



Universitat Autònoma  
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# The construction of an EU foreign policy identity:

Identitarian resonance and dissonance in the European  
Union's relations with the Mediterranean, Northern  
European and Western Balkan borderlands

Ph. D dissertation

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## – List of Abbreviations –

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ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
B7-Islands	Baltic Sea Seven Islands Cooperation Network
BEAC	Barents Euro-Arctic Council
BMENA	Broader Middle East and North Africa
BSPC	Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference
BSSSC	Baltic Sea States Sub-Regional Cooperation
CARDS	Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilization
CBSS	Council of the Baltic Sea States
CEECs	Central and Eastern European countries
CEES	Common European Economic Space
CEFTA	Central European Free Trade Area
CFE	Conventional Armed Forces in Europe
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CSCE	Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe
CSCM	Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean
DG	(European Commission) Direction General
EAR	European Agency for Reconstruction
EEA	European Economic Area
EEC / EC	European Economic Community / European Community
EMAA	Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreements
ENP	European Neighborhood Policy
EPC	European Political Cooperation
EPINE	Enhanced Partnership in Northern Europe Program
ESDP	European Security and Defense Policy
EU	European Union
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany
FRY	Former Republic of Yugoslavia
FTA	Free Trade Area
FYROM	Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
GAFTA	Greater Arab Free Trade Area

GDR	German Democratic Republic
GMP	Global Mediterranean Policy
GONGOs	Governmental Non-Governmental Organizations
ICTY	International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia
IGC	Intergovernmental conference
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INTERREG	Interregional cooperation (European Regional Development Fund)
JHA	Justice and Home Affairs
MEDA	French: <i>Mesures d'accompagnement financières et techniques</i>
MEFTA	Middle East Free Trade Area
MEPI	Middle East Partnership Initiative
MNEPR	Multilateral Nuclear Environmental Program in the Russian Federation
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDEP	Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership
NeDAP	Northern eDimension Action Plan
NEI	Northern European Initiative
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NIS	Newly Independent States
NTA	New Transatlantic Agenda
ODA	Official Development Aid
OHR	Office of the High Representative (Bosnia)
OSCE	Organization on Security and Cooperation in Europe
PCA	Partnership and Cooperation Agreement
PHARE	French: <i>Pologne et Hongrie Assistance pour Reconstruction Economique</i>
SALT	Strategic Arms Limitation Talks
SEA	Single European Act
SFRY	Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
START	Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty
TENs	Trans-European Networks
TEU	Treaty on the European Union
UBC	Union of the Baltic Cities
UMA	French: <i>Union du Maghreb Arabe</i>
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNMIK	United Nation Mission in Kosovo
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WMD	Weapons of Mass-Destruction
WTO	World Trade Organization

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To Iris and Eric,  
but above all to Josep



*“The European Identity  
will evolve as a function of the dynamic construction of a United Europe.”*

(Declaration on European Identity 1973)





# 1 – Introduction –

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The idea that a grouping of states such as the European Union may have a collective foreign policy identity in international affairs is a question which has fascinated generations of politicians and scholars.<sup>1</sup> In the early 1970s the Nine would declare that the integration process inherent in the European Community had an international identity.<sup>2</sup> About the same time François Duchêne (1972; 1973) and Johan Galtung (1973) would help stimulate – each from their radically different viewpoints – the emergence of an interesting, yet essentially unresolved debate in regards to the nature and characteristics of the European Union. The apogee of the early scholarly exchange in regards to the EU’s identity in international affairs would take place during the 1970s, only to be abandoned in the 1980s when the Ten/Twelve seemed more intent on pursuing their individual national foreign policies as opposed to a

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<sup>1</sup> The usage of the term ‘EU foreign policy identity’ here is taken to mean the collective EU cultural practices, norms and values which give expression to and shape its foreign policies and its relations with non-member countries. The term will be used interchangeably with the term ‘EU identity’ or ‘EU international identity’ throughout the present work.

<sup>2</sup> In 1965 the ECSC, EEC, and Euratom were merged into the European Communities (EC). Hence the terminology used in this work will employ the ‘EEC’ previous to 1968 (merger in force) and EC after this date. As of November 1993 the European Union (EU) came into being. The term EU will thus be used to explain events after this date. This is to constantly remind the reader of the much more circumscribed foreign policy (external relations) which the EC formally could undertake, compared to the more wide-ranging potential of the European Union today.

common one. After a lull of more than two decades, however, one might infer that the debate of a European identity is returning, evidenced by the ever-growing numbers of studies treating the topic (cf. Smith, H. 2002; Smith, K. 2003; Tonra 2003; Tonra and Christiansen 2004; Sedelmeier 2004; Manners 2002 and 2006; Sjursen 2006; Bretherton and Vogler 2006).

The return of the debate of ‘what is Europe’ is perhaps not surprising. On the one hand, we are witnessing a certain pause in the European Union’s twin-ratchet mechanisms of ‘deepening’ and ‘widening’. The twin engines of the ‘moveable feast’ EU has apparently stopped, if only momentarily. This is both due to the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty, in lieu of the failed EU Constitution, as well as in the moratorium placed on future enlargements of the European Union. Therefore scholars have an easier time to take a ‘snapshot’ of the entity and to work out its basic features.

On the other hand, the interest for an EU identity has also been stimulated by the incorporation of Constructivism into the mainstream of the International Relations discipline, providing us with an opportunity to employ new approaches through which to conceptualize the EU and its nature. Constructivist concerns help us highlight factors which permit deriving additional understandings about the EU as an actor in the international system, alongside already fairly well-explored parameters such as institutional coherence, efficiency, actorness, or capabilities. Sociological understandings of the EU invites us to think outside the box in terms of what constructs agency and what factors flow together in order to mediate between the structure and behaviors. The Reflective approach also allows us to take a dynamic perspective, revealing to us how the preferences and interests are constituted as they

come together in the making of the EU foreign policy and whether or not these same are altered as a consequence of sustained intersubjective interaction.<sup>3</sup>

The present dissertation has been inspired by these interesting political and academic debates and encouraged to make use of the sophisticated conceptual toolbox of the Constructivists to pursue the issue of the EU identity further. This study will argue that research into the EU identity from a Constructivist perspective can be seen as a valuable building-block for our overall understanding of how the EU can be conceptualized in international relations at large as well as in the discipline of International Relations. However, the Constructivist research on the EU identity has arguably so far revealed two major shortcomings. On the one hand, the EU's identity has mostly been studied with an intense focus on the agent (e.g. Europeanization processes) and its motivation (e.g. 'gentle power', 'normative power', 'ethical power') with scarce attention to the social context (i.e. outsiders) in which the agent's identity is inserted. On the other hand, while 'power' is frequently used as an attribute to the EU, as we have seen, few Reflectivist studies on the EU's identity have indulged in a deeper exploration of the nature of this power. The present dissertation aims to address, without being exhaustive, these issues in relation to the geographical areas under survey – the Mediterranean, northern Europe and the Western Balkans.

This chapter will look at the issue of identity from the perspective of the main schools of thought in International Relations as well as ponder the 'added value' of exploring the variable 'identity' by Constructivist means for obtaining deeper

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<sup>3</sup> The author has opted for using the terminology the 'European Union's foreign policy' in that it spans the three-pillar structure of the European Union, referring to the formulation and execution of diplomatic, commercial, humanitarian and security action by the EU beyond its territorial confines, while also contemplating individual EU member state' policy, where relevant. In spite of the many institutional and instrumental developments in the past decades (since 1970, EPC: institutionalized in 1987 with the Single European Act), the second pillar's common foreign and security policy does not represent the totality of external action with the Union undertakes. Moreover, while the EU's foreign policy is the preferred term here, references to 'European foreign policy' – an alternative term, albeit not necessarily synonymous with the former – might be used in original quotes by scholars in the field.

understandings of the EU in its relations to the three geographical areas under study here. The chapter will also provide the main thesis, research questions, an outline for the remainder of the work and an indication of sources used.

### 1.1. Identity as a concept in International Relations theory

‘Identity’ is a controversial concept in International Relations theory. Polemics arise for the want of a firm definition of the EU as an international actor – for this reason the Union is most frequently referred to as a ‘foreign policy system’ (Hill 1998a; Ginsberg 2001; White 2003; Hill and Smith 2005) – and thus there have been considerable debate within the European Studies community whether such a loosely configured collective such as the European Union may possess an identity separate from its member states. Such pessimism generally stems from the longstanding debate whether the EU is a state-in-construction or a *sui generis* phenomenon. In absence of a firm destination of the European construction it has been controversial to assert that such a non-descript entity as the EU could possess a collective identity.

Indeed, the Neorealist school outright rejects the notion that a collective composed of sovereign states may have an identity. Their affirmation is based on the notion that an intergovernmental entity cannot take on a life of its own and acquire characteristics which are separable from its member states. The Neorealists main concern is how states insert themselves in the structure and thus they tend to look at how EU member states act to balance each other off within the European construction in pursuit of relative gains in accordance with their national interests (Waltz 1979 and

1986). Thus, most mainstream Neorealists would probably concur with Ifestos (1987: 106) when he sustains that “an observer should avoid searching for the existence of a ‘European interest’” in that this is, as the same author concludes, essentially an elusive quest given the competition among the states in regards to the distribution of power among them. Some greater conceptual leeway on the issue, however, can be found within the broader Realist church. There are some Realists who – in essentially regarding the EU as a proto-state – would venture to affirm that a tenuous collective European interest could potentially exist. However, even to these scholars such a tentative European interest would always be dependent on the interest calculations of the EU’s bigger member states (cf. Hyde-Price 2006).

Pluralist accounts have been more accommodating in terms of the possibility that ideas affect choice in political decision making (Keohane 1988 and 1989). This has paved the way for sociological Institutionalists arguing that exogenously given state preferences may to some extent be molded in the constant communication, interaction and persuasion in an institutional setting. International institutions may in this sense act as frameworks for constraining and clarifying the strategic options open to essentially self-interested sovereign states (Moravcsik 1993 and 1998). However, middle of-the-road Pluralists are still essentially skeptical in regards to whether the current level of institutional interaction within the EU also could generate a collective sense of ‘we-ness’ beyond the simple sum of the intervening member states (Habermas 2001). A collective identity, in the mind of most Institutionalists, means that the state grouping has taken on a new quality and merged into what Neofunctionalists have termed ‘political community’. Haas (1958: 5) defined such community as “a condition in which specific groups and individuals show more loyalty to their central political institutions than to any other political authority.” The

average Institutionalist would thus rightly have a hard time arguing that today's EU is a political community in the Haasian sense, given the – obvious and empirically verifiable – continued importance of the national (and in some cases sub-national) level for the EU's citizen's identification.

Constructivists, in contrast, argue that interest- and identity formation are a natural spill-over elements from sustained cooperation processes and both exogenous and endogenous to the integration process itself. Identities and interests of political agents are socially constructed by individual and collective interpretations of the world. These particularistic and collective understandings are in turn the outcome of interacting individuals who act purposively on the basis of their personal beliefs within a determined structure (Adler and Barnett 1998). According to the sociological approaches shared by Institutionalists and Constructivists, states do not merely interact in international institutions and use them as arenas or instruments in the pursuit of their national interests. States are also influenced by the cooperation processes to the extent that they are socialized by them and come to internalize the norms inherent in these processes. These norms, in turn, affect how states perceive their socialized national identity and thus their national interests. Actors' interests are therefore not given, but are shaped by the collective identities of a cooperation structure that suggest to them through which types of behavior these identities should be enacted (cf. Jeppesen *et al.* 1996; Wendt 1999). The sociological understanding of a collective identity is thus that it rests on a sense of belonging and a shared perception about the essential features of the political collective, where the latter can both act to enable and restrain the strategic options open to the participant states (Adler and Barnett 1998; cf. Aggestam 1999 and 2004).

However, where mainstream Pluralists and Reflectivists are at variance is on the point that something as solid as a political community is a necessary condition *before* a distinct identity of a non-state collective can evolve, become distinctive and be recognized as such by others. To Constructivists a collective may exist as an objective (albeit socially constructed) reality apart from its component parts. The value of a sociological approach is thus to call attention to the fact that any social collective, e.g. state, region, an ethnic group or, as in our case, the European Union, however loosely constituted, may have an identity. Illustrative examples of that identities may exist even among loosely configured collectives could be the sense of ‘we-ness’ experienced among Benelux or Nordic countries or transnational groups such as the Roma spread across Europe, the Sami in northern Scandinavia or the Catalan and Basque identitarian communities spanning the Franco-Spanish border.

Finally it is worth noting that Constructivist (and Pluralist) accounts reject the Neorealist assumption that only the larger member states have a say on EU policy formation. Even small member states, or any group within, may potentially play an important role in setting and developing EU foreign policy and contribute to the EU identity as we will see throughout the present work. So may also bureaucracies; and indeed the European Commission has played an important role in shaping the collective outcomes in the geographical areas under study here. Institutions have their own specific interests and concerns to defend (budget, resources, influence) and may therefore propose policy options which enhance their position within the overall policy making process (Nuttall 1990, 1992 and 1997; Laffan et al. 1999; Hyde Price 2004; Wallace 2005).

The ‘value added’ of exploring the EU’s identity by ways of Constructivism is thus that it allows us to contemplate the possibility that a collective such as the EU

may have an ‘identity’ separable, albeit not separate, from its member states even if it is not a full-fledged political community and that small countries and institutions may play a role in such in identity formation. The Reflectivist approach, in contrast with Rationalists, also allows us to pry into the ideas which lie underneath such identities. Indeed, one of the central assumptions of the present dissertation is that by opening up the ‘black box’ of the EU’s identity we will uncover the different ideas which flows into its formation, the tension between these ideas, and how this affects the eventual EU behavior – or policy output – vis-à-vis other actors on the international stage.

## 1.2. ‘Identity’ as a conceptual framework

Constructivist approaches thus provide us a sophisticated array of conceptual tools for exploring the EU foreign policy identity as a distinct research parameter. However, this fact notwithstanding, Constructivist scholarship has, arguably, so far mostly produced rather unidimensional portraits of the EU.

A first major strand of sociological inquiries into the EU’s identity has essentially been limited to describing the EU as a framework which upgrades its member states national foreign policy identities. This is perhaps so because the focus so far has been on explaining European foreign policy integration (i.e. Europeanization) (Börzel 1999; Torreblanca 2001; Olsen 2002; Grabbe 2003; Tonra 2003; Tonra and Christiansen 2004; Wong 2005) and not so much on the EU as an actor inserted in its international setting at large. While these Europeanization processes are important in understanding how national preferences and identities are



‘uploaded’ to the European level and how the European collective identity enables or constrain these, we will aim to take the step further to examine what happens in terms of foreign policy output (i.e. identity projection) once national and collective have become socialized.

A second major strand of Constructivist research into the EU’s international identity has focused on the debates about the alleged ‘goodness’ or ‘badness’ of the Union. Already in the early years of the European Political Cooperation (EPC) there were voices sustaining that the European Community (EC) was ‘civilian power’ (Duchêne 1972, 1973), while others adamantly maintained that the EC was a “wolf in sheep’s clothing” covering up its member states’ exploitive relations and practices with former colonial dependencies (Galtung 1973). These debates have now been revived at the hands of scholars that argue that the EU’s nature and its purposes in the world are distinctive per se and somehow different that age-old power politics. To Manners (2002 and 2006), Padoa-Schioppa (2001) or Aggestam (forthcoming) writing about the EU’s supposed ‘normative power’, ‘gentle power’ or ‘ethical power’ respectively, the exceptionalism inherent in the European Union as a unique political construct in international relations compels the Union to have an equally *sui generis* foreign policy. In particular, Manners sustains that “the central component of normative power Europe is that the EU exists as being different to pre-existing political forms, and that this particular difference predisposes it to act in a normative way” (Manners 2002: 242; cf. Sjursen 2006). Such positive depictions of the EU have also had a certain resonance among EU officials, where CFSP High Representative Javier Solana (2006) has been heard to refer to the Union as a ‘force for good’ for the world.

There are several problems with such an uncritical portrait of the European Union as a foreign policy actor. On the one hand, the argument that the EU is a ‘gentle power’, normative power’ or ‘ethical power’ imply that the normative or altruistic facet of the EU’s foreign policy is elevated to a chief explananda of the EU’s foreign policy motivation and hence output (Johansson-Nogués 2007). However, the trouble of such a narrative of the EU foreign policy is that it tends to simplify, overlook and, at worst, fail to account for other equally important rationales behind the EU foreign policy. Almost four decades of rich academic debate – first over EPC and later the CFSP – has left us with many pieces of evidence for the different motivations behind EU action, whether it is normative (Duchêne 1973), commercial, neoimperial interests (Galtung 1973), parochial geopolitical or institutional interests (Allen 1998; Hill 1993 and 1998; Barbé 1998 and 2000; Nuttall 1992 and 1997; Youngs 2004) or ‘special relationships’ – e.g. Spain/Morocco and Poland/Ukraine – based on notions of interests and identity (Natorski 2006) which steer the Union and its member states in its relations with determined neighboring countries.

On the other hand, in these depictions the EU’s ‘power’ in the international arena is either taken for granted or outright negated a role in the explaining the Union’s foreign policy output. Manners (2002), for example, claims that the EU’s foreign policy actuation is divorced from power consideration and therefore he does not appear find the further research into this matter worthwhile.<sup>4</sup> However, central to the understanding of the present work is that the EU foreign policy identity has an ambiguous relationship with power. On the one hand the EU-27 is obviously a powerful reality in and of itself. The EU’s geographical expanse, its population (495

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<sup>4</sup> It could also be speculated that because many Constructivist theorists writing on the EU’s identity appears to draw inspiration from Liberal Institutionalism which holds that the study of power is less relevant given that power can be mitigated or overcome given the right distribution of interests and strategies and thus there is no need to address this variable.

million), its role as an international donor and its impact on the world economy, are important sources of EU power. Another source of power is the Treaty-revisions of intra-EU mechanisms and new instruments which have made the EU a more capable actor in terms of delivering upon its foreign policy objectives in the decade plus which has passed since the adoption of the Maastricht Treaty. These are the principal features, it can be argued, which have attracted and continue to attract those states vying for EU membership. Since the early 1990s one of the principal rationales for many member states to seek themselves to the EU, aside the economic benefits, has been for its weight in foreign affairs and potential for powerful international projection.<sup>5</sup> This understanding of the European Union's structural power and power of attraction is echoed in EU documents and also by outsiders. There is also evidence from EU officials' discourse that there is a burgeoning understanding within the European Union that the EU should employ its powers to provide for its member states and defend the Union and its member states' identity and interests in the light of international challenges (Larsen 2004).

At the same time the Union's use of power has displayed considerable ambivalence in the past decade and a half. Despite institutional reforms, the Union is obviously not comparable to a state or a tightly-knit transnational actor (e.g. NGO or multinational company) in terms of effective decision making, resource mobilization and policy implementation. There are thus still many factors which point to an EU as a political actor which raises expectations rather than actual potential (Hill 1993 and

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<sup>5</sup> For example, prospective members see EU membership as a way to counter and potentially shape the forces of economic globalization. Security reasons have been another important for some applicant states i.e. the EU as a (political) counterweight to other actors in the international system. Others have also been attracted to the 'politics of scale' possible through the EU (Zielonka 1998), whereby when the Union speaks with 'one voice' it is a powerful actor within international organizations etc. Many small European countries, that hitherto had felt as being bobbed around by the ebb and tide of international politics, saw their situation change as they were admitted to the Community/Union. Their membership was perceived as better protection their individual interests at the international level (Johansson-Nogués 2004a and 2006a).

1998). The resulting lack of clarity in the EU power projection is one of the principal concerns which will accompany us throughout the present work.

The present work therefore wishes to address these two Constructivist research lacunas. The dissertation will attempt to provide an (however limited) added value in terms of sociological studies of the EU as an international actor and by taking the above studies a logical step further in two major ways.

First, while the present work will agree with Manners and many others that hold the EU to be a *sui generis* entity, a ‘post-modern political form’ (Ruggie 1993; Smith K. 2003; Bretherton and Vogler 1999 and 2006) – or, in Fenech’s (1997: 12) definition: a “socio-economically prosperous union aspiring to acquire a security-political identity” – in an international system dominated by states, it will leave the door open to that the EU may construct and act out its foreign policy both in a normative and a materialistic way. The Reflective approach to identity – and in spite of what it might seem from the above debates – has in essence no a priori assumptions about actors’ underlying interests and thus does not start off from the assertion that the European foreign policy pursues *either* ‘possession’ goals *or* ‘milieu’ goals (Wolfers 1962).<sup>6</sup> Constructivist accounts allow us to open the research field and to combine the ‘logic of consequences’ with the ‘logics of appropriateness’ in a complex relationship. The two approaches reflect different logics of how human behavior and intentionality are interpreted: rational instrumental action and rule-based action (Checkel 1998: 4). However, as March and Olsen (1998) point out, the two logics are not mutually exclusive, in that –

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<sup>6</sup> ‘Possession goals’ refers to a nation’s pursuit of “the enhancement or the preservation of one or more of the things to which it attaches value” (e.g. territory, membership in the Security Council of the United Nations, or tariff preferences). ‘Milieu goals’ are those which are aimed at shaping conditions beyond an international actors’ borders (e.g. peace, the promotion of international law or international organizations) (Wolfers 1962).

“political action is generally explicable neither as based exclusively on a logic of consequences nor as based exclusively on a logic of appropriateness. Any particular action probably involves elements of each. Political actors are constituted both by their interests, by which they evaluate their anticipations of consequences, and by the rules embedded in their identities and political institutions. They calculate consequences and follow rules, and the relation between the two is often subtle.”

Viewed from this perspective, EU policy makers do not only calculate which strategy is most likely to advance their particular interests in the relation with third countries or what their collective (material) interests are with regard to these countries (Sedelmeier 2004: 125). The EU’s engagement with third countries also reflects a sense of what EU institutions and member states consider as appropriate behavior for the role that they collectively ascribe to themselves - as representatives of the EU - in their relations with third countries. Hence, by studying identity as a value composite expression (i.e. neither as a self-less or a selfish, but both) variable we can focus our attention on what impact this composite identity has on outsiders and what connotations it carries for the EU as a foreign actor overall.<sup>7</sup>

Second, our assumption that the Union possesses a composite identity built on Constructivist understandings allows us to enter into direct dialogue with central Rationalist concerns in regards to power. It is worth noting from the outset that power is neither an inherently positive nor negative variable. Power, as Foucault reminds us, is first and foremost a productive force (Foucault 1981: 73). Power can both be conceptualized as steeped in terms of the dominance of ideas and resources as well as

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<sup>7</sup> It is worth noting that ‘value composite’ is not the same as ‘value neutral’, the latter referring to a context where values are cancelled out by each other, while the former suggest that these values co-exist and exert competing dynamics on each other.

in territorial terms or military strength. Power is also essentially relational, i.e. power is reproduced in social context between actors as these enter into relation with each other (Barbé 2007: 144). Whether the reality that is enabled by power is intrinsically positive or negative – or somewhere in between – depends both on the agent employing power and on the perception of the actor placed at the receiving end. Power, in essence, is the ability of an international actor to influence or control other actors in the system (Hill 1990; Smith K. 2003) in a positive-sum or negative-sum fashion. In the typology suggested by Barnett and Duvall (2005), power simplified can be understood as either related to the agent's will to project 'power over' another actor, or the agent's 'power to' enable actors and cater to their identities and interests.<sup>8</sup> The choice of the agent is thus either to use other actors to enhance its power and/or powerbase, or to act to mitigate the power-differentials by empowering other actors through different means (e.g. financial, technical and/or political).

### 1.3. The EU and its 'borderlands'

Identities only acquire their meaning inside a determined social context. It is therefore imperative to contrast the 'Self' with a set of 'Others'. An identity is constructed

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<sup>8</sup> The agential leeway is of course, at all times, enabled and constrained by the structure in which the agent is inserted. Such a structure may reproduce a clear and direct hierarchy between policy makers' and policy takers' socially interpreted roles – as according to Marxist interpretations of capital-holders and laborers (Bicchi 2006: 290) – or a more diffuse understanding based on knowledge differentials, natural resources etc. We believe that the EU-borderland relations are more based on knowledge/resource differentials than responding to the logic of role play. We are, however, open to the idea that a certain role play represents a powerful backdrop for the Union's relations with US/Russia.

differently in relation with different social ‘Others’.<sup>9</sup> The empirical material informing the present work is drawn from the EU’s relations with countries beyond its borders or, what we have called here, its ‘borderlands’.<sup>10</sup> Concretely, we will examine the European Union’s relations with the Mediterranean, Northern European and the Western Balkan borderlands. These three areas are worthwhile subjects for the current research work in that their interrelation with the EU is intense and have become even more intense since the end of the Cold War.<sup>11</sup> The relevance which the EU places in its borderlands is confirmed in different ways.

First, the EU has been actively involved and devoted considerable effort into establishing highly elaborate framework policies for its borderlands in the 1990s. The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) came to life in 1995 buoyed by the prospects of the Middle East Peace Process.<sup>12</sup> In 1997 Europe’s North was accepted as an important area of the EU foreign policy, and the ‘Northern Dimension’ came into being in 1999.<sup>13</sup> Also in 1999, in the aftermath of the Kosovo crisis, the EU adopted the Stabilization and Association process (SAP) for the Western Balkans.<sup>14</sup> In addition the EU has emitted a significant number of declarations, Joint Actions and specialized policy initiatives (e.g. Stability Pacts) and even undertaken military operations in the Western Balkans in support of the EU framework policies for these regions. It is thus

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<sup>9</sup> For example, the identity which the EU constructs in relation with, for example, the China (great power and trade competitor) or Bolivia (poor and underdeveloped country) is arguably different than the identity which the Union creates in relations with its borderlands.

<sup>10</sup> The term ‘borderland’ is used here to denote a cognitive space which is essentially a socially constructed area in a constant state of transition given its open-ended and contested boundaries. This term is therefore eminently suited to group together a heterogeneous set of countries which relate to the European Union in different ways, some of which are EU accession candidates or having a ‘confirmed European perspective’, while others being non-candidates with no inclination to join the Union.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Annex 1 for maps providing an overview of the different borderland areas.

<sup>12</sup> The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in 2007 encompasses Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Jordan, Morocco, Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey. Previous to 2004 Cyprus and Malta were also Euro-Mediterranean partners.

<sup>13</sup> EU partners involved in the Northern Dimension today are Iceland, Norway and Russia. Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland were Northern Dimension partners until their respective EU accession.

<sup>14</sup> The Western Balkans is currently understood as being composed of Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia.

fair to say that the Union has unleashed the full instrumental spectrum on its borderlands in an unprecedented and complex manner.<sup>15</sup> A systematization of this wide-ranging instrumental gamut reveals a formula which, simplified, comprehends three principal strands: regional multilateralism (e.g. regional cooperation and regionally focused financial assistance programs), multi-sectoral cooperation (spanning political, economic and socio-cultural elements) as well as interventionism (e.g. ranging from conditionality and twinning programs to hands-on ESDP missions). The Union's tripartite foreign policy formula reflects a generalized EU *modus operandi* in foreign affairs as well as some of the key premises upon which the EU's international identity is based.

Second, the shared intra-EU understanding of the importance of the borderlands has been matched by a considerable allocation of financial assistance in the past decade (Jansen 1999). The financial perspective 1995-2000 decided at Essen in 1994 was meant to send an 'important message' to Russia and the southern Mediterranean countries, and thus in effect translated into a substantial increase in their respective financial envelopes over previous periods (Barbé 1996; Gomez 2003).

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<sup>15</sup> The different regional framework policies are contemplated in their widest possible sense. The conscious choice here has been to study each area at great level of concreteness instead of a generic geographical approach as has been tried elsewhere (Smith, H. 2002; Bretherton and Vogler 1999 and 2006). Indeed, as far as we are concerned, generic studies of the different geographical areas tend to give the impression of a substantial EU impact across the board, while a reality check reveals this not being the case. However, this does not mean that an 'everything-goes' principle has been applied. A conscious process of selection of material and simplification has been necessary given the considerable policy input and output in the EU's relations with its borderlands. The individual chapters on the Mediterranean region, the Baltic/Barents Sea areas and the Western Balkans will thus describe the most relevant aspects of each framework policy and supporting policies. In addition, there has been a plethora of other EU initiatives *vis-à-vis* these countries. Some have had fairly limited impact (Common Strategies), some have been short-lived, some have been issue focused (Stability Pact for the Central and Eastern European countries), some have been all-encompassing. The approach used here is to employ the Barcelona Process, the Northern Dimension and the Stabilization and Association process as *vertebra* for narrating the most relevant aspects of the EU's relations with its borderlands. Since these framework policies have been the most all-encompassing, perhaps most significant and trademarked, and sometimes they have functioned as an umbrella in close connection with other regional initiatives. Such broad treatment of the EU-borderland relations aims to give us as a complete vision of relations as possible and provide ample basis for discussing the most significant features of EU foreign policy identity as it is expressed in its relation with the borderlands.



This allocation trend has been maintained in posterior financial framework, with the European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument (Russia and other Eastern European countries, as well as the southern Mediterranean partners) and the Pre-Accession Instrument (Western Balkans) which taken together assign almost EUR 24 billions in total for these areas during the 2007-2013 budgetary period. The borderlands have thus effectively replaced the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries, as well as Latin America, at the top of the ‘pyramid of privilege’ in their relations with the EU in the post-Cold War era.<sup>16</sup>

However, these areas are also worthwhile subjects because there is also some basis for thinking that these borderlands areas have actively been used to construct an EU foreign policy identity. A survey of EU documents points to a dominant discourse whereby the EU has assumed a duty to take on the ‘responsibility’ for the borderlands (Larsen 2000, Jørgensen 2004a). The 1992 Lisbon European Council, for example, would note that “[t]he Community [...] cannot [...] refuse the historic challenge to assume its continental responsibilities and contribute to the development of a political and economic order for the whole of Europe” (European Council 1992). Indeed, such understandings began to be articulated already before the fall of the Berlin Wall. For example, in the Rhodes Declaration of December 1988, the European Council declared that the EC had responsibility for developments in Eastern Europe, i.e. over countries which were still formally at the time within the Soviet Cold War ‘sphere of influence’. Likewise Gomez (2003: 171) has sustained that the EU and its member states were perceived as having special obligations vis-à-vis the southern

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<sup>16</sup> Research by Cox and Koning (1997) show how post-Cold War EC aid flows already in the period of 1988-1991 began to be redirected away from former colonial dependencies (predominantly the ACP countries) toward countries bordering the Community. This trend is confirmed by the Tenth European Development Fund for ACP countries whereby they are only awarded an approximately EUR 22.682 billion for the 2008-2013 period, i.e. a relative decline over previous periods and in sharp contrast with the EUR/capita spent on EU borderland partners.

Mediterranean by virtue of being “the major trading partner of all its partner countries and the biggest provider of financial aid.” However, perhaps nowhere else was this duty so keenly felt by the Europeans as in the Western Balkans when the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia began to fall apart. Jacques Poos (EC Presidency at the time) would even declare confidently in the 1991 that “[i]f one problem can be solved by the Europeans it is the Yugoslav problem. It is not up to the Americans or anyone else” (Poos, as cited in Garton Ash 2004). The EC’s success in terms of the Brioni agreements (ceasefire in Slovenia and Croatia on 7 July 1991) seemed to briefly confirm that the EC/EU inevitably – by virtue of composed by a set of rich, developed countries – was an important international actor. The European hopes of being able to make a difference were to be brutally squashed only in the months to follow as the war in Bosnia began. However, the fundamental premise that the EU is responsible for those countries bordering to it has, however, not been altered in the decade that has followed. Solana (2003: 150, cited in Bossong 2006) has affirmed that to his mind: “Europe [...] has begun to take charge of the destinies of peace and security on its own continent, including its most turbulent parts.” Such affirmations are also echoed in the academic community holding the Union as a “major regional actor” in the European borderlands and as “having the primary responsibility [...] for re-shaping the economic and political map of the continent” (Bretherton and Vogler 2006: 216-8).

‘Responsibility’ is thus a recurrent conceptualization of the EU foreign policy identity vis-à-vis the borderlands. Responsibility has, as a semantic carrier of meaning (‘signifier’), multiple connotations.<sup>17</sup> Responsibility entails a hierarchical

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<sup>17</sup> One could define a signifier as being an active element of language which does not necessarily only designate a particular concept but may also convey a whole meaningful chain, through which many elements are linked and obtain their meaning through constant intersubjective negotiation and re-negotiation of those elements and meanings (Saussure [1916] 1983 as cited in Laclau 1996).

understanding of the relation between the Self and the Other, where the Self is perceived as superior to the Other. It could thus be argued that from the EU's point of view responsibility for the borderlands entails styling the Union in the role of the 'care-taker' or 'guardian' 'looking out for' neighboring countries as if they were the EU's 'ward' or a subject in the Union's 'care'. Responsibility is, in other words, a carrier of subtexts of asymmetric power (i.e. 'power over'). At the same time, responsibility may also convey the notion of a necessity by the 'custodian' to show restraint and gentleness in the power projection vis-à-vis the 'protégée' in question. One of the central questions posed for this work is thus how the EU operationalizes this discourse of responsibility and if it, at all, tries to bridge the asymmetric power between itself and its borderland partners (i.e. 'power to').

For these above two reasons – the density in social interaction and for the EU's claim to 'responsibility' – the borderlands seem to be excellent cases for exploring the EU's composite foreign policy identity and how it is constructed. The importance the Union attaches to its relations with the borderlands and the centrality of these to the Union's self-understanding in terms of its foreign policy identity is beyond questioning.

However, it is well worth noting that at the same time the EU impact on the borderlands in the past decade and half has been rather small, which is clearly paradoxical given the attention devoted, array of instruments used and the financial resources put in by the Union. For example, the 2005 Tenth Anniversary Summit of the Barcelona Process revealed the scarce results obtained in the decade which has passed. Similarly, in the Western Balkans, only Croatia has made some socioeconomic progress since the early 1990s. We know from ample empirical studies that in part the scarce progress has been due to that intra-EU problems have been

rampant (inter-pillar coordination etc.) (cf. Whitman 1998; Smith, H. 2002); however, it will be argued here that the intra-EU troubles are only part of the problem and that by pursuing the issue of the EU's identity and how it inserts itself into the social contexts of the borderlands we will obtain more answers.

#### 1.4. Thesis, research questions and intermediate variables

The thesis of the present dissertation is that **the European Union's composite identity is the variable which best explains the troubles which the Union is finding in terms of the overall scarce acceptance of the EU's framework policies in the borderlands and their meager impact** in the time period that has been under survey. This proposition gives rise to the necessity to explore three interrelated questions: What is the EU's international identity? How is it constructed? And finally, how does it play out in relation with third countries, in particular with three by the EU highly prioritized areas such as the Mediterranean, Northern Europe and the Western Balkans?

First, what is the EU's international identity? In order to understand the EU's foreign policy output in the borderlands we will look at the principal ideas which flow into the EU's collective identity. It is thus of relevance to examine these underlying ideas. The research is all along informed by our interest for establishing what results from the interaction between the EU's foreign policy identity and outsiders and how this does, or not, set the Union apart from other (arguably more traditional) actors in the international system. Does the EU's foreign policy have a *sui generis* character

given that it is a sui generis international actor? Is the EU on the balance more an international ‘do-gooder’ than a self-serving actor? Moreover, in order to be able to argue that the EU has a collective identity in its relations with the borderlands, we need to establish that the EU institutions and member states rally around such an identity. For this purpose the intermediate variable of ‘cohesion’ (the extent to which the EU and its member states act in a unitary way) will be used to determine EU policy convergence around the borderland framework policies over time.

Second, how is the EU’s international identity constructed? It will be sustained that collective identities are always complex edifices, but the European Union’s identity construction is particularly byzantine. It is therefore of interest to examine the processes under which the EU identity formation comes about. The result of these Europeanization processes – understood as political reunification or a feedback loop between the national and the European identity constructions (Olsen 2002) – is what is later projected onto the borderlands. Particular emphasis will be on uncovering what troubles arise for the EU’s identitarian construction processes to project a unified identity – compared to the collective identity of a nation-state. Moreover, the identitarian construction processes are also where the different output of identity projection are determined and hence where the contradictions in the EU’s identity arises. What are the dynamics of the EU’s identity construction? What impact do these identitarian construction processes have on the EU’s foreign policy output in the borderlands? Is the EU’s identity introspective or extraverted vis-à-vis the borderland partners?

