>28</sup>, China<sup>29</sup>, etc<sup>30</sup>. In this sense, the EU has been studied as a state in IR and therefore criticized (for lack of unity and efficient coordination of actions) in a narrow-minded comparison to the USA for example.

In looking at the EU as a regional actor, scholars devoted time to its diverse relations with its (old and new) neighbours.<sup>31</sup> Partly because of the new regionalism approach, more and more attention is devoted now to the EU and inter-regionalism, covering the EU relations with other regional integration schemes worldwide.<sup>32</sup>

Finally, the EU has gradually developed relations with many major international organisations and has been studied also as a global actor. Many scholars picked this up, especially within the field of EU-UN relations. Another part of the literature examines polity features including governance issues, institutional dynamics, legal issues, diplomatic representation and foreign policy. One can refer here to the literature on the institutionalisation of EU foreign policy<sup>33</sup>, the Europeanization literature<sup>34</sup> or normative issues like accountability, democracy and legitimacy<sup>35</sup>.

A last possible way to study the EU as a global actor is through the lens of different traditions or schools of thought. Scholars from many disciplines like politics, history, law, economics or sociology have studied the EU in a quite successful and interesting way.<sup>36</sup> Within politics there is a growing tendency to combine views from EU studies, new regionalism and IR theories and to explore how regional integration schemes all over the world tend to act in fields like trade, security, etc.

Different bodies of literature have posed different problems and presented different solutions to EU's global actorness. The body of literature pertaining to *EU Studies* builds on the premise that the EU is *sui generis* and requires the construction of new conceptual categorizations to fit it and to explain its international role. Some approaches include notions of civilian power Europe, debates on the concept of *actorness* (constructing criteria of actor capability in comparison to a state, denying the EU international significance until it conforms to the actor pre-requisites) and on the concept of *presence* (a counter-point to the previous one). The dominating view within the EU Studies community on the N=1 dilemma<sup>37</sup> refers to the idea that the uniqueness of the EU (the single case study obstacle) prevents comparative research<sup>38</sup>.

Another body of literature – *New Regionalism* - seems to have overcome this problem by seeing the EU as part of a new generation of regional actors (third generation regionalism) with international capacities and the will to engage globally. New regionalism does not face N=1 dilemma because here the focus lays on the worldwide phenomena of regionalism and ignored the Eurocentric view of the first generation scholars. One example is the work developed by Van Langenhove and Costea<sup>39</sup>, who have shown how the EU is increasingly engaging globally and developing a third generation of regionalism. The description of how the EU deals with trade, development, security and the implementation of global regimes clearly shows that the EU has a presence as a global actor. There are attempts to speak with one voice in multilateral *fora* such as the WTO. There is a neighbourhood policy and an outreach to the developing world. There are attempts to establish a specific security policy. Implementing global regimes is done as coherently as possible. And last but not least there are the "bilateral relationships" with other regions and states. Taking all this together is fair to say that no other regional organisation has the same level of actorness. In that sense the EU is different from any other second generation regionalism initiative. One interpretation, often

promoted by the EU itself, is that the European Regionalism is a *casus sui generis*. Another way to see it is that the EU is on the edge between second and third generation regionalism and this might open the path for other organisations to follow.

Within recent years some leading scholars who are traditionally linked to EU integration studies on the one hand and others who are leading voices within the new regionalism school, are making a strong case to re-evaluate current thinking on regional integration/regionalism and are stimulating cross-fertilisation between the different generations. The purpose is to find a new interdisciplinary 'language' that brings the generations closer together. By doing this, they are also trying to bridge the divide between EU Integration studies and the leading debates within the mainstream study of International Relations. The idea is also growing that regions must be studied comparatively and that regionalism has an important place within global governance. These ideas are convincingly promoted by several scholars<sup>40</sup>.

As for the discipline of *International Relations*, the main problem, as put forward by Rosamond, is the assumption that IR is capable only of contemplating the interaction between states, therefore unable to understand the EU as an actor itself. International Relations as a disciplinary starting point is "incapable of asking the sorts of questions necessary to unravel the complexity of EU politics because it is a disciplinary discourse of interstate interaction and little else"<sup>41</sup>. The most obvious issue is that the appearance of actor-like entities such as the EU challenges traditional state-centered images of the international system<sup>42</sup>.