Third and finally, how does the EU’s international identity play out in relation with third countries, in particular with three by the EU highly prioritized areas such as the Mediterranean, Northern Europe and the Western Balkans? The objective with the

present research is thus to establish the main characteristics of the European identity as it derives from the EU's interaction with Northern Europe, the Western Balkans and the Mediterranean area, in particular as seen through the framework policies (and supporting policies) which it has attempted and failed/succeeded in creating for these areas since the end of the Cold War. We will argue that although these areas are highly diverse, both in terms of the socioeconomic realities inside the countries in each area and the EU's policies vis-à-vis them, there are certain core ingredients, certain cognitive nodes or cluster of ideas (essentially the tripartite foreign policy formula and the EU's sense of 'responsibility' for the borderlands), around which the current EU organizes its foreign policy identity which justifies their comparison.<sup>18</sup>

The dissertation has been designed to consider two distinct sets of 'Others' which the EU identity encounters in its interaction with the borderlands. First, the borderland partners' perception of the EU's identity will be contrasted with the Union's perception of its international identity. By ways of the borderland partners' perceptions of the EU foreign policy identity 'presence' the dissertation will venture to explain some of the reasons why, for all the EU's emphasis and resources committed to the borderlands since 1989, there has been so little acceptance across the board in the borderlands of the Union's foreign policy overtures in the decade and half which has past. In essence, we will try to answer the queries related to what are the limits of the EU's ability to inspire, orchestrate and enforce reform in societies conditioned by non-democracy and/or weak statehood and incomplete sovereignty? Why have not the EU standard 'carrots' (i.e. incentives for reform, such as trade, financial assistance, etc.) – and even in the case of the Western Balkans, the 'golden

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<sup>18</sup> These countries' relations with the EU also vary, ranging from being confirmed candidate states (Croatia, Macedonia and Turkey), having 'European perspectives' (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia) to being either EU 'associates' (Algeria, Egypt, Iceland, Israel, Jordan, Morocco, Norway, Palestinian Authority and Tunisia), 'partnership and cooperation' partner (Russia) or 'cooperation' partner (Syria).

carrot' of membership – had greater effect? How does multilateralism, multi-sectoral framework policies and interventionism – the cornerstones of the EU's foreign policy strategy – play out in societies where the discourse on 'Europe' does not have unconditionally positive connotations and where the process of transition is also conditioned by other international actors? It will be argued here that there is even a clear inverse or negative relationship between the Union's burgeoning composite international identity (as it is presently constructed) and the perception of the EU's foreign policy in the borderlands.

The second set of sociological 'Others' which the EU identity encounters in the borderlands is the United States (US) and Russia. The argument would be that in the social context of the EU's borderland these international actors constitute a differentiated 'Other' (aside EU's borderland partners) against which it is interesting to contrast the Union's international identity. The research is deemed as especially worthwhile given the deep penetration of the US and the USSR of the EC's borderlands during the Cold War which, back then, was one of the factors which impeded the emergence of constancy in the EC's international identity. The assumption here is that EU's international identity continues to be closely related to the foreign policy preferences and identities of these powers. The role of Russia is doubly interesting, both as an object included in a framework policy as well as a power in its own right – a contradiction which is central to EU's understandings of Russia.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> To tease out the differences between Russia as an object of the EU's foreign policy (i.e. as a borderland partner) and Russia as a great power different independent variables will be used: 'presence' in the first case and enablers and constraints on 'autonomy' in the second. For the precise definition and use of these in the present work cf. Chapter 2.

## 1.5. Structure of thesis

The first part – *The EU's foreign policy in its theoretical and historical setting* – will serve as a point of reference for the remainder of the present doctoral dissertation. Chapter 2 and 3 will try to answer fundamental questions such as: what is the EU's international identity, how is it constructed and what is the historical background of this identity evolution? These questions will first be explored from a conceptual point of view in Chapter 2, titled *The construction of the EU identity: a conceptual model* which above all surveys the relevant mechanisms as to how the Union constructs its collective identity and how that identity construction draw strength from the current state of the international system in order to situate the reader. This review will be followed by a discussion of three concepts – ‘cohesion’, ‘presence’ and ‘autonomy’ which intends to help highlight in following chapters how the EU's identity construction is perceived by the Union's component parts and outsiders.

Chapter 3 returns to the aforementioned questions set out for Part I, but this time from a historical perspective. This Chapter, titled *The EU and the EU's borderlands – From EPC to the European Neighborhood Policy*, attempts to show the evolution of EU's relations with non-member countries in its borderlands since the early days of the EEC. The Chapter pays close attention to the endogenous and exogenous forces which have been determining forces in shaping the EU's foreign policy identity in its relation with borderland countries over time.

Part II of the present dissertation (*Borderlands – three cases of EU regional framework policies*) aims to provide insights into the concrete relations between the Union and its borderland partners, as seen through the perspective of each region



treated here. Each chapter in this section will both provide in-depth treatment of the framework policy developed, as well as try to establish how the EU identity is expressed in its relations with three borderland areas and how ‘cohesion’ among EU actors in regards to the Union’s identity each of the borderlands has developed. The chapters will also examine what reaction that identitarian expression generates by ways of the variable ‘presence’. Chapter 4 (*The EU and its southern borderlands: The Mediterranean*) will delve into the world of the EC/EU relations with partners on the southern and eastern side of the Mediterranean. Chapter 5 (*The EU and its northern borderlands: Europe’s North*) will take us to a very different regional framework which is the Arctic/Baltic/Barents Sea areas. Finally, Chapter 6 (*The EU and its southeastern borderlands: the Western Balkans*) will alert us to the ins and outs of the EU’s relation with the Western Balkan countries.

The third and final part of this work (*The EU as an actor in the borderlands*) will be aiming at drawing together all the different elements which have emerged in the conceptual and empirical parts examining the Union’s general modus operandi of interaction, as well as consider the role of third actors in the construction of the EU’s identity vis-à-vis the borderlands. Chapter 7 (*The EU in the borderlands: the dissonance of identitarian constructions*) will endeavor to explore how the EU’s foreign policy identity resonates in its interactions with neighboring countries. There is a certain interest in performing such a survey in that there is in EU discourse and academic literature a set of assumptions about the EU foreign policy formula (multilateralism/regional cooperation, holistic multi-sectoral policy formulations, interventionism) which are deemed as ‘correct’ and thus rarely questioned in terms of what reception and reaction they have solicited in different European borderlands. The chapter will point to how EU’s identitarian constructions have been contested –

or even generated outright hostility – in the Union’s borderland areas. The Chapter will in particular focus on how or not the Union has tried to mitigate its asymmetric power in relation to borderland partners. It will be sustained that partner’s reluctance may in part be due to the EU’s ambiguous relation to power. Chapter 8 (*In EU’s borderlands: the United States, Russia and the European Union*) will contemplate the effects exerted by the US and USSR/Russia on the evolution of the EU over time as a foreign policy actor and the constraints on EU identitarian expression in relation to its borderlands (‘autonomy’). From the historical overview provided one can discern that EPC surged as way to give the EC member states a ‘European voice’ in international affairs, and intone a cadence which is distinct from the US. This tendency, one might argue, is still very much alive in EU-US relations today as well and expresses itself with clarity vis-à-vis the EU’s borderlands. Russia, in not yet being a full consolidated state-building project, has a more diffuse influence over the EU’s foreign policy identity in general. Moreover, EU’s identitarian constructions do not always concord with the Russian vision of the world, making for a troublesome relationship.

Finally, the Conclusions will draw together the main points of the present work and discuss how the present survey of the concept EU identity has helped us understand the EU as a foreign policy actor in the borderlands better both in its theoretical and empirical facet.

## 1.6. Research Sources

The answers to these questions and the compilation of the empirical material have been found through surveying an extensive quantity of material on a host of topics. The review has drawn from separate works dealing with the EU's foreign policy generically, and/or area studies. Multiple interviews of policy practitioners performed over the years have also served as a source of first hand information, and so have an extensive review of official documents from the European Union's institutions, member state governments as well as, where available public documents issued by partner governments.<sup>20</sup> Secondary sources consulted are brought together in the bibliography at the end of this work. There has been an attempt to balance sources between book chapters, reviewed journal articles and newspaper articles, while not ignoring the steadily increasing access via Internet of more informal forms of publications such as working papers, conference papers etc. Institutional reports, where available, have also been used.

Moreover, the author is especially indebted to the valuable ground work laid by the Observatory of European Foreign Policy (Institut Universitari d'Estudis Europeus) and the (now discontinued) Observatory of Mediterranean Politics (the European Institute for the Mediterranean and Institut Universitari d'Estudis Europeus) in Barcelona, which both have served to introduce the author to a wide range of different issues related to the EU's relations with countries beyond its borders. The author has also been fortunate enough over the years to be able to draw from in-depth,

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<sup>20</sup> Interviews with Commission officials conducted annually between 2000-2007 and with representatives at national delegations in Brussels in 2003, 2005 and 2006 Sporadic interviews at the Council of Baltic Sea States (Stockholm) in 2000 and 2002, with officials at the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2000, as well as with retired diplomats.

and in some cases sustained, discussions with prominent scholars in the field on different topics regarding the European Union's foreign policy or International Relations more broadly, whether in the framework of the European network of FORNET and CHALLENGE or elsewhere. The author is particularly indebted to Christopher Hill, Karen E. Smith, Patrick O. Morgan, Helmut Hubel, James Rosenau, Hanna Ojanen and, above all, Esther Barbé.

Part I – *The EU's foreign policy in its theoretical and historical setting*



## The construction of the EU foreign policy identity: a conceptual model

As the Cold War came to an end, ‘Europe’ – as opposed to ‘Western Europe’ – began to take shape. As the bipolar structure disappeared most international actors had to adopt new identities or redefine old ones, so to the EC. The divided Europe, which had been the center of the East-West conflict, had to begin to develop a new *raison d’être* as the superpowers withdrew. The perceived ‘turbulence’ around the EC-12’s borders after 1989, and the ever-growing chorus of voices stemming from Central and Eastern Europe demanding accession, would add a sense of urgency to this pursuit. The Community needed to find its feet fast. This realization stimulated the Belgian memorandum in 1990 for the convening of an intergovernmental conference to lay out the foundations for the ‘European Union’ and a ‘common foreign and security policy’. Moreover, the Charter of Paris in November 1990, when the EC Twelve, the US and the USSR would confirm the European Community as the anchorage point for the stability of the continent and proclaimed that peace, democracy, human rights, rule of law and economic liberty would become the guiding principles in the building of a ‘New Europe’. Thus, as ‘Europe’ took

its first stumbling steps toward defining its new role as the European Union and readying itself for future enlargement rounds, the basic parameters of the new EU's identitarian construct had to be in consonance with these principles. At the time thus, "[e]verything seemed to point to the Community gradually taking upon itself the role of a major regional power" as de Schoutete de Tervarent (1997: 41) puts it.

This chapter will explore how the EU identity is conceptually constructed. A sociological understanding of the collective identity is that it is in part shaped by the particularistic/idiosyncratic identities of its members and the relation between the members of a group, and in part rests on a degree of social interaction with social realities (structure) and actors external to the collective. A collective identity can be therefore be conceptualized as a shared and interactive sense of 'we-ness' in relation or contrast to one or more actual or imagined sets of Others. The first section will thus look at the mechanics behind collective identity construction. The second section be devoted to the principal sources of the EU's foreign policy identitarian construct since 1989, which in turn is enabled or bounded by the opportunities and constrains imposed by the post-Cold War international structure. The third section will endeavor to make some early reflection on the implications of the EU's identitarian constructions. The final sections will be used to establish the conceptual outline for those parameters which we will use in order to explore the dynamic impact of the EU identity on the borderlands in Chapter 3-6.



## 2.1. The construction of a collective identity

Identity constructions are contextually dependent and develop and change over time in “a continuing exercise in the fabrication of illusion and the elaboration of convenient fables about who ‘we’ are” (Ignatieff 1998: 18). Collective identities express a sense of membership of, or affinity with, a distinct group and as such, they tend to provide a system of orientation for self-reference and action (Ross 1997: 2). Foreign policy, in many ways, plays a significant role in the socio-political imagination of a collective identity as a specific representation of ‘we’ in relation to outsiders and ‘Otherness’. Wallace (1991: 65) has, for this reason, argued that foreign policy is intimately linked to the issue of identity, in that the latter expresses “the core elements of sovereignty it seeks to defend, the values it stands for and seeks to promote abroad.”

How a collective defines its foreign policy identity depends in part on objective, material factors (geography, size and wealth) but also on a range of subjective, normative considerations formed through inter-subjective communication (creation of ‘ego’ or sense of ‘we’). The latter include the political culture of a collective, its dominant moral and ethical values, sense of justice and conceptions of the common good, and its belief in what makes it distinctive as a polity (Hyde-Price 2004: 102) as these constructed and re-constructed over time. The politics of identity tend to draw upon a particular set of understandings about a social collective that policy-makers tap into in order to mobilize a sense of cohesion and solidarity and to legitimate the general thrust of foreign policy, i.e. the so-called ‘dominant discourse’. One could thus infer that the principle conduit for collective identity formation is discourse. In this sense, discourse is a continuous process

of construction of meanings for political action which reveal how policy-makers view the past, the present and the future political choices they face (Aggestam 2004; Larsen 2004).

The focus on the dominant discourse enables us to explain a collective actor's identity without denying that any collective identity is fundamentally a plural expression. As we already have noted in the Introduction, within the EU no tightly-bound political community has emerged in the sense of that there has not been any full-scale shift of loyalties from the national to the European level, as Haas (1958) had predicted (and later himself refuted). Rather, there is evidence to suggest that the European construction has been accompanied by a non-homogeneous process of creating additional layers of identity on subnational, national and European levels or re-affirming existing ones (Panebianco 1996; Olsen 2002; Aggestam 2004). The mechanics of constructing the EU's identity can be said to be through a process whereby its component parts' (member states, subnational actors and institutions) identity formation structures – composed of particularistic interests, values and identities – become Europeanized into one global, loose European political culture, the latter which in turn feed back into the component parts' political cultures without necessarily supplanting each other (Olsen 2002).<sup>1</sup> Risse (2003) has held that such a link between the European and (sub-)national within the EU framework conjures up the notion of a 'marble cake' in which differentiated identitarian layers are not extinguished by each other but definitively reciprocally influenced. As the former President of the European Commission Jacques Santer has put it, the "European identity is not a simple fact of life." Rather, the EU identity is, according to the former President of the Commission "based on the intuitive certainty of a joint destiny, but it is

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<sup>1</sup> The way 'culture' is used here is to refer to a more or less unified set of ideas, symbols and practices of social actors and the context that gives such practices meaning.

also the creation of a slow process of diplomatic negotiation” (Santer 1995). The glue that essentially holds the collective identity together – however heterogeneously understood – is, according to Wendt (1999), three factors: ‘we-feeling’, solidarity and loyalty.

The conceptualization of the EU identity as a global, loose European political culture draws our attention to three observations relevant to the present work. First, the understanding of the EU’s identity as loosely configured, multilayered identity alerts us to that the Union’s identity is, as one analyst has, it a ‘thin’ postnationalist collective identity (Schimmelfennig 2001b) and universalistic in character given its penchant for expressing its liberal values and norms in universal rather than specifically communal terms. Ginsberg (2001: 25) attributes the thin, universalism of the European Union to the fact that the EU as a collective rests on a “relatively weak sense of shared history and identity because of the diverse historical, cultural and linguistic experiences of its members.” Most member states’ national identities may be conceived of as ‘thicker’ in having an emotive component to them (nationalism) as well as more consistent for being longer standing and historically based. The European identity, in contrast, is more diffuse and carries less emotional charge and/or historical significance. We thus expect that whenever the EU’s universalistic identity is confronted by an EU members’ strongly held nationalistic and particularistic identity posture, the former is likely to yield to the latter. We also expect that the EU’s universalistic identity will have a harder time to stand its ground when confronted with the US more consolidated international identity or the Russian more nationalistically defined foreign policy.

Second, the loose, non-homogeneous collectiveness of the EU also alerts us to that at the European level the collectively held identity may be interpreted in different

ways by different members of the collective. Jepperson et al. (1996) draw our attention to the difference between ‘shared’ and ‘collective’ norms. On the one extreme, ‘shared’ norms are those which are internalized more or less homogeneously across some distribution of actors in a system, while ‘collective’ norms may be communally held features of the system – either by being institutionalized or by being prominent in public discourse of a system – although all actors in the system may not give the norm the same significance. Norms and policies agreed on the European level are, in other words, not necessarily equally internalized or inter-subjectively understood by all the EU member states in the same way. In a plural collective, such as the Union, it is fair to say that the resulting group-identity is more frequently informed by collective norms compared to shared ones. This variety of opinions on what constitutes the EU’s identity has most often little overall impact on the expression of the marble cake EU’s identity, which is usually expressed in a generalized manner which reflects the maximum number of intra-EU preferences and identitarian construction (i.e. the dominant discourse). The malleable EU’s international identity indeed enables ‘unity’ to be constructed out of ‘diversity’ – as the Union’s own motto puts it. However, on occasions national or other non-dominant specific identitarian constructions may come to impinge on the EU identity. There are occasions where the non-dominant identity is expressed in a rival discourse at variance with the EU collective. Such rivaling logic could act to obstruct the EU foreign policy action in resonance with the collective (dominant) logic. At other occasions, two or more rivaling discourses among different EU actors may impede the emergence of a single dominant discourse at the European Union level and consequently hold the EU’s identity in limbo. Most often these situations are resolved over time by identity negotiation

between rivaling discourses which after a process of dialectics reaffirms or alters the pre-existing dominant logics, however, not always. We will argue in the following chapters that the EU's internal cacophony of rivaling discourses vis-à-vis the borderlands have been significantly reduced in recent years, however, there are still plenty of occasions where rivaling logics are pursued side-by-side given rise to a contradictory (or fuzzy) EU identitarian projection.

However, this is not to say that non-dominant groups cannot use Europe or ideas about Europe completely at will. In complex and dynamic contexts, like that of the European Union, "purposeful actors influence the processes and structures within which change takes place. Yet, no single group of decision-makers has the insight, authority and power to design and reform institutions at will and achieve pre-specified objectives" (Olsen 2002: 926). The permissive marble cake EU's identity construction allows particularistic national identity concerns or rivaling discourses as long as not seen as in utter contradiction with the essence of the EU. The EU diplomatic reprimand of Austria when the 2000 elections brought in a coalition government in which one of the partners was a political party based on a xenophobic platform is a good example of that there are limits to the malleability of the marble cake. The manner in which Europe is deployed by politicians and other identity collectives must therefore resonate to some extent with pre-existing symbols, values and myths within the European construction. We therefore expect to find that the particularistic national identity stands most chance of succeeding in being accepted at the EU level and part of the collective's dominant discourse if it is expressed in 'Euro-speak' whereby the national concern takes on a discursive value as being inherently beneficial to all members of the collective.

Third and finally the global, loose EU identity resembles, as we have seen, that of a democratic nation-state both in plurality and numbers of actors intervening in the construction process. However, the decided advantage a national foreign policy identity has over the EU's international identity is that the former has a reduced number of actors intervening to articulate the officially endorsed international identity and ensure coherence in the nation's international action compared to the much less hierarchical EU system. In other words, even if the US as a democratic nation has an international identity which very often is subject of intense rivaling debates among different domestic organized groups, in the end it is essentially the White House and a small group of State Department officials which are responsible for ensuring coherence in the US international action, both in discourse and action on the ground. The EU's international identity does not have any similar 'gate keeping', or 'herding', of its identity and many different groups within the EU 'marble cake' legitimately claim to speak for the Union in the international field (e.g. the EU Presidency, different Direction Generals within the Commission (DGs), the High Representative etc.). We expect this to be a source of fuzziness in the EU identitarian projection in its relations with its borderlands.

## 2.2. The sources of the EU identity (Self and structure)

To explore the cognitive nodes of this post-nationalistic or universalistic identity we need to look at the EU's perception of itself and how this Self is constrained or boosted by the

structure it is inserted in (the international system).<sup>2</sup> Stated differently, how does the EU construct itself socially as a foreign policy actor? In terms of the EU's dominant identity discourse in the borderlands three relevant factors stand out. The first two factors stem from the European integration experience (founding myth and its organizational logic) and are arguably more static. The third factor playing into Self is that of the member states and it is essentially dynamic and co-variable: the member states' separate foreign policy concerns or special relationships with third countries bordering the Union.

### **2.2.1. The EU's founding myth**

The EU's *telos* myth comprehends many strands and would vary according to the temporal and spatial context in which it is inserted. Here we will only highlight two which seem particularly relevant for the present discussion of the evolution of the EU's identity vis-à-vis its borderlands. First, one could note that for most current EU member states the European integration process was founded as a reaction against the worst excesses of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, such as war, genocides, extremely aggressive nationalist or totalitarian ideologies as well as exploitative colonialism – and often toward countries in the borderlands (Wæver 1995; Manners 2002). European integrationists have thus been faced with the task of re-channeling the negative legacy of previous generations of nationalists and nation-builders in individual European states. Moreover, this has

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<sup>2</sup> A 'cognitive node' refers to the different ideas (or clusters thereof) upon which a Self hangs its identity. An identity is therefore understood as a vast heterogeneous network or continuum of such cognitive nodes.

generated, as Winn (2001: 33) has noted, the drive towards an ever closer union and tempered nationalism to provide “compelling visions of a post-national European order based on transnational indeterminate forward-looking identities.” One could infer that the aggressive European past forms a cognitive barrier of sorts in EU dominant discourses – a veritable red-line on the ground – beyond which EU member states today would not like to return. Even member states which have no colonial past, or did not participate in the World War II (e.g. Sweden or Spain) accept this logic based on collective guilt. The EU has thus been vested with the semantic signifier of ‘order’ by its member states and the European construction is perceived as an antidote against the early 20<sup>th</sup> century European ‘mayhem’. That such readings of the European recent history are central to the EU’s institutions and member states’ understanding of EU ‘we-ness’ is evident in many ways, but perhaps especially telltale is the way that values such as democracy, human rights and the rule of law or the reference to avoiding the drawing of new division-lines in and around Europe are inserted into virtually all documents related to the relations with the EU borderlands.<sup>3</sup> Values and moral conduct are thus perceived as an obligatory ingredient in any EU foreign policy because they serve as the walls for a bounded European foreign policy identity and help the EU member states to dissociate the European construction from some of its members’ historical legacy. The EU, in this sense, provides the counter-weight to its member states past and potential future<sup>4</sup> and the cognitive basis of an actor aspiring to allow principles guide its action internationally.

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<sup>3</sup> An example of this discourse is the following statements by Commission President Barroso at the EU-Russia Summit in Samara May 2007. Addressing both Russian and foreign journalists, Barroso said the EU placed great store in human rights. “We stress the importance of democracy, freedom of the press, freedom of association, freedom of demonstration. These are values I’m sure unite, not divide, us. It’s very important for all European countries - and Russia is a European country - to ensure the full respect of those principles and values” (*International Herald Tribune* 2007a)

<sup>4</sup> See for example the European Commission’s concern about human rights in Poland (2007).



Second, part of the founding myth is also the idea of the gains which can be had through a positive-sum depoliticized cooperation in pursuit of long-haul objectives. The purpose of the Treaty of Rome was essentially on the one hand to overcome the beggar-neighbor competition which had characterized the interwar period and ‘cooperation’ was seen as a conveyor of a more peaceful and stable future for Europe. ‘Cooperation’ was even seen as a marker connoting the possibility to restore Europe’s greatness again after the devastation of the World War II. Transnational cooperation on technical issues and the satisfaction of basic human welfare needs is thus one of the defining features of the European Union’s origins and is extended to third countries in the spirit that collaborative action on specialized sectoral matters substantially contribute toward greater understanding between people and perhaps eventually toward peace. Once proven successful, cooperation could come to contribute to attitudinal change in favor of trust and therefore eventually diminish the prospect of strife among societies – whether armed or social – as a consequence of mutual misperceptions and suspicion. This notion is visible in the EU’s relations with its borderlands in that the schemes invariably espouse the value of a highly technical, depoliticized cooperation spanning many inter-linked policy issue areas in the terrain of ‘low’ politics and clearly meant to stimulate reform in the longer run rather than overnight. Pami Aalto (2004) has even argued that the EU has striven to appear as “a faceless entity” disconnected from national or material interests, whose “policy outcomes simply ‘happen’ without anyone or any institutional bodies really being responsible”.

The founding myth has become an increasingly important ingredient in the EU’s self-perception, as well as in its foreign policy expression since 1989, given the success

the European integration process in creating peace and prosperity among its member states. The ingredients involved can be seen as the dominant understanding, or even the shared norm, among EU member states. The 2003 Greek EU Presidency George A. Papandreou and then External Relation Commissioner Chris Patten provide an illustrative example for how such founding myths inform the EU's framework policies, when they in a joint op-ed in an Israeli major daily held –

“[t]he ambition of Europe in the Mediterranean is to turn its former power into positive influence, to help build trust among all countries, to share our experience of consolidating peace through economic cooperation. These are the same instruments that shaped the European continent. So we are confident these instruments will also serve to gradually achieve stability and prosperity in Euro-Mediterranean relations, while bringing our societies closer.” (Papandreou and Patten 2003).

### **2.2.2. Intra-EU organizational logics**

A second ingredient relevant to the EU identity construction is the factor of intra-EU organizational logic. The two key strands of thinking which have bearing on the EU's self-perception relevant to our discussion at hand here are: the EU's hybrid supranational-intergovernmental political form and the *acquis communautaire*. First, the EU can be

understood as an unprecedented political experiment whereby supranational and intergovernmental forms of governance are combined (Ruggie 1993; Bretherton and Vogler 1999 and 2006; Manners 2002). The EU's unusual political structure is a source of identitarian self-understandings as far as the EU and its member states tend to hold the European construction as a novel form of international relations. Ferrero-Waldner (European Union Committee 2005) sees the EU as "a *sui generis* regional organisation" looking to find its "own path within the international community." Or as the *Gateway to Europe* website (undated) has it "[t]he EU is, in fact, unique. Its member states have set up common institutions to which they delegate some of their sovereignty so that decisions on specific matters of joint interest can be made democratically at European level". The singularity of the EU political experiment is thus above all that it aspires to transcend the Westphalian state through the pooling of sovereignty.<sup>5</sup> One could even infer that the 'nation-state' as a semantic signifier is often implicitly constructed in EU documents as an inferior form of political organization in comparison to the European integration process.<sup>6</sup> In this view, the EU poses itself as a successful example of how the forces of international anarchy, self-help and power politics – whether intra-state or as stemming from the system – can be tamed through integration in the spirit of utilitarianism. The Union's dominant collective worldview therefore does not seem far off Wendt's (1992:

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<sup>5</sup> Riffkin (2004) holds that this is a trait which stems from European political culture in that "[f]or Europeans, freedom is found not in autonomy but in embeddedness. To be free is to have access to many interdependent relationships. The more communities one has access to, the more options one has for living a full and meaningful life. It is *inclusivity* that brings security." This stands in contrast with the Americans, for whom "freedom has long been associated with autonomy. An autonomous person is not dependent on others or vulnerable to circumstances beyond his or her control."

<sup>6</sup> As Nikitin (2006) interestingly notes, "[h]aving gone through many cycles of accession dialogue with uneasy nation-state partners (Denmark, Turkey, Cyprus, Balkan and Baltic states, etc.), Brussels has elaborated a habit of perceiving a dialogue between 'the Union' and 'a State' in terms of inequality by definition. The Union is perceived as by definition more valuable (at least because it already represents 'a collective will') than any country." Karen Smith (2003) has also argued that in many ways the EU tries to construct itself as being different (i.e. Othering) from the Westphalian state.

394), who argue that anarchy's consequences for specific political interactions are radically undetermined and that the socially constructed nature of anarchy makes it amenable to transformation. The EU's confident belief in its integrative model to cancel out the ills of inter-state competition can be seen both by its standing invitation to outsiders in the past decades to join the European construction, as well as the EU's, in particular the EU Commission's, active support for those multilateralist and/or regional cooperation arrangements which have surged elsewhere in the world (Regelsberger 1990 and 1997; Alecu de Flers and Regelsberger 2005). Indeed, the multilateralization of EU's foreign relations has been described as a "landmark on the road to a new world order" (Genschler 1987) or as a "micro-cosmos, a laboratory for the world at large and explorer of new kinds of political deals between and beyond states" (Nicolaidis and Howse 2002).

Second, the intra-EU organizational logic in terms the *acquis communautaire* is another factor central to the EU foreign policy self-understanding. The *acquis communautaire* serves the role of binding the EU member states and its institutions together and, in essence, the factor which probably best distinguishes understandings of 'we' from 'Others' in that the acceptance of the total body of EU accumulated law entails membership of the EU (Friis and Murphy 1999; Filtenborg et al. 2002). The importance which the EU and its member states attaches to the *acquis* is that the complexity of the *acquis* allows a functional cooperation among a highly heterogeneous set of states, whether big or small, whether southern European or northern, whether relatively rich or relatively poor. The *acquis* can be said to represent the institutional balance struck within the EU which enables partnership and equality between a mixed bunch of member states. This understanding of the significance of adequate legal arrangements is also reflected in

the EU's foreign policy making. The EU prefers to structure its relations with third actors through comprehensive legal agreements to foment transparency in terms of the rights and obligations inherent in the relationship. The EU is proud of this contractual approach in that it is meant to show the EU's restraint as a power, whereby third countries 'jointly' agree on the objectives of the relations and the agreement are entered into 'voluntary'. This 'non-coercive' approach is hailed to make the inter-action more 'just'. Duchene (1973: 19; cf Manners 2002) has argued that the EC acted to restrain international relations through the use of law, by bringing "to international problems the sense of common responsibility and structures of contractual politics which have in the past been associated almost exclusively with 'home' and not foreign [...] affairs." Maull (2006) has even sustained that EU has employed the rule of law beyond its borders in a way which works toward "civilizing" international politics.

The intra-EU organizational logics, whether in the form of its hybrid political form or in terms of its focus on legalistic frameworks, have contributed to the collective self-perception of the Union as an entity trying to 'domesticate' relations between states in the international system, both between its own member states as well as with states beyond the Union's borders. Such an understanding can be said to be a collective norm among EU institutions and member states.<sup>7</sup> The dominant discourse within the EU essentially sees the Union as a pioneer and a champion of a fairer international system. This conception of the Union is common in EU documents and sometimes rather forcefully states by EU officials. The External Relations Commissioner Benita Ferrero-

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<sup>7</sup> We argue that the intra-EU organizational logic is a collective, rather than shared norm, given that some 'Euro-sceptics', most notably e.g. UK or Sweden, now and then profess that they are not convinced by the virtues of being restrained by the EU framework. Such skepticism stands in contrast with the 'Euro-enthusiasts' led away by Germany or the Benelux.

Waldner has noted that the EU is a “civilian power by design” (European Union Committee 2005), while the CFSP High Representative Javier Solana (2006) has, for example, stated that: “I see Europe as a new form of power. A force for good around the world. A promoter of effective multilateralism, international law and justice.” The restraining effect of the EU hybrid organization and *acquis* is even perceived as one of the Union’s principal identitarian strengths as a political actor. This fact is well-illustrated by the good-natured joking by EU officials which Robert Kagan’s (2002) – meant to be stinging – critique of the EU as a weakling in international relations. Kagan has held that the EU is a Venusian power, living “post-historical paradise” ruled by international law, from which power politics is banished and the Kantian vision of “perpetual peace” is realized. The riposte of Solana, before an American audience, started off with the tongue-in-cheek affirmation that “I’m from Venus” and went on to lay out the virtues of using a Kantian approach in today’s world politics (cf. Solana 2003).

### **2.2.3. Member states’ identities**

The third relevant element of the EU’s foreign policy identitarian construction of the Self is the way the respective national identity constructions of the EU’s member states shape or are shaped by the Union’s collective identity. It could perhaps appear tautological to affirm that the EU’s self-perception also derive in part from its member states’ foreign policy identities, they are after all the principal actors within the EU foreign policy

framework. Moreover, they are most frequently the source, stimuli or advocate for different EU identity traits, such as for example, Germany has possibly been the strongest defendant of regional cooperation as a regular feature of EU foreign policy (Regelsberger 1990 and 1991). The British and the Nordic EU states have been at the forefront of nudging on their other EU partners to adopt value promotion as a prominent facet of the EU's interventionism. Newer member states have also in different ways worked to weave their particularistic foreign policy identities into the broader EU identitarian constructions, i.e. 'customizing' the EU into something more in accordance with national expectations, cultural affinity and deeply held foreign policy beliefs (Ojanen 1999). Examples abound, but to name a few would be e.g. Austria's staunch commitment to the Western Balkans, for which it has found allies among other post-Habsburgian countries such as Hungary and Slovenia, has been one of the motors behind EU's policy there. Finland, on its hand, has shown eagerness to Europeanize its relations with Russia, portraying itself and a bridge between East and West (ibid. 2000). Such pursuits are surely part of a process to reverse the 'Finlandization' of its foreign policy experienced during the Cold War, but also to maintain the close links it established with Moscow during those years. Yet another example would be Poland, which has insisted on special attention for the Eastern Dimension (Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine) (Natorski 2006). Historic or cultural ties have, however, not been the only factor explaining how EU member states have uploaded national interests and identities at the European level. The perception of seeing themselves as (increasingly) peripheral to the EU agenda are an additional rationale behind Spain's or Finland's drive to have their respective 'proximity areas' included or higher prioritized on the EU agenda (Barbé 1997). France's interest in

the the western Mediterranean and Paris drive to establish Stability Pacts in Central and Eastern Europe as well as the Royaumont Initiative for the Western Balkans was to some extent a reflection of its fear of loosing leadership – a concept central to its foreign policy identity – in areas where Germany had increasingly at the time become the foremost referent.<sup>8</sup>

In most cases the nationally specific identitarian constructions have little negative consequences for the EU identity overall, indeed it can be said that the above national identitarian traits have been incorporated within the EU ‘marble cake’ foreign policy identity without much problems. However, there are occasions when rivaling logics limit or block the EU’s dominant discourse. On other occasions rivaling discourses pursued side-by-side give rise to a contradictive (or fuzzy) identitarian projection.

First, perhaps most well-known among the non-dominant identity understandings which contribute to the limiting of the EU’s identity are the special ties between certain EU members vis-à-vis third countries. This is, for example, the case of Germany’s special relationship with Israel, Croatia, Slovenia and Russia, relations which have been especially influenced by the events of the World War II. Other illustrative examples are French and British understandings of their residual imperial standing and special relationship with its former colonies. These particularistic national understanding have had a determining influence over the EC/EU collective identity, whether inhibiting Germany from supporting any EC/EU policy taking a too assertive stance against Israel

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<sup>8</sup> In terms of the Western Mediterranean, François Mitterrand would already in 1983 propose a regional conference (involving France, Italy, Spain, Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco) during a visit to Morocco. While the challenges stemming from this area provided part of his motivation, the project was also very much to do with France seeking to harness ‘southern power’ to counter Germany’s preponderance within the EEC. Indeed, even before arriving in the Elysée Palace, Mitterrand had looked for southern support to counterbalance German predominance within the Socialist International, by holding two conferences of southern European socialist parties in January 1976 and May 1977 (Gillespie 2002).



or Russia, or France from allowing EC/EU action, or at least particular kinds of action (e.g. democratization, human rights), in those areas (Maghreb or elsewhere in Africa) where it considers it has a *domaine réservé*. That cultural identitarian understandings also may be a motivation is evident from the Greek decision since 1992 to block the EU's planned recognition of the Republic of Macedonia on a basis of the latter's alleged usurpation of national patrimony. Greece did not question the right to independence and sovereignty of the former Yugoslav republic, but objected to how Skopje allegedly 'appropriated' Greek history and traditions through the usage of the name 'Macedonia' and potentially attempting to create a transborder identitarian community with Greeks Macedonian residents.<sup>9</sup> Such blockage has, however, meant that Athens has found itself in isolation given that the remaining member states would like to recognize the Republic's Constitutional name. A different type of example would be the existence of identitarian communities which perceive themselves as differentiated from the dominant national identity (ethnic, linguistic or cultural communities) within different EU member states, sometimes with secessionist ambitions, also conditions the EU identity in important ways. The Spanish, Italian or French ambivalence when it comes to extending recognition for the right of self-determination for territorial, cultural or linguistic groups which so desire has heavily conditioned the EU actuation in this terrain in the past decade, producing at best an ambiguous stance on the international principle of self-determination.<sup>10</sup> These particularistic national identity constructions thus limit or outright impede EU articulation of a more forceful policy or line of action even in cases where

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<sup>9</sup> The Greek claim is that 'Skopje's government' allegedly uses the name 'Macedonia' to claim that Macedonians exist 'under occupation' in Greece and calls for the 'liberation' of all Macedonians, even those who regard themselves as Greeks.

<sup>10</sup> See for example the debate among EU members in regards to the future status of Kosovo.

such action would have been in consonance with the dominant understanding of the EU's identity.

Second, rivaling discourses may not necessarily only stem from the intergovernmental level. Subnational particularistic interests and identities may also produce rivaling discourses and competing claims on the EU foreign policy identity. For example, well-organized organized economic interests (e.g. European steel, textile, wine industry or horticulture) or local-based identities trying to protect their lifestyles (e.g. farmers or fishermen) are actors which may have a bearing on the EU identity either directly or by ways of their national governments. They all add their particular vision to how the EU is articulated by their actuation (Krahman 2003; Birckenbach 2003). The European Union protectionism in agricultural produce, steel and textiles as well as its restrictive take on freedom of movement of workers from non-EU countries, inserted in all the EU's framework policies towards borderland regions, are frequently noted as an outcome of domestic identitarian pressures influencing the intergovernmental dominant discourse towards external partners (Gomez 2003; Gomez and Christou 2004). However, it is usually overlooked that competing claims from other sub-national well-organized organized economic interests or local-based identities within the EU also play in. While many textile fabricants try to protect their industries from extra-European competition, for example, many EU garment retailers argue in favor of yet greater EU market openness in terms of textile imports from third countries. In terms of agricultural produce there are as many intra-EU voices arguing the necessity to protect EU farmers' daily-bread, lifestyle and the value of a 'cultivated landscape' against external competition as there are arguments in favor of EU consumers and in solidarity of third country

producers. There is thus an absence of consensus giving rise to European Union policies pursued simultaneously in outright contradiction to each other. The particularity of the EU's identity is that it seems malleable enough to accept that both rivaling logics be pursued at the same time.