However the literature on EU external relations has been conspicuously cautious about possible transformations of the international system. Instead, attention is turned to EU's capabilities as an international actor, and, by extension, to the capacity of the EU to mimic the features of a nation-state within the international system (Allen and Smith, 1990; Hill, 1994; Sjostedt, 1977; Smith, 1996; Whitman, 1997)<sup>43</sup>. The usual conclusion is that the EU is not a state or does not resemble to one in its external attributes.

As noted all mentioned approaches encounter problems and seem to have shortcomings. The concept of "foreign policy" represents confusion when discussing the EU (no consensus on which group of policies or decision-making processes should have a EU label). The concept of 'actorness' does not accommodate an assessment of EU's international significance before compliance with actor pre-requisites. The concept of 'presence' encompasses more than the EU (Western Europe) and therefore needs re-statement before it can be applied<sup>44</sup>.

In order to prove its utility for EU studies, Rosamond asserts, International relations theory must 1) "transcend the 'would be polity' nation-state continuum"; 2) pose interesting questions on how actors derive their interests and policy outcomes in institutionalized environments as the EU; 3) pose alternative questions of what an actor like the EU can stand for ("what is this an instance" questions) that go beyond the traditional cooperation/bargaining/conflict alternatives. Finally, 4) IR must show it has the best tools to locate the EU within the dynamics of global change.

In order for IR theory to better understand the EU in its external action and international / global actorness, it has to lend theoretical instruments from other bodies of literature – such as EU integration theory – like the concept of multilevel governance, used in general to understand governance at the EU level (EU/state/regional/local). Not only the EU is an atypical actor in IR, but the context in which the EU moves is one of change. Today's international context is one of global governance through multilateralism in crisis, and one of

increased multipolarity. These changes make the EU move in between different *foras* and levels of action and actorness (state/regional/global). The EU cannot be placed on a continuum running from loose intergovernmentalism to 'superstate' – an understanding must be found between these different levels of action and actorness without separating them.

### 3. The Multilevel Governance Approach

The multilevel governance metaphor is an emphatic attempt to break with the rigid imagery associated with such a continuum. Gary Marks first used the term multilevel governance to capture developments in the EU structural policy following its major reform in 1998, then applying it more broadly to EU decision-making. In developing this approach, Marks drew insights from both the study of domestic politics and of international politics. Before this, most theorizing about the EU had come from IR theory (neofunctionalism developing from pluralism and intergovernmentalism developing from state-centered realism). The development of Multilevel Governance was part of a new wave of thinking about the EU as a political system rather than seeking to explain the process of integration.

There is no uniform or predictable pattern to EU actions in its foreign security policy, its bilateral exchanges with other actors or what might be called its foreign economic policy. The variation in the exercise of EU's actorness is reinforced by the different forms the EU takes in its relations with other actors (more inter-governmentalist through the council, presidency or particular member states; or more supranational through the commission)<sup>45</sup>. There are different levels of actorness and governance represented in EU's international behaviour: state to state; region-to-region; region-to-state; or region-to-global. This brings conflict in its relations with other actors in global *foras*, mostly for the lack of a holistic vision in its analysis.

It worth to look at the concept of multilevel governance in this context - as encompassing both the changing role of the EU in governance; and the changing vision of multilateralism as a form of global governance. Multilevel governance helps understand multilateralism, helps understand security and helps understand EU's actorness in international relations (namely in global governance and more specifically in security governance).

In an early article, on the subject Marks defined multilevel governance as a 'system of continuous negotiation among nested governments at several territorial tiers' and developed this definition through analysis of domestic politics, especially the policy networks approach. The multilevel governance concept thus contained both vertical and horizontal dimensions. Multilevel referred to increased interdependence of governments operating at different territorial levels, while governance signaled the growing interdependence between governments and non-governmental actors at various territorial levels. In short, the rise of the sub-national level and acknowledgment of policy networks combined to stimulate the initial conception of multilevel governance in EU studies<sup>46</sup>.

My take is that in studying EU's external policies in security and EU's role in IR in this field, this concept of multilevel governance must be transposed from the EU level (EU-regional /state /sub-national /local) up to the global level (global/ regional (EU + other regions/ national/ sub-national/ local). Warleigh has made similar proposals when claiming that EU Studies can help IR scholars ask new and useful questions about the nature, development and functioning of the emerging global polity<sup>47</sup>. The fact is that EU's policies are not based on a

simple agent-structure analysis and this becomes especially complex and multilayered when it comes to its international actorness.

The EU governance model is complex and many layered, embracing supranational institutions such as the European Commission and the ECJ, and at the national level, the governments, ministers, national legal systems and the sub-national governmental and administrative entities; it includes also a whole host of interest groups and representative bodies as part of a wide consultative process that precedes European policy-making; there are the regulatory agencies, and the treaties, laws and directives agreed by the member states; and there are the rules and un-written laws concerning the actual member state behavior with regards to EU laws and policies. The multilevel nature of this governance model implies that political decisions are taken at different levels and taking in consideration lower levels of governance. This format of governance is transposable to the global level in the way the European Union cooperates with actors at different levels, intermingling the multiple political arenas in the process of governing.

The past decade has seen significant progress toward the multilevel governance of the EU foreign policy, particularly when compared with the European Political Cooperation (EPC) of the 70s and 80s. Although the EU certainly possesses some elements of a federal system, the term 'multi-level governance' is preferred here for two reasons: the EU is still a treaty-based polity and its member states reserve ultimate authority to approve all decisions, especially in foreign/security policy. Smith applies in this article the multi-level governance perspective to the European Foreign Security Policy, hoping to overcome the pitfalls of intergovernmental approaches (when a growing body of research suggests that it might be inappropriate to describe national and EU-level decision-making as two separate processes when in practice, EU members do not form their national positions in isolation from each other<sup>48</sup>).

The analysis of multilevel governance in EU foreign policy must begin with the broader context in which governance is embedded and the global governance framework in which the EU is embedded in security. The concept of global governance comes therefore of use for the understanding of EU's multilevel-based foreign security policy.

Global governance can be conceived as "the evolving system of formal and informal political coordination across multiple levels from the local to the global – amongst public authorities (states and intergovernmental organisations) and private agencies (NGOs and corporate actors) seeking to realize common purposes or resolve collective problems through the making and implementing of global or transnational norms, rules programmes and policies"<sup>49</sup>. Just as new regionalism distinguished itself from EU studies, Global Governance authors consider their work to be different from the one of International Relations as it has been traditionally understood, claiming that the end of the cold War changed the nature of the international system, and that as a result it became impossible to separate the different policy-making arenas and levels. As a result, global governance work pays sustained attention to a broader range of actors than conventional international relations: while IR still debates whether for example International institutions and organizations are influential, global governance scholars take such influence as a given and have a much broader understanding of the range of actors which can be influential in international decision-making.

The same holds truth for the concept of multilateralism, intergovernmental in its traditional construction but now in need of reinvention according to the present context of globalization

and global governance processes. These changes are even clearer in the security domain, as the literature in multilateralism, security, regional security and security governance point to.

#### **4. Crisis and reinvention of multilateralism according to a multilevel approach**

Multilateralism was created as a form of cooperation among states that institutionalises intergovernmental co-operation and substitutes anarchy. The starting-point for most scholars who study multilateralism is the definition by Keohane and its expansion done by Ruggie. Multilateral arrangements are institutions defined by Keohane as "persistent sets of rules that constrain activity, shape expectations and prescribe roles"<sup>50</sup> in a purely institutional (rather than normative) manner. Ruggie however, presents a definition that is not only institutional but also normative, including behaviour. For Ruggie, multilateralism is "an institutional form that coordinates relations among three or more states on the basis of generalised principles of conduct (...) which specify appropriate conduct for a class of actions, without regard for the particularistic interests of the parties or the strategic exigencies that may exist in any specific occurrence"<sup>51</sup>. Ikenberry states that multilateralism operates at three levels of international order: system multilateralism, ordering or foundational multilateralism, and contract multilateralism. Multilateralism, he continues, can also be understood in terms of its sources. It can emerge from the international system's structural features, the independent influence of pre-existing multilateral institutions, domestic politics and finally multilateralism can be traced to *agentive* sources.<sup>52</sup> Very common in this regard is the classification in the literature between three institutional domains of interstate relations: international orders<sup>53</sup>, international regimes<sup>54</sup> and international organisations<sup>55</sup>.