#### **2.2.4. Structural opportunities and constraints (social context)**

Identity, as agency, is mediated through the social structures in which it is inserted. Structure refers to patterns of predominantly stable social relationships, practices and shared perceptions of reality, whether at the domestic or international level (Wendt 1987; Ruggie 1993). In International Relations theory, the Realist premise that the structure is anarchic and that international political structures are reducible to the distribution of inter-state capabilities have essentially dominated the debates on exogenous forces shaping social relationships and perceptions in the past decades (Waltz 1979 and 1986). A sociological understanding of structures, in contrast, opens up the possibility that 'anarchy is what states make out of it' (Wendt 1992) meaning that these structures are as all other social realities constituted by the actors composing it. Constructivists therefore conceive these structures as composed both of both (more or less) objective and subjective elements. The advantage of a Reflectionist approach is that it perceives international system structures as consisting of both enabling and constraining elements on a given actor's behavior. Such a take on the international system differs from the

Neorealist view that denies the enabling feature of international structures seeing it predominantly as a constraint on state agency.

First, the end of the Cold War and the collapse of state socialism contributed significantly to the appeal and dominance of liberal ideas around the world. This has been increasingly reflected in Western policies towards non-Western countries, including the policies of the EC/EU (Bretherton and Vogler 1999: 8; Barbé 2007). The fall of the Soviet communism seemed to put an end the Marxist appeal as a way to ensure economic growth and social welfare, which had been the main alternative until then. The 1990 CSCE Paris Charter (signed by US-USSR and Europe) would sanction Western modes of liberalism, market economy and the democratic rights of the individuals. Moreover, the speed with which the Central and Eastern European economies opted for pursuing market principles and undertook politico-institutional reform has been seen as a further revalidation of the application of the liberal tenets of state-building and economic ideals on a worldwide scale. This fact facilitated the institutionalization of liberal market based values that justify particular economic-institutional choices as inevitable responses to the demands of a globalizing economy. The EU's power has thus increased as the international system shifted from military balance to economic competition. Fukuyama's (1992) thesis that the 'end of history' had revalidated the truly universal significance of liberalism and liberal institutions, such as the rule of law, representative democracy, and the market economy was therefore at the time rather uncontested. It is worth noting that the EU's self-understanding it built on that it has adapted the liberal economic formula into an own-version. Philippart (2003a: 209) argues that the EU rejects the "unidimensional approach of neoliberal thinking". The European allegedly 'softer'

approach has been described as ‘embedded liberalism’ with a balance between bargained trade liberalization and the evolution of the welfare and regulatory state (Knodt 2004). The EU has attempted to combine a mixture of trade liberalization, macroeconomic stability, export-driven growth and privatization with attention to economic development and political, social and regional stability. The EU formula also stands out for providing financial assistance to help palliate the worst social effects of economic restructuring. Perhaps for this reason, the EU to many “holds some of the answers to the challenges posed by globalization” (Nicolaïdis and Howse 2002: 767). Indeed, as Neil Walker (2001: 55) puts it, in many ways the dominant discourse within the Union circles around the view that “the EU provides a role model of trade liberalization, a miniature template to which the global organization might aspire and from which it might learn in policy areas as diverse as competition, agriculture and the environment.”

Second, the international system after the Cold War, and especially after the 11 September, is being given a reading in which security is an increasingly a matter requiring transnational attention. As an influential report of the mid-1990s signaled: “[t]raditionally security meant military strength, but there is a clear development indicating that security includes more areas as threat emerges from different sources. Nowadays...increasing significance attached to a new aspect centering around internal civil strife, protection of minorities, human rights violations, ecological disaster risks, irresponsible use of the new technologies etc” (Westendorp Report 1995: 31; cf. Buzan et al 1998). Dominant Western perceptions hold that the last decades have seen a gradual blurring of high and low politics and steeped in the notion of the ineffectiveness of trying to maintain domestic and international politics as fundamentally separate domains. This

fact had two principal consequences. On the one hand the Cold War apprehensiveness against external intervention into sovereign nations-states has disappeared as a consequence of a change of mentality in Western-led institutions (UN, IMF etc.) (Charillon 2004). The insertion of political criteria into foreign policy actions is a natural consequence of the ways in which the apparently rigid bipolar divisions have been eliminated. Political conditionality has also become a notable feature of EU foreign policy since 1990s (Smith, K. 2003). On the other hand, dominant international discourses have shifted the emphasis away from the bipolar politico-military version of security to 'soft' security. The Liberalist take on soft security is that it shifts concern away from states as the referent object of security towards individuals and society at large (Buzan et al. 1998). Related to this is that soft security threats are usually seen as transcending the ability of any one state to deal with them. Instead, they are of transnational, regional and even global dimensions and require cooperation between different states and societies (Browning and Joenniemi 2004: 238). The new perception of security has thus opened up the horizon for institutions capable of multilateral cooperation and acting in diverse terrains. Ifestos (1987) notes that the conditions of global interdependence have created opportunities for a larger role in international affairs by "giant middle powers" with civilian means at their disposal. The 1990 CSCE Charter of Paris would therefore bestow the task of providing soft security in the borderlands on the EU, given its (compared to a nation-state) ample range of trade and financial assistance instruments, which could have more influence in a world in which economics is just as (or even more) important than military powers (Smith, K. 2003; Bretherton and Vogler 1999 and 2006). The end of the Cold War thus appeared to shift the "essence of

power” in international relations, as Duke (2006: 17) would have it, away from a focus on ‘hard’ to ‘soft power’.

The opportunities created by the current international system serves to reaffirm EU’s self-perception in feeling strengthened, justified or boosted by the structure to pursue its foreign policy agency through the means of market economy, redistributive economic policies, social and political reform leading to democracy, human rights, good governance and rule of law. It can be argued that the European Union, as a “process of collective policy-formation,” is deeply integrated into its structure which is both “penetrated or perforated by the broader activities and institutional developments of the EU” as well as “embedded within a variety of international/global frameworks” (Hill and Smith 2005: 9; cf. Telò 2001).

### 2.3. What the EU composite foreign policy identity adds up to

The above sections have traced some of the rudimentary cognitive nodes around which the EU’s composite foreign policy identity is constructed on in its relations with the borderlands. The composite identity, as we have observed, is based both on a logic of consequences (most notably, EU member states’ security), as well as of appropriateness (e.g. human rights, democracy and a ‘fairer’ international system). Such a broad identitarian construction is arguably necessary in such a plural collective as the European Union in order to ensure that all member states and EU institutions feel their

particularistic identities represented at the EU-level. We have also seen how the dominant discourses in the contemporary international system have essentially vindicated the EU's self-perception, thereby boosting the EU identity in important ways. However, what does it all add up to then?

The EU's founding myth and the intra-EU organizational logic are without doubt the facets of the EU's international identity which have received most attention in political speeches by the Union's officials or by the academic community. These are the identitarian facets which most often are cited or referred to in order to point to the EU's success as a political construction, its achievements and its potential as a global player. Moreover, it is not infrequent to find statements whereby the EU founding myth and the intra-EU organizational logic constructs the European Union as an innovative, less aggressive way of conducting international relations and a model to be emulated. According to such narratives the EU is seen as having a surplus of a set of liberal values, while borderland partners are found in deficit of governance, gender equality, human rights, functioning and/or independence of legal and judicial systems, civil society, education, civil liberties and economic and social performance (Harpaz 2007: 91). Romano Prodi, former President of the European Commission, has, for example, held that –

“[o]ur continent has been transformed. It was once a cauldron boiling over with conflicts. And today Europe is a powerhouse for peace, generating stability and prosperity beyond its borders. The Union has brought us one of the longest periods of peace in our history. And it has set an example that gives hope to



millions around the world. Our success shows we have found a model that works. A model to draw on in managing relations between states in our neighbourhood and even beyond” (Prodi 2004).

The EU is thus trying to create an identity based on distinctiveness. The EU would like to appear as an entity which is *sui generis*, at the service of world-wide well-being and based on internal philosophy which divorces it from power politics and unfair practices. Hill (1996: 9) has noted that indeed the European diplomacy has gradually come to be “associated in the public mind with a distinct set of principles” which above all “stimulates a consciousness of and a debate about what Europe ought to be doing in the world.”<sup>11</sup> If one is to believe Rifkin (2004) the EU’s narrative has even had the effect of fomenting a ‘European dream’ beyond the Union’s borders as a source of inspiration in that it is “bound to [enhance] the welfare of the planet.”

However, while the Union may construct its identity in a jubilant and positivistic fashion, it may have chosen to gloss over the less attractive features of its composite identity. Some authors have pointed to that the intra-EU organizational logic and the member states particularistic concerns are a constant source of fuzziness which affects the EU identity projection negatively (Bretherton and Vogler 2006). Unworthy intra-EU squabbles in regards to the Union’s geopolitical involvement in the EU borderland (cf. Chapter 3), has also raised questions of the soundness of the ‘model’ held up. Similarly, the Union’s free trade vs. protectionist rivaling discourses or the rather subjective manner whereby conditionality is applied or financial assistance distributed due to member states’

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<sup>11</sup> Hill’s findings are consistent with public opinion polls gathered in a special Eurobarometer study on the European Neighbourhood Policy (European Commission 2007). A majority of EU citizens polled strongly support European Union upholding principles of democracy and human rights in neighboring countries.

special or commercial ties to third countries have also contributed to confusion about what the Union's identity is trying to project. On the one hand the EU promises to level differences by re-setting the political, economic and cultural disequilibrium between itself and borderland countries and, on the other, it acts in ways which seem more concerned with the intra-EU power equilibrium and/or preserves the current power asymmetry between the EU and borderland partners. And, as if these factors contributing to identitarian fuzziness were not sufficient, Calhoun (2001: 52) has also noted that "Europe is constructed out of both categorical similarities and relational ties, but no one set of these reaches all Europeans without joining a range of non-Europeans as well." If politics is essentially about the access or non-access to influence and resources (or stated differently decision-making, agenda-setting, and preference-shaping), the EU is perhaps exceptional among political constructs in allowing for such openness to or inclusiveness of third country preferences in its decision making system by ways of the EU's individual member states (in particular, for example, the US, but to some extent also Russia). The extensive influence of outside actors clearly contributes to the perception that the EU's foreign policy identitarian projection is ambiguous and easily swayed under pressure.

Moreover, other sources of identitarian fuzziness are the different competing discourses, all claiming to speak for Europe, which simultaneously emanate from the EU. The EC/EU's inability to 'speak with a single voice' is a longstanding problem which gives rise to some confusion to outsiders in terms of what identity the EU is trying to project and whether the model is really worth emulating. Perhaps the best example of this is the institutional cacophony as a consequence of the tension between the different European institutions since Maastricht. The member states seems almost ambiguous

about the supranational institutions and inter-pillar coordination they themselves have created. On the one hand, the member states have tended to give the Commission a broad mandate in its post-Cold War role as a policy initiator to configure relations with different areas in and around Europe. The post-1989 growing involvement of the Commission in the EU borderlands can be seen as a recognition of the member states' desire for greater foreign policy consistency. However, at the same time the member states have shown themselves reluctant to allow the Commission to freely manage these relation or endow the Commission with the necessary competences to make the high level of ambition in EU foreign policy since 1989 come true (Peterson 1997). The existence of two separate foreign policy budget lines (CFSP and External Relations) also reveals the member states continued hesitancy to implement the totality of the EU's foreign policy through the Commission, as a consequence of their reluctance to giving the European Commission a seat at the CFSP decision making table. This indicates an ambivalent foreign policy discourse, whereby on the one hand outsiders are encouraged to emulate the EU to overcome the trappings of power politics, but at the same time the EU member states do not seem content with, of even suspicious of, the very institutions which they themselves have created to achieve that purpose.<sup>12</sup> The European Commission, on its hand, has grown increasingly wary of encroachments on its existing competences and has regularly taken the Council to the European Court of Justice in order to settle outstanding

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<sup>12</sup> It is also worth noting, as Bretherton and Vogler (1999 and 2006; cf. Gomez 2003, Jupille and Caporaso 1998) have, that the system has learnt to live– and indeed feels comfortable– with this interpillar complexity and multileveledness to a point that it exploits it for its own benefit. Third actors complain, for example, that the Commission in determined negotiation situations uses its structural inflexibility as a negotiation ploy. This means that third parties might have to accept a deal which for them is less than they desired lest the Commission be forced to go back to the negotiating table with the EU member states for a new negotiation mandate. The latter is a situation which most third country negotiators would want to avoid due to that they are fully aware that a new mandate might be years in coming and might be even less concessionary.

disputes. Such internecine institutional warfare has obviously not helped the image of the EU foreign policy as solid and as a template or model to be emulated. The consequences for the borderland partners of the inter-pillar tension have been long delays – or even suspensions – in financial assistance disbursements, unclear application procedures or implementation prioritization for projects and a constant bewilderment in terms of their proper interlocutor.<sup>13</sup>

From the above discussion one can only draw the conclusion that the EU's relation to power is highly ambiguous. On the one hand, the EU foreign policy identity is essentially discursively constructed by the EU and its member states by ways of a narrative which portrays the Union as a responsible actor, an anti-dote to Realpolitik and Machivellian designs and as a solution to the age-old problem of balancing between strong and weak. In the words of Patten (2000) “the skills we are developing to manage our own [EU] affairs are enormously relevant to a world that is still struggling to evolve an economic, legal and political framework to contain the passions of states, to help manage relations between them, and to channel globalisation in beneficent directions.” To the mind of one analyst, Europe therefore appears to be turning away from power. To Kagan (2002) the European Union “is moving beyond power into a self-contained world of laws and rules and transnational negotiation and cooperation. It is entering a post-historical paradise of peace and relative prosperity, the realization of Kant's ‘Perpetual Peace’.” Any EU power projection would, to the same author, be “inconsistent with the

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<sup>13</sup> In terms of the question of the correct interlocutor, this was evident in the case of the ENP pre-planning stage in 2003, when partners were informally gauged on their opinions in regards to the launch of an ENP/Wider Europe policy. The new policy contained elements of CFSP and external relations mixed together in a way which caused third country to question whether there had been an unannounced fusion of the first and second pillar and whether they should now address the Commission as the sole interlocutor or continue to address Council and Commission matters separately. *Interviews, Brussels July 2005.*

ideals of postmodern Europe, whose very existence depends on the rejection of power politics” (ibid.). Perhaps such defensive identitarian construction is necessary given the turbid past of some of the EU member states with different borderland partners. The EU’s identity projection rather seems to rest on that power can be transcended by the right distribution of interests and strategies.

Moreover, it is also empirically observable how the EU institutional set-up also makes straightforward or traditional power projection inherently difficult. The EU foreign policy system essentially lacks the key central institutions and instruments for carrying out foreign policies based on statist, or what might be termed ‘modern’, assumptions. The EU appears to prefer to project its foreign policy in a diffuse manner through global networks of wealth, information and images (Paasi 1996; Rifkin 2004). The multi-perspectival nature of the European project and the complexities of a globalized world essentially appears to render the search for a EU foreign policy based on traditional assumptions about centralized power and resources fruitless (Smith, M. 2003). For this reason, the European foreign policy is, to some observers, a kind of ‘post-modern’ – in the sense of being ‘post-sovereign’ or even ‘post-power’ – foreign policy (Smith, M 2003). As a force for post-modern diffuse power or of ‘goodness’, the EU, it is perceived, can get away with intrusive measures such as stabilizing states and regions via sovereignty-infringing bilateral or regional partnerships. The EU’s “power of attraction and transformation” is, according to Solana “enormous.” The CFSP High Representative would also have us believe that much of EU’s ability to stimulate reform in third countries stem from its ‘transformative power’ or ‘soft power’ in arguing that “[w]e [the EU] do system change, not regime change. We do it slowly, in partnership and without

military force. Once they enter the EU's orbit, countries are changed forever" (Solana 2005).

However, if one moves beyond the rhetoric and look at the operationalization of the EU's identity in the borderlands, concretely by examining regional multilateralism, multi-sectoral cooperation and interventionism, such depictions of the Union and its foreign policy do not seem to coincide with reality. There is much more 'power over' than expected in the EU's relations with its borderland partners and the Union's attempt to foment situations of 'power to' have most often yet to come into functioning. One could infer that the EU's self-narrative is therefore more an illusive idealistic identity than an accurate reflection of the Self. Nicolaïdis and Howse (2002: 769) have argued that the EU's identity constructions in international economic relations overall often lack "self-awareness." It would seem that both in global economic and in the EU's borderlands the identitarian construction projected is not the EU as is but an 'EU-topia' (ibid.). Hegel has offered the insight that the key challenge was to recognize human self-hood as is in that the individual and/or collective is often tempted to wanting to be different than we are, wanting even, perhaps to have different wants than those that actually drive us (Hegel, cited in Calhoun 2001: 46). There is thus a prospect for that the by EU projected identity stem more from the EU and its member states enthusiasm for the idea of a common European foreign policy and their collective hopes that the Union will prove to be a source for goodness than a well-founded identity kept in check by reality. Such misidentification or outright self-delusion is problematic in that it distorts the perceptions of policy options and pursuits open to the EU in its relations with the borderlands, and creates a misfit between the EU's identity and the social context (i.e. the

borderlands) in which it is inserted. These are observations which we will explore further in Chapter 7.

#### 2.4. The EU identity in the borderlands: ‘cohesion’, ‘presence’, and ‘autonomy’

If the previous sections have examined how the EU perceives itself, how it constructs its identity and how this identity is mediated through the structure, we will now turn to how this self-constructed identity is conditioned by internal factors and how it plays out and interact with the EU’s borderlands. The EU’s identitarian construction would be rendered meaningless or lack credibility if the EU member states and institutions did not support it, outsiders took no note of the EU’s foreign policy identity or other important players involved in the same regions acted to impede or cancel out the EU foreign policy identity.

The remainder of this work will thus have a dual function. On the one hand it is of some interest to see how this EU’s foreign policy identity in relation with the borderland have evolved in the past decade and thus we will examine how the dynamic part of the EU’s identity – member states and institutions – have converged or not into a EU cohesive international identity in relation to the borderlands. On the other hand, the existence and self-recognition of a collective identity is never purely an internal matter; it always presumes and depends on the existence of other entities. We will therefore be reflecting upon how the EU’s identity is perceived, facilitated/constrained and resonates with outsider’s identitarian constructions.

For this purpose we will forward three conceptual models to explore this identity – ‘cohesion’, ‘presence’ and ‘autonomy’. ‘Cohesion’ refers to the extent to which an actor acts in a unitary way, ‘presence’ refers to ‘outsiders’ perceptions of EU identity and these parameters will help us structure the analysis in Chapters 4-6. ‘Autonomy’ will be the focus of Chapter 8 and examine how the EU identity is distinctive and independent from other actors in the borderlands.

#### **2.4.1. The EU ‘cohesion’ in the borderlands**

Cohesion refers to the degree to which the group is able to formulate and articulate consistent policies based on its professed values or ideas (i.e. cohesive foreign policy articulation and action) (Jupille and Caporaso 1998: 213-29). Cohesion in relation to the EU’s collective foreign policy identity construct is an expression of ‘we-feeling’, solidarity and loyalty whether among member states or among institutions. The interest lays therefore lies in uncovering if the dominant national and institutional identity discourses have come to converge to forge a dominant EU identitarian discourse. Cohesion could thus be seen an umbrella category to explain what Nuttall (2005) has labeled ‘horizontal’ (between EU policies), ‘institutional’ (inter-pillar; intergovernmental vs. supranational) and ‘vertical’ consistency (between EU and EU member states’ policies). We have opted here for one single category, however, to facilitate the argument. The way ‘cohesion’ will be applied in Ch. 3-6 is to measure over time the



convergence of in terms of the policies adopted vis-à-vis the three borderland areas under study here.

In the above discussion of a pluralistic collective identity we noted that ideas, norms and values may be ‘shared’ or ‘collective’, meaning that there is a gradient as to the way in which these are internalized the members of the collective. With ‘cohesion’, however, we turn our attention to those situations where the EU member states have such divergent identitarian visions as they either produce no EU identity or they contribute to the forming of rival discourses and hence as a source of dynamic tension which helps define new EU identities. Some discursive dichotomies are very familiar to us and have been explored in much detail in academic literature over the decades, such as for example the ‘Atlanticists’ vs. ‘Europeanists’, ‘big’ vs. ‘small, member states, ‘southern’ vs. ‘northern’ EU countries etc. Another good example is the discursive competition between the ‘federalists’ and the ‘inter-governmentalists’ which means that the European project is left in such a limbo that so far it continues to a theoretically non-descript entity (*sui generis*).

Competing discourses are highly relevant to the context of EU’s foreign policy identity in the borderlands, as we have seen above in the section on how the EU member states contribute to the EU identitarian construction. Chapters 3-6 will look at the presence or absence of cohesion among member states along two principal lines of research. First, we will see in Chapter 3 how the EU’s international identity has been forged around the notion of taking on ‘responsibility’ for the borderlands. The great divergence in EU member states’ views in the 1990s in regards to the role of the European Commission in external action, whether the EU or other European security

organizations should assume leadership and the EC budget-battle would initially produce a non-identity for the EU (cf. Chapter 3). We will also explore the factors which helped bridge these rivaling discourses. Second, the Chapters 4-6 will examine the specificities of the member state cohesion in each of the three borderlands under survey here. It will be sustained that cohesion has been facilitated as a consequence of the Union's multi-vector foreign policy based on regional multilateralism, multi-sectoral cooperation and interventionism.

Competing discourses among and within the European institutions (EU Council, EU Commission and EU Parliament) are also relevant factors of cohesion or its absence. As we have already alluded to the tension between the Council and the Commission, in particular, stems from member states' ambivalence over the growing role for the Commission in the EU's foreign policy. Such friction has at times generated contradictory dynamics, and/or no action, and is therefore relevant to consider in each of Chapters 4-6. Finally, on some occasions there have also been problems within a particular European institution to produce a cohesive policy output as a consequence of rivaling dynamics between its component parts. An illustrative example, which we will come back to in Chapter 5, have been the difficulty for the Commission to achieve cohesion in the implementation of its financial assistance instruments given their management being spread among different Directorate Generals (DGs). Each DG has been highly unwilling to dovetail or subordinate their institutional logic to that of another DG out of concern that this would inevitably result into a loss of decision making autonomy or prestige.

#### **2.4.2. The EU ‘presence’ in the borderlands**

The term ‘presence’ as a concept in International Relations studies refers essentially to a foreign policy actor’s ability to exert influence and shape the perceptions and expectations of third actors, whether by words or deeds. Presence can be defined by “a combination of factors: credentials and legitimacy, the capacity to act and mobilize resources” as well as the place it occupies in the “perception and expectations” of third policy makers and societies (Allen and Smith 1990: 21; cf. Bretherton and Vogler 1999 and 2006). Presence determines the reputation and status’ accorded to the EU by external audiences. It is thus a function of how efficient policy machinery which an actor disposes of and, in particular, how the collective identity is communicated to and/or projected onto third parties. Presence may also refer to “the external, often unanticipated or unintended, consequences of the Union’s internal priorities and policies” whereby EU’s identitarian construction may generate responses from third parties (Bretherton and Vogler 2006: 27). This indicator will be used in the following chapters to determine whether the EU identity has been noted, or receive recognition, by outsiders. Moreover, ‘presence’ will be used to explore what acknowledgement or recognition has the EU identity received by outsiders over time. Given that presence is a function of objective (geography, size and wealth) and subjective (political standing and ‘soft power’) parameters we will break the indicator down into three variables: economic presence, political presence, cultural presence.

The EU’s ‘economic presence’ is the consequences of its economic system and weight in the international system, something which manuals on the European integration

(cf. Wallace and Wallace 2000; Hill and Smith 2005) never fail to notice. The EU is now a union of 27 states with near 500 million people and generating a fifth of the world's Gross National Product (GNP). This has automatically centered borderland countries' attention on the EU. It seems fairly indisputable that the EU and its member states have become the world largest internal market with the resulting impact on third countries. If one adds to this the customs union, and the 1999 creation of a single currency, the creation of an economic creature of such dimensions evidently and logically has a discernable effect on world commerce, both in terms of trade creation (integrated market, consumerism) as well as trade diversion (external tariffs and non-tariff barriers). Moreover, the EU and its member states have become the largest source of financial assistance for the borderlands in the previous decade as noted in the Introduction. The image of the European Union as an economic 'giant' is thus frequently invoked as a means to convey the stature which the EU enjoys in the world trade system. Such notions reaffirms the Union's unique identity to the outside world, shaping perceptions and expectations regarding its strengths, weaknesses, preferences and strategic policy choices (Papadimitriou et al. 2007: 225).

In comparison with its Goliath size in international economic circles, however, the Union is often ridiculed as a 'dwarf' in terms of its 'political presence' on international affairs. Nevertheless, while there might be a grain of truth in this metaphor, one cannot ignore that the Union is slowly becoming a political referent in the international environment that is increasingly difficult to ignore. Rhein (1992: 30) has even sustained that the international presence of the European Economic Community as a "strange, new animal of the international order" was already palpable immediately after its launch in

1957. Proof of that is, according to the same observer, the fact that within three years of the Community's creation, seventeen countries comprising all the West European neighbors, plus the US, Japan, Canada, New Zealand and Israel had established diplomatic missions in Brussels. By January 1991, 160 countries had ambassadors accredited to the Community (ibid.) and today virtually all states which can afford the expense have an office in Brussels. Moreover, another factor which seems to indicate a growing political presence and actor capability of the EU is the Union's ability to shape the international agenda on issues, such as the International Criminal Court, environmental regulations or the death penalty etc (cf. Laatikainen and Smith 2006). One should, for example, not underestimate the influence which the European Union holds as a voting caucus in the United Nations over debates in the General Assembly, related committees and subordinated UN agencies (Strömviik 1998; Luif 2003; Johansson-Nogués 2004a and 2006a;), in the World Trade Organization (WTO) or IMF, or in regional organizations such as the OSCE or Council of Europe. Within important UN bodies the Six, Nine, Ten, Twelve, Fifteen and now EU-27 have, for example, since the early days of EPC gradually moved for a greater coordination among member states (cf. Regelsberger 1988; Luif 2003; Johansson-Nogués 2004a) and, although the record still waivers somewhat in terms of convergence, the Union is frequently held as the most cohesive political group on a number of issues related to international politics in the General Assembly in the post-bipolar era (Luif 2003) with all its implications for outside observers.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> If during the latter part of the Cold War the member states of the European Communities could hardly muster a 50 percent voting coincidence rate, the past decade has shown a rapid and dramatic increase in convergence in the EU member states voting record. In 1990 the EC member states would coincide in their vote on a 44.4 percent of roll-call resolutions (45<sup>th</sup> session). Eight years later the convergence rate would

The EU's 'cultural presence' is also explored here as a consequence of the EU's self-proclaimed ambition to be an actor in this field. The cultural facet is included in all framework policies. Moreover, the EU foreign policy discourse is replete with references to how increased familiarity and practices through cultural and social interaction can become confidence building mechanisms to overcome contradictions between international actors. It will also be argued that the EU's cultural presence is a function of how attractive it is to outsiders, how much 'soft power' the EU identitarian constructions have in order "to get others to want what you want" (Nye 2002). The argument essentially boils down to: when external identity constructions resonate with the European identity constructions the European direction will be accepted, if not, not.

These examples serve to highlight the presence which the EU enjoys as an actor in the international system. Most authors coincide on that the EU's presence overall on the international scene has even become more significant since the early 1990s (Allen 1998; see also Whitman 1998; Bretherton and Vogler 1999 and 2006). We will thus have occasion to survey how the EU's identitarian presence has played out within the more constrained framework of the EU's borderlands. It is worth noting that outsiders attitudes and reactions to the collective identity also flow into shaping and constituting the collective's identity. The central premise of constructing an identity is indeed determining the uniqueness of one's traits by contrasting them with difference. The result is a process of identity negotiation where an actor 'negotiates' with outside actors the meaning of its social identities. Difference in identitarian understandings may lead to tension, which may in turn generate a necessity for change of EU and/or outsider identity.

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have nearly doubled; the 53<sup>rd</sup> General Assembly (1998) would be an especially favorable one for the EU with a peak of 85.2 percent. In the time period spanning 1998-2005 there has seen a slight regression, but the record still show impressive rates hovering around 80 percent (Johansson-Nogués 2006a).

### **2.4.3. The EU ‘autonomy’ in the borderlands**

The concept of ‘autonomy’ is of central importance in International Relations. The autonomy of the European Union as a foreign policy actor must thus not only be pondered in terms of its separateness from its component parts, but also as a distinguishable part from the rest of the international system. The EU’s autonomy is thus very much related to the thorny matter whether the Union can acquire a distinctive profile which is more than the sum of its component parts – which we believe – and, if so, to a sufficient strength that it may withstand external pressure applied by third actors, most obviously major powers, in the international system, such as China, Russia and the US. Here we will look at the US and Russia as the two other relevant intervening actors for the three borderland areas under study here, and this will be the topic of Chapter 8.

The EU has a longstanding close relationship with the US and it is fair to say that during the Cold War era the US would dominate the European foreign policy agenda to an extent which made a consolidated or coherently articulated identity difficult. The USSR has been another important constraining influence on the EC foreign policy during the Cold War, often exerting a negative pressure (threat) which would block most if not all of the most ambitious Western European initiatives for the East bloc area. It will thus be argued that it was not until the fall of the Berlin Wall opened up an opportunity for identity renegotiation that the EC/EU as a foreign policy actor came to be examined and re-evaluated. The new international identity of the EC/EU was to be hailed by Washington and Moscow both with expectation and some apprehension. It is thus of

some interest to see what has happened in the past decade and half in view of these changed dynamics, in particular as concerns the EC/EU's much more prominent involvement in the borderlands.

We will in particular examine evidence for the US and USSR/Russia creating 'enabling' or 'constraining' environments for the EU identity in the borderlands. An enabling environment would presumably be favorable towards the agent's (i.e. EU) empowerment by opening up policy space, authorizing or legitimizing the EU to take a certain action(s) (e.g. taking 'responsibility' for its borderlands) and positive reinforcement through coordination, cooperation or supportive or value added policies etc. The USSR invitation to the EC to become more economically engaged in the East bloc countries in the 1970s can be seen as an example of enabling environment. The absence of engagement of US/Russia in one or other borderland area will also count as an enabling environment (even if in its most passive form), given that the EU's freedom of maneuver will be maximized. A constraining environment on the contrary circumscribes an agent's freedom to act and take initiatives. Constraining measures may include counter-strategies launched for the borderlands or by wielding the threat of negative repercussions over the EU or one of its borderland partners if certain actions were to be taken. The classical example would be the US' Cold War threat to withdraw its military presence in Europe if the EC/the Twelve did not fall in line on important US policies for the East bloc or in the Middle East. Such a threat impeded the Europeans from developing a distinct foreign policy identity during the bipolar era.

The aim of Chapter 8 is thus to examine how the US and Russian identitarian constructions enables or constrains the EU identitarian construction in its relations with



the borderlands partners. The EU's foreign policy identity will predictably have an easier time reaching its borderland partners in those cases where the US or Russian foreign policy identities enables it (or are absent). Where the US or Russian international identities act to displace the EU identity, the Union will have amore difficult time to getting through to its partners.

## 2.5. Conclusions

At the close of the Cold War the EU began to explore the rudimentary notions of what with time has become a more distinct foreign policy identity. This identity, as it has developed in the past decade and a half in relation to borderland partners, stems from four principal cognitive sources: *telos* myth, intra-EU organizational logics and input from the member states, as well as structure. The resulting identitarian construction is one which is steeped in a strongly positive light as rhetoric related to the EU as a 'force for good' in the international context shows. Moreover, the EU identity is strongly infused by Liberal optimism in regards to cooperation, partnership and potential for overcoming power politics with differentiated compensation measures to outsiders and by ways of EU institutional restraints.

The EU identity is, however, as noted not a homogeneous, strong identity at par with 'thicker' national identities. There is considerable pluralism and we have noted the existence of differentiated discourses, dominant/subordinated or rivaling, within the EU's

marble cake or universalistic identity. There are thus considerable areas of fuzziness in the EU's foreign policy identity. There are indications that there is a gap between EU identitarian projection and its foreign policy output which contributes to the perception of a 'EUtopia'.

Finally, we constructed three parameters which will allow us to see how the EU's identitarian construct is conditioned by specific contexts. Identity fluctuation depends on how member states, to a greater or lesser degree, come to view the 'we-feeling', solidarity and loyalty necessary for a coherent collective identity. 'Cohesion' will therefore direct our attention to those occasions on which competing internal visions within the EU produce either a non-identity or rivaling discourses and to see if and how the member states and institutions have converged or not with Union dominant understandings since the signing of the Maastricht Treaty. Moreover, an identity never exists in a vacuum; it always presumes and depends on the recognition of other social actors. We will therefore be reflecting upon how the EU's identity is perceived, facilitated/constrained and resonates with outsider's identitarian constructions. 'Presence' will look at the borderland partners' reaction to the EU's international identity, and 'autonomy' will explore those situations in which the US or Russia may boost or cancel out the EU's identity/action in the borderland areas.

## The EU and the EU's borderlands – From EPC to the European Neighborhood Policy

The end of the Cold War changed the landscape around the European Community. The Twelve began therefore to perceive that the EC was increasingly useful to provide an anchor for the post-bipolar 'turbulent' international climate. The EC would take the first steps toward asserting an international identity in the Maastricht Treaty's ambition of a common foreign and security policy. The birth of the CFSP was meant to be a *saut qualitatif* and some authors have noted that this seemed to imply a EU foreign policy jettisoning its defensive or passive approach to cooperation in favor of a more positive, proactive one (asserting European interests and values beyond its borders) (Smith, M. E. 2003). However, in reality Maastricht left many issues unresolved among the member states and it would take several rounds of Treaty-revisions and a constellation of exogenous and endogenous catalysts before a more consolidated foreign policy identity could come about.

This chapter will look at the EU's relations with its borderlands from a historical perspective. It will be argued that borderland issues have been a constant on the communitarian agenda since the early days of the EEC. The first two sections will take us from the signing of the Treaty of Rome in 1957 to the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989.

It will be argued that this period was essential for establishing the EC's actorness and the articulation of some of the seeds of the EU current foreign policy identity. The following section will look at the tribulation of the incipient EU identity during the 1990s. The final section will examine those events which have permitted a more profiled EU identity consolidate.

### 3.1. The Six and frontier non-member countries

Even before the Rome Treaty was signed the borderlands would play a decisive role in the European integration in constructing actorness. The 1956 Suez Crisis, for example, would not only have dramatic effects on the French and British national understandings of themselves as global powers, but it would also become an accelerator in favor of European economic integration. The blow to French interests in the Middle East would make Paris to draw the conclusion that European integration as the only possible 'counterweight' to Washington. Indeed, during the ceremony following upon the signing of the Treaty of Rome, Louis Armand – a close aid to Monnet and shortly thereafter the President of the European Atomic Energy Community – went as far as suggesting that “[w]e ought to erect a statue to Nasser” with the insignia: “the federator of Europe” (Armand, cited in Bromberger and Bromberger 1969: 176).

The Rome Treaty contemplated the establishment of external economic relations with non-member countries in both direct and indirect ways. The creation of the EEC customs area and the common external customs tariff (that came into full effect in 1968) was going to be the first and most direct way in which the EEC would affect its external

environment (trade diversion), and in particular so, its closest neighbors.<sup>1</sup> All goods entering any Community country were as a consequence subject to a common customs tariff, and the size of this tariff and import quotas (on certain goods) were fixed jointly and applied Community-wide. Any third countries desirous to export goods to EEC markets had to negotiate with the Commission in Brussels in regards to special conditions or preferences; no longer able to strike separate deals with the national capitals of the Six. In the words of Piening (1997: 3) —

“[w]ith the creation of this customs union, the EC became an entity with which countries everywhere had to talk directly, and since the Community’s member states provided markets for virtually every country in the world, that meant that no country was able to ignore the EC’s arrival on the international scene”.