In the political sphere, multilateralism is embodied in the universal obligations of the UN Charter and international law. Multilateralism is more and more used in global issues like human rights, the environment or non-proliferation. International governance (traditional multilateralism) as portrayed by the UN (especially within the field of collective security), is confronted with diverse challenges leading to governance gaps with which international governance systems cannot cope adequately – prompting a move towards global governance. More than a reflection of the failure of the concept, this crisis is the sign of a changing international context, which has rendered the traditional intergovernmental multilateralism of the post WWII anachronistic. In today's reality, states play a relatively minor role as protagonists in the security system, as threats have acquired a system-wide significance. In order to overcome this crisis, the multilateral institutions, namely the UN, need to adapt and reinvent themselves according to the new security context. The traditional intergovernmental multilateralism is indeed going through a crisis, most visibly in the Bush administration rejection of international agreements and treaties like the Kyoto Protocol, the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and the US Iraq campaign of 2003.

In recent years many scholars tried to find answers towards this crisis of multilateralism. The different expectations of multilateralism on each side of the Atlantic complicate the current debate. Although the Americans played a leading role after World War II, they view multilateralism more in terms of its efficiency in solving problems, as a means to an end.<sup>56</sup> Some put question marks behind the current multilateral system<sup>57</sup>, while others go further and see in unilateralism a more efficient and promising option.<sup>58</sup> Europeans on the other hand tend to prefer multilateralism because they see utility in its procedural aspects.

As put forward by Slaughter, multilateralism is challenged not only from global hegemonic pressures but also from underlying structural forces, including the weakening of sovereignty, the increasing global role of non-state actors and policy networks and the transfer of liberal practices from national to international and transnational spheres, most strikingly in Europe – basically the transfer of sovereignty to a higher level than the state - characteristic of regionalism processes<sup>59</sup>. So, next to the weakening of the national level there is a strengthening of the regional level, which has not been reflected at the global governance system.

In this debate, the challenges to multilateralism have been made clear, but possible solutions are still to be further analysed. In search for a reinvented and more effective definition of multilateralism, Slaughter proposes a system of governance that has been called New Multilateralism. Slaughter believes that unlike "old" multilateral forms, this new form of multilateralism, in a context of disaggregating states, seeks to coordinate state actions; but it also amounts to a primitive yet increasingly elaborate hybrid system of international and transnational global governance to solve problems that states have been unable or unwilling to deal with<sup>60</sup>. This new multilateralism includes a more multivariate network of actors and global governance issues, and foresees the entanglement of domestic and systemic levels – in a non-traditional coalition building both with states and transnational networks<sup>61</sup>. Forman and Segaar also put forward this notion of networks and multi-stakeholder arrangements as alternative arrangements for a new multilateralism<sup>62</sup>.

In this same token, Mario Teló has put forward the notion of a more constructivist definition of multilateralism in order to propose a *multilevel multilateralism* (both regional and global), entailing not only various relationships to globalisation but also a differentiated political dimension. Within the current heterogeneous global system, regional entities offer 'multilateral workshops' which might show the way out of reforming global multilateralism, as a post-hegemonic institutionalised framework not only of global governance but also of a more peaceful world order, provided that states are ready at pooling part of their sovereignty, at least more than in the past<sup>63</sup>. Martin Ortega also speaks of multilevel governance as the most probable future shape of global governance<sup>64</sup>, since it will involve different institutions, from universal to regional organisations, to states, sub-state, local institutions and private organisations.

The solution that is put forward in this paper goes in the same direction and provides one more argument to study EU's international actorness through a multilevel governance approach, which will help reinvent multilateralism and will also set the loose framework necessary to understand EU's actions at the international (global, interregional, regional and bilateral) level.

Multilateralism is no longer inter-governmental. The number and nature of the actors has changed. Now the regional actors are not only multilateral frameworks of cooperation between states but started having a voice of their own at the interregional and global levels – they too became actors, along with many other new actors that are not states. The EU is a perfect example of this changing multilateralism, further interlocking its members' national policies for the sake of efficiency and general welfare. The EU is the perfect example of a semi-state, semi-intergovernmental organisation, semi-region, and semi-global actor.