If the establishment of a common customs tariff and a common commercial policy was to provide the backbone of the EEC ‘s incipient foreign policy identity, the differentiated bilateral agreements with determined third countries was to be a second fundament of the external economic policy of the Community (Whitman 1998: 44). The external economic relations and the bilateral agreements accorded responded, at first hand, to the logic of protecting the economic interests of the Six in the world and to ensure that pre-established trade and cooperation patterns between each member state and determined countries and/or regions of the world would continue uninterrupted (Smith, M. E. 2003). Hence, even if the agreements were of an explicitly economic nature, it would not be possible to conceal their essentially political use (Rhein 1992: 33; Zapater 2000: 25). France, in particular, was eager to continue its relations with —

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<sup>1</sup> The implementation of the external trade policy, which included external representation and trade negotiation, was to be entrusted to the Commission.

and influence over – North African protectorates, overseas departments or former colonies elsewhere through the EEC and use the Community as a counterweight against France’s diminished global status in the wake of the Suez Crisis. Paris would therefore advocate a protected and privileged EEC treatment for a restricted group of third countries (Gomez 2003: 29).<sup>2</sup> Belgium, another colonial power, had sympathies for such an approach and a joint Franco-Belgian proposal was forwarded during the negotiations leading up to the Treaty of Rome in which these two countries expressed their preference for the association with overseas territories on an equal basis in terms of commerce and investment (Gerbet 1999: 186). Fearing that such relations would taint the new Community with the stigma of perpetuating colonialism, the Dutch, Germans and Italians would initially oppose reject this proposition. Nevertheless, in face of the staunch insistence by the French Primer Minister Guy Mollet, the Chancellor Adenauer finally had to give in, lest the whole common market project be jeopardized.<sup>3</sup>

As a consequence, the posterior development of the common commercial policy and the increasing attention to non-EEC states led to an “elaborate pattern of agreements and special relationships” (Smith, M. 2003: 559; Bretherton and Vogler 1999). Economic external relations were, however, not only used to maintain privileged relations between the Six and third countries around the globe. The member states soon would see the usefulness of using the mixture of trade and bilateral accords and/or prospects for accession to manage ‘Otherness’ beyond the Community’s immediate borders and especially as a means to mitigate the strains of the international bipolar environment in and beyond Europe.

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<sup>2</sup> Moreover, West Germany and the Netherlands, neither having important domestic agricultural sectors and both traditionally important importers of tropical produce, would during the EEC negotiations rather favor economic cooperative relations with third countries in line with the GATT non-preferential treatment (Gerbet 1999: 186).

<sup>3</sup> The French government, in order to secure parliamentary backing for what subsequently became the Treaty of Rome, had to assure the Gaullist opposition that the treaty would include provisions beneficial

The Community of Six had come into being in a global bipolar context and in a fragmented Europe, where the EEC found itself surrounded by a ‘troubled’ vicinity: the communist bloc in the east, Soviet overtures in the Balkans and in the Middle East, a non-democratic south where dictators in Portugal and Spain (and temporarily in Greece and Turkey) held sway. In addition, a European counter-project, the European Free Trade Association (EFTA, launched 1959), which, headed by the British, largely encircled the Community geographically and openly challenged the very *raison d’être* of the EEC.

The complex political situation in the decade leading up to 1970 gave rise to the need for a greater coordination in the response from EEC’s member states. Greece<sup>4</sup> (1961) and Turkey<sup>5</sup> (1963) were granted EEC association accords with membership perspectives based on fears that otherwise they would be inevitable drawn into the sphere of Soviet influence (Gomez 2003: 27).<sup>6</sup> The EC decision to withhold economic relations (as a bloc) from the Iberian dictators until the 1970s,<sup>7</sup> as well as with the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA or Comecon, the communist trading bloc), was also based on political reasons, i.e. an unwillingness to legitimize regimes

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to France’s colonial and former colonial interests. Among other things, France wanted the customs union to grant favorable access to goods imported from countries tied in different ways to the French empire.

<sup>4</sup> On 25 July 1959 the Community accepted Greece’s request for Association. On 9 July 1961 Greece became the first European state to sign an association agreement with the EEC. On 1 November 1962, the agreement entered force. The Association with its promise of eventual accession, was seen both as Greece’s means of overcoming her structural economic and political weaknesses, and as the definitive stamp of approval of the international acceptance of its place in Western Europe.

<sup>5</sup> The Turkish decision to apply for association was a consequence of several objectives. On the one hand, Turkey wished to be, once and for all, recognized as a full member of the Western community (an objective of Turkish leaders since the days of the *Tanzimat*, 1839). In this sense, EEC association was seen as a logical extension of Turkey’s membership of NATO and other Western organizations. The economic objective, on the other hand, of gaining easier market access to the EEC, which already accounted for about 35 per cent of Turkey’s exports, was also determining. Finally, the fact that rival Greece had just submitted an exploration for association was from the Turkish perspective added to the incentive (Hale 2000: 175; Sözen 2002).

<sup>6</sup> Albania and Yugoslavia were also offered special accords to sway them away from the Soviet sphere, Albania refusing, but Tito would concede. The bilateral trade accord was signed in 1970.

<sup>7</sup> Preferential trade agreements were signed with Spain in 1970 and in 1972 with Portugal.

that were deemed politically objectionable.<sup>8</sup> In 1962 Spain had petitioned the Community for an association accord similar to that of Greece and Turkey. The petition would receive a cold shoulder in EEC member state capitals. Despite General Franco's intent to portray himself as a bulwark against communism in Europe, memories were still ripe in regards to the Spanish Civil War (1936-39) and democracy and human rights continued to be prime impediments for any closer relation with the integrated Europe.<sup>9</sup> The Spanish petition would lead to the adoption Birkelbach Report by the European Parliament that lays out explicitly for the first time the understanding that being 'European' (EC) meant the adherence to democratic values and respect for human rights (Pardo Sanz 2000: 355; see also Verney 2002). The Report can in this way be seen as the first trial balloon sent out to explore the potential for the European Community and the Six to adopt an international identity outside the economic sphere.

In terms of the CMEA countries, their ambition throughout the 1970s and early 1980s, was to seek bloc-to-bloc relations with the Community, but the EEC viewed the Comecon as an instrument of Soviet domination over Eastern Europe. The Community insisted on developing relations with the CMEA countries on a separate basis, which led to the establishment of basic trade arrangements in 1975 as an outcome of the Helsinki Act (Smith, K. 1999).<sup>10</sup> Finally, the non-communication between the Community and

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<sup>8</sup> Bilateral trade between the CMEA and some of EEC member states, predominantly West Germany, however, flourished during this time period. The Council of Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON or CMEA), international organization active between 1956 and 1991 for the coordination of economic policy among certain nations then under Communist domination, including Albania (which did not participate after 1961), Bulgaria, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Mongolia, Poland, Romania, and the Soviet Union. Yugoslavia participated in matters of mutual interest. Although it was formed in 1949, a formal charter was not ratified until 1959. The charter gave COMECON the same international status as the European Economic Community (Common Market), but the structure was controlled by the economic planners of the Soviet Union. The CMEA was disbanded in 1991.

<sup>9</sup> Although the EEC members were deeply divided over what to do with Franco's regime. As a result, although bilateral relations in the late 1950s and during the 1960s were to improve with France and Germany (as well as, to some extent, Belgium), Italy and the Netherlands remained reserved against *El Caudillo's* different attempts to reach out of Spain's isolation in Western Europe (Pardo Sanz 2000: 350; see also, Collado 1993: 483-9).

<sup>10</sup> The resulting bilateral accords were to be upgraded in the mid-1980s as Gorbachev took the helm in Soviet Union and the EC wanted to give further support to the reform processes under way over the board



EFTA, for reasons of political rivalry in terms of who had the most promising European economic project was evident, and would, to a large extent, keep the two entities apart for most of the 1960s.<sup>11</sup> The political frost between the EFTA ‘Outer Seven’ and the Common Market’s ‘Inner Six’ would nevertheless eventually give way to bilateral free trade agreements in the early 1970s. These accords, in principle, abolished all trade tariffs between the two economic groupings, as the British accession to the Community became imminent.<sup>12</sup>

Yet, the EEC’s economic instruments would not prove to be enough to mitigate the ups-and-downs in the Cold War environment or for elaborating independent policy positions vis-à-vis those of Washington. The bluntness of the economic instrument (granting or withholding economic relations) was going to be held as insufficient to effectively influence the events unfolding in the EEC’s vicinity or as a result of the superpower confrontation. As a consequence, by 1960s the EC began to seek alternative formulas for enabling certain foreign policy cooperation and a first push towards a timid harmonization of the member states’ foreign policies became a solution.<sup>13</sup> However, it was not going to be until in 1969 before the issue of political cooperation was to take on a formal aspect. It was considered as a way to exert influence on the international scene and as a way to acquiring a separate ‘voice’ within the transatlantic community. This change of heart within the EEC was greatly facilitated by political changeovers in France and Germany, whereby de Gaulle was replaced by Pompidou and Adenauer by

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in Central and Eastern Europe.

<sup>11</sup> In 1959, representatives from Austria, Denmark, Great Britain, Norway, Portugal, Sweden and Switzerland met in Oslo to explore the possibility of forming a European free trade area. The negotiations between the seven countries quickly resulted in the signing of the convention that would lead to the establishment of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), coming into force on 3 May 1960. The EFTA was seen as an alternative to EEC for those of its neighbors which had *Angst* against the supranationality of the Community, in that EFTA was firmly based on intergovernmental practices. There was thus no love lost between the two arrangements in that they perceived each other as open rivals.

<sup>12</sup> Although inside the Community, as well as with the EC’s closest trading partners, non-tariff barriers would still in essence hamper a true circulation of goods and services.

<sup>13</sup> Informal meetings between foreign ministers to exchange views took place between 1960 and 1963 on

Brandt. This would lead the Six to the Hague Summit the same year, where the member states meeting as heads of state and government not only cleared the way for the British, Danish and Irish accession, but also launched European Political Cooperation (EPC).

### 3.2. The Nine, EPC and the borderlands

The EPC fittingly came about in part as a reaction against a threesome of events in the EC's vicinity: the pending British accession, events in the Middle East (Six Days War in 1967) and the 1968 Prague Spring when Soviet troops took the streets of the Czechoslovakian capital in response to intents to political reform in that country.<sup>14</sup> The British EC membership was perceived to put things at an edge. The perception among the Six was that if the lingering notion of a political community (which had been obliterated with the French rejection of the European Defense Community in 1954) was ever to be realized, it had to be before London could use its veto as a member state to exile the issue from the EC agenda for all eternity. The June War in 1967 (energy) and the Prague Spring in 1968 (stability beyond the EC borders) also showed the need for a concerted EC approach. The development of EPC was therefore explicitly to coordinate the Six's – and after the 1973 enlargement the Nine's – foreign policies, in order to better assert the interests of the member states and the Community as a whole in the

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issues related to the Soviet Union, the Congo crisis and the Cuban missile crisis (Smith, H. 2002).

<sup>14</sup> That these topics were uppermost in the politicians' mind in 1969 is evidenced by Willy Brandt speech to the 'Summit Conference' at The Hague, 1 December 1969. The German Chancellor would argue that "[i]f all were well with Europe, we would not be meeting today. If the Community were able to speak with one voice our main topic here would be foreign policy: the question of the peaceful organization of Europe, negotiations with the countries of Eastern Europe and our interests with regard to the conflict in the Middle East" (Bulletin of the EC 1970). Intra-EC developments such as the 1968 EC Customs Union also played a facilitating role in terms of freeing EC to look at foreign policy issues.

international arena. EPC was designed to grant the Six/Nine, with some enhanced (albeit still limited) autonomy in international affairs and enable the EC members to act in some of the vacuums created by the superpower stalemate.

The Community commitment to political cooperation was initially warmly welcomed by different actors in the international system, illustrated by the sheer amount of third countries that was to seek it out in order to try to escape, or find a temporary relief in, their superpower dependence. In this way the Community would come to function in all modesty – and with indeed a patchy degree of success – as a ‘third way’ in the bipolar order. The escape valve effect was, for instance, visible in the UN General Assembly, where the Group-77 trying to win the Europeans over to their cause of a New International Economic Order in face of US resistance (Gomez 2003: 31).<sup>15</sup> Another example was the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) which in the late 1970s sought Community links in part to shield themselves from the worst excesses of Soviet/Chinese communism (Smith, H. 2002: 26).<sup>16</sup>

At the first EPC meeting (19 November 1970) two particular issues related to the EC’s vicinity topped the agenda: the Middle East and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). These two topics were put there on the insistence of France (Middle East) and Belgium/Germany (East bloc), eager to create a harmonized European stance towards these two important and geographically close areas of Western Europe.<sup>17</sup> While some have pointed that this agenda reveals the limited ambition of EPC project especially in its early years (Allen 1992; Nuttall 1992), others have noted that the exclusive EPC dedication to East-West and Middle East issues was a matter of

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<sup>15</sup> The G-77’s pressure would in part lead the EC to respond with the adoption of the Lomé Convention in 1975.

<sup>16</sup> The closer relations resulted in the 1980 Cooperation Agreement between the EC and the member countries of ASEAN: Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

<sup>17</sup> However, as Mestres i Camps (2003: 94) has pointed out this apparent Franco-German tandem in foreign policy in early 1970s would soon be subsumed into a French leadership in most areas of EPC

pragmatic choice and felt an appropriate start for an emerging political cooperation which still had to get off the ground (Glarbo 1999: 643). Both issues would have far-reaching consequences for the further development of EPC.

As for the Middle East, France, which had in the mid-1960s recently converted to the Arab cause, was looking for a way to forge a common EEC position in respect to the Arab-Israeli conflict.<sup>18</sup> Other member states, however, were not immediately inclined to support the common policy France was looking for.<sup>19</sup> It would take the 1973 October War and the resulting global oil crisis to forge a more convergent European stance towards this volatile region. At the Copenhagen Summit (14-5 December 1973), with the Arab countries present as observers and with the global energy crisis in full swing, the Six adopted a recognition of the legitimate rights of the Palestinians, called upon the Commission to enhance an existing proposal for a Global Mediterranean Policy (GMP) and declared the intention of opening a direct dialogue between the Community and the oil-producing countries.<sup>20</sup> This communitarian thesis was well received by the Arab states, who thought themselves having found a new ally in the Europeans.<sup>21</sup> The news of the dialogue would, nevertheless, encounter fierce opposition in Washington (and Tel Aviv). Consequently, the Nine were not able to remain

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until the fall of the Berlin Wall.

<sup>18</sup> Whereas, in 1956, France had taken part in the Suez operation in support of Israel, by the time of the June War in 1967 Paris was clearly on the Arab side (Nuttall 1997: 24). The 1967 War and Israel ensuing occupation of the West Bank, Old Jerusalem, the Golan Heights, the Gaza Strip, and Sinai, changed France's notions of the Jewish state dramatically. France, and Europe as a whole, was also becoming increasingly dependent on Arab oil.

<sup>19</sup> Germany and the Netherlands in particular, for their differentiated historical 'debt' to the Israeli people, were more favorable to the Israeli thesis. A common position was adopted during 1971 in the form of the Schumann Document, however, marked a first shift of German and Dutch policy towards a communitarian stance.

<sup>20</sup> The Arab League countries had presented themselves unannounced at the Copenhagen Summit, urging for closer political relations.

<sup>21</sup> The Copenhagen Declaration favored the Twelve in that as a result the Arab producer oil-embargo imposed on them was lifted. The exception was the Netherlands, in spite of that The Hague had aligned itself with the common position. Although the maintenance of the embargo against the Netherlands would prove merely nominative given that with the communitarian free circulation of goods oil would enter Dutch markets from the other Community members and thus the Netherlands would not see itself too adversely affected.

sufficiently united to be able to carry their point on an independent policy towards the Middle East, nor did they have “sufficient confidence in the rightness of their cause” to hold up against the strong US resistance they encountered (Nuttall 1997: 31). This in effect meant that the Nine/Twelve would for the remainder of the Cold War work hard to establish a common view on the Middle East – the 1980 Venice Declaration was to be a first step in that direction – knowingly that their ability to shape events would be sub-edited by Washington.<sup>22</sup>

The second item on the agenda at the first EPC meeting in Munich in 1970 was a response to a proposal made by Moscow in terms of setting up a pan-European security conference (Ghébali 1989; Lundestad 2003).<sup>23</sup> Moscow had firmly opposed the creation of the EEC in 1957 and was suspicious of any European integration on a political or security level. However, at the same time, Kremlin was not against a certain European autonomy in the hopes that this would sooner or later under the transatlantic ties. In the EEC, the interest for Community-East bloc relations was at first highly divergent among the Six, however, there existed a tacit agreement among them that the opportunities which the more relaxed climate in East-West relations under Brezhnev should not be passed over.<sup>24</sup> The Six saw the talks as a way to reduce the tension in Europe by furthering commercial ties, economic cooperation and ease the humanitarian plight in the Communist bloc. Here Bonn, with most to gain from a positive engagement with the

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<sup>22</sup> The same problems encountered over the Euro-Arab Dialogue in 1973 would come back to haunt the EC-US relations over the Venice Declaration in 1980.

<sup>23</sup> The proposal for a pan-European conference had been a constant in Soviet foreign policy towards the West since the Soviet foreign minister, Vyacheslav Molotov, first made an outline of the Treaty of Collective Security in Europe in February 1954. The Soviet outplay was to become the embryo for the later Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (Lundestad 2003).

<sup>24</sup> The détente in Europe was initiated by the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), under Chancellor Willy Brandt, which conducted a series of bilateral diplomatic initiatives with the East bloc. In exchange for the Federal Republic's recognition of the territorial status quo of the divided Europe, a set of subsequent Treaties were celebrated between the FRG and USSR (12 August 1970) establishing diplomatic relations, between FRG and Poland recognizing the Oder-Neisse line (7 December 1970), as well as the 19 June 1973 Treaty between Bonn and Prague annulling the Munich accords of 1938. On 21 December 1972 an exchange of representatives between FRG and GDR was also established and a pledge to put bilateral relations between the two Germanies on a new diplomatic footing (Ulam 1985: 61). These

East bloc and, under the firm leadership of Chancellor Willy Brandt and his *Ostpolitik*, was to lead the way in the EPC negotiations, although it was a smaller member state – Belgium – which would formally put the issue on the EPC agenda. The collaboration among the Six/Nine in the framework of EPC to prepare the CSCE-negotiations in Geneva was considerably facilitated by the distraction of Washington elsewhere (Vietnam). Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger, as Nuttall has noted, “seemed temperamentally adverse to the sort of multilateral diplomacy that such a conference required” (1997: 23). The US’ self-exclusion at the first stage of the negotiations would enable the Nine to table papers which were distinctly European in flavor. The CSCE and the work carried out in relation to the 1975 Helsinki Final Act can thus be considered essential to the further development of EPC. Symbolically so, as Aldo Moro, President of the Council, signed the Final Act on behalf of the Community.<sup>25</sup> More importantly, the CSCE negotiations had meant a de facto Soviet recognition of the EEC both as a political and economic reality.

Both the Euro-Arab Dialogue and the learning experience from the CSCE-negotiations would awaken the European interest for what later has been a recurrent European foreign policy feature, the Union’s recourse to multilateralization of interstate relations and the holding of dialogue in a multilateral setting. The EPC had thereby sown the seed for what was to become a regular staple of the European foreign policy: group-to-group dialogues and the communitarian habit to group clusters of countries together into ‘regional’ approaches (Regelsberger 1991). Moreover, the CSCE has also been important for the EU identity in that it was a first in grouping many sectoral issues together and linking them together in an overall dynamic framework. This is an EU template which has become a standard characteristic of EU foreign policy since and

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accords prepared the ground for the Helsinki Act (Ghébal 1989; Grosser 1981).

<sup>25</sup> Previously, the EEC and each member state had had to sign in their institutional/national capacity.

have been boosted by the holistic thinking on security which was popularized in international relations in the early 1990s.

Other events in the EC's immediate borderlands would also in their modest way help shape the incipient EPC in the 1970s and early 1980s. In contrast, however, with the Middle East and relations with the East bloc that were consciously chosen by France and Germany as objectives for the newly created European Political Cooperation, on most other occasions EPC was going to function in a predominantly reactive and incoherent manner.<sup>26</sup> The 1970s and 1980s could thus be seen as a period in which the EC and its member states were experimenting with foreign policy cooperation, sometimes with a successful outcome, sometimes not. EPC experience painfully revealed the difficulty inherent in multilateral political cooperation, in that even where (belatedly) there was consensus that action should be taken (1974 Cyprus, 1975 Spain), what means to deploy was object for dispute which in turn produced the paradox that a least common denominator- or no action was taken.

EPC would nevertheless, in effect, render the Nine that slightly differentiated 'voice' in the transatlantic community they desired, although it would recurrently prove unable to play a fully independent role, let alone express a consistent foreign policy identity. EPC and the EC would essentially maintain a low foreign policy profile through the Cold War as a consequence of its member states' security dependence on

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<sup>26</sup> For example, the Greek military coup in 1969 which would lead the EC to suspend the EU-Greek association agreement in defense of democracy. The impact, however, was going to be null and void in that colonels' regime remained in power until 1974, and it only fell due its own ineffectiveness. When Turkey flirted with authoritarianism with periods of military rule in 1960, 1971, and 1980, as well as a 'silent coup' to reverse the rise of political Islam in 1997, the Community would however not react at all. The Cyprus coup (1974) to overthrow Archbishop Makarios, would not only take the EC members by surprise, but also reveal the divergences between member states as in terms of using negative sanctions (deploying fully or partially the association agreements with the parties involved) (Hill 1992: 140). The fiasco over the 'Spanish question' and the executions of five *Euskadi Ta Askatasuna* (ETA) terrorists in Burgos, would mark the beginning of a gradual decline in EPC process for the remainder of the Cold War. Another watershed event in the EC vicinity which marked EPC, and this time for the positive, was to be the response to the declaration of martial law in Poland on 1981. The imposition of EC sanctions set an important precedent, never before had Community instruments been used to implement EPC objectives (Hill 1992; Nuttall 1997: 31).

the United States (see Chapter 8).<sup>27</sup> Moreover, and perhaps more importantly, EPC was seen by most of its member states as a mere vehicle for protecting and amplifying existing foreign policy interests and conceptions of Self rather than ‘we’. A common identity was resisted in that individual EC member states claimed that certain areas (*domaines réservés*) were off-limits to EPC discussion and they took pains to prevent those areas (such as France and its African colonies, Greece and its relations to Turkey, Britain and Ireland, East and West Germany etc) from having these areas covered by EPC (Smith, M. E. 2000). Finally, the separateness between the EC’s economic instruments and EPC political steering meant that there were simply insufficient common elements to foment a common EC perception, let alone an EC identity. As a result, EPC only enabled the Europeans to play a modest role in international relations during the 1970s and 1980s, creating different references for an embryonic foreign policy identity and some limited instruments of action.<sup>28</sup>

However, by the end of the 1980s it began to become more evident to EC member states that EPC allowed them a greater say in international affairs, compared to ‘going it alone’ (Regelsberger 1997: 68). Moreover, EPC had fomented what has been termed the ‘co-ordination reflex’, whereby member states built practices of consultation, and this was consolidated in the procedures established by the London Report, the SEA and the TEU (Hill and Wallace 1996). A growing network of information exchange contributed further to the growth of trust and responsiveness, as did cooperation in third

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<sup>27</sup> This fear was not unsubstantial given that Washington, throughout the Cold War, used the threat of such withdrawal of troops as a way to ensure that the Europeans eventually fell into line. Even after the end of the Cold War the Washington would show its reluctance towards the development of an ESDP. In 1991 the George H. W. Bush administration would, in an initial reaction, send a diplomatic missive (the ‘Bartholomew Letter’) to European NATO members warning that if the EU sought to establish a defense and security policy separate from the Atlantic Alliance, the US commitment to NATO was going to be ‘reviewed’ (Walker, M. 2001: 71). For transatlantic disputes during the Cold War, see Barbé 1997: 132; or Gerbet 1999: 370-1.

<sup>28</sup> Some would even contend that the EC represented a ‘third force’ in international relations after the two superpowers. This had been the goal of UK Foreign Minister Ernest Bevin in the late 1940s, that Britain and France should unite with their colonial possessions and lure others (without colonies) to join at the



countries between diplomatic missions. The EPC edifice was thus built on reciprocal understandings and practices, and in many respects the image was that of a 'club' with its own rituals and conventions (Smith, M. E. 2000). Moreover, given the complexity of EC's geographical vicinity (communism, authoritarianism), one could argue that there was an emphasis on ideas (e.g. liberal market economy, human rights and democracy) which arose as a consequence of events in the Community's geographical vicinity. The 1980s would thus see the preparations for and later the birth of the Single European Act where EPC was boosted institutionally. The transformation of European international politics in the early 1990s challenged the cosy assumptions of the EPC 'club', but the underlying dependence on reciprocity and consensus did not disappear (Glarbo 1999).

### 3.3. The birth of an identity?

The end of the Cold War and the subsequent turning of first the EFTA countries and later the Central and Eastern European countries towards the EC seemed to validate the success of the communitarian model and the values the Twelve stood for (Petersen 1993: 25). The importance of the presence of the EC on the regional scene could thus not be refuted. With consolidated identities as rich, liberal societies, the EU and its member states seemed in a very good position to help with the urgent problems of underdevelopment and other soft security problems. Moreover, in an international atmosphere where military force appeared to have lost importance, the Community seemed to be in an unparalleled situation (relatively unstained by superpower logics) to

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force of free access to markets and resources to balance against the superpowers.

not only help its neighbors on an ad-hoc basis, but also to direct the developments of the economic and political vacuum which the Eastern Europe was immersed in (Hill 1998b) as well as to serve as a model for the post-Cold War redefinition of national identities.

This heady mixture would embolden more than one European leader as the decade changed over to the 1990s. The EC had been awarded a centrality in international and European politics which it never had experienced before, and seemingly totally by chance. It appeared that a golden opportunity for the Community to become a significant actor at the international stage had come, an actor able to mould the international system in conformance with European priorities. Indeed, a European Commission (1989) document drawn up at the time would boldly claim –

“[t]he European Community is now seen as the main focus for peace, democracy and growth by all Europe and the neighbouring countries to the South and East. It is vital to consolidate this position if we are to increase the Community’s weight and influence for a more stable order in an ever more interdependent, and therefore more vulnerable world [...]”

The expectations of EC’s leadership at the head of the transformation process of Europe appeared to be confirmed at the highest level at the 1989 Paris summit of the industrialized countries (G-7), where the Community (European Commission) was entrusted with the coordination of the whole of Western aid to the CEEC (Allen 1992:121). The newly instated George H. W. Bush’s administration, taking over from Ronald Reagan in January 1989, had much improved transatlantic relations. Washington seemed at the time more than willing to let the Community take direction in Central and Eastern Europe, an area which had been radically devaluated in terms of

its strategic interest to Washington as a result of the debilitation of and internal change in the USSR and as other matters on the world agenda became more pressing (Gulf War) (Rummel 1992: 21).<sup>29</sup> For these reasons, the psychological climate in most European capitals toward the end of the 1980s was distinctly optimistic. In 1990 the Commission observed –

“[t]he peaceful revolution which swept Eastern Europe in 1989 is probably the most significant event in global terms of the past 45 years. It is happening at the very doorstep of the European Community. It represents a challenge and an opportunity to which the EC has given an immediate response” (European Commission 1990).

It was in this changing Europe which the decision was taken among the Twelve to proceed in the ambition to deepen the European Communities into a European Union. The notion of an enhanced international role for a putative European Union was widely welcome by European public opinion, press and national parliaments who favored a stronger EC able to take on the challenges which the post-bipolar order had brought with it. There did not, thus, seem to be any doubt at the time that EC would finally be hailed as an important and influential international actor – even as Europe’s first war since the World War II broke out in Yugoslavia. In 1989-91, there was more than one European leader who would have happily chimed in with Jacques Poos, the President of the Council in early 1991, confident statement that the ‘hour of Europe’ had finally come.<sup>30</sup> As Allen (1998: 47) has put it –

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<sup>29</sup> Relations with Moscow were, nonetheless, going to remain principally a US-Russian affair, where the outcome of their many bilateral decisions in regards to Europe was often communicated afterward to the European allies.

<sup>30</sup> Speaking informally with a group of journalists and asked about the potential involvement of the Bush

“[a]t the start of the 1990s, it was generally accepted that the European Community/Union would be in the forefront of creating a new European order: it would extend its ‘zone of civility’ either by offering membership or association to the rest of Europe. It was assumed that the EU, as the central focus of a new European order, would be capable of developing the vision and exercising the leadership needed to construct this new order.”

The question was never thus so much if a CFSP should be created, but rather what it would look like, and here the theses diverged between the different visions for security architecture in post-bipolar Europe, as well as intra-EU preferences. Moreover, it was commonly held among the Twelve that the CFSP must serve to bridge the gap between political direction and economic instruments.

### **3.3.1. Maastricht and on**

The Maastricht Treaty was thus widely expected to provide the elements for the perceived needed ‘vision’ and ‘leadership’ for the new European order. Indeed The Preamble of the Treaty on European Union would boldly declare that the implementation of CFSP will help ‘reinforcing the European identity and independence in order to promote peace, security and progress in Europe and in the world’. Moreover, the Treaty seemed at first to provide the European Union’s foreign policy with expected

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administration to bring peace to the Balkans, Poos allegedly claimed that “[t]his is the hour of Europe, not the hour of the Americans” (Poos, as quoted in Garton-Ash 2004).

the *saut qualitatif*, in particular given that the new Treaty endowed the Union with novel instruments (common positions, joint actions, a CFSP budget line etc.). As we have seen, one of EPC main drawbacks was its inability to draw upon the EC's economic weight to effectuate a foreign policy beyond the declaratory. Much expectation was therefore raised as a consequence of the 'Greek temple' pillar structure in which allegedly the three EU pillars would be working in unison for the objectives set out in the Treaty of Maastricht.<sup>31</sup> The Treaty of Maastricht therefore seemed to provide a unifying framework in which political and economic objectives and instruments could be better combined.

Nevertheless, and as many observers have pointed to over the years since, while the Maastricht Treaty seem to acknowledge the widespread expectation that the new Union would play a more important international role, the member states were far from in unison on what that new international identity would look like. The Maastricht Treaty thus essentially left a host of the finer details of how the newly created foreign policy instruments and inter-pillar mechanisms would work in practice unanswered. It would take successive Treaty revisions (e.g. Amsterdam, Nice) to eradicate some of the worst institutional malfunctioning, diminish the political-economic coordination gap and create a more cohesive foreign policy. The transition from EPC to the CFSP would, for example, have a significant impact on the institutional division of labor. For the European Commission, external relations and foreign policy had now become one of its most important fields of operation (Forster and Wallace, 1996). As a result of Article J.8 (TEU) the Commission became associated with the CFSP with the competence to submit proposals to the Council on CFSP matters. To make the most of its new powers the Commission undertook an institutional overhaul, in which DG 1A acquired a CFSP

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<sup>31</sup> The first pillar is the EC, the second pillar the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the third Justice and Home Affairs.

directorate and was broadly charged with the programs related to Central and Eastern Europe, while DG1B was tasked with the responsibility for the southern Mediterranean and the Middle East (Gomez 2003: 54). The novelty of the undertaking, with its correspondent personnel restructuring and internal divisions of labors to be worked out, would inevitably consummate a large share of the Commission's organizational energies during these first years of the Treaty of Maastricht. Perhaps, as some analysts have speculated, this would be the reason why during much of the last decade the Commission, which had been expected to perform a fairly large policy entrepreneurial in external relations and CFSP role, lingered gingerly without much real input (Forster and Wallace, 1996). The member states also put pressure on the incoming Commission President Jacques Santer in 1995 to further circumscribe the role of the Commission in the external ambit and undertake an overhaul the Commission's external relations to reduce some of the inefficiencies which the DG1A and DG1B division created.<sup>32</sup> Such repeated organizational restructuring inevitably produced unclear mandates, delays and certain confusion in the execution of EU foreign policy in the 1990s.

Another stumbling block for the EU's foreign policy towards its borderlands in this decade would prove to be the implications of the desire of closer inter-institutional cooperation in Europe. As the early 1990s seemed to herald a deemphasizing of traditional politico-military security, new importance would be placed on 'soft security' organizations such as the EC, the CSCE (upgraded into OSCE in 1995) and the United Nations. The CSCE Charter of Paris in 1990 had stimulated a debate on a post-bipolar European security architecture, and in its new Strategic Concept of 1991 NATO

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<sup>32</sup> Reorganization was also on the order of the day when the Prodi (whereby DG1A and DG1B were fused into DG External Relations and EuropeAid was created) and the Barroso Commissions (primarily reform of financial assistance mechanisms) began their respective stints.

articulated a need to seek a broad approach to security through the concept of ‘interlocking institutions’ (Barbé 1995).<sup>33</sup>

Initially, the EC member states would welcome this notion of collective security based on a pragmatic division of labor and of responsibilities for the new European security architecture. At the 1989 Strasbourg European Council the Twelve stated that the Community “remains the cornerstone of a new European architecture and, in its will to openness, a mooring for a future European equilibrium” together with “the Council of Europe, EFTA and the CSCE process” (European Council 1989). However, member states remained divided on how this new security order should be best managed and, concretely, what role the EC/EU should play in it. Germany, one of the main drivers behind the CSCE, would instinctively move to have this pan-European security organization recognized as the principle entity for organizing the post-Cold War European continent, thus effectively subordinating the EC to the CSCE. The German government was particularly interested in having the Russians onboard as a co-equal partner (as it is in the CSCE) for the management of the new European order, including the Western part. The UK together with other EC members were, however, reticent to allow Moscow such a large say also in Western European affairs and rather favored an enhanced transatlantic relationship under the guidance of the US/NATO.<sup>34</sup> France, Italy and Spain and several smaller EC member states would in turn argue that it was the EC which should take a leading role in post-bipolar Europe. de la Serre (1996: 32) has pointed the two ‘contradictory fears’ in French EU policy: “seeing Germany dominating the Community and/or distancing herself from the EC in order to have a very active policy in Central and Eastern Europe” through the CSCE/OSCE. The French-promoted

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<sup>33</sup> The Strategic Concept referred to the political, economic, social and environmental elements of security, i.e. ‘soft’ security, implemented through the collaboration between NATO, EC and CSCE.

<sup>34</sup> For an example, the Russian proposal at the 1994 Budapest OSCE Summit that NATO (and the CIS) should be placed under the aegis of OSCE and run by a European Security Council of the major powers

Stability Pact, or the Balladur plan as it was originally known, is essentially seen as an expression of such French concerns and as an attempt by Paris to enhance the EU's standing as an actor in Central and Eastern Europe (Sjursen 1998). The 1994 European Stability Pact is really a good example of how hesitant the EC member states were over EU actorness. On the one hand the Pact was an audacious undertaking by the Union in the area of preventive diplomacy and a sharp contrast with everything that the Community/Union had been able to do hitherto (Santer 1995). However, on the other hand the speediness by which Germany negotiated to have the Pact transferred to the CSCE shows the ambivalence of a Union not quite sure about its international role. The divided stance of the EC member states in terms of the role of the European Union in international affairs would thus be the primary obstacle in making the Maastricht the promised qualitative leap forwards over EPC and toward an EU identity of leadership in the borderlands.

However, by mid-1990s two things had become clear: the CSCE (since 1995 OSCE) was increasingly gridlocked as a result of divergent views between Russia and former Soviet Union states or satellites over the institution's scope and purpose. As a result the OSCE had lost much of the cohesion to be able to act decisively (if at all) on most major international issues of the day. The CSCE/OSCE would not even be able to send observer missions – or influence in any other positive way – as the Yugoslav conflict escalated. Moreover, the Europeans would find themselves increasingly constrained by US-led NATO initiatives and divided over Washington's vision of security for Europe. As Peterson (1998: 12-3) argues –

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received a cold shoulder by these countries.



“[e]ven as the EU and its member states contributed more than half of all public and private finance invested in Eastern and Central Europe, western policy towards Russia and the Ukraine, as well as NATO enlargement, was primarily defined and driven by Washington. The Partnership for Peace plan, an important step towards squaring the circle of enlarging NATO without threatening Russia, was designed and tabled by the U.S. with virtually no prior consultation of the EU and its member states.”

The difficulties which this complex multi-institutional interlocked matrix entailed, especially in the recurrent Yugoslav conflicts, led many critics to dismiss the notion of a common European cross-institutional architecture.<sup>35</sup> For the EU the outlook was not good. The diplomatic failures in Bosnia (with the humbling lesson of US haughtiness during the negotiations of the 1995 Dayton Peace Process, with a resulting minimum European input), and the setbacks in the Middle East Peace Process (jeopardizing to nullify the efforts behind the 1995 Euro-Mediterranean Partnership), combined to severely undermine the EU’s pre-Maastricht positive self-image of responsibility for the countries in its periphery.

To further compound problems another more subtle battle was brewing behind the confusion of the interlocking institutions. In the expectation that the Treaty would come into force on 1 January 1993, on 7 February 1992 the Foreign Ministers of the Twelve presented a first report “on the likely development of the CFSP with a view to identifying areas open to joint action vis-à-vis particular countries or groups of countries” meant to provide the beginnings of a strategic rationale within which to

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<sup>35</sup> Although ‘inter-locking’ institutions would experience a brief (and unexpectedly successful) revival over the military intervention (NATO) and post-conflict diplomatic settlement (EU and OSCE) in terms of Kosovo in 1999. However, it is doubtful that if it had not been for the special circumstances (fear of more recurrent conflicts in the Western Balkans), and the willingness of EU, the US and Russia to work

conduct the CFSP (Whitman 1998: 92). The Lisbon European Council in June 1992 singled out geographical proximity, overwhelming interest in the political and economic stability of a region or state and the existence of a potential threat to the Union's security interests for the EU's overall foreign policy priorities in terms of joint actions. This was going to be the first recognition by the European Council of the growing importance of the close geographical vicinity to the Union and its member states. However, the fact that the joint action committed budget allotments became the source for a festering debate throughout the remainder of the 1990s over the importance of determined borderland areas and in consequence their financial allotments (Walker, M. 2001: 71).

In the early years of the 1990s the European agenda seemed absolutely absorbed by the events happening in Central and Eastern Europe and internal changes, while projects in EC's southern periphery received relatively little attention. Several ventures for Maghreb, Middle East and/or the Mediterranean had been proposed by southern European member states during these years; however, as Barbé and Izquierdo (1997: 124-5) have noted, the difficulty had been to try to unite a common southern European front (see Chapter 4).<sup>36</sup> Nevertheless, by 1994 this would change. The Southern European countries had by then awoken to the danger inherent in that the pending Eastern enlargement would make the Community increasingly oriented to the north and the east, presumably contributing to a marginalization of southern European concerns. This realization would act as a galvanizing force among southern European countries, and to joint pressure at the June 1994 Corfu European Council to strengthen the EU's Mediterranean policy, and continued unabatedly through the European Council of Essen

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closely together that the 'interlockedness' had worked.

<sup>36</sup> Some of the proposed initiatives (e.g. CSCM) foundered on the very lack of consensus between France, Italy, Portugal and Spain over whether the European Community's relation with the Mediterranean basin should be 'subregional' (i.e. Maghreb and Middle East treated separately) or overarching.

(December 1994) and European Council of Cannes (June 1995). France, Italy and Spain joined forces to press for more resources to the Mediterranean region and thus staging a regular showdown between south-north orientations within the Union (Barbé 1998: 122; Bretherton and Vogler 1999: 280).<sup>37</sup> These tensions had been already evident during the preparations for the priority list presented at the Lisbon European Council, but at Essen they would flare up with particular intensity.<sup>38</sup> The Spanish Prime Minister Felipe González had previously to the Essen European Council put things to a fore and threatened to block the Eastern enlargement if there was no meaningful gesture to rebalance east-south relations in the EU's foreign policy (*El País*, 20 November 1995).

The Essen dispute revealed the underlying differences between member states on the prioritization of different foreign policy objectives, a reality on the ground which clashed with the Treaty of Maastricht commitment to having a 'common' foreign and security policy (Forster and Wallace 2000: 481). The differentiated geographical prioritization and the lack of solidarity among European Union member for each others' foreign policy priorities had placed itself squarely on the European agenda. These debates were to be reiterated to some extent by Finnish and Swedish politicians from the moment they entered the Union's institutions, calling for a greater equity between the Union's commitments to and resources reserved for Europe's southern rim and Europe's North, concretely arguing for a Northern Dimension to the EU policy. This resulted in some apprehension among Southern European member states that the newcomers would fracture the cohesion within the Union by forming a 'Nordic bloc' in order to tap the EU's resources or promote certain interests (Ojanen 2001a: 24). In

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<sup>37</sup> Spain under Felipe González was very adept in the game of exacting concessions in this regard. Madrid, for example, succeeded in blocking the establishment of the 1991 TACIS program until it received satisfactory assurances that increased funding for the Mediterranean were forthcoming.

<sup>38</sup> The clash was possibly more accentuated by the fact that the about-to-be member states Austria, Finland and Sweden, as well as the Eastern enlargement candidates were present at the Essen European

essence, the Mediterranean and the Baltic Sea area had become “competitors in the bid for favours from the Union’s structural funds and neighbourhood policies” (Stålvant 2001: 5).<sup>39</sup>

Funding for West Balkan aid was also going to be controversial in being linked to funding for the MEDA II programme. The member states had set a funding ceiling for the period 2000-2006 of EUR 10 bn, for both programs together. However, northern and southern EU countries would disagree on which area should receive the largest proportion of that aid. The award of EUR 4.65 bn to CARDS and EUR 5.35 bn to MEDA II at the Marseilles Euro-Med Summit on 15-16 November sealed the bargain, however, not before Nicole Fontaine, President of the European Parliament, sent a stern letter to EU leaders on 27 October, saying the Parliament could not “allow the Balkan countries and Serbia to be built to the detriment of other political priorities, particularly the EU's Mediterranean policy” (*European Report* 2000).

The squabble over prioritization and resources for different borderland areas has been viewed by some as essentially about a contest of changing foreign policy identities of different EU member states, as between centrality and marginality in the new integrative Europe (Joenniemi 1999). The distributive problem of accommodating the needs and demands of the north and the south has continued to brew under the surface, which is evident from the reiterated flare-ups over different topics related to the neighborhood.<sup>40</sup> Indeed, some observers have even remarked that even a decade after

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Council, driving home to the southern member states the very evident shift of political weight towards the north and east which was about to become real.

<sup>39</sup> Finnish Foreign Minister Erkki Tuomioja has also acknowledged that the Northern Dimension meant to counterbalance the southward drift of the EU towards the Mediterranean area. However, Finland in 1997 would still show itself sensitive enough to the intra-EU tensions, perceiving that the south-north bickering was jeopardizing the overall efficiency of EU in its neighborhood. Thus, as part of the strategic overtures when launching the Northern Dimension, Helsinki offered to arrange a big symposium on the Mediterranean and the Barcelona Process to show that for the Finnish government the whole of EU’s periphery was important.

<sup>40</sup> The north-south rift has from time to time since re-surfaced at different occasions, such as for example, every four years when the budget framework is to be established, or in 1999/2000 when the adoption of

the signing of the Maastricht Treaty the concept of ‘geopolitical coherence’ in the EU’s external action was “still in its infancy” (Maresceau and Lannon 2001: xix).

In short, in the period 1988-1996, as Allen (1998: 47) argues –

“the EU had failed to develop a coherent foreign policy for managing the new European order, in marked contrast to the United States which the Union once aspired to replace in the European order. To develop a foreign policy, as opposed to the present collection of multi-faceted external relationships, the Union needed to find ways of directing, managing and coordinating its external relationships in the pursuit of identifiable and legitimised interests. The problem clearly could not be resolved by either concentrating the foreign policy focus on the CFSP or by putting all the foreign policy eggs in the EC basket.”

### **3.3.2. The ‘neighborhood’ arrives on the agenda**

The faltering confidence in the EU as a foreign policy actor would, it could be argued, begin to swing again with a series of unrelated events during 1997-1999 which would jointly serve as an impetus for making the European Union become more profiled in international affairs (Barbé 2000b). The 1997 British general elections ushered in Tony Blair and his Labor Party into government, and with them a fresh British take on the European construction. The new British rapprochement with Europe would be symbolized in the 1998 Franco-British St. Malo meeting which served to lay the basis

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the Common Strategies on Russia and Ukraine set off demands among the southern European member states for a Common Strategy on the Mediterranean, or the pressure to make sure that the southern

for the development of a European Security and Defense Policy. Other institutional advances such as the 1 June 1998 establishment of the European Central Bank, heralding the 1 January 1999 adoption of the euro in the financial markets, also provided a measure of optimism. Simultaneously, war clouds once again gathered in the Western Balkans as violent clashes took place between members of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) and the Serbian military throughout 1998. The looming conflict over Kosovo would jolt European leaders into motion, not wanting to experience the same severe humiliation at the hands of the US as over the recent Dayton Peace Process.

Some analysts have noted that the Kosovo conflict had come to mark a psychological turn-around for the positive in the EU's foreign policy in that, under the circumstances, the EU-15 managed to maintain remarkable united despite the existing panoply of member states' concern (Crowe 2003: 536; Ginsberg 2001). There are also other, and much more critical, interpretations of the EU's handling of the Kosovo conflict as it flared up in late 1998. However, even for these observers the outcome would still be a boon for the EU's international actor capability in that the negative experience suffered once again over a Western Balkans conflict, conspired to converge "in such a way as to impart new momentum to the development of European foreign policy and to raise the possibility of an almost revolutionary change in member state commitments" toward such a policy (Smith, M. 2003: 556 and 2001; cf. Howorth 2000).

The reason for this, as some foreign policy pundits have pointed to, is that while the US (through NATO) dominated the military action, it was going to be EU negotiators, in particular from Germany and Finland, who played a notable role in the

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Mediterranean countries would not loose out relatively as the ENPI was born in 2007.

diplomatic end-game, especially when it came to persuading Russia to exert pressure on President Milosevic (Allen and Smith 2000: 103; Ginsberg, 2001). Similarly, the rapid actuation of the incumbent German EU Presidency to establish the Stability Pact and later the Stabilization and Association process for the Western Balkans added to the feeling that even if the EU could not muster any military teeth in open conflict, it could at least have an important role in the post-conflict reconstruction phase and in the attempts to win the peace (Friis and Murphy 2000). Both facts, one might infer, marked a sharp contrast to the humiliating sidelining which the EU had experienced during the negotiations of the Dayton Peace Agreement in 1995. There was thus a new, growing confidence among EU leaders that the Union could, and indeed should, play a more decisive role in foreign policy pursuits, especially in terms of its close geographical vicinity and areas central to its burgeoning identity understanding (e.g. post-conflict reconstruction, economic development).

Against the background of the dramatic events in Kosovo and the entering into force of the Amsterdam Treaty (May 1999), the member states reflected upon the recent developments at the Cologne European Council (1999a; emphasis added) by stating that

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“[t]he European Council recalls that at its Vienna meeting it called on the Council also to prepare common strategies on Ukraine, on the Mediterranean region, specifically taking into account the Barcelona process and the Middle East peace process, and on the Western Balkans. The six months since the Vienna meeting have, in various ways, again clearly brought out the importance of all these regions to the European Union not only as partners in its external

relations but also for the stability and security of our continent and its immediate *neighbourhood.*”

The ‘neighborhood’ had thus made its entrance on the EU’s agenda as a concept and the terminology was used to signal the intention of a more coherent and strategic approach towards third countries in the EU’s immediate geographical vicinity.

The adoption of the Common Strategies in 1999 and 2000 seemed nevertheless at first to point to politics as usual within the EU. The Common Strategies on Russia, Ukraine and Mediterranean could only be read as expressions of the customary EU declaratory policy and continued infighting between member states over prioritization of peripheries. The added values expected from their adoption in the form of political-economic coordination did not materialize and, worse, they seemed to add confusion to the EU’s foreign policy in that the Common Strategy on Russia was almost identical to the Northern Dimension initiative which after several years of preparation by the Commission was about to be launched, the Common Strategy on the Mediterranean in its turn was a virtual facsimile of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

However, other more subtle and long term developments were underway in the EU’s foreign policy towards its borderlands. The Stability Pact and Stabilization and Association process for southeastern Europe had been launched to infuse the region with a new post-conflict dynamic. The Cologne European Council had appointed Javier Solana as the first CFSP High Representative. It was not at first clear how Solana would be able to add something new and positive to the EU’s foreign policy in that his office was very ambiguously defined, but soon he would work out in which niches he could begin to make a difference. The same year, the Commission of Italian Romani Prodi would take over the work of the outgoing Santer Commission (October 1999). The



recent events in Kosovo were surely on his mind when Prodi in his investiture speech lay out the vision for a more coherent approach to the Union's borderlands. The European Commission President stated –

“[a]ll of us – the European Union, the applicant countries, and our neighbours in the wider Europe – must work together towards our common destiny: a wider European area offering peace, stability and prosperity to all: ‘a new European order’” (Prodi; as cited in Grabbe 2000).

The view that the Union was getting more attentive to its borderlands and aware of the need for a more coherent and decisive approach in its foreign policy was also corroborated at the Helsinki European Council in December 1999. Still reeling from the ‘Kosovo-effect’, some would hold, the Helsinki Summit opened the door to the remaining six recognized EU accession applicant states at the time (Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Slovakia and Romania), it accorded candidate status to Turkey, and took decisive steps towards establishing the ESDP (both civilian and military reaction forces) (Arnswald 2002; see also Allen and Smith 2000: 101).

As the Eastern enlargement accession negotiations was coming to a close in 2002, European leaders began to work in earnest on a unified and more solid approach to non-member third countries in the EU's geographical vicinity (Johansson-Nogués 2004b and 2007b). The work would proceed along three principal conduits. First, and on invitation by the April 2002 General Affairs Council, the CFSP High Representative and the External Relations Commissioner Chris Patten, circulated an internal memo in regards to taking a more strategic view on ‘wider Europe’. The Solana-Patten proposal would later find its way into a more complete Commission Communication titled *Wider*

*Europe-Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours* of March 2003. The Communication proposed a progressive integration of the countries concerned into the EU's Internal Market and its regulatory structures, including those pertaining to sustainable development (health, consumer and environmental protection) and the Four Freedoms (free movement of goods, services, capital and persons) (European Commission 2003a). Both the Patten-Solana memo and the later Communication showed for the first time a willingness of the Union and its member states to treat the periphery as an organic whole and outlines a more uniform vision for how relations with its closest neighbors would be carried out (Johansson-Nogués 2007b).

Second, with the international situation complicating as a result of 11 September 2001 and the return of violence in the Middle East, as well as the CFSP crisis over Iraq in 2003, an EU security concept was deemed necessary. In 2003 Solana presented, first to the Thessalonica European Council (June 2003) and then the final version at the Brussels European Council (December 2003). The Security Strategy stresses the importance of the EU's neighboring areas to the internal stability of the European Union (Biscop 2005). The strategic importance of the borderlands in the EU's foreign policy was further emphasized by the decision to include a paragraph in the EU Constitution dedicated to EU's non-candidate neighbors.

Finally, in the time period since the adoption of the ENP and the European Security Strategy, member states have also in different ways labored to strengthen the Barcelona Process, the Northern Dimension and the Stabilization and Association process. In 2003 a special Western Balkans Forum was opened to give the Stabilization and Association process a firmer institutional footing and in 2005 an enhanced European Integration Partnership strategy was launched. In 2005, at the Tenth

Anniversary meeting of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, the Barcelona Process was vested with a Five-Year Work Program designed to make the cooperation more concrete and predictable. Finally, at the end of 2006 a Framework Document was adopted among the Northern Dimension partners (EU, Iceland, Norway and Russia) which upgraded the cooperation into a shared undertaking among the four partners and awarded parity in terms of decision-making and agenda-setting.

One could argue that the adoption of the ENP and the European Security Strategy, as well as the upgrading of the existing regional framework policies, indicate that the EU member states have reached the realization that the EU is the actor which is most placed to provide for their preferences and act according to their national identities in the borderlands, as opposed to other European entities. Moreover, there was also awareness among member states that the intra-EU rivalries over the prioritization for different EU peripheries had become unsustainable in view of the post-Kosovo evolution of the international environment. The north-south-east rift had provoked paralysis and generated little satisfaction. The adoption of the ENP/ENPI and the European Security Strategy in this way acted to settle, or at least placate, such rifts by a discourse that places the whole periphery on par (Johansson-Nogués 2007b). There is thus some ground to note that the Union's 'geopolitical coherence' has move fairly quickly in recent years, leaving 'infancy' behind in favor of a more mature stance. Finally, the improvements made on the regional framework policies and the adoption of the ENP are also designed to help intra-Commission coherence, by giving external relations and CFSP a uniform structure within which to function. All in all these indications therefore appears to point to that fifteen years after the Maastricht Treaty pledged that the EU should assert its international identity, the European Union is increasingly in a position where its foreign policy identity in the borderlands have

become more defined and more operative. The three factors of Wendt's (1999) definition of a shared identity – we-feeling, solidarity and loyalty –, noted in Chapter 2, are arguably therefore the most powerful explananda contributing to such increased EU's foreign policy cohesion since Maastricht.

### 3.4. Conclusions

As the Berlin Wall crumbled, high outsider expectations were placed on the EU to lead the way towards a new European security order. The end of the Cold War would drive home the European willingness “to create a European actor capable not only of responding to external expectations but actively contributing to the construction of understandings and practices which in turn shape the expectations of others” (Bretherton and Vogler 1999: 257). Jørgensen (2004b: 12) suggests that there was a widely held intersubjective understanding among European makers and analysts that the absence of the Cold War almost automatically would elevate the EC into a new and significant actor in international politics and, moreover, an actor with considerable diplomatic and political clout. However, although the Union has been prolific in creating many different policy frameworks and upgrading bilateral relations, on the whole the EU's foreign policy output has for the more part of the past decade and half been rather uneven. For the more part of the 1990s the EU member states would essentially wring their hands over whether to endow the Union with the competencies and instruments to make it into a coherent and functioning foreign policy actor. Moreover, once the members seemed to converge on the importance of making the EU

their primary European institution for foreign policy pursuits, a different battle began to brew whereby the member states pitted each other geographical interests and identities off in a zero-sum fashion. Such convergent views of the member states produced rival foreign policy discourses and a splintered EU foreign policy identity.

Only in the aftermath of Kosovo and the Amsterdam Treaty is there evidence for a budding political commitment on the part of the member states to produce a more cohesive EU's foreign policy identity. The European Neighborhood Policy, the European Security Strategy and the different upgrades which the Barcelona Process, the Northern Dimension and the Stabilization and Association process have experienced are elements which combined with a political will of solidarity and loyalty for different geographical peripheries have produced a more coherent and forceful 'we-feeling' in EU foreign policy vis-à-vis the borderlands.

While on the whole it is impossible to deny the significance of different exogenous events (Kosovo, 11 September 2001 etc.) pushing the EU foreign policy identity in relation to the borderlands in the direction of greater concretization, it is still possible to argue that the most important source for the 'we-feeling' is nevertheless endogenous. The EU member states' relation to each other and their particularistic readings of what the European Union should be all about are perhaps the principal factors explaining the EU's identity in the borderlands today. The rivaling discourses of the 1990s (geographical or institutional priorities) contributed to a hobbling or in-existent EU foreign policy. The realization coming out from that experience is that if the Union's member states want to have an impact on the world they need to pull together. Such a dominant understanding can be said in turn to have generated an intra-EU agreement in terms of how the Union's identity – in the form of responsibility – should be expressed vis-à-vis the borderlands. The dominant discourse equates the

Union's duty to its borderland partners with 'regional multilateralism', 'multi-sectoral cooperation' and 'interventionism'. 'Regional multilateralism' is to counter a return to a similar situation as the 1990s where different member states' relations to certain third countries and their wishes to safeguard those close ties by ways of the European Union ended up playing member states off each other. 'Multi-sectoral cooperation' is of essence in order to resonate at the EU level with a maximum EU member states' national foreign policy objectives and particularistic identity expressions. Finally, 'interventionism', among other things, puts the onus for pro-active action in the borderlands on the EU as opposed to any other European institution.

Part II – Borderlands  
– three cases of EU regional framework policies





## The EU and its southern borderlands: The Mediterranean

The geopolitical earthquake on the European continent at the end of the bipolar era would not produce any dramatic ripple effects in the countries of North Africa or the Middle East. Although a few aftershocks would be registered in the Mediterranean – mainly a reconfiguration of the regional balance – making the Middle East Peace Process in the early years of the 1990s possible – few other noticeable changes seemed to loom on the southern Mediterranean horizon. The very politico-economic stagnation of the Mediterranean region in the early 1990s, wedded to the European fixation with the monumental changes taking place in Central and Eastern Europe, seemed for a moment to relegate the EC/EU's relations to the region to the annals of history. However, the Mediterranean – a recurrent theme on the European agenda, as we have seen, since the days of EPC – was not going to go away that easily. Different international events have resituated the Mediterranean as increasingly central to European concerns. If the 1993 Oslo Accords and alarmist report on southern Mediterranean migration or violent political Islam would be among the prime causes for the development of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in 1995, more recently other events have kept the Mediterranean as an ever-current topic on Council meetings. The

return to violence in the Middle East, the regime change in Iraq, the conclusion of Eastern enlargement and the 2006 Israeli-Lebanese crisis have in different ways called Europe's attention to the relevance of the southern Mediterranean and the need for a continued EU engagement there.

This chapter will begin with a look at the early post-Cold War years to trace the EU's growing involvement in the area. The following section will be devoted to the description of and reflection on the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and supporting EU-led initiatives for the region. The final section will look at how the EU's foreign policy identity has fared in terms of cohesion and presence.

#### 4.1. In a Cold War thaw and changing international circumstances

At the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s there were a host of events and developments in the Mediterranean region which would eventually prod the EC/EU to get increasingly involved in the area. A primary reason would be the 1980s accession of Greece, Spain and Portugal which further exposed the Community to the ins and outs of North Africa and the Middle East. At the end of the decade the economic stagnation in the southern Mediterranean countries had reached alarming levels, a fact that when combined with the external debt-rates and the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) painful restructuring programs created social unrest and an anti-Western rhetoric in these countries. The large-scale public manifestations against the Gulf War in Algeria and Morocco, and in some European capitals with sizeable Muslim populations in 1990, would add to the feeling that something had to be done about the situation in the

Mediterranean. The burning of French flags in Rabat during demonstrations there would, for example, have a profound effect on French public opinion and solicit the panicky observation from media that France had somehow ‘lost the Maghreb’ (Gomez 2003: 52). Moreover, the wake-up call which the 1991 electoral victory of the Islamic Salvation Front in Algeria provided meant that the phenomenon of political Islam would henceforth place itself firmly on the agenda in various European capitals. Many EU member states would begin consider the growing popularity of Islamic opposition movements in various Arab countries, but also in the poorest areas of Europe’s urban centers, as a new security challenge for European countries as the movement seem to draw strength from a negative identity stereotyping of the West. Finally, another factor which was to jar European governments into motion was the reports predicting a growing exodus of people from the southern Mediterranean rim seeking themselves to European countries in the search of political stability and better economic prospects (Gillespie 1997a).

To attempt to address some of these political problems the European Commission would in the late 1980s begin to prepare a Renewed Mediterranean Policy. The Renewed Mediterranean Policy was called so in view of its ambition to supplant the earlier and exclusively trade-aid oriented Global Mediterranean Policy (launched in the 1970s).<sup>1</sup> The new policy, officially launched in 1990, proposed a new emphasis on structural reform, regional integration as well as cooperation in new areas such as culture or environment. It was clearly a first attempt by the European Union to reinvent its external relations in the wake of the changing international environment distancing itself from the traditional donor approach and taking on a more active foreign policy identity. However, the new policy would fail to really tackle many of the most urgent

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<sup>1</sup> The central pillar of the Global Mediterranean Policy was free access to Community markets for manufactured goods from the countries of the Mediterranean basin.

concerns of the southern Mediterranean countries at the time. First, from a southern Mediterranean viewpoint the Iberian accession and the negotiations for the Single European Market (1986) – the latter which seemed to some as an attempt to turn the EC into an economic ‘fortress’ – seemed especially threatening. The southern enlargement had greatly increased the Community’s internal production of Mediterranean agricultural produce, resulting in a lessened demand for southern Mediterranean products. The Renewed Mediterranean Policy did, however, little to balance these worsening trade terms in one of southern Mediterranean countries main export sectors. Moreover, although a relaxation of textile import restrictions was included in the policy, it was a small compensation for EC’s southern neighbors which would not offer enough margins to help them out of their economic conundrum. Nor would the promise of extra financial assistance granted help palliate the situation. The EC’s fourth generation of financial protocols would be riddled with long delays and complex granting procedures. These factors, together with the fact that there were few projects considered viable by the European Commission, resulted in a poor take-up of the funding made available for the southern Mediterranean countries. Finally, there was no follow-up offer alongside the Renewed Mediterranean Policy of debt-relief or renegotiation, which could easily have accompanied the policy given that the major debtors of the southern Mediterranean countries were then, and continue to be, EC/EU member states.

Second, the changing international environment of the early post-Cold War years seemed to further exacerbate the political isolation which several of the Maghreb countries were experiencing. Although an attempt to regional integration in view of trying to boost both their economic and political position on the world stage was launched in 1987 in the form the Arab Maghreb Union (UMA; French acronym), the plan promoted by the late king Hassan II of Morocco must essentially been considered

as still-born.<sup>2</sup> The Renewed Mediterranean Policy would neither hold out any hopes of palliating this felt political marginalization. One could thus draw some parallels between the isolation felt by the Central and Eastern European post-communist countries and those of some southern Mediterranean countries in the late 1980s and early 1990s. However, the stark difference would be that on the European side the Central and Eastern European countries would soon be invited to regular European regional fora, such as the CSCE and the Council of Europe, and to liaise with the NATO through the North Atlantic Cooperation Council, while for the southern Mediterranean countries the political vacuum continued without filling.

The failure of the EC to come up with a more suitable policy for southern Mediterranean circumstances in the late 1980s to early 1990s, can in part be explained by the fact that the Community was at the time increasingly distracted by the developments in the Central and Eastern Europe as well as with its own metamorphosis from Community to European Union. In the words of Barbé and Izquierdo (1997: 121)

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“[t]he [Central and Eastern European] ‘velvet’ revolution of 1989-91 meant a profound change in the international system to which the EC needed to internally and externally adapt to. Internally, the construction process to build a political and economic union came under way in the early 1990s. Externally, the Community undertook various ad-hoc measures initially to assist its eastern

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<sup>2</sup> The UMA comprises the five Maghreb countries – Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Libya and Mauritania – and was an outright attempt to emulate the EC-model. Hassan II had the idea to turn the Arab Maghreb into one country, with one passport, one identity and a single currency and thus breathing life into century-old aspirations towards a Greater Maghreb unity based on a shared historical identity. The UMA was also going to be an attempt at achieving economic diversification and reducing the dependence on European markets (Pomfret 1992: 86). However, the UMA’s aspiration would soon languish. The historical tension between the five Maghreb countries and unresolved conflicts in the region (Western Sahara) posed, and continues today to pose, formidable obstacles against closer cooperation. Moreover, intra-trade between the five UMA members remains difficult given the similarity of their economic base

post-communist neighbors, while later creating long-term relations via the Europe Agreements and PHARE/TACIS programs.”

This distraction meant that there was no real stomach within the EC, especially for some northern EU member states, to look more closely at the Mediterranean *problematique* and come up with more than a stopgap approach such as the Renewed Mediterranean Policy.

Perhaps for the very difficulty to engage the other EC partners more firmly on Mediterranean affairs, some of the southern EC member states began to take matters in their own hands and actively pursue extra-Community means to address the challenges facing the region. In September 1990, the Italian Prime Minister Gianni de Michaelis and Spanish Prime Minister Felipe González would, for example, propose the creation of a Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean (CSCM) at the CSCE Mediterranean environment conference held in Palma, Spain. The CSCM was to be composed of CSCE members as well as all interested southern Mediterranean rim states. The CSCM, however, would soon prove itself to be a non-starter in that both France and Germany adopted a rather cool attitude towards it.<sup>3</sup> Other CSCE-members, such as Russia and the United States would also oppose. The latter given Washington’s concern that such an initiative would distract Israeli-Palestinian attention away from the then still incipient US-led bilateral contacts to set up a peace process in the Middle East (Bonvicini 1996: 102).

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(Gillespie 2002).

<sup>3</sup> However, the CSCM did plant the seed of an inter-parliamentary CSCM, which functioned until 2005. These meetings have since been replaced by the more institutionalized Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, which held its inaugural session in Jordan, September 2006, and opened its door to other countries in the Mediterranean area. Members of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean are parliamentary representatives from: Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Malta, Montenegro, Morocco, Portugal, Serbia, Slovenia, Spain, Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, Turkey.

France had snubbed the CSCM proposal as a consequence of its concern that the overarching framework of the initiative would interfere with the French-sponsored 'five-plus-four' group – the five Maghreb countries (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania and Libya) and France, Spain, Portugal and Italy (later 'five-plus-five', upon joining Malta in 1991), which emerged simultaneously as the proposals for a CSCM. The 'five-plus-five' initiative, also known as the Western Mediterranean Forum, was an attempt to create a meeting format among the participating countries for concertation of views and deliberation on 'current issues' (King 1997: 375-388). It was also clearly an initiative which surged as a consequence of a French preoccupation with regaining the political influence in the Maghreb which it seemingly had lost after the 1990-1 Gulf War. The first foreign minister meeting was held in Rome, (10 October 1990), in Alger (27 October 1991) and then there would be a pause of a decade until the meetings were resurrected in Lisbon (26 January 2001).<sup>4</sup>

If the CSCM proposal and the 'five-plus-five' initiative were launched as a consequence of individual southern EU member states' concerns, and in view of EC inaction, it soon became clear that these schemes could still not be more than a temporary substitute for Community involvement. The failure of other Mediterranean fora to come into being or function would cause France, Italy and Spain to call for a firmer EC commitment to the southern Mediterranean rim. Their insistence would give its fruits in two ways. At the 1992 Lisbon European Council Maghreb and Mashreq, as we have seen, would be listed for EC priority action. Moreover, parallel to the Lisbon

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<sup>4</sup> The reason for the pause was the strong European reaction to the Algerian military's decision to cancel the national election in 1992. Since 2001 the dialogue has experienced a revival of sorts as the first meeting of the heads of state and government took place in Tunis in 2003. Moreover, in 2004 a first meeting of ministers of defence of ten Mediterranean countries was held in Paris with the aim to establish military cooperation in order to promote security and the fight against terrorism in the region. At a meeting in Malta in 2005 the participants present discussed items such as the importance of the strengthening of the social welfare systems in the southern Mediterranean countries, the question of illegal migration, a Libyan proposal for a Charter on Peace and Security in the Western Mediterranean and the Tenth Anniversary Summit of the Barcelona Process.

decision, the Spanish government was given a mandate to work with the Commission to come up with a proposal for how relations with the Maghrebi countries could be improved.

However, although the 1992 Spanish report would provide the basis for a reinforced and expanded Euro-Maghreb relationship, events in the rapidly developing peace process in the Middle East called for the EC to get more involved in Mashreq as well. The fact that a Middle East Peace Process got under way would be an element stimulating the interest of the EC's northern member states. The Middle East was, as noted in Chapter 3, the most longstanding issue on the Community's foreign policy agenda and most member states had over the twenty years of EPC experience come to embrace the matter as central to the understanding of their foreign policy cooperation. This was now to become a factor which facilitated the northern member states' political willingness to equilibrate their Central and Eastern European interests with Mediterranean. When the Oslo Accords finally were signed in 1993, the Community therefore began to work on a policy to embrace the Mediterranean region as a whole.

#### 4.2. Taking Euro-Mediterranean relations to a new level?

As a consequence, and in tribute to hard work undertaken by the successive French and, in particular, Spanish EU Presidencies, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership came into being November 1995 at a special conference held at the Palau de Pedralbes in Barcelona. The Partnership, it was thought, would become an instrument to comprehensively settle many of the problems inherent in the Mediterranean basin and,



at the same time, signal a higher political commitment from Europe compared to earlier policies. Hence, in a formula reminiscent of the Helsinki Process, the Barcelona Declaration divides the partnership into three chapters — political and security; economic and financial; social, cultural and human affairs (Barbé 1996: 26). With this goal in mind, the Barcelona Declaration (an executive agreement comprising of a political declaration and a work program), sets up general principles and common objectives in some 40 sectors, among them the objective to create a Free Trade Area by 2010, establish economic and cultural cooperation, as well as political dialogue. It was quite widely held that such a holistic multilateral political and economic integration would be the solution to both how to integrate the southern Mediterranean countries into the international economy, to provide some political anchorage, to deal with the majority of sources of instability in the region as well as to blur the suspicion and antagonism which had impeded a close relationship during the bipolar period.

The Barcelona Process thus seemed to be off to an auspicious start. Felipe González, caught in a buoyant mood, affirmed his conviction that the Partnership represented a ‘launching-pad’ for putting the Euro-Mediterranean relationship on a new footing (Barbé 1996). However, the then Spanish prime minister would not be alone in his optimism. The presence of representatives from all southern Mediterranean partners at the Barcelona conference was deemed as a no small feat in itself. A new cooperative climate seemed possible, as Israelis, Syrians and Palestinians posed side by side for the world press, and thereby capturing the essence of the ‘Barcelona spirit’. The Partnership would, however, suffer set-backs already before a follow-up Summit could be celebrated on Malta in 1997 as the Middle East conflict revived. As the Second *Intifada* was launched in late 2000, most observers gave the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership for largely irrelevant, and impression which was further deepened by the 11 September

2001. However, notwithstanding inherent difficulties, the activity within the Barcelona Process has proceeded and has since late 2000 circled around different European-instigated proposals for how to revive and strengthen the Partnership. The Action Plan adopted in Valencia in 2002 pretends to make the Partnership's objectives more concrete and introduce some novel areas of cooperation (ESDP and civilian crisis management). In addition, in 2004 the EU launched the European Neighborhood Policy which provides for a 'deepened' cooperation in many sectors (economic integration, JHA issues etc.) and designed to reinforce, not replace, the Barcelona Process (Johansson-Nogués 2004b).

In terms of institutions, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership is relatively institutionalized compared to some of the other regional framework policies the Union has launched in the past decades. At the top of the political steering of the Partnership there is the Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Ministers of Foreign Affairs and the Euro-Mediterranean Committee for the Barcelona Process (the Euro-Med Committee), the latter which is tasked with monitoring the implementation of the Work Programs.<sup>5</sup> Both are chaired by the EU Presidency-in-office, who also provides the policy initiative and direction of the Barcelona Process. Since the EU Presidency rotates between different EU member states every six months, the prioritization of different issues tends to differ from one EU Presidency to another, which clearly has had a negative impact on continuity and consistency of the Process' agenda. The Valencia Action Plan was in some measure created to avoid this adhocery and provide the Euro-Mediterranean agenda with greater constancy. However, in reality the quality and capacity of taking the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership further continues to vary significantly in different Presidency stints. This led to the decision at the 2005 Luxembourg Barcelona VII

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<sup>5</sup> The Euro-Mediterranean Committee, set up at senior official level, consists of the EU troika and a representative from each of the Mediterranean partners (sometimes referred to as 'Misters Barcelona').

minister meeting to set the goal to celebrate ministerial meetings every eighteen months, with an intermediate mid-term meeting in between. Moreover, at the Tenth Anniversary Summit in Barcelona in November 2005, a 'Five-Year Work Program' was adopted, which for the first time provides the Partnership with a longer operational timeframe than it has possessed in the past. Hitherto, the tasks set up were meant to be achieved in the period up until the next minister conference (Gillespie 2006: 275).

Preparation and follow-up work for the Euro-Mediterranean meetings are largely in the hands of the European Commission. There are ad hoc sectoral meetings of ministers, senior officials and experts provide specific impulse and follow-up for the various activities listed in the work program. At the Parliamentary level, parliamentary representatives from EU and Mediterranean partners' national parliaments as well as the European Parliament meet in the form of the Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly (set up in 2004). Economic actors and civil society have also been encouraged to participate in the Barcelona Process, both in the Barcelona Declaration and again reiterated in the Valencia Action Plan. However, their direct contribution to the development of the Partnership has seen itself severely circumscribed by the fact that they have been given no formal role or specific rights so far. They may of course make proposals, mobilize public opinions, use indirect strategies and organize their own monitoring of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership's development, but their input in the past decade is deemed as not having been overly heeded so far by the executives, in spite of reiterated pledges on the part of the latter to the contrary (Jünemann 2002; Olivan 2002; Johansson-Nogués 2006b).

Another facet of the Barcelona Process is the enhanced bilateral relations with each of the Mediterranean country. The diverse pre-existing EC bilateral agreements with southern Mediterranean countries have during the 1990s progressively been

replaced by Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreements.<sup>6</sup> Only Syria has, to date, not signed its Agreement and nor has the EU Council – although technical negotiations were concluded October 2004<sup>7</sup> – and Algeria and Lebanon is currently awaiting the ratifications of its Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreements by EU's member states. The agreements provide establishment of the usual association institutions between EU and the associated country. The Association Council monitors the implementation of the association accord and suggests further areas for cooperation.

#### **4.2.1. The political and security dimension in Euro-Mediterranean relations**

The aim of the political and security cooperation to create a common area of peace and security was probably one of the facets in the Barcelona Declaration which would raise the most expectations in 1995 and the perhaps most noteworthy difference compared to the erstwhile Renewed Mediterranean Policy. The conceptualization of the Barcelona Process' holistic framework had essentially been shaped by the Union's bipolar era CSCE experience, largely marked by cooperation on a broad range of 'soft security' concerns. However, some elements in the Barcelona Declaration (e.g. nuclear proliferation, disarmament etc.) gave the impression that the EU finally was willing to enhance its political standing in the region by sitting down and discussing 'hard security' issues as well.<sup>8</sup> From this perspective, the attempts at establishing confidence-

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<sup>6</sup> Except for Turkey which has a customs union agreement signed with the Union. Cf. Annex 2 for an overview of relevant legal agreements between the EU and Mediterranean borderland partners.

<sup>7</sup> As of time of writing the EU-Syrian Association Agreement is still held up by the Council. EU member states still expect Syria to take positive and credible steps to make signature possible, including on regional issues such as Lebanon, the Palestinians and on WMDs.

<sup>8</sup> Other hard security elements were outright excluded from the start. See, for example, the discrepancies

building measures in so-called hard security domains of security and disarmament were considered a priority. However, later events, such as the derailment of the Middle East Peace Process with the death of Yitzhak Rabin in 1994 and the Israeli elections in 1996, would make any such European pretenses unsustainable.<sup>9</sup>

The main thrust of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership has since been the focus on soft security issues and practical cooperation. In view of the failure of promoting confidence building in the region in the traditional hard security sense, the work in the security chapter would instead ostensibly shift to what has become known as 'partnership-building measures'. The partnership-building measures were designed to determine the common ground between the northern and the southern shore in terms of security culture.<sup>10</sup> The partnership-building was initially, above all, framed within the attempts to develop a Euro-Mediterranean stability pact. The French Balladur's government, the central force as we have seen behind the 1994 Stability Pact for Central and Eastern Europe, maintained that a similar initiative for the Mediterranean would be a means for the EU to gain leverage in the Middle East as an alternative interlocutor to the United States. However, this proposal was much diluted already at the Barcelona

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on the convenience or not to include references in the Barcelona Declaration to a settlement of the Middle East conflict (proposed by Syria, opposed by Israel), a reference to self-determination in regards to Palestine (opposed by Israel) or the Egyptian proposal for including an obligating clause for all EU partners to sign the Non-Proliferation Treaty (opposed by Israel).

<sup>9</sup> The European Parliament, however, tried in April 2002 to return the Barcelona Process into the terrain of hard security, by adopting a resolution asking the European Council to impose an arms embargo on Israel and Palestine. Part of the resolution was also a request for the Council to suspend the EU-Israel Association Agreement. The Prodi Commission declared its support for the Parliament's resolution, however, it came to nothing due to the resistance of most EU member states. The European Security Strategy, and in particular, the European Neighborhood Policy, have also tried to once again put the accent on the issue of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, however, the Union continues to fail to make any substantial inroads on this topic since (Kienzle 2006). Since 2005 the British government has tried to convince a number of Middle East countries to hold a senior official's conference on WMDs and the EU has lent UK support through its WMD-strategy and by setting aside money for the event. However, the southern Mediterranean partners are reluctant even to attend such a conference for fear of having to compromise on or become more transparent in terms of their open or clandestine WMD-programs which are deemed fundamental in the psychological propaganda war against each other to safeguard territorial integrity and the regional security balance.

<sup>10</sup> The divergent security cultures across the Mediterranean, and among southern Mediterranean partners, have been patent. Not only are there differences in terms of hailing in a state of peace or conflict, but also, and perhaps more importantly, threat perceptions, security referents (organized crime, terrorism etc.) and

II's conference in Malta 1997 and was as a result replaced by a proposal in respect to a non-binding charter (Aliboni 1999). The purpose of the 'Euro-Mediterranean Charter for Peace and Stability' was allegedly to enhance political dialogue to prevent tensions and crisis through actively stimulating partnership and good-neighborly relations and to maintain peace and stability through subregional cooperation (i.e. the pursuit of cooperative security) (Euro-Mediterranean Partnership 1999). After five years of negotiation, often down to the minutiae of semantics, an agreement was reached on the contents of the Charter in 2000. However, considering the outbreak of the violence in the Middle East that same year, it was decided at the fourth Euro-Mediterranean Conference of Foreign Ministers in Marseille (November 2000) to defer its adoption *sine die* (Philippart 2003b).<sup>11</sup>

Another main facet of the political and security thematic in the Mediterranean region, which has grown significantly in importance in recent years is the cooperation in regards to Justice and Home Affairs.<sup>12</sup> One of the major motivations behind the launch of the Partnership was the perceived insecurity that southern EU members felt stemmed from the southern Mediterranean rim. Calleya (2000) holds that the multilateralization of the Partnership stemmed from a perceived need for joint boundary management of the Mediterranean borders, especially on the northern rim. Hence the Barcelona Declaration places considerable emphasis on issues such as migration, terrorism, and cross-border flows of drugs and organized crime. These same objectives have gained particular importance for the Union and its member states in the light of the various al

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adequate measures to deal with security threats are very disparate.

<sup>11</sup> The Charter will allegedly be revived, and publicly disclosed, when the 'international situation' so allows.

<sup>12</sup> As noted above the division here in political and security, economic and social, cultural and human affairs does not perfectly correspond to the three Euro-Mediterranean Partnership baskets. JHA are treated in the third basket. However, JHA was only placed there as a consequence of southern Mediterranean resistance to have migration etc. included in the security chapter. This political finery notwithstanding, for most Euro-Mediterranean partners JHA matters continues to be a security-related area of cooperation.

Qaeda-linked attacks, and evolved on the Euro-Mediterranean agenda at the pace of the EU members' (still evolving) work to consolidate an 'area of freedom, security and justice'.<sup>13</sup>

Migration has perhaps been the most controversial issue in Euro-Mediterranean cooperation. EU governments tend to argue that southern Mediterranean partner countries do not sufficiently act to impede the illegal migratory fluxes stemming from their own territory or from other countries passing through. As a consequence, the Union has repeatedly encouraged its southern Mediterranean partners to adopt new border control agreements, and provides them with funds for policing borders and for local development initiatives (Volpi 2004: 145–164) both through the EMP and the posterior ENP. However, as Testas (2001, as cited in Volpi 2004) points out, whilst North African and Middle Eastern countries formally agreed to the terms of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and receive funds to this effect, they have tended to fail to achieve an effective implementation of the required reforms. Here a combination of corruption, poor territorial control (borders, internal security) and the fact that the southern Mediterranean authorities often simply turn a blind eye to the migration (viewing it as essentially positive) is at work.<sup>14</sup> The southern Mediterranean partners also often counter-argue that if there were more work-permits issued and a liberalization of EU's visa regime contemplated, the illegal trafficking would be much reduced in that

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<sup>13</sup> With the entry into force of the Amsterdam Treaty in May 1999 the Schengen rules were incorporated into the institutional framework of the European Union. One of the main objectives of the Treaty is to maintain and develop the Union as an area of freedom, security and justice, in which there would be free movement for persons combined with suitable measures pertaining to the control of external borders, asylum, immigration, as well as the prevention and combating of crime. The 1999 Tampere European Council was the first to begin to define this new 'area', and each EU Presidency has since taken the issue further.

<sup>14</sup> The outwards migration is viewed as positive in that it reduces the population pressure for services and scarce job opportunities, while once established on foreign territory often contribute to the southern Mediterranean economy through lucrative remittances. Moreover, in recent years migrants have tended to come from other parts of the world (e.g. Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia) and EU borderland partners have in consequence turned a blind eye to avoid situations where thousands of persons become trapped on their territory every year without funds to attend to their necessities (cf. Johansson-Nogués 2002; Barbé and Johansson-Nogués forthcoming).

these measures would take out the edge of the market for trafficking.<sup>15</sup> In the light of the 11 September 2001 there is also considerable emphasis put by partner governments that adequate protection, recognition and non-discrimination of migrant communities within the EU territory should be provided, given the rise of xenophobia or further social exclusion that Muslim migrants have experienced in some European societies since. The matter of an EU charter of migrant rights has, however, not gone beyond the embryonic blueprint stage as a consequence of the political sensitivity which immigration raises in most EU member states. Immigration increasingly constitutes a topic on which European elections are gained or lost. Hence, at the EU-level most of the work related to this matter has instead focused attention on concluding re-admission agreements with southern partners as a first stage for further measures.

There is also a common interest from both sides of the Mediterranean to fight organized crime, particularly drug trafficking, and terrorism. The Tenth Anniversary Summit managed, after considerable wrangling, to adopt a Euro-Mediterranean Code of Conduct on Countering Terrorism reflecting the particular concerns of the two co-Presidencies of the Anniversary Summit (UK and Spain) as international terrorism had struck both in London and Madrid (Gillespie 2006: 273). However, here different views on terminology (e.g. what does terrorism mean), the European reticence of sharing intelligence, know-how, technology for fighting network-based terrorism or providing the necessary financial resources have made cooperation difficult so far. This hesitance is, in part, founded on European concerns over security-leakages and/or that intelligence sharing would excessively reveal European/Western intelligence-gathering techniques

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<sup>15</sup> The European Commission published in early 2003 a first draft on new European Neighborhood Policy which initially seemed to forward a solution in calling for greater freedom of movement of workers in the Euro-Mediterranean area (European Commission 2003a). However, after Portuguese and other member states' pressure the matter was dropped off the ENP agenda in the Council meeting in June and replaced with a much diluted formula referring to an enhanced cooperation with partner countries "on matters related to legal migration".



to southern Mediterranean countries. This basic distrust is further alimented by a different European concern in terms of lack of guarantee in terms of basic human rights in southern Mediterranean detention centers (e.g. the use of excessive coercion and/or torture). On the other hand, the Anniversary Summit also revealed a perception within some Arab countries that the European identity in regards to the War on Terror is too conditioned on the US. The Arab representatives present at the Summit thus did not welcome the draft Code of Conduct prepared by Great Britain is that it seemed to want to legitimize the authority of a regime arising from foreign military intervention and to require active solidarity against those fighting it.<sup>16</sup> The final Code of Conduct document thus reveals the important differences in worldviews between the European Union and its southern Mediterranean interlocutors, in only committing the partners to a loosely worded cooperation against international terrorism.

#### **4.2.2. Creating a Euro-Mediterranean area of shared prosperity?**

The kernel of the EU relations with the Mediterranean is the economic partnership, due to the overwhelming need for trade and financial flows to stimulate economic development in the southern Mediterranean countries.<sup>17</sup> The economic dimension of the Partnership can in turn be divided in two distinct components: the creation of a free trade area, and the provision of technical and financial cooperation.

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<sup>16</sup> As Gillespie (2006: 274) has noted Syria and Algeria would be among those most vocal in calling for a 'right to resistance' against 'foreign occupation' to be excluded from any definition of terrorism. Other Arab states would be more moderate in their reactions to the draft Code of Conduct, however, they were wary of any formulation that might suggest that their rulers were wavering in criticism of the conduct of the conflict in Iraq or in sympathy for the Palestinian cause.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Annex 3 for socioeconomic indicators and trade flows.

#### *4.2.2.1. The freeing of Euro-Mediterranean trade*

The central goal of the Euro-Mediterranean relations is to create a free trade area of industrial goods and services by 2010.<sup>18</sup> The bilateral association agreements concluded between the EU and each of its Mediterranean partners are the principal instruments expected to act as conduits for opening up the southern Mediterranean economies, introducing market economy principles and adopting necessary legislative business reforms. Trade is so far conducted on an asymmetric basis, i.e. the EC abolishes customs duties, quantitative restrictions and other measures having equivalent effect faster than the partners. The Mediterranean goods enter the Union customs free, while most southern Mediterranean partners will be allowed to maintain their tariffs outwardly until their individually marked transition periods are up.

The concrete advances towards the 2010 target goal for a free trade area have been slow. Even if economic growth levels have been up in recent years, the overall levels of economic restructuring remain more than modest among the southern Mediterranean countries (FEMISE 2004: 133; European Commission 2006). Only Israel, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia can be said to have made some progress towards the goal of introducing a free trade regime in their relations with the EU. This, one might infer, has been a consequence of that transition of the rest, even among the most willing of EU's southern Mediterranean partners, has suffered from several impediments. Perhaps above all they have been confronted with a legacy of decades' of economic mismanagement and distortions within the economy which is difficult to undo. Many southern Mediterranean countries suffer from a small private sector, insufficient provision of public services, underdeveloped banking systems and, an

education system that does not meet the needs of the economy for a qualified labor force, a narrow productive base, and small internal markets. These are the same problems which make it difficult for most southern Mediterranean countries to compete on the globalized market, in particular with Chinese products. However, it is also true that the Union's embedded liberal economic model has brought them considerable headaches. Joffé (1999) has, for example, argued that a too rapid introduction of free competition rules has in some countries been detrimental to small and medium enterprises that make up the bulk of the productive sector for not being competitive in relation to international companies. The bringing in of commercial banks according to international standards have also created relative problems in that these are biased against the financing of small and medium enterprises and in favor of consumerism based on credit.<sup>19</sup> Thus, after a decade of cooperation within the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership most countries in the region find that free trade and FDI is not sufficient to achieve their development objectives. Most southern Mediterranean countries, upon lacking a dynamic enterprise sector, will not be able to take advantage of trade and investment opportunities inherent in the 2010 free trade area objective. Thus, according to one southern analyst "one of the main subjects of discussion these days in the region is how raise the level of productivity and competitiveness in existing firms. Among other things, this will require proactive [EU and national] policies and programmes aimed at increasing the transfer of technology and information as well as improving access to financial, infrastructural and export markets" (Hemal 2004: 68). In other words, the key will lay in the EU's technical and financial assistance.

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<sup>18</sup> Both agriculture and free movement of laborers are currently excluded from this free trade area.

<sup>19</sup> The bias of commercial banks in favour of consumerism is usually welcomed by Western donors in that household consumption tend to quickly remedy economic dissatisfactions which could easily otherwise led to social upheaval.

However, perhaps the most longstanding and recurrent topic in the trade chapter between the Union and the Mediterranean non-member countries continues to be agriculture. Agriculture was not included when the trade concessions accompanying the Barcelona Declaration and the Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement were negotiated. The exclusion of agricultural products has been a continued sour note in the Euro-Mediterranean relations, in that – from a southern Mediterranean standpoint – once more protectionist Europe refuses to open its markets to those products in terms of which the southern Mediterranean countries have a genuine trade advantage. The matter has been further complicated in that the EU has countered the proposals of successive global trade rounds to reduce external tariffs in terms of agricultural produce, by protecting its markets with a set of quota restrictions or other non-tariff barriers. This has increasingly meant that access to European agricultural markets is a labyrinthine undertaking for most third countries, the southern Mediterranean partners among them. In theory talks to liberalize the Euro-Mediterranean agricultural regime began in 2000, and both the ENP and the Anniversary Summit have reiterated this objective, however, so far no any firm dates for opening of such negotiations have been forthcoming (Gillespie 2006). The problem for the EU is that its discourse relative to the logic of free trade clashes with the concerns of well-organized collectives within the EU trying to protect their life-styles (e.g. fishermen, farmers, flower-growers), creating rival discourses. Here some restructuring within EU member states have taken place to reduce the number of workers in these sectors, however, so far change has been slow and too many European governments have feared an electoral backlash were they to try to speed up the process. The result, however ironically, is that countries such as Jordan or Morocco have found their free trade agreements with the US more beneficial than

those with the EU given the overall lesser restrictions on agricultural produce and higher quota awards.<sup>20</sup>

Another problem which has riddled the development of the 2010 free trade area is the scarce intra-trade between southern Mediterranean partners. Although South-South trade has increased in past years, many problems still accrue from the fact that trade integration between southern partners have traditionally been, and continues to be, marginal. As according to a 2004 report, inter-Arab exchanges represent only eight to ten per cent of the whole of Arab trade (FEMISE 2004: 124-5). Intra-regional trade among all Euro-Mediterranean partners (i.e. including also Israel and Turkey) is only marginally higher (15 percent) as according to the European Commission (2005). The problem is that the southern Mediterranean partners are essentially trade competitors, having very similar goods to export to the EU and in extension to each other (Turkey and Israel being the exceptions). This pattern, which remains essentially unchanged since the Cold War, is likely to continue even if the Euro-Mediterranean diagonal cumulation of origin for goods has been adopted by some countries of the region (Egypt, Israel, Jordan and Morocco) in July 2006.<sup>21</sup> The other southern Mediterranean countries, in having essentially similar industries and exporting very little manufactured or process goods it is difficult to see how the cumulation would improve the current situation aside. This means that even if the Barcelona Declaration commits itself to a free trade area, as Martín (2003) has well pointed out, the result has rather been a series of 'bi-multilateral' trade zones between each southern Mediterranean partner country and the EU. This of course strengthens the traditional dependency relationship between

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<sup>20</sup> For example, the Jordanian trade deficit with the EU has widened from Jordanian Dinars (JD) 77.7 mn in 1997 to 57 mn in 2003. In contrast, the signing of the US FTA made Jordanian export grow tenfold from JD 44 mn in 2000 to 468 mn in 2003 (Abu-Dalbouh 2005: 162). Although it is worth noting that Morocco has experienced a negative impact of US comparative advantage (and export subsidies) in terms of cereals, with the consequence drop in Moroccan cereal production.

<sup>21</sup> Exporters from one Mediterranean country could incorporate imports from another Mediterranean country and exports their goods as if they originated in their own country, thus enjoying the preferential

the northern and southern Mediterranean rim and competition between partner countries to obtain the better trade concessions by the Union.

Two major initiatives in terms of south-south trade have been taken by the EU's Arab southern Mediterranean partners in the past decade to reduce this asymmetry. On the one hand work has been under way to develop a Greater Arab Free Trade Area (GAFTA), with the goal of establishing a free trade zone by 2007. Here the commitment has been to reduce inter-country trade tariffs to ten percent, and there are signs that this is being implemented (FEMISE 2004: 125).<sup>22</sup> The GAFTA integration is thus complementary to the efforts undertaken by the European Union and have been welcome as such, although the Union has not committed itself to any financial assistance to help this initiative along. On the other hand there is the 2004 Agadir Agreement between Jordan, Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco, which the EU has reiterated its support for.<sup>23</sup> The Union has even supported the initiative with the creation of a special budget line in the MEDA program. However, the Agadir Process does nevertheless stand in strong competition with the EU principle of diagonal cumulation of origin. The benefits to be derived from cumulation of origin will, as Darbouche and Gillespie (2006: 10) have pointed out only accrue if Morocco, Tunisia, Jordan, Egypt (i.e. the four Agadir Process countries) align with European economic norms in the same way. The leverage for creating a certain trade autonomy among these countries away from EU structures to reduce trade asymmetry with the EU are thus relatively scarce if they want to continue to benefit from the EU markets and macro-financial assistance.

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access granted to products for the first country.

<sup>22</sup> In January 2003, 60% of products traded between member states were liberalized (Arab League website).

<sup>23</sup> Signed 24 February 2004, the Agadir Agreement foresees the establishment of a free trade area between these four countries as a first step towards the fulfilment of the 2010 Euro-Mediterranean free trade area.

#### *4.2.2.2. Euro-Mediterranean technical and financial cooperation*

The technical and financial cooperation is another important facet of the Barcelona Declaration in view of creating a partnership across the Mediterranean. The cooperation is in the first hand designed to assist the gradual transition of the economic regimes of many southern Mediterranean countries into the mainstream of global economics. In particular, efforts are dedicated to improve the technical and financial management of public services with a view to assist the transition of the local economy towards a market economy open to international markets. However, there are also components of EU's financial assistance which functions to develop and/or improve on existing public policies in the social sphere. In particular, a set percentage of EU funds tend to be destined to minimize the social disruption occasioned by economic reform, such as the assistance to the establishment of a social safety net, fight against poverty, agricultural conversion, the strengthening the housing sector and improving the social expenditure.

The technical and financial cooperation in the Mediterranean has taken place through the *Mesures d'accompagnement financières et techniques* (MEDA) program. The introduction of the MEDA program through the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership was to imply a triplication of financial funds available to southern Mediterranean countries, if compared to the fourth generation protocols linked to the Renewed Mediterranean Policy. The new financial assistance program disposed of €3.4 bn in the period 1995-1999, a sum which was increased to €5.35 bn with the second phase of MEDA (2000-2006). The MEDA II is, in addition, assisted by €7.4 bn per year in loans from the European Investment Bank (Euro-Mediterranean Partnership 1999). On 1 January 2007, the MEDA was substituted by the European Neighborhood and

Partnership Instrument (ENPI). A total of €1.181 billion will be allocated over the next seven years to support the European Neighbourhood Policy for the period 2007-2013, of which an approximate three-fourths of that sum destined to southern Mediterranean countries.

The EC financial assistance programs for the southern Mediterranean have run into several problems. The MEDA in 1995 was welcomed by a broad public for the fact that it represented a unified framework, compared to the bilateral protocols of earlier Mediterranean policies. Moreover, MEDA was created to increase efficiency of the Community's delivery and management of funding. Nevertheless, the MEDA program was to be off to a rather tortured start in its first period 1995-1999. Several factors would contribute to this. First, there had been an expectation that MEDA would boost the Union's foreign policy coherence by being able to better match political objectives with targeted financial aid. The British government would to this end initially hold up the implementation of MEDA in an attempt to convince its European partners of the necessity of fulfilling such expectations (Bretherton and Vogler 1999: 280). Concretely, Britain was looking to strengthen the human right conditionality in the Barcelona Process as the Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreements were under negotiation. However, the attempt had to be abandoned given the little stomach among most southern European member states to press the issue too far with the southern Mediterranean partners. Another factor which would reduce the impact of the MEDA I was the political scandal which blew up in 1998 as the Court of Auditors ordered the suspension of all MEDA disbursements. The Court had found irregularities committed by the Commission in payments to certain projects (Jünemann 2002). As a consequence of these and a set of more minor factors, the MEDA I would barely manage to allocate a third of the funds available in the five years period of its running (Philippart 2003b).



The reputation of the MEDA program was thus noticeably dented as the 1999-2004 Prodi Commission took over. The Commission, under the guidance of External Relations Commissioner Chris Patten, would undertake an overhaul of all external service programs, among them the MEDA. One of the more noteworthy reforms introduced in the MEDA II was the introduction of the idea, drawn from the experience with PHARE and TACIS, of setting up national programming papers in consultation with the Mediterranean country in question. This procedure was meant to enhance the feeling of ownership of the partner in that the annual financing plan was to be implemented by the country itself. Critics have noted that this essentially reduced the EU's political control in directing reform in the southern Mediterranean, but in overall outsider's satisfaction with the MEDA program has augmented. The MEDA II has, however, also been criticized for focusing too much on large scale projects, or accumulated projects, to be able to show forceful results at the end of the auditing cycle, while neglecting other important (but less visible) areas such as regional cooperation or micro NGO projects.<sup>24</sup> The latter may simply be a tribute to the Western political culture where instant results with noticeable media impact are increasingly valued. Finally, it is worth noting that the program throughout has tended to reward those countries with financial management capacity with scarce regards to actual delivery of the by EU set objectives. Tunisia, for example, has been one of the major beneficiaries of financial cooperation in the Mediterranean, because, thanks to its good absorption capacity, it has received around 13 percent of the MEDA budget since 1995, even if it only has approximately 4 percent of the population of the Mediterranean region (European Parliament 2007). In contrast, Morocco – which has been seen in Brussels as performing relatively well on reforms and indeed allocated substantial MEDA funding –

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<sup>24</sup> The disbursement rate during 2000-2004 was 77 percent, compared with the average of some 20 percent annually of MEDA I.

only 28 percent of MEDA I was disbursed (Ammor, 2005: 151), with fingers pointed among other things to the Moroccan inexperience in relation to the submission of bids, and accounting for funding in a manner meeting Commission requirements (Darbouche and Gillespie 2006: 9).

#### **4.2.3. The socio-cultural dimension of Euro-Mediterranean relations**

The social, cultural and human affairs facet in the Barcelona Process' third basket is an integral part of the Union's holistic approach to security and international cooperation in the post-Cold War setting. The idea of creating a third basket dealing with social and cultural issues was a tribute both to Spanish and French concerns over the growing anti-Westernism in southern Mediterranean countries, as well as an interest of EU member states in the mid-1990s to pursue a dialogue on human rights and democratization processes (Gillespie 2003: 21). The Partnership would thus revive the notion of a social and cultural dialogue first introduced by the Renewed Mediterranean Policy, although giving it a more prominent role. The Barcelona Declaration would, in effect, place social and cultural concerns at par with security and economic matters in the three basket Partnership structure.

The Barcelona Declaration would set out a long list of goals for the new social, cultural and human affairs partnership. What the third basket was allegedly hoping to achieve was an improved dialogue on cultural and social issues in a view to try to overcome mutual suspicion and facilitate (people-to-people) contacts across the Mediterranean. Moreover, the text promised action on migration related issues, such as integration and eradication of racism and discrimination. Nevertheless, what was

missing was a more concrete description how these goals would be achieved. This evident omission would make for that this dimension of the Partnership would right from the start become focus for severe criticism, with authors arguing that the third basket was rhetorical and essentially ‘empty’ (Feliu and Salomón 2000; see also Jünemann 2003).

The third basket would in its first years of existence continue to remain in a state of limbo, given the return of conflict in the Middle East and the reluctance of EU member states to fill it with something more ambitious than low key technical assistance programs. However, this lack of enthusiasm for social and cultural affairs would eventually change. The outbreak of the second *Intifada* in the late 2000 and the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks would both create a momentum in favor of the inter-cultural dialogue inherent in the third basket. The so-called ‘Cartoon Crisis’ in 2006 would also contribute to a greater European interest in pursuing inter-cultural dialogues (cf. Jensen 2006). Work has begun and apart from continuing the technical cooperation programs, attention has been centered on three major facets: the Euro-Med programs, the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation and the Euro-Mediterranean Civil Forum.

The technical cooperation inherent in the Partnership has its roots in the Renewed Mediterranean Policy. The most prominent examples would be the Euro-Med Heritage<sup>25</sup>, Euro-Med Audiovisual<sup>26</sup>, Euro-Med Youth<sup>27</sup>, to which a special line to

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<sup>25</sup> The Euro-Med Heritage Phases I and II aim at the preservation and development of the Euro-Mediterranean cultural heritage.

<sup>26</sup> The Euro-Med Audiovisual program supports regional multi-annual projects in the fields of television and cinema, particularly in the following areas: preservation of archives; creation, production and co-production; broadcasting, distribution and circulation of audiovisual products. Its objectives are to develop the audiovisual sector in the Southern Mediterranean region; to promote the transfer of technology and know-how; to promote vocational training; to encourage cooperation between producers and distributors at Euro-Mediterranean level; to develop the region’s audiovisual and film heritage; and to encourage the promotion and distribution of films from the EU and the Mediterranean partners.

<sup>27</sup> The Euro-Med Youth Action (Youth II) program rests on a network of national coordinators. In the framework of the second phase, three calls for proposals are launched each year in areas such as the fight

enhance the public visibility of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership has been added: Euro-Med Dialogue<sup>28</sup>. These networks have proliferated beyond expectations and today perhaps constitute the most developed part of the Partnership. However, the very abundance of projects, most often at very micro-levels, has made for that a proper overview of them in order to evaluate their impact and contribution to the overall goals of the Barcelona Process has been exceedingly difficult (Psychogiopoulou 2005). What had become clear, however, at the Tenth Anniversary Summit was that more often than not they have not reached the southern Mediterranean civil society at large, nor have they contributed to promoting further public awareness on the northern or the southern rim of the existence of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. Rather, it could be ventured, most projects have concentrated within the borders of each state without much reference to wider Mediterranean perspectives or any attempts to break down cultural stereotypes.

Among the novelties introduced recently in the third basket, the creation of the Anna Lindh Foundation stands out. The 2002 Valencia Action Plan would incorporate the Hispano-Swedish proposal for the launch of the ‘Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the dialogues between cultures’ as a means to creation distension and improve mutual perceptions across the Mediterranean. In the wake of the 2003 US-led intervention in Iraq, widespread discontent with Western policies is palpable in many southern Mediterranean societies and the Foundation has been seen as one instrument (among others) to over time help change the negative view of Europe that the southern Mediterranean public has. The main doubt which lingers, however, in view of this

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against racism and xenophobia, cross border cooperation and the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities into the program. Over 250 projects have been selected for funding, covering activities such as youth exchanges, training and information, and voluntary service.

<sup>28</sup> The Euro-Med Dialogue is an information and communication program aimed to strengthen the visibility of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, and its perception among the public and opinion leaders in the region. The program’s implementation was begun in 2004.

newly created institution is whether the Foundation will have sufficient independence away from governments to be able to really make a difference for fomenting cultural cooperation and civil society networking (Malmvig 2005). In the setting up phase of the Foundation, governments had to determine which organizations which were to participate, and southern Mediterranean governments were notorious for appointing their favorite GONGOs (Volpi 2004: 145–164).

The EU has also, as a consequence of the poor results of cooperation at the intergovernmental level (Middle East conflict etc.), wanted to give more relevance to the Euro-Med Civil Forum in the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. The first Forum was celebrated in 1995, parallel to the Barcelona Summit, and has since regularly taken place in connection with Barcelona Process minister meetings. The Euro-Med Civil Forum groups together Euro-Mediterranean NGOs and representatives from civil society, Mediterranean cities etc. (Aubarell 2000). The early Civil Forum meetings suffered from two important drawbacks, being a very loosely structured undertaking, whose agenda shifted to and fro as according to the convening host government, as well as being composed of a multitude and sometimes cacophonous lot of highly diverse actors with highly disparate concerns. The latter fact in effect impeded the effective consensus around one single agenda for all and this meant that the Forum's agenda scarcely moved forward between different meetings (Olivan 2002). This has reduced the political impact of the Forum in the past. However, after a successful meeting in 2004 the Civil Forum has reorganized itself into a single platform, headed by the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network from Copenhagen. Some observers have augured a more forceful future for the Platform as of since, taking courage in the fact that the conclusions of the Luxembourg Barcelona VII meeting in 2005 gave a more prominent echo of the Forum's concerns.

### 4.3. The Euro-Mediterranean relations in a reflective perspective: what of the Union's identity?

The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership which was launched in 1995 with 'high hopes' and fanfares, was thought to herald a markedly new relationship between European Union and its southern and eastern Mediterranean neighbors (Marks 1996). It seemed at the time that there was much to celebrate, in that the new European approach entailed an all-encompassing, multilateral framework, supported by 'deepened' bilateral relations, and main concerns such as increased access to European markets and substantially increased financial assistance had been addressed. The spirit of 'partnership' which the Barcelona Process was imbued with thus seemed to want to make a clean break with the post-colonial dynamic in the EU-southern Mediterranean relations, as well as with the unfortunate Renewed Mediterranean Policy of the early 1990s (Fenech 1997). Indeed, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership appeared to have all the trappings of a genuinely 'new' regional initiative intended to promote a novel tack on relations between the Union and southern Mediterranean partners. That the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership was further accompanied with an institutional architecture and a substantial financial package would boost this image. Finally, the outward show of EU unity during the Barcelona conference – where all member states seem to momentarily put past north-south rifts behind and to take onboard the logic of the necessity for a strong Euro-Mediterranean policy – raised hopes that the Union this time around would be able to become an influential actor in the region (Gillespie 1997a).

However, how has the European Union fared since in terms of identity? This section will evaluate any prospective EU identity through the lens of the conceptual framework set out in Chapter 2 (cohesion and presence,).

#### 4.3.1. The EU's cohesion as a foreign policy actor in the Mediterranean

The Union's identity in the Mediterranean region depends on whether member states dovetail their particularistic identities with that of the EU. The very act of creating the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership as overarching framework policy was meant to be testimony to the European Union and its member states' commitment to conduct a unified policy vis-à-vis their southern Mediterranean neighbors.

It is of some relevance to ponder the autonomy of the EU in the Mediterranean region in that the Barcelona Process has sometimes been accused of being a French or Spanish foreign policy writ large. However, one could argue, even if these two countries were the main national contributors to the design of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, it would be reductionist to view the policy as a merely mirroring their national interest. As Gomez (2003: 56-62) has plausibly sustained in his exhaustive study of the negotiations and the creation of the Partnership a host of other actors were also involved. The Commission, the European Parliament, and other EU member states, such as Germany, the Netherlands, the Scandinavian countries and the UK also came to be net contributors to its set up and posterior evolution. This fact gives credibility to the notion that in overall the agenda and the objectives of the Partnership are an increasingly joint EU exercise, and hence not the exclusive *chasse gardée* of one or other member state.

For the Spanish the Partnership was to be a signal for a higher European profile for Spain, edging it away from the periphery of the continent to a more central political position within the Union. González' was, for example, to play a pivotal role in driving the initiative forwards, in particular by winning a reluctant Chancellor Kohl over to the

idea of a Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. Employing a mixture of argumentation and threat, González eventually convinced Kohl to accept that the southern dimension was crucial to the EU's stability and that the Mediterranean was an appropriate area for EU to begin to forge its foreign policy identity. The González government's activism would in many ways change the perception of Spain among its EU partners deeming Spain as an increasingly central player in Europe (Gillespie 1997a). However, the Barcelona Process would also serve Spain well in that it took its contested kinship with Morocco to a higher level, thus satisfying the Spanish vision of itself as a good and useful neighbor to Morocco. The staunch Spanish defense of the MEDA program can, in this perspective, be seen as fulfilling Madrid's wish to supply Rabat the necessary financial resources which Spain could not muster by itself.

The importance of the Mediterranean, in particular Maghreb, to France is linked to its past as an imperial power and its present ambitions to remain as a cultural hegemon in the western Mediterranean. This has led Pace (2002: 202) to quip that Paris essentially sees the Mediterranean as a 'Latin lake', and not to be shared by others. The French ambition to preserve its standing in Maghreb has over the decades more than once trigger it to block or dilute EC/EU proposals for the region, within or related to the framework of the Barcelona Process. However, according to Emerson et al. (2005: 21) the post-11 September has ushered in new thinking in the higher French political echelons. They point to certain Europeanization of French foreign policy vis-à-vis the Mediterranean in general, and Maghreb in particular. France has increasingly begun to see the merits, for example, in pursuing political reform in Algeria through the EU framework. However, such reinterpretations of French national foreign policy identity will not mean the complete French abdication in its role as 'guardian' of Maghrebi interest. For example, it is widely accepted that the dispute over Western Sahara will



not be debated even informally in the Council of the European Union until the Elysée agrees to do so.<sup>29</sup>

However, even if there was a general agreement among the EU member states to the desirousness of creating the Partnership, the means to achieve that end has been hotly contested since 1995. The divergent approaches to commonly held values among the member states has been a recurrent problem in the making of EU's foreign policy, the Barcelona Process would be no exception. Basically one can identify two major fault lines within the EU which tended to jeopardize the overall cohesion of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership as it was being negotiated: the trade vs. aid controversy and the divergence over if, and how best, to promote democracy and human rights. It is worth noting that these divergences did not line themselves up in the traditional inter-pillar confrontation between Commission and Council, but rather worked across institutional boundaries. The Commission would often find itself aligning with more liberalizing and interventionist member states.

The first fault line referring to the trade or aid debate became manifest as the second basket came into being. There were clearly two camps, as Gomez (2003:57) has noted. The first was populated by the traditional trade 'liberalizers', including the Scandinavian countries and the UK. The second, more protectionist, included Italy, Portugal and Spain. The former were in favor of opening up EU markets to the widest possible range of southern Mediterranean goods; the latter, fearing trade competition, favored a restricted access of goods. Italy and Spain would instead argue in favor of rather generous aid packages to the southern Mediterranean countries to offset the trade diversion effects. This divergence in fundamental values would come to almost jeopardize the whole construction of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, until a compromise at the Essen European Council was reached.

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<sup>29</sup> Currently the Western Sahara dispute is in the hands of the UN Security Council.

However, one could argue that even if this controversy has not entirely vanished ten years later, there are signals today that perhaps there is a growing convergence between the Union's liberalizers and protectionists. On the one hand, the 1995 and 2004 enlargement has added a number of new member states which are clearly pro-liberalizing. Perhaps the foremost evidence to this point is the creation of the ENP with its promise to extend the benefits of the Internal Market to reforming southern Mediterranean countries. Trade creation and market opening thus seem to be gaining increasing currency in EU's relations with its neighbors on the southern side of the Mediterranean basin. However, this tendency is also, on the other hand, a consequence of a policy evolution within the former protectionist countries. In terms of the Renewed Mediterranean Policy Spain had been staunchly protectionist and favored aid over trade with Maghreb. In 1994 when the economic basket of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership was being fleshed out Madrid began to show itself more flexible on this point, somehow feeling that the EU needed to accept the neoliberal orthodoxy of the European Commission to do more in terms of both trade and aid. However, at the same time, as we have noted, individual collectives (fishermen, farmers) began to voice their discord with the change in the Spanish government's stance.<sup>30</sup> The Spanish government's understanding would eventually have to fold to the powerful manifestations of these collectives. In 2003 when the review of the EU-Moroccan Association Agreement was undertaken, some protests from Spanish tomato growers were issued, but not enough to warrant the Spanish government to request any special limitations or exceptions on the proposed increased Moroccan export quotas. Today's average Spanish farmers surely feel more threatened by Chinese flowers, fruit and nuts, than Moroccan. Whatever the reason catalyzing this recent value convergence

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<sup>30</sup> For an excellent review of the different Spanish domestic battle lines over this issue in 1994-5 see Gillespie and Jordan in Gillespie 1997.

notwithstanding, its effect still acts to augment the cohesion of the Union as an actor in the Mediterranean basin.

The second fault line refers to the traditional discrepancy among member states on if, and how, to pursue normative EU foreign policy. In the case of the Mediterranean region, the southern EU member states have habitually been reluctant to be too heavy handed in terms of imposing democracy and human rights conditionality. Some of the southern EU members have been stubbornly unwilling to push any foreign policy objective which could however slightly upset the political stability of the region. This has been evident, for example, in both French and Spanish governmental meddling into the Euro-Mediterranean Civil Forum organized under their respective EU Presidencies in 2000 and 2002. Both the French and the Spanish governments were to accommodate the concerns of southern Mediterranean regimes in different ways, either by canceling or renaming human rights panels within the Civil Forum, or conveniently 'loosing' Schengen visa applications by human rights activist from southern Mediterranean countries (Johansson-Nogués 2006b). In contrast, some northern member states – in particular Denmark, the Netherlands, Sweden and the UK – have, together with the Commission and the European Parliament, been much more prone to exact reform from third Mediterranean countries in these areas.

One report has now pointed to that the variation between northern and southern EU member states is not quite as marked as before (Emerson et al. 2005: 22). The new watchword in Brussels has become 'gradual political change'. There seems to be a growing conviction, whether in national capitals or in Brussels, that there is an urgent necessity to promote modernization and good governance in Arab Mediterranean states. This fact has several sources. Most patently, the 11 September 2001 and the subsequent terrorist acts in and around the Mediterranean basin have acted as a galvanizing factor

for EU and its member states to promote reform in the southern Mediterranean. Even Paris has allegedly shown some impatience with Tunisian President Ben Ali for resisting political liberalization. However, there is also some evidence which point to other additional and more subtle factors. For example, Spain and Portugal have also eventually come to embrace the idea of southern Mediterranean political liberalization as a consequence of what can be seen as a long process of redefining their recent national history. In a move to come to grips with their authoritarian past, they have increasingly come to project themselves as highly successful models of transition from dictatorship to democracy. This puts them at the forefront of arguments in favor of EU formulas that encourage political reform without undermining the stability of a state. To this end, speeches of different member states, by Ferrero-Waldner and Solana have tended to echo their belief in methods which respect cultural differences, and allow the change to be ‘home grown’ (cf. Ferrero-Waldner 2006). This change of EU philosophy is perhaps most starkly evident in the ENP, but the Tenth Anniversary Summit has also been an occasion for the Union to display its newfound unity in cause around gradual political change.

The member states have thus largely converged around the Union’s multi-vectored foreign policy formula (regional cooperation, multi-sectoral cooperation, interventionism) as it is employed in the Mediterranean. However, it is also worth noting that parallel to the member state (or intra-Council) debates reflected in previous sections, there has been considerable inter-institutional tension over the Commission’s role in implementing the Barcelona Process – a tension which also had to be resolved in order to achieve greater cohesion in the EU foreign policy. In particular there was concern among member states that the Commission would expand its competences by the ‘backdoor’ i.e. exploiting the grey zones in the Maastricht Treaty to acquire new

institutional powers. The Commission's proposals for negotiation mandates for Association Agreements have for this reason been intensively scrutinized by the Council, often inserting footnotes with excessive details in order to circumscribe the Commission's negotiation lee-way (Gomez 2003). This was more than evident from the excessively tight Council mandate for the Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreements, where the Commission's saw its negotiation autonomy severely circumscribed. Moreover, as Patten (2000) noted the member states desire to "micromanage" EC aid by ways of "absurdly heavy procedures" created between 1995 and 2000 an increase in the average delay in disbursement of committed funds from 3 years to 4.5 years. There were also intra-Commission troubles in the post-Maastricht era as a consequence of the divisions of competences between different DGs. The Commission's relative institutional inexperience in the wider field of external action which the Maastricht Treaty had laid at its door would initially lead to 'internal communication problems' (i.e. turf battles) which prevented the Commission for acting as a single actor (Wessel 1999; Duke 2006). For example, DG1B was responsible for the negotiations of the Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreements, but it found sometimes that relations with DGVI (Agriculture) demanding given the latter's staunch defense of EU agricultural interests (Gomez 2003: 57). Finally, another prominent problem which hampered the Commission's external action in the 1990s was the plethora of legal foundation upon which its financial assistance instruments were based. In the case of the Mediterranean the bilateral financial controls deriving from the Renewed Mediterranean Policy would continue to operate alongside the MEDA I, until they were faced out by the Patten Commission's overhaul of the financial instruments. This meant different accounting principles for each of the instruments as well as a differentiated set of political justifications for activating one or other financial mechanism (Duke 2006).

However, with Treaty changes as of Amsterdam and Nice, as well as a growing awareness among member states that the Commission is perhaps the best guarantee for the consistency needed in Euro-Mediterranean relations has begun to alter these dynamics. The streamlining of the political responsibility and aid disbursements through DG External Relations has increased intra-Commission coherence and so has the creation of the ENPI. Moreover, the rise of an increasing number of transversal policies, such as terrorism, organized crime, human rights or conflict prevention has catapulted the Commission to a much more prominent role, both as a policy initiator as well as using its expertise to find ways to achieve the political objectives agreed upon with the Council (*ibid.*).<sup>31</sup> One could therefore plausibly argue that today there is certain convergence within the EU in regards to Euro-Mediterranean relations. National identities have arguably converged in favor of a dominant, rather than rival, EU foreign policy identity discourses in recent years. Moreover, perhaps EU member states are today, one decade into the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership much more comfortable with the EU as a foreign policy actor and, in addition, more at ease with the linkage between the EC and CFSP pillars in foreign policy making. For this reason, Pace (2002: 208) has compellingly argued that although the EU and national discourse might sound like a cacophony at times, the manner in which the Mediterranean is increasingly conceived at national, as well as EU levels, indicates that the Union can increasingly claim to have a cohesive Mediterranean policy.

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<sup>31</sup> However, it is worth noting that at the same time intra-EU litigation has increased between the Council and the Commission by ways of the European Court of Justice. These disputes have, however, had rather

#### **4.3.2. The EU's identitarian presence in the Mediterranean**

During the Cold War the southern Mediterranean countries were centripetally attracted to the EU by the ‘magnetic force of economics’ (Rosecrance 1998: 18). As the European Union consolidated itself from a Single to an Internal Market in the early 1990s, and adopted a unified currency in 1999, its outward economic international presence has naturally increased in the past decade and thus also vis-à-vis its southern Mediterranean neighbors. Trade and aid dependence for the Maghreb countries on European markets has always been strong, given the historical context of imperial trade relations. However, the accelerating forces of the internationalizing world economy, and the general lingering economic stagnation affecting most southern Mediterranean countries, has meant that the EU has become an even more important economic referent for the latter since the inception of the Barcelona Process.<sup>32</sup> Even for Israel and Egypt, two countries with traditionally strong economic ties to the US, the last ten years has meant a turn around in commercial flows to the extent that the Union now constitutes their main trade partner.<sup>33</sup> Perhaps the only country in the southern Mediterranean which has relatively reduced its dependence on European markets since 1994 in favor of greater international commercial autonomy is Algeria.<sup>34</sup> This is a consequence of President Bouteflika’s active pursuit in recent years of new outlets for the country’s energy exports, such as the US, China, Brazil and Canada. In terms of bilateral financial assistance the EU and its member states are also the largest donors of official

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minor effects in overall on the regional framework policies under consideration here.

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Annex 3 for socioeconomic indicators.

<sup>33</sup> More than 50% of the trade of the region is with the EU, and for some countries the EU represents the destination of more than 70% of their exports. Europe is the largest direct foreign investor with 36% of total foreign direct investment (European Commission 2005).

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Annex 3 for EU-Mediterranean trade flows

development aid (ODA) for most southern Mediterranean countries.<sup>35</sup> This fact also contributes to the general balance that on the whole in the past decade the EU has augmented its economic presence in the Mediterranean region, although that presence is contested given the EU's economic preponderance which has not diminished in the past decade, the unwillingness to open up certain economic sectors (e.g. agricultural produce, freedom of circulation of workers), and the scarce or stop-start financial assistance coming in to palliate the effects EU-mandated reforms.

Presence does, however, not only have an economic side, two more facets are important to consider: political and cultural presence. On the political side, Joffé (2001: 31) has argued that the Partnership was an attempt of the Union to “organize Europe’s southern periphery”, in what amounted to essentially “an exercise in European power projection in order to deal with security threats and risks.” One could thus argue that the EU was through the Barcelona Process aspiring to assume a vastly expanded political identity in the Mediterranean region, compared to merely relying on its economic stature and/or the more limited EU initiatives of the past decades. The initiation of the Middle East Peace Process with the Oslo Accords did indeed briefly seem to raise the prospects for the EU to play a larger role in the region. Also the 2006 Lebanon crisis appeared to raise the specter of a new dynamic in the EU concerning the region, particularly vis-à-vis the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Indeed the Euro-Mediterranean ministers meeting at Barcelona VIII (November 2006) welcomed “the positive role played by the EU in the Middle East, particularly during the latest escalation in the region.” However, while the Union’s raised profile as a political actor has been overall welcome by Arabs in the region, in that its engagement helps to take the edge of the US preponderant dominance, the EU’s political influence over the region, one might argue,

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<sup>35</sup> Other international donors include other Arab countries (22 percent), the US 20 percent (Development Strategies 2004: 24).



has not more than marginally increased in the past decade.<sup>36</sup> The Union's strong economic presence has thus curiously not translated into a greater corresponding political role in the Mediterranean region. This fact can, in part, be explained by the revival of the Middle East conflict to which solution neither the US nor Israel is willing to let the EU have more than a figurative involvement.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, the inclusion of the Union in the Quartet, together with the UN, the US and Russia, was more an expression of the kind consideration of the UN General Secretary, Kofi Annan, than any wish on the part of the actors with a major stake in the conflict to have the Union onboard.<sup>38</sup> Thus, the EU's standing in Mashreq continues to be largely perceived in terms of being a junior partner to the US at best, or at worst – as some would have it – as a simple paymaster for US initiatives. A similar argument could be said for the Western Sahara, and or other conflicts in the Mediterranean region at large (see, for example, the 2002 Hispano-Moroccan spat over Perejil/Leyla), where Washington continues to be the only peace broker that is relevant and credible enough for the conflicting parties. The political identity of the EU in the Mediterranean region is thus conditioned by the presence of the US.<sup>39</sup> One could even infer that EU's presence in the eastern

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<sup>36</sup> As Gomez reports (2003: 177) Arab government, for example, reproached the Union for being insufficiently forceful with Binyamin Netanyahu's government, and for appointing a diplomat (Miguel Ángel Moratinos) – rather than a high-level politician as its Special Envoy to the Middle East Peace Process. It will thus be interesting to see if the nomination of Tony Blair in 2007 as the new Special Envoy will make any difference in the EU's political presence in the region.

<sup>37</sup> Although Harpaz (2007) reports that a slow change of perception of the EU in Tel Aviv may be forthcoming given the fact that Israel recently welcomed the EU role in monitoring the Palestinian–Egyptian cross-point at Rafah and the decisions to send soldiers from various member states to South Lebanon. However, such Israeli acceptance of the EU has not been extended to the Union's peace brokering in the Middle East conflict where the Union is still seen as anti-Israeli and biased.

<sup>38</sup> It should be recognized, however, that the Union itself has not contributed to boosting its image as a serious and credible actor in the Middle East. Instead of speaking with 'one voice' through the CFSP High Representative, Solana's role is often undermined by a vague mandate and the cacophony of the national representatives insisting on representing the Union along his side at all Quartet gatherings.

<sup>39</sup> This conditioning effect is also evident when one of the EU member states takes a national foreign policy initiative in the area. For example, in November 2003 when a French special envoy undertook a secret trip to Damascus to see Syrian President Bashar Assad to deliver the Syrian leader a message from Chirac and German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder and Russian President Vladimir Putin – the same trio which formed the anti-Iraq war coalition – the French envoy was received in Damascus as a covert messenger from Bush. Assad would reportedly outright ask the French envoy "[a]re you the spokesman

Mediterranean, especially in the Middle East, is essentially ‘crowded out’ by the US and that the past decade has not seen any major revision of this trend.

Even in the Maghreb – which the Bush administration’s foreign policy concentration on the greater Middle East has left a bit sidelined – the Union’s prospect of having a greater political presence is scarce. The explanations why vary, however, they range from the manifest dissatisfaction of Morocco with the limitations inherent in the Barcelona Process, where Rabat has demanded more of its relationship with the EU (e.g. EU membership or a *statut avancé*) both economically and politically, to the Algerian and Tunisian reluctance to engage with the Union politically.<sup>40</sup> On the whole, there is little evidence that southern partners, whether in Maghreb or in Mashreq, are willing to admit that there is a relationship between regional security and domestic conduct, an attitude which undermines the holistic politico-socioeconomic approach of the Barcelona Process and consequently the Union’s ability to influence events in the region as a foreign policy player (Tanner 1997). Finally, during the Tenth Anniversary Summit there were more than one southern partner which reportedly complained that the EU was too European in its policy proposals for the region (e.g. Justice component). The European approaches may carry high political relevance within Europe, however, they have scarce resonance with the problem on the southern side of the Mediterranean where, for example, the social reality of the phenomenon of migration, trafficking etc. are interpreted differently by the broad public.

In terms of cultural presence, as we have seen the third basket has not developed along the lines of the expectations which were raised in 1995. The third basket was

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of the Americans?” when the latter proposed that the Syrian leader should make a pro-active step to break the deadlock in the Middle East Peace Process (*Washington Post* 2006).

<sup>40</sup> For Algeria colonial memories makes it stay wary of any scheme where its sovereignty could be seen as compromised. Alger tends to prefer to look for bilateral interlocutors (France, and in recent years: Spain). For Tunisia the aims of the autocratic government of Ben Ali is far from the political objectives which are espoused by the EU and thus Tunis perceives that it has nothing to gain by paying any political homage to the Union.

developed in that it corresponded well with the sort of holistic foreign policy actor the EU was aspiring to become. The language of the Barcelona Declaration was in terms of this basket nevertheless going to be very vague and ambiguous. Consequently, as we have also noted, it has not been until after the 11 September 2001 that some efforts have been taken since to fill the basket with concrete substance (Gillespie 2003). The cultural dialogue is thus only of very recent date. This factor, together with others much more longstanding ones, have led to that the EU can not be considered as a cultural referent for most southern Mediterranean partners. The longer standing reasons, it can be held, are twofold. On the one hand one can point to factors as lingering fears of cultural imperialism or impositions of exogenous models on the part of some southern Mediterranean societies (Baroudi 2004; Darbouche 2007, Darbouche and Gillespie 2006). This notion has been well outlined in the Arab UNDP Reports from 2003 onwards where there is a strong statement in favor of autochthonous formulas of development, while not sidelining progress and attention to civil liberties (cf. *Arab Human Development Report 2005* 2006). The European post-11 September approach on gradual democratic transition may thus better echo these nationalistic sensibilities.

However, the, on the whole, rather primitive European view of Islam has constituted another obstacle for finding alternative routes for advancing the Partnership. The European standpoint at the outset has been that of ambivalence or, some would hold, even a negative imagery of the Muslim cultures represented in the Union's southern Mediterranean partners (Jünemann 2003; Johansson-Nogués 2006b). The European reluctance is most certainly based on the assumptions underpinning the West secular, modern state, which stand in stark contrast with societies where the political culture might embrace nationalist, clannish and/or spiritual authority in a heady mixture (Baroudi 2004; Grünert 2003). The European debate has also been fuelled by a rigid

conception of Islamist political movements and their agendas (Jensen 2006). The EU member states' failure to see the crucial nuances in the variegated conglomeration customarily referred to as political Islam and European leaders' inability to distinguish a small clique of radicals from a large non-violent majority has not added to the EU's ability to act and influence events as they evolve in the region. The EU has thus in the past decade failed to engage with vital social networks in southern Mediterranean Arab countries and passed up on an opportunity to become a referent for a growing group of important social actors. It should be noted that the main beneficiaries of EU's lack of sensibility toward moderate Islamic groups have been the southern Mediterranean governments and the radical Islamic groups – sometimes acting to fan the European lack of understanding of the Islamic culture and social phenomenon – which in this way have managed to keep European money from boosting the sociopolitical impact of any of these groups (Kaczynski et al. 2006).

#### 4.4. Conclusions

The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, launched in November 1995, as the ENP in 2003, was meant to become a means to redirect EU-Mediterranean relations towards a more ambitious level of interaction. Much hope was placed on the new relation, in that fresh off the drawing board the Partnership seemed like a much more substantial offer than previous relations maintained. Moreover, exogenous and endogenous factors have in recent years come to exert a centripetal force on the Union's actuation in the

Mediterranean region which have made the EU a more consistent actor in the area. Strategic and value cohesion within the Union is thus beginning to emerge as the Partnership has just recently turned ten years of age.

Expectations notwithstanding, the Barcelona Process' ability to respond to the needs of the region have been scarce. The failure to engage the southern Mediterranean countries in any useful dialogue, in order to reflect on responses to their problems (external debt, conflict resolution, trade concessions etc.), has contributed to making the Barcelona Process appear more as a prolongation of Cold War 'hub-and-spoke' patterns as asymmetries between Europe and the Mediterranean south have grown. The Union's involvement in the region has a particularly limped as a consequence of its political and cultural 'absence' (or no-presence), which would have made it a true force to count on in Mediterranean affairs. Unfulfilled promises in the Partnership (co-ownership etc.) as well as the EU's rather clumsy handling of political Islam, have been two factors impeding the Union's foreign policy identity from having greater transcendence in Euro-Mediterranean relations. The longstanding engagement and overwhelming predominance of the US in the region is also clearly on factor which crowds the Union out.

The EU's international identity in its southern borderland does thus, in other words, not resonate well with the preferences and identitarian constructions of the southern Mediterranean partner governments and societies. The EU's Mediterranean politics has, in other words, been constructed much more in reference to intra-EU concerns, and/or structural pressures, rather than properly negotiated within the relevant social context i.e. with its southern Mediterranean partners. The result is that the southern Mediterranean partners, whether governments or civil society actors, feel

alienated from the EU's identitarian discourse and repelled rather than attracted by its alleged 'soft power'.

## The EU and its northern borderlands: Europe's North

To claim that a small revolution occurred in the years 1989-1991 in Northern Europe is perhaps overstating. However, it is true that the momentous events that took place during the span of these three years decisively rearranged the geopolitical landscape around the Baltic and Barents Seas. The German reunification, the systemic change in Poland and independence for the three Baltic States, the end to the Soviet Union and East-West antagonism, profoundly changed the geopolitical profile of Europe's North.<sup>1</sup> As a result Northern Europe – formerly a periphery and political backwaters compared to the European heartland – seemingly obtained greater political weight in continental Europe in the 1990s. A series of accessions of the majority of the Baltic Sea countries to key European entities, such as the European Union and NATO, added to give this geographical space a more central place on the European agenda.<sup>2</sup> Perhaps above all, however, the momentous

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<sup>1</sup> 'Europe's North'/'Northern Europe' are here defined as Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, the Russian Federation and Sweden.

<sup>2</sup> EU accession of Finland (1995), Sweden (1995), the Baltic states (2004) and Poland (2004), the NATO accessions of Poland (1999) and Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in 2004.

changes around the Baltic Sea rim and adjacent areas would translate into an acute need for overcoming bipolar East-West antagonism and finding common grounds between the EC/EU and the Soviet successor state: the Russian Federation. The strategic importance of Russia as the Union's largest neighbor is unquestionable. However, the relationship between the EU and Russia has in the past decade been plagued by recurring misunderstandings of each others' purposes and motives. This fact has inevitably colored the Union's engagement in the Baltic and Barents Sea regions.

This chapter will begin with a look at the early post-Cold War years to trace the EU's growing involvement in the area. The following section will be devoted to the description of and reflection on the Northern Dimension and supporting EU-led initiatives. The final section will look at how the EU's foreign policy identity has fared in terms of cohesion and presence.

### 5.1. In a Cold War thaw and changing international circumstances

The end of the Cold War would create a new interest in Europe for matters related to the Baltic, Barents and circumpolar Arctic areas. If hitherto considered as essentially marginal to politics on the continent, these Northern European regions would in the wake of the disintegration of the Soviet Union take on newsworthiness as the three Baltic States regained sovereignty. The Soviet Union had not intervened to impede the velvet revolution that was extending in 1989 elsewhere in Central and Eastern Europe. In contrast, Latvia and



Lithuania would find themselves embroiled in armed skirmishes with Soviet special force troops in January 1991, if only for a few days, as the momentum in favor of secession gathered in these countries. The independence of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania were eventually recognized by Moscow later the same year, after the failed putsch in Moscow in August 1991. However, the relationship between Russia and these three former Soviet republics soon reverted back to tension given the unresolved issues stemming from the World War II and the Soviet era (e.g. borders), the presence of Russian troops on Baltic soil and the stateless Russophone minorities in Estonia and Latvia. The resulting friction would transcend the narrowly conceived Russian-Baltic States' relations and reverberate throughout the Baltic Sea area, resulting in a general concern over prolonged instability in the region. Moreover, international attention would also be further drawn in as wider access to information revealed to the West the lamentable state of infrastructure, sanitary provisions, environment and the existence of poverty and widespread corruption etc. in these post-communist countries.

The international community would also take note of the political and economic fragility of the newly independent Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, the transition in Poland and the uphill struggle for the newly democratic Russian Federation created a feeling of political vacuum. The brave efforts by the post-communist institutions to overhaul the situation in their respective countries, whether in terms of creating democratic political conditions, converting of state-planned economies into market-based or the creation of new domestic governmental agencies, created complex transition processes which seemed at times easy prey for populist forces and political opportunists wanting to stall or impede the reforms.

Although the problems were thus undoubtedly large-scale and had effects on the EU

beyond the Baltic Sea, Barents and Arctic areas proper, there would, however, initially be some resistance among the Twelve to get involved in Europe's North.<sup>3</sup> Even Germany – which through reunification had acquired a substantially longer Baltic Sea shoreline and had historically been closely connected to the area – was hesitant at first. Berlin's principal foreign policy focus was in the early 1990s fixed on Poland and the rest of the Visegrad countries and it did not want the EC committed to new areas in fear of diluting political capital needed for its main priorities related to a then still much hypothetical future Eastern enlargement (Schmalz 2000). The German government would thus at first take sides with those EC members considering that Europe's North did not merit more than a limited economic involvement of the Community (Wessels 2000: 18). This, in part, explains the absence of any mention to the Baltic-Barents-Arctic areas in the 1992 Lisbon CFSP priority list.<sup>4</sup>

Seeing the political inaction of the European Community, it was clear that the political actors in the Baltic, Barents and Arctic areas had to pick up the baton.<sup>5</sup> One of the more all-encompassing regional initiatives would appear in 1992 at the hands of the German foreign minister, Hans-Dietrich Genscher, and his Danish homologue, Uffe

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<sup>3</sup> The Twelve had different reasons for not wanting to extend Community action toward the Baltic Sea in the early years of the 1990s. First, the role of the EC in foreign affairs was not yet settled. In 1991 the IGC for the Maastricht Treaty were still ongoing and 1992 would see a quite turbulent ratification process. Second, many southern member states feared that engaging the EC in the Baltic Sea would divert resources away from the Mediterranean and the Renewed Mediterranean Policy. Finally, there was a widespread concern not to 'rock the Russian boat', first not to undermine Gorbachev's reforms and in 1992-3 not to cause strain on the newly democratized Russian regime.

<sup>4</sup> The Twelve would grant the Baltic States access to the PHARE program and the Russian Federation would become recipient of the TACIS as the USSR ceased to exist in December 1991.

<sup>5</sup> Moreover, the newly democratized states' would also received invitations to join different European fora, such as for example the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Council of Europe, and moreover Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland would adhere to NATO's North Atlantic Cooperation Council in 1991 and the Partnership for Peace in 1994. Western European Union's (WEU) associate partnership for Poland and the Baltic States was also extended in 1994. Hence, the political vacuum created by the end of the Cold War. Russia was also invited to join the North Atlantic Cooperation Council and Partnership for Peace, but only did so reluctantly, feeling suspicious of the motives of NATO and not being able to overcome the feeling of continuing animosity with the organization even if circumstances had changed

Elleman-Jensen, to propose the creation of a regional initiative in the form of the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS). The new Council, it was envisioned, would operate according to the logic of traditional intergovernmental cooperation.<sup>6</sup> The CBSS would at first lead a very low key existence in that three of its partners and principal financiers – Finland, Norway and Sweden – were until 1994 relatively distracted by their individual national efforts to join the European Union. Moreover, tension between Moscow and the Baltic capitals over the less than speedy Russian troop withdrawals would initially make cooperation in the framework of the CBSS cumbersome.

However, the CBSS would not be the only initiative in the region in the early 1990s. Another regional initiative coming out of the changing international environment of the early years of the post-Cold War era was the (non-EU member) Norwegian proposal to create the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC). The Norwegian ambition was to create a multilateral solution to a frequently tense diplomatic relationship in the North Atlantic with democratizing Russia, as well as at the same time find a way to deal with the environmental hazards inherent in and around the Barents Sea. The Council was founded in 1993, by the five Nordic countries, Russia and the European Union.<sup>7</sup> The geographical area covered by BEAC consists of the northernmost regions of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia, whose common feature is that the areas involved are located North of the Arctic Circle.

The Union would in general view the regional activism of the Baltic and Barents

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radically and the Soviet Union no longer existed.

<sup>6</sup> The CBSS came into being in March 1992, on an initiative from the EU members Germany and Denmark, representatives at minister level from the ten countries linked to the Baltic Sea basin (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia and Sweden) and the Commission of the European Community met in Copenhagen to establish the Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS). In 1996 Iceland also joined the CBSS. In 1999 the CBSS granted observer status to United States, Great Britain, Ukraine and France (Council of Baltic Sea States website, as consulted July 2007).

<sup>7</sup> Observers are Canada, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Poland, and the United States (Barents Euro-Arctic Council website, as consulted July 2007).

Sea areas as positive. It was widely held that the CBSS and BEAC could assist the stabilization process of regions which were undergoing substantial changes. In a gesture of support, the EU would tacitly allow the Commission to take up 'membership' in these two regional entities (Myrjord 2003). However, in the light of the Finnish and Swedish successful EU accession bids, it was realized that the Union would have to think more strategically about Europe's North (Ilves 1999: 293; Heininen 2001). Moreover, changes in the internal situation in Russia in 1993 would warrant the concern of the entire international community. The domestic stability of newly democratic Russia would in 1993 seem jeopardized by a series of events, among which the electoral success of Vladimir Zhirinovsky's Liberal-Democratic Party and the Communist party appeared to be the most preoccupying. The demise of the popularity of Yeltsin's presidency and the fact that he was challenged by Russian nationalist and/or anti-Western political forces alarmed many leaders in Europe and in the US. They became increasingly concerned that such developments posed a serious threat to the continuity of the pro-Western president in power.<sup>8</sup> The internal political fragility of the Russian state-building, combined with the fact that the central government did not appear to have sufficient control over parts of its territory, gave rise to a generalized climate of fear in the West of a Russian destabilization and its consequences. Analysts began to speak of an 'arc of instability' ranging from the Baltic Sea to China and as a consequence the EC would be prompted into action.

The result was at first to be the EU's 'Baltic Sea Region Initiative' from 1996 that was intended to promote, support and accelerate existing developments in the Baltic Sea

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<sup>8</sup> Western leaders' support for Yeltsin was evident from their silence when Yeltsin decided to scupper the Russian Constitution earlier that year and declared himself having emergency powers.

region.<sup>9</sup> The Communication from the Commission establishing the Initiative was, nevertheless, to be a disappointment for those who had expected a more concrete commitment to the region. The Baltic Sea Region Initiative encouraged the regional cooperation underway but did not foresee a greater EU involvement, nor did it produce the strategic engagement for the region which had been hoped (cf. European Parliament 1996). The continued relative disinterest for Northern issues among a majority of EU members was amply illustrated by the fact that the Northern European lobbying during these years to establish a 'Baltic Sea Desk' at the European Commission utterly failed (Williams 2001).<sup>10</sup> The idea had been to set the engagement of the Union on a firmer footing by having a permanent staff at the Commission assigned to a Baltic Sea geographical desk, similar to those existing for other areas of the world. However, this idea would meet considerable resistance from more southern EU member states. Perhaps above all though, the Baltic Sea Region Initiative was going to prove too little, too late. The success of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, the establishment of an Arctic Council in 1996 in Ottawa, Canada,<sup>11</sup> the 1996 Russian military intervention in Chechnya and, perhaps most importantly, the imminent entering into force of the Russian Partnership and Cooperation agreement in 1997 (Heininen 2001: 29), would make the Union's member states realize that the region needed

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<sup>9</sup> The Initiatives targeted (a) political cooperation, mainly to find a solution to the problem of the Russophone minorities in Estonia and Latvia; (b) economic cooperation, on the basis of trade liberalization, technical assistance and investment promotion; (c) technical cooperation, centering on the CBSS as "an important complement to the Union's bilateral relations in the region", alleging that the Commission intended to play an active role as "a full member" in the work of the Council (European Commission 1994).

<sup>10</sup> A 'Northern Dimension unit' has not emerged since either. The policy was under the Prodi Commission organizationally grouped with other Horizontal matters at the E-1 unit and separate from Eastern European matters. Under the Barroso Commission the Northern Dimension has disappeared from the organizational charts, but is allegedly coordinated from in the Directorate E/1, dedicated to Russia and Eastern Europe.

<sup>11</sup> New opportunities for Arctic circumpolar cooperation emerged in the late 1980s during the final reformist phase before the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Environmental cooperation was identified as a first step in promoting comprehensive security in the region. The eight Arctic countries adopted an Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy in 1991. Five years later, in 1996, Foreign Ministers of the Arctic states agreed in the Ottawa Declaration, to form the Arctic Council with a mandate to undertake a broad program to include all

more than a limited Baltic Sea format and a much deeper involvement by the European Union (Ilves 1999: 293).

Nevertheless, any new initiative for Europe's North would first have to overcome a set of hurdles. A growing number of member states rather favored the idea of creating a brand new initiative, although they tied different conditions to it. First, the format had to be limited. Most EU members did not want at the time to reproduce the experience of the grand scale Barcelona Process elsewhere in the Union's geography, having seen the stalling of the Partnership already in its second year of existence. On its account, Berlin, burdened by its many financial commitments at home and elsewhere in Europe, opposed any initiative which would create obligations for it to spend further resources in Europe's North, a position which France would unhesitatingly endorse (Schmalz 2000; cf. Terpan 2000). Britain was in principle in favor of an elaborated policy towards the Baltic and North Calotte areas.<sup>12</sup> However, its principal interest would be highly specific, such as engaging in environmental and nuclear clean-up (Archer 2000).

## 5.2. Taking EU-Northern European relations to a new level?

It would take a determined Finnish prime minister, Paavo Lipponen, to convince his fellow European homologues of the merits of launching a new framework policy for Europe's North. Lipponen would himself, together with the then Finnish President Matti Ahtisaari,

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dimensions of sustainable development (Arctic Council website, as consulted August 2005).

<sup>12</sup> The North Calotte encompasses the Nordland-, Troms- och Finnmark *fylken* (regions) in Norway, the

become the main lobbyists behind the initiative, traveling extensively around to different EU capitals to peddle the idea. Their – by Finnish standards rather uncharacteristic – boldly stated and optimistic ambition to “integrate Russia into Europe as a democracy and a market economy” by ways of the Northern Dimension would strike a sensitive chord in a many European capitals desirous of seeing the EU’s foreign policy identity develop as a defender of such values (Financial Times 1999; cf. Bonvicini et al 2000). Helsinki’s great game would pay off in late 1997, when the Luxembourg European Council agreed that the ‘Northern Dimension of the EU’ should be explored further (European Council 1997). The problems of the Arctic, Baltic Sea and Barents Sea areas, as the Finnish Premier stipulated, was to be resolved by consolidating stability, welfare and sustainable development in Northern Europe (Lipponen 1997a). Consequently, the objectives for the new policy were, largely based on the Finnish blueprints, was to focus on seven issue areas, spanning more than fifty concrete actions (Foreign Ministers’ Conference 1999). The Northern Dimension initiative thus seemed sufficiently broad to respond to Northern European needs for a comprehensive, large scale policy in the wake of the hitherto EU adhocery, while, at the same time, being of such a highly technical nature as to skillfully avoid to awaken anyone’s fear of a Northern European replica of the Barcelona Process or negative reactions from Moscow.

The Finnish were therefore cautiously confident as they set about to plan the extraordinary foreign minister conference in Helsinki at which the Northern Dimension initiative would officially be launched. The November 1999 meeting was planned by the Finnish hosts to be an equally elegant policy inauguration as the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership had been in 1995. However, external events would turn the tide against Finnish

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Lapland region in Finland and the Norrbotten region in Sweden.

interests. The second Russian invasion into Chechnya would cause a severe blow to EU-Russian relations and consequently also for the Northern Dimension. The foreign minister conference took place, but the event was a considerable diplomatic blow to the Finnish government. Only Finnish foreign minister, Tarja Halonen, was present out of the EU-Fifteen ministers.<sup>13</sup> According to Heininen (2001), face was only saved by the fact that practically all partner countries' foreign ministers assisted and that the Swedish declared willingness to host a follow-up minister conference during its EU presidency in the first half of 2001. The inauspicious start would, however, color the first years of the initiative's existence. The 2000 French and Portuguese EU Presidencies virtually ignored the topic, and Russia, with Vladimir Putin as the President, seemed to become more ambivalent on regional cooperation in comparison to the Yeltsin Presidency, especially as the European reticence in regards to Chechnya mounted.

The Northern Dimension would also come to loose steam as a consequence of the lackluster first Northern Dimension Action Plans presented to the Feira European Council in June 2000 (European Council 1999b). The Action Plan would fall far from Lipponen's (1997a) initial ambition for Europe's North, i.e. the creation of an EU comprehensive strategy, an institutional framework and sufficient financial arrangements for the Northern Dimension to bring cooperation to fruition. However, the intra-EU reticence in regards to the latter two ingredients would clearly hamper the development of the first. The Action Plan which the Commission had elaborated envisioned the EU as functioning as the aloof coordinator of ongoing (non-EU) cooperation, i.e. an umbrella mechanism for existing activity, to which the Union itself added very little new. The result was that the document's

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<sup>13</sup> Another speculation is that the other EU Foreign Ministers stayed away either due to disinterest (Catellani 2001a).



scarce strategic value became focus of severe criticism and observers would draw parallels with the ill-fated Baltic Sea Region Initiative, in that once again the Union was unwilling to assume leadership in terms of directing the evolution of Northern Europe and EU-Russian relations. However, the practical limitations which marked the Northern Dimension – without structures and funding – meant that the Commission was almost forced by the circumstances to limit itself to lay claim to nearly all international projects being pursued in Northern Europe at the time rather than proposing anything new and EU-driven (Heikkilä 2006: 18).

The Northern Dimension pact was adopted at the EU-Russia summit in Helsinki in 2006 pretends to make a difference in this regard. The new framework document replaces as of 2007 the erstwhile Northern Dimension Action Plans. The ‘Northern Dimension Policy Framework Document’ is a permanent agreement, drawn up with the full participation of the EU, Iceland, Norway and Russia. The Pact now grants all four parties the same rights of agenda-setting, supervision and decision-making, and the Pact can only be amended by consensus of the four partners. Although the Northern Dimension is now considered the ‘regional expression’ of the EU-Russian Four Common Spaces, the initiative does not dovetail fully with the four spaces and thus remain autonomous in at least two sectors (environment and health).

The adoption of the Framework Document has represented a consolidation of the existing Northern Dimension institutional framework. At the top of the political direction for the initiative are the Northern Dimension foreign minister meetings. Regular minister meetings were instated by the second Action Plan in 2004 with meetings every second year. The task of the minister meetings is to provide policy guidance and monitoring for

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Northern Dimension implementation. The preparation for and the chairing of the Northern Dimension foreign minister meetings – which until 2006 was in the hands of the EU Presidency – are after the adoption of the ‘Framework Document’ to fall alternatively on the four partners (EU, Iceland, Norway and Russia). At a lower political echelon, there are the annual Senior Officials meetings held every second year, the first one held in Brussels in October 2004. The Northern Dimension Foreign Ministers’ Conference and the Senior Officials are as of the ‘Framework Document’ assigned the charge of reviewing the implementation of the cooperation.<sup>14</sup> The ‘Framework Document’ also provides for the creation of a Steering Group, composed of representatives of the European Union, Iceland, Norway and the Russian Federation, at expert level, to provide continuity between the Minister and Senior Official meetings. The Steering Group will meet three times a year. Finally, the perhaps greatest novelty in Northern Dimension relations as of 2007 is the own-initiative by members of the European Parliament, of the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference, of the Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, of the Baltic Assembly, of the Nordic Council, and of the network of Barents parliamentarians, to arrange for the creation of a Northern Dimension Parliamentary Forum. The Forum would encompass representatives of the parliaments of the EU Member States, the European Parliament, the parliaments of Iceland, Norway and Russia, as well as the parliaments of the Northern Dimension observer states Canada and the USA and the elected representatives from indigenous peoples’ and regional parliamentary assemblies. The latter initiative would enhance the Parliamentary oversight of the cooperation.

The regional entities present in the Baltic Sea, Barents and Arctic areas labor under

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<sup>14</sup> Previous to the Pact this was a task of the EU Presidency and the Commission.

the commitment to implement and take the Northern Dimension initiative further.<sup>15</sup> Their institutional role was considerably enhanced in the framework of the Northern Dimension as a result of the significant turn around in the 2004-2006 Action Plan assigning the regional and subregional bodies a greater role in the elaboration, management and implementation of the Plan.<sup>16</sup> The great proliferation of regional bodies, the IFIs, as well as regional and local authorities, of the business community and of civil society is perhaps the Northern Dimension's greatest success. To better manage such a wide variety of actors, the European Economic and Social Committee has committed itself to continue the organization of annual fora on the implementation of the Northern Dimension Action Plan, bringing together representatives from the social and economic organizations.<sup>17</sup> In the same vein, the EU Committee of the Regions has been encouraged to organize similar encounters on a regular basis, bringing together representatives of local and regional administrations of the Northern Dimension area. Such meetings are deemed positive in that they provide sub-state or non-state actors an additional venue (apart from the regular channels through the national government) for voicing concerns and concrete proposals to improve the Northern Dimension and make it more suitable to their interest. However, it is worth noting that the 2006 'Framework Document' would in this sense not go further over the previous Action

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<sup>15</sup> Adding to the complex set up is the fact that coordination is meant to take place within and between three circles of cooperation: The Arctic, the Barents Euro-Arctic region and the Baltic Sea cooperation. These regional councils are then sustained from below by structures of transnational cooperation (Stålvant 2001: 10).

<sup>16</sup> Initially, the Commission adopted a rather prudent position when defining the role of the regional councils in the Northern Dimension. In a Communication presented at the Vienna European Council, the Commission stated that it would continue to participate in the CBSS and the BEAC, "in particular regarding the exchange of information, cooperation and further development of these instruments in the perspective of advancing the objectives of the Northern Dimension" (European Commission 1998). A remarkable change in discourse appeared in the guidelines adopted by the General Affairs Council in May 1999, which introduced the notion that the regional bodies should be given a role in the implementation of the Initiative (European Council 1999a). However, it has not really been until the second Action Plan that their involvement has been confirmed as instrumental for policy input and the execution of the Northern Dimension.

<sup>17</sup> Two such meetings had been held previously, in 2001 and in 2003.

Plans in allowing for a greater access to decision making procedures or agenda-setting for these actors. The 2006 document only foresees that “invitations may be extended” to these actors as observers at minister meetings.

The implementation is borne out through the individual association agreements concluded with the partner countries in the area, such as for example, the Russian Partnership and Cooperation Agreement or the EEA agreement with Norway and Iceland.<sup>18</sup> The EU-Canada and EU-US summits held on a regular basis are also considered as a basis for the development of the Northern Dimension in what concerns these two transatlantic countries.

### **5.2.1. The political and security dimension in EU-Northern European relations**

The aim of the Northern Dimension is allegedly to promote peace and security in Europe’s North through positive interdependence and with a holistic approach, very much along the lines of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (Foreign Minister Conference 1999). The Northern Dimension initiative has, similarly to the Barcelona Process, studiously tried to avoid any entanglements with regional military related security preoccupations (e.g. the security status of the Baltic States).<sup>19</sup> There was early on a widely held concern among northern EU member states that a focus on traditional security concerns would end up

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<sup>18</sup> Until 2004 the Northern Dimension was also implemented through the Europe Agreements signed with Poland and the Baltic states. Cf. Annex 2 for an overview of relevant legal agreements between the EU and borderland partners in the Northern Dimension area.

<sup>19</sup> In contrast to the Mediterranean though, the EU has in terms of the Northern European security been able to count on the intervention of all the major European security organizations in a rather complementary fashion.

paralyzing cooperation in the soft security terrain. This cautiousness notwithstanding, the Northern Dimension was not going to free itself completely of the management of Northern European hard security as concerns rose over the concentration and condition of Russian nuclear weapons stockpiles at the Severomorsk naval base in Murmansk. Finnish sources has estimated that some 2,500 tactical nuclear weapons and some 500 nuclear reactors installed in submarines, ice breakers or regular vessels are still stationed in the area (Walker, M. 2001: 123).

A careful diplomatic exploration had begun already in the mid-1990s to investigate if there was any possibility that the West, under the guise of environmental protection, could help pay for the dismantling of the dangerous nuclear weapons accumulation and the decommissioning of submarines. Moscow had initially welcomed such a scheme. Russia had the obligation to undertake weapons reductions as a part of the START I and START II agreements and getting external financial assistance to do so seemed to Russian officials at the time an attractive solution.<sup>20</sup> However, when work on the ground got off, the lack of legal guarantees became a problem. The decommissioning process undertaken by Russian companies was carried out in a particularly opaque manner, leaving major donor countries with scarce control over their financial assistance. Moreover, the Russian non-adherence to major international conventions in regards to nuclear disposal exposed donor countries with a risk for liability suits should something go wrong in the decommissioning process. Finally, the Russian unwillingness to dismantle is customs duties on nuclear-related technology meant that donors were at times requested to pay custom taxes up to 40 percent

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<sup>20</sup> The START I Treaty provides for the limitation and reduction of offensive strategic weapons, was signed by the US and USSR on 31 July 1991 and entered into force in December 1994. The START II Treaty was signed by the USA and the Russian Federation on 3 January 1993 with a view to eliminating ground-launched multiple independently targetable reentry vehicles (MIRV) and limiting strategic nuclear forces on both sides (Federation of American Scientists web-site, as consulted August 2007).

of the equipment's cost. This could be explained as a consequence of differing cognitive frameworks. While the EU and its member states perceive nuclear issues in a multi-dimensional fashion (military, environmental), Russia has essentially "continued the Soviet tendency to cloak all matters nuclear under the rubric of military security" (Heisler and Quester 1999: 68). Although Russia and major international donors adopted the 'Multilateral Nuclear Environmental Program in the Russian Federation' (MNEPR) in 2003 – essentially a legal framework guaranteeing the access to Russian nuclear sites – there is scarce evidence for a changed Russian attitude on this point.<sup>21</sup> Russia's unwillingness to allow to extensive access to its military installations in Murmansk reveals that this matter touches the heart of what it perceives to be its state sovereignty. However, one could also infer that such lack of trust is a clear symptom of that the bipolar East-West enemy-images have not quite dissipated in Russia. Finally, although recognizing the importance of environmental protection, Moscow has not shown more than piecemeal interest in aligning itself with European environmental and legal standards, given the high cost of protection and clean-ups that this would imply.

The Northern Dimension has managed to propel the cooperation forward even during difficult bilateral relations between the states in the area. Differences of opinion over the Baltic NATO accession or Chechnya have had relatively little noticeable impact on the Northern Dimension cooperation. All more divisive issues have been managed by other European organizations, such as NATO or OSCE, or in specially confectioned EU initiatives. One illustrative example of this is the open Russian-Estonian, Russian-Latvian

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<sup>21</sup> In November, 2003 the Lower House of the Russian Duma ratified MNEPR. On 10 December 2003 the Upper House of the Russian Duma ratified MNEPR. On 27 December 2003 President Vladimir Putin signed MNEPR into law. Partners in the MNEPR are: Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden, the United States of America (for the main agreement), the European Community, and the European Atomic Energy Community.

dispute over the status and treatment of the Russophone minorities in these two Baltic countries. Moscow links the issue with the ratification of the border treaties with these countries and as a result neither Estonia nor Latvia (nor Lithuania) has their eastern borders with Russia fully settled. The EU tried initially to deal with the problem through the 1993 'Pact on Stability in Europe' ('Balladur Plan') which foresaw the convening of a series of pan-European conferences to try to settle minority and border disputes in Central and Eastern Europe (Peterson and Bomberg 1999: 238-9). Moscow, after some initial reservation given its reluctance against multilateralist formats, decided to participate as an observer. As a consequence, a Baltic Sea Round Table was set up, bringing together officials from all the countries on the Baltic Sea rim and the United States.<sup>22</sup> The outcome of the Baltic Sea Round Table talks was that some problems were solved, but not the most important ones (borders and status of minorities). The Pact of Stability was in 1995 passed on to the OSCE, now repository guardian for the agreements met. Further work on the Stability Pact to reach accords on the outstanding issues has not been undertaken since, even if the OSCE High Commissioners on National Minorities or the CBSS High-Commissioner on Democratic Institutions and Human Rights have in different ways used their good offices to find a solution acceptable to all parties.<sup>23</sup>

The principal focus of the Northern Dimension has nonetheless been the Justice and Home Affairs component. Russia continues to be the country in the region that its neighbors perceive as the most prominent source of these soft security problems, although

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<sup>22</sup> The Baltic Round Table was tasked to discuss general political issues of the region and should promote regional cooperation relating, for example, to integration of populations of foreign origin, national minorities, language training, ombudsman, transborder activities and maritime cooperation and cooperation among regions of neighboring countries.

<sup>23</sup> The border issue has been completely left aside, currently being held by most Western European states as a matter of bilateral concern between the Russian Federation and each Baltic state. See statements to the effect made in the context of the 2005 Russian backtracking on signing the Estonian and Latvian border control.

criminal activity is far from a phenomenon stemming exclusively from Russian territory. Problems related to the yet to be fully consolidated Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian and Polish post-communist institutions are also cause for concern.<sup>24</sup> The focus has consequently been on improving the management of EU-Russia border zones and to fight organized crime by further developing concrete operational measures. On the one hand, the INTERREG III and TACIS CBC programs have co-financed the construction of new border points on the Fenno-Russian border to obtain greater control of a 1,400 km long border most of which passes through uninhabited woodlands. On the other hand, a CBSS Task Force on Organized Crime was established in 1996 as a intergovernmental means to coordinate action in stemming the tide of growing criminality and the trafficking of illicit goods in the Baltic Sea basin. The Task Force coordinates joint law enforcement activities, including police, customs, coast guards, border patrols and prosecutors amongst the Baltic rim countries. Moreover, the Task Force has set up joint investigation teams made up of law enforcement officers from different states to tackle crimes related to the external borders of the Baltic States and Poland. Finally, the Task Force has a function of setting up cooperative initiatives designed to provide training and capacity enhancement to law enforcement officers in the region. Russia is reportedly an active participant in the Task Force and has organized various joint operations to impede trafficking of vehicles and women in the Baltic Sea area, including in the Kaliningrad oblast (European Commission 2002a). However, it should be noted that the Russian and some of the new member states' attitude in general on organized financial crime and money laundering is more tolerant than the Nordic or German, a fact which not always produces efficient cooperation between the

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<sup>24</sup> Elements of organized crime has sometimes proved to have high level political benefactors, such as the case of the Lithuanian prime minister which had to resign over a scandal linking him to Russian mafia.



two sides (Vinatier 2006).

Visa facilitation arrangement between Russia and the Schengen area has since 2004 begun to make cooperation across the borders easier. While people contacts were relatively fluid in the past decade as the Baltic States and Poland maintained a liberal visa regime vis-à-vis their eastern neighbors, the introduction of EU visa regime as a consequence of their accession to the EU has truncated these contacts. The Schengen visa regime has created considerable tension with Russia, feeling itself unfairly targeted by the EU and retorting by beginning requiring visas of Europeans traveling to Russia.<sup>25</sup> As of 2007 the EU has introduced visa-facilitation measures, however, since these only encompass certain groups (students, businessmen, journalists and a few more very specific categories) the average Russian will still find it hard to cross the Schengen border.

### **5.2.2. Creating an EU-Northern European area of shared prosperity?**

The EU's engagement with Europe's North has been centered on commerce and economic cooperation.<sup>26</sup> The Union's traditional recipe of trade and technical/financial assistance in its relations with the borderlands has been applied, although in a compartmentalized fashion. The freeing trade has been conducted through bilateral channels, while technical and financial cooperation has been steeped in more multilateral trappings. The focus of the

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<sup>25</sup> See for example the remarks of Viktor Khristenko, the Russian deputy prime minister, which has noted in speech in the south-eastern Finnish city of Lappenranta, Finland, that because of the tough visa restrictions Russia is isolated from the rest of Northern Europe. Khristenko suggested this should also be one of the issues for the Northern Dimension program to resolve (*EUObserver* 2001a).

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Annex 3 for socioeconomic indicators and trade flows.

Northern Dimension has, above all, been on the factors that facilitates economic development and improves the interconnectedness of the economies of the countries in Europe's North.<sup>27</sup> Energy has, for this reason, naturally been at the top of the agenda, alongside with infrastructure and communications. However, also other items central to the EU's financial assistance agenda are present, such as for example the environment or health care provision.

#### *5.2.2.1. The freeing of EU-Northern European trade*

The major part of trade in Northern Europe is in principle based on the Internal Market, given that today most of the Baltic Sea countries are EU members. The EEA- and Schengen accords with Iceland and Norway permit free circulation of goods, services, capital and persons between these two countries and the European Union at equal standing of any EU member state. The situation with Russia is, however, radically different and not yet resolved. In 1994 EU signed a Partnership and Cooperation agreement with Russia, contained a so-called 'rendez-vous' clause whereby a free trade regime could be established if the Russian economy met certain basic requirements of reform. These requirements have essentially never been met by Russia. Perhaps as a way to overcome this impasse, EU-Russian discussions have since 2000 instead circled around the development of the

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<sup>27</sup> In 1991 the European Commission forwarded a study recognizing that border regions were disadvantaged because they lay at the extremities of transport systems planned on a national basis. In such areas trade is often distorted, while services wastefully duplicated and mobility hampered by differences in language, taxation, employment practices and welfare systems (as cited in Putnina 2005: 75)

Common European Economic Space (CEES). The basic idea of the CEES is to achieve improved levels of transborder flows of goods, services, capital, and perhaps eventually people, between the EU and Russia. Talks have also been ongoing as to how this economic space could eventually be extended to all OSCE-countries and thereby create the world's largest free trade area. While the CEES may represent a long-term goal, to date discussions have, however, been limited to four concrete areas (the 'Four Common Spaces') as agreed on at the St. Petersburg EU-Russia Summit, May 2002. The Four Common Spaces represent a roadmap for EU-Russian relations in the short to medium term in four concrete areas: economic issues; freedom, security and justice; research, education and culture; and external security. The Four Common Spaces scheme allegedly offers Russia a model for economic and legal integration with the European Union, without forcing Russia into a particular mould. That is to say that it is recognized that Russia does not have to adopt EU Internal Market regulations in the same way as an EEA or ENP partner. The EU-Russia Summit in November 2006 was to seal the agreement which had been elaborated, although in the end the accord was not signed due to last minute intra-EU opposition.<sup>28</sup>

All the same, the Four Common Space's scheme cannot hide that there are some important and deep-seated differences in approaches between the two partners. The EU has negotiated the Four Space's scheme on the basis of its neoliberal approach to economics convinced of the benefits of privatization and decentralization. Kremlin, however, defends the economic specificity of the Russian economy. Rather than allowing the market forces to self-regulate the economy as according to Western logics, Putin has in the past few years instead moved to increase state control over the Russian economy, e.g. Gazprom,

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<sup>28</sup> The Four Common Spaces was blocked by Poland, linking the matter with its opposition to the import-ban on Polish beef which Russia has imposed. The matter remains unresolved at the time of writing.

Transneft, Rosneft and Aeroflot (Vinatier 2006: 12). Moreover, Moscow has shown scarce interest in moving toward a more transparent business environment to foment foreign direct investment or diversifying the economy by supporting small and medium enterprises or any other reform which would take Russia closer to WTO accession. Finally, and especially relevant to the Northern Dimension initiative, the Russian government has since 2000 in different ways acted to centralize the Russian economy, centering it on Moscow, to the detriment to independent economic initiative taking in the Russian peripheries, such as for example the Russian Northwest.

There are thus indications that the differences in EU-Russian economic paradigms will continue to keep bilateral economic relations rather limited in spite of the ambition of the Four Common Spaces scheme. Another factor which creates distortion and tension in the EU-Russian trade relations is the Union's dependence on energy/mineral fuels (65%) and other raw materials coming from Russia, while Russia imports machinery, chemicals, manufactured goods and a substantial amount of food and live animals from the EU. Given the characteristic of the Russian export produce and the Union's dependence these products enter duty-free and in unrestricted quantities (cf. Annex 3). Russia, on its hand however, has begun to pursue a selective policy of non-tariff barriers against EU produce, such as for example agricultural produce, citing deficient sanitary standards such as in the case of Bulgaria, Romania and Poland. These Russian allegations are considered legitimate according to world trade standards and, indeed, it is the same argument that the EU itself uses in terms of agricultural produce from determined countries.

*5.2.2.2. EU-Northern European technical and financial cooperation*

The technical and financial cooperation in the Europe's North is the centerpiece of the Northern Dimension initiative. The cooperation has for the more part of the past decade aspired to ensure the full economic transition of the post-communist economies in the region, as well as safeguard some principal features essential for economic development, such as the adequate and reliable access to gas, oil and other energy resources for the countries and sub-state regions in the Baltic Sea, Barents and Arctic areas as well as the creation of large-scale infrastructure. However, other factors such as environmental preservation and social issues have also been prominent targets for EU funding.

The financial assistance for these and other projects have been drawn from several sources. The Northern Dimension is not furnished with a single, overarching financial instrument. One of the major reasons behind why the Northern Dimension was accepted onto the EU's foreign policy agenda was, as already noted in Chapter 3, the fact that it did not aspire to an independent and unified budget line (Stålvant 2001; Catellani 2003). The Northern Dimension's cooperation projects are on the EU side financed through the bilateral EU funding given to the different countries in the region (INTERREG, TACIS, PHARE/ISPA/SAPARD; since 2007 INTERREG and the ENPI). The participation of Canada, Iceland, Norway and the United States in Northern Dimension projects is funded by these respective countries.

Given the multitude of financial assistance sources the main task of the European Commission at the onset of the Northern Dimension initiative was, as stipulated by the Cologne European Council, to "improve the interoperability and coordination of EU

programs” and “to increase the multiplier effects of EU’s assistance” by better coordinating with member states and third party donors (European Council 1999a). However, the reality since 1999 has proven that these objectives have been hard to fulfill. In terms of the EU financial assistance programs in Europe’s North, the coordination between INTERREG and TACIS (and PHARE/ISPA/SAPARD) has proven very difficult. As each program addresses different categories of countries and tend to focus on different priorities, coordination problems are inevitable. Russia has, for example, chosen to destine most of its TACIS funds to projects in and around Moscow to the detriment of those Northwestern Russian regions covered by the Northern Dimension initiative. Moreover, EU financial programs create a coordination problem as they run under different budgetary time-tables and project cycles. TACIS (and PHARE) operates on the basis of annual projects, while the structural funds, like INTERREG, have a multi-annual budget. What is more, relations between cross-border programs under the auspices of TACIS and PHARE, managed by the DG External Relations and DG Enlargement respectively, and as Catellani (2001a: 60 and 2001b) has noted that this complicates the implementation of Northern Dimension objectives. Especially when taking into account that they have needed to be harmonized with the Instrument for Structural Policies for Pre-Accession (ISPA) as well as with INTERREG, both administered by DG Regional Policy. Finally, for TACIS the European Commission and the recipient country remain jointly responsible for project implementation; for INTERREG, on the other hand, responsibility for project selection and implementation lies with the European Union member state(s) concerned (European Commission 2001: 6). The result, which Swedish Foreign Minister Anna Lindh and Commissioner for External Relations Chris Patten would note already in December 2000 was that it has been “absurdly difficult to link money from these different sources” (Patten

and Lindh 2000).

The 2004 EU accession of the Baltic States and Poland has eliminated the coordination problems with the PHARE program. However, several problems related to the compartmentalized EU financial assistance remains. DG Regional Policy is still in charge of an INTERREG which is very different in timing and procedures from the ENPI designed to benefit Russia in lieu of TACIS. The Commission has tried to impose a certain solidarity among different DGs involved in the same region, however, DG Commissioners are obviously wary of becoming subordinate to other DGs and thus jealously safeguard their institutional autonomy. The main source of financing of Northern Dimension related activities at has therefore become the ‘Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership Support Fund’<sup>29</sup> and ‘Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being’<sup>30</sup>, since 2003, which are based on voluntary participation and funding being left to the discretion at each donor. These Partnership Funds runs parallel to EU structures and are therefore not under the direct control of the Commission. The Northern Dimension has in overall had fairly limited impact in Russia, beyond a few macro-projects (e.g. nuclear waste disposal, sewage treatment). Arguably Northern Dimension related cooperation has had more and broader impact in the Baltic States and the Polish regions covered by the initiative.

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<sup>29</sup> NDEP Support Fund donors are: Belgium, Canada, Denmark, European Union, Finland, France, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Russian Federation, Sweden and United Kingdom.

<sup>30</sup> The Partnership receives funding from 13 countries, including, for example, France and Canada in addition to the Baltic Sea states. The European Commission is also involved, as are eight international organizations: the regional councils, as well as the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the International Labor Organization (ILO), the World Health Organization (WHO) and the joint UN HIV/AIDS program (UNAIDS).

### **5.2.3. The socio-cultural dimension of EU-Northern European relations**

One could argue that the social and cultural ambit of the Northern Dimension is paradoxically simultaneously at the core and at the margins of the initiative. During the 1990s the North seemingly became a hothouse for multilevel regional cooperation, much to the surprise of both locals and the rest of Europe (Joenniemi 1999: 3). Then premier of the Schleswig-Holstein Björn Engholm had pioneered the vision of the Baltic Sea region as a 'region of regions' not merely as an inter-state area but also a place where sub-state/non-state actors interacted and cooperation had exceeded the wildest expectations (Jukarainen 1999: 365). City twinning, such as the Haparand on the Swedish-Finnish border, proliferated at the end of the Cold War and would become the first tangible manifestations of spontaneous cross-border cooperation. Other self-sustained initiatives, responding to local necessities and/or models, were for example those launched across the Fenno-Russian border. The end of the bipolar era meant for some Finnish border regions, such as North Karelia, Kainuu, and northern Ostrobothnia, the possibility to restoring truncated connections with the parts of Finland ceded to the Soviet Union after World War II and to revive cross-border ethnic and cultural identities (Kononenko 2004). One of the rationales for launching the Northern Dimension was therefore the provision of an all-encompassing mechanism for coordinating this activity in regards to issues of social or cultural nature, rather than to create something new.

However, the multitude of initiatives and their disparate agendas have made coordination difficult. In being spontaneous and responding to a very localized concern many of the socio-cultural organizations and entities working in the Baltic, Barents and



Arctic areas find greater difficulties in fitting into the EU's budget categories and project culture. Those cooperation initiatives which have adjusted itself more to the European mainstream, such as the Euroregion Karelia for example, has obviously had an easier time to obtain EU funding. The lack of subsidiarity has been an additional problem. Although the Northern European authorities has been quite permissive in its approach to sub-state and non-state actors taking cross-border initiatives in their own hands, decision making has remained fairly centralized. The decision to support different projects or not have most often been taken in the national capitals and not regionally or locally by the people most concerned (Putnina 2005: 81).<sup>31</sup> This is a situation which has created great frustration in that it reduces local autonomy in terms of pursuing joint projects and contributed to the sensation that the socio-cultural dimension has not been prioritized. This frustration has deepened as a result of Putin's reversal in 2005 of Yeltsin's policy of regional autonomy.<sup>32</sup> Kremlin's move was designed to reign in on some of Russia's more unwieldy regional governors running their territories as personal fiefs and to provide the central government with more means to exercise greater control over the territory. The decision can also be interpreted as a fear of that the intensity of the contacts across some of the Russian borders – both in the Russian Northwest and southeast – could over time perhaps, if left unchecked, give rise to secession claims.<sup>33</sup> In Russia's Northwest the result of the regional re-

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<sup>31</sup> For example, in terms of the Barents cooperation, Norwegian participating counties receive each year a lump sum from the national budget. In contrast, regional actors in Finland, Sweden and Russia must apply for funding on a project-by-project basis, be it from central government, the EU or other sources (Myrjord 2003: 252).

<sup>32</sup> This is a reversal of the earlier situation in which the Russia had carried out the spirit of the framework Madrid Convention (May 1980) on cross-border cooperation between border regions and communities, and had even conceptualized a strategy for such cooperation (Shlyamin, undated).

<sup>33</sup> *Radio Free Europe* (2000) reports of a 2000 poll which showed that 70 percent of the inhabitants of the Russian region of Karelia, would welcome its return in whole or in part to Finland given the opportunity that would bring with it for them to become Finnish citizens. There have also been some reported efforts by determined groups in Finland to promote the idea that these World War II-era border changes should be reversed in whole or in part.

organization was the replacement of the major of St. Petersburg. Some European observers lamented his substitution given that the major had on many occasions shown himself decidedly pro-Western and given to cross-border cooperation in pursuit of solutions to St. Petersburg's problems.

Health and education are two other areas which have been greatly emphasized. The Northern Dimension cooperation has paid special attention to the perils of communicable diseases (especially tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS) in Northwest Russia, Kaliningrad and the Baltic States, as well as to the goal of addressing problems related to general health and social welfare, such as the use of illicit drugs, alcoholism and other life-style related conditions. These programs have been carried out by different non-state actors. However, has slowdown as a result of a Russian clampdown on foreign NGOs operating on the Russian territory since 2006, progress has slowed. The foreign non-governmental organizations have increasingly come under bureaucratic harassment and on occasions invited to cease their operations in Russia's Northwest all-together. Moreover, although the 'Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being' was established in 2003, this partnership has not managed to take off in that it is based on project-financing and voluntary donations. So far, the funds allocated to the partnership have not reached the pledged amounts (Heikkilä 2006: 19).

In terms of education, projects have focused on higher education and/or skill-training programs. Illustrative examples are the four Euro-Faculty programs which have been set up at universities in each Baltic country and in Kaliningrad. The Euro-Faculty has been jointly sponsored jointly by CBSS and EU to provide first class law school programs to help ensure qualified legal trained officials to consolidate the rule of law, democracy and

human rights.<sup>34</sup> These measures are designed to stimulate inter-regional exchanges of scholars and bring the Baltic States' and Kaliningrad's higher education up to European standards. These initiatives on higher education has been welcome by Russia, seeing in them a way to halt Russian slip in educational standards and aggressively promote managerial skills, engineering and other areas vital to Russian economic reconstruction.

### 5.3. The Northern Dimension in a reflective perspective: what of the Union's identity?

If the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership had made its entrance on the EU agenda with considerable flourish, the ascent of the Northern Dimension initiative would be marked by a considerable anti-climax. The First Foreign Minister Meeting in Helsinki in 1999 was not to live up to the expectations of its Finnish hosts and, what is worse, the conclusions of the conference seem to set the initiative off on the same untenable footing as the previous and short-lived Baltic Sea Region Initiative. The very ambiguities which surrounded the launch and initials years of the Northern Dimension appeared to entail that the countries in the region would remain marginal to the concerns of the European Union and its more southern member states. The wish to understate the EU's involvement in Europe's North was further emphasized by Chris Patten when he noted, in his speech during the Helsinki inaugural conference, that the Northern Dimension framework policy was neither to be a 'new' regional initiative nor furnished with a financial instrument of its own (Finnish Ministry of

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<sup>34</sup> Currently, the EuroFaculty program may also count on the sponsorship of sponsors such as France, Great Britain and United States (observers in CBSS).

Foreign Affairs 2000). The Initiative thus seemed doomed to live out its existence in utter discretion, where the already existing bilateral relations with Iceland, Norway, Russia – and until 2004 the Baltic States and Poland – would mark the limits of the Union's ambition in Northern Europe. The Northern Dimension unassuming existence notwithstanding, work has clearly been done and the Initiative has even been more strengthened and further concretized in recent years by several institutional innovations and a clearer definition of its mandate.

However, how has the European Union fared over the past decade in terms of its foreign policy identity in a set of regions that have emerged relatively recently on the political agenda in Brussels?

### **5.3.1. The EU's cohesion as a foreign policy actor in Northern Europe**

The Northern Dimension was conceived as a way to introduce the Union into an area which it arguably had shown little interest or knowledge about previous to the Northern enlargement in 1995 (Heininen 2001: 26). The EU and its member states pledged a formal commitment to the Initiative, at par with other dimensions of the EU foreign policy. However, outside *Norden* other EU members have had a hard time to make the Northern Dimension their own. The excessive technicality of the projects undertaken within the framework of the Northern Dimension, combined with the absence of a budget framework to review, has conspired to doom the Initiative to a, in practice, relatively relegated position among the EU's borderland framework policies. Few EU policymakers, outside the

Northern European EU members, know what the initiative really stands for.<sup>35</sup> Perhaps this is also why intra-EU cohesion has not been a major problem.

The Nordic countries have been the major proponent of the Northern Dimension initiative within the European Union – and, only of late, receiving reinforcement by the 2004 EU accession of the Baltic States. However, the Finnish would invest great care into the articulation of the Northern Dimension to avoid having the initiative seem as of merely Finnish-Nordic interest. The extensive involvement of the Commission in the planning of the framework policy would also help avoiding accusations of Nordic parochialism and giving the policy a European ‘feel’ by working in concerns held by France, Germany, the Netherlands and the UK.

The major fault line within the Northern Dimension initiative would stem from the individual national visions of the region. The stage preceding the launch of the Northern Dimension would be characterized by considerable inter-Nordic competition, each eager to forward their different recipes for the best management of the Baltic Sea, Barents and Arctic areas. As David Arter (2000: 681) has argued “[t]he end of the Cold War was conducive to a measure of institutional pluralism in Northern Europe”, and consequently the Nordic countries explored different means to engage with Russia and the countries on the southeastern rim of the Baltic Sea. Sweden, as we have already noted, would pursue the Baltic Sea Region Initiative, the Danes would invest political capital in the CBSS and in

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<sup>35</sup> Repeated set of interviews since year 2000 show that the most common complaint at the Commission and Nordic member states representations is the lack of knowledge many non-Nordic EU members display in terms of the Northern Dimension. Some interviewees attribute the lack of wider EU knowledge of the Northern Dimension to the absence of a budget review committee and/or an Article 133 committee on trade concessions. However, it is worth noting that the southern European member states have not been entirely absent from the region. The Italian Berlusconi government was keen on a closer EU-Russia cooperation and the efforts by the 2002 Spanish EU Presidency, especially on the issue of Kaliningrad to keep the issue high on the agenda, may indicate the timid beginning of the reversal of the previous trend characterized by a substantial disinterest of the Southern members in matters concerning the North of the Union (Catellani 2003:

military cooperation with the Baltic States. For Norway the principal concern would initially be the BEAC. For the Finns, which had hitherto found themselves lagging behind their Nordic colleagues, the Northern Dimension was developed to promote the country's national interests. In 1997, Lipponen clearly referred to his country's national interest when he evoked the Northern Dimension: "Finnish national interests are very much involved. We need to enhance stability in this region. Our industry and the whole economy, including our regions, can benefit. Finland will be developed as a business centre for the region, with global opportunities" (Lipponen 1997b).

The Finns saw themselves as a bridge between Russia and EU-Europe. This understanding was derived both from the relative positive relationship which had arisen between Helsinki and Moscow despite of the Finlandization it had been object to during the Cold War. The Finns also wanted to re-invent themselves as a significant player in Europe and contributing to the EU agenda. Helsinki's caution was perhaps called for in that, as Ojanen notes –

“[a]rguably, the initiative would have been less well received, had Finland furthered it through criticizing the EU's policies or undermining its efforts thus far, or relying on the idea that there is an automatic right to ‘dimensions’ and thus, on an explicit juxtaposition between North and South” (2000: 364).

Sweden, on the other hand, would see the Finnish Northern Dimension initiative as an element of interference with its own regional vision for the Baltic Sea (and to a lesser extent Barents and Arctic) area. The Swedish premise was much more based on a idea of

keeping the EU involved in the ongoing regional cooperation (as one among many), without making the Union the central actor to which regional dynamics would inevitably have to be subordinated. Novack (2001) has noted that this Swedish regional vision is much related to the country's reluctant Europeaness, or outright 'Euro-skepticism', which manifests itself in a wish to retain the decision making autonomy at the regional level rather than having all important decisions related to the region taken in Brussels.

However, the eventual launch Northern Dimension was later embraced by all Nordic countries. This is well illustrated by the fact that Sweden would pick up the baton after Finland and hold a follow up Northern Dimension meeting during its EU Presidency in 2001. The Nordic acceptance has come about as a consequence that Northern Dimension is a flexible concept, allowing for considerable leeway in its interpretation and sufficiently pliable to permit differentiated actuations. However, above all there has been a (belated) Nordic consensus that the European Union must be tied to the regional context and the only way to guarantee involvement was to bank on the same initiative: the Northern Dimension. Today the Nordic bilateral programs are often worked out to harmonize EU objectives, as are the work conducted in multilateral fora, such as the Nordic Council, the CBSS, the BEAC, the Arctic Council and the multitude of subnational bodies and initiatives. Preparatory studies made by individual Nordic countries or by their joint action programs on various hotspots remain loyal to the spirit of the Northern Dimension (Stålvant 2001: 11) and so does the implementation process of the Baltic Sea, Barents and Arctic bodies. The competing identitarian discourses between Finland and Sweden have been reduced given the relative facility by which their different cooperative logics could be turned into complementary ones. While the Finnish might continue to give relative preeminence to the EU level in terms of Northern Dimension, and Sweden the CBSS, they have found that they

can still pursue their regional institutional facet without seeming in contradiction with the EU dominant identitarian projection.

As the intra-Nordic dissonance subsided, other transversal issues would begin to generate some discordance among EU partners. Such was the case, for example, of the use of European institutions for external relation purposes. Two of the main projects in the Northern Dimension area have been the water treatment plants in the Russian cities of Saint Petersburg and Kaliningrad and a sewage treatment plan in Saint Petersburg. Sweden would use its 2001 EU Presidency to explore whether the European Investment Bank (EIB) could be used for environmental projects in northwest Russia. This would cause a heated debate with other EU members given that the EIB can only operate outside the European Union if there is a unanimous approval from all shareholders, in other words all EU member states.<sup>36</sup> In overall, southern member states held at first that such specific environmental concerns should basically be paid for by the national financial assistance of the EU Baltic Sea member states. The Swedish Foreign Ministry had to launch itself in a passionate plea noting the importance of improving the environment in and around the Baltic Sea, which was about to become “an inland sea of the European Union” (*Radio Free Europe* 2001a). The Swedish would eventually win the battle. That the tide in favor of intra-EU solidarity was thus turning was not lost on German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer who had noted only a month before in a meeting with the press that “it’s obvious that the Mediterranean has regional problems, [and] that the member states around the Baltic Sea also have regional problems. [...] So, from our point of view, in an enlarged union, a regional approach is a contribution [to] a well-organized European Union. I think

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<sup>36</sup> This was the first time the EIB was to invest in Russia. It was, however, not the first time outside EU territory given that the Bank had granted more than USD 12 billion since 1990 to different projects in the ten



it's more important inside an enlarged Union than today -- therefore I think the Northern Dimension, the Baltic Sea approach, will create great opportunities in an enlarged union” (*Radio Free Europe* 2001b).

Another major intra-EU fault line which was drawn already as the first proposals for the Northern Dimensions were aired would be the issue of the EU pursuing normative foreign policy in regard to the protection of minorities. The safeguarding the rights of minorities is a sensitive issue for many EU member states given that their own substantial minority populations may use any action of the EU as a precedent for claiming greater rights for themselves in the domestic setting. This is perhaps why the issue of the stateless Russian-speaking population in Estonia and Latvia has stricken a susceptible chord in several EU member states.<sup>37</sup> The resulting division among proactive and reactive EU member states on the rights of the Russophone population has generated a sustained situation of generalized paralysis, which is essentially an intra-EU fault line which still remains unresolved today. The EU has never pronounced itself clearly in regards to the issue. Only timid statements to the effect of ‘encouraging’ the finding of a solution to the situation have been issued and some projects related to promoting Estonian language skills have reportedly been supported by EU funds (Raik 1998: 85-91). The EU has been visibly eager to shift the primary responsibility for taking measure to ensure the rights of the

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Central and Eastern accession states, including the Baltic States.

<sup>37</sup> After Estonia and Latvia became independent in 1991, more than 30 percent of their inhabitants found themselves excluded from citizenship based on the fact that the newly adopted citizenry laws restricted citizenship to those persons who resided in Estonia and Latvia legally previous to 1940 and Soviet rule, and of their descendants. Those who had settled in the Baltic countries posterior to 1940 – most of them of Russian, Belarusian, Ukrainian and Polish origin – became stateless. In 1999, the number of non-citizens in these two countries had diminished a few percentage points either due to emigration to Russia or to naturalization procedures based on the minimum standards required internationally. Others, about 8 percent of the Russian speakers in Estonia, have opted for and acquired Russian citizenship and live in the country as foreign residents (Birkenbach 2003).

Russophone population in these two Baltic States onto the OSCE.

The member states have thus, similarly to in the Mediterranean area, largely converged around the Union's multi-vectored foreign policy formula (regional cooperation, multi-sectoral cooperation, interventionism) as it is employed in Europe's North. The Northern Dimension Framework Document, in particular, has helped bring Northern European problems into the mainstream of EU foreign policy. However, it is also worth noting