Although there is a need for finding global solutions to global problems, there is not sufficient global support for global institutions and regimes dealing with such problems, and regional initiatives can play a leading role in the implementation of policies until such consensus is

reached. The EU is proving to have an important role in this respect in several fields especially in its commitment to an effective multilateralism through the support of the UN. While the EU has put forward its commitment to 'effective multilateralism' in the ESS, this remains a 'buzzword' with no established understanding of what the concept means in fact (see for an exception the work of Biscop<sup>65</sup>). Further research on the concept of effective multilateralism and its use (both as an institutional form and as a political process) is needed. The proposal put forward is to further develop the concept of multilateralism through the study of security and the concept of multilevel security governance.

The analysis of multilevel governance in EU Foreign policy must therefore begin with the broader context in which governance is embedded. CFSP has become a field where EU states share a high propensity for common action, based on their shared experiences and history, high interdependence and several levels, sense of common fate, etc, but also because they are interlocked at the global level through a set of multilateral organizations (UN, NATO, OSCE, Council of Europe etc...) which oblige all decisions in this field to be taken taking in consideration the other arenas where the states and the EU itself take part.

Among the states of Western Europe the EU is now the primary frame of reference for more policy decisions than any other international/regional organisation and it is for this reason that any discussion of multilevel governance must focus primarily though not exclusively on the EU. For in the realm of Foreign Policy, even EU decisions must show some sensitivity to decisions taken elsewhere, particularly the UN, but also in relations with other regions – ASEM dialogue, in other foras at the European level (NATO, OSCE, or Council of Europe) and decisions taken in cooperation with other international actors, at state level – in this world of growing multipolarity.

## **Conclusions**

More than a theory or a final argument this is a first reflection and a research proposal on how to study the EU in security. It is trying to show that the different theoretical approaches to the study of the EU are limited in scope because they study only one level of governance and one dimension of EU's actorness. It is important to find a loose theoretical framework to study the EU that is able to encompass these different levels of policy-making. When the EU states vote in a particular fashion in the SC or the GA, it must be understood that this decision is not a product of a national interest or a coordinated approach but also of EU's different relations with other organisations, with other states, plus its internal coordination of national interests. IR theories fail to address all these levels of cooperation. And so do regional integration approaches, or the body of literature of EU Studies.

The policies are simultaneous and must be assessed simultaneously, as a whole. The EU has to be seen as a multilevel multifaceted actor in a multilevel framework of security governance. It is not only about getting its members to agree on a particular policy.

Many scholars have been trying to reassess how the European Union is studied in its external actorness, searching for new solutions to fill the gaps created by the intertwining of different theoretical schools (International Relations, Comparative Politics, EU Studies, New Regionalism, or Global Governance). Most authors try to show what each study can learn from the others. For example Warleigh-Lack considers that EU studies scholars have much to learn from New Regionalism and Global Governance Scholars, looking for multi-disciplinary

research programmes that can draw on as a wide range of perspectives as possible and speak to as many scholars as possible<sup>66</sup>.

My vision is that when studying the EU's external actorness in security, no theoretical school must be left aside and all must be taken in consideration. In order to support the complex process of EU's decision in Foreign Security Policy, a multilevel framework that encompasses the study of the different levels of action and actorness and the domestic and international level is needed. This framework must be able to take into consideration EU's different faces (state, regional organization and global organisation) and therefore to combine the different theoretical approaches.

New Regionalism, especially looking at the EU as a third generation regionalism process, shows that the EU is no longer just a regional process of integration where policies are decided by a group of states, but that it is part of a global governance system on the making, based on the objective of an effective multilateralism. Security and global governance and multilateralism studies show that there are more levels of actorness, developments and decision-making, which need to be addressed. While EU studies is developing towards the idea of European multilevel governance, the concept of multilevel governance holds increasing strength to explain global governance in the field of security – the state, regional and global level are intertwined and the regional level is taking over compared to the state level – the EU is the main expression of this change. Its policies must be studied in this context and the different theoretical schools that have been studying the EU separately have to bring their developments closer, so that they can better explain how the EU is becoming an actor with an international presence in security, and a global actor in the making.

Merging different theoretical schools in a framework that follows the developing multilevel framework of security governance, will allow for a more holistic vision and a better grasp of EU's actorness in international security, and therefore, allow for more accurate and more pertinent policy recommendations.

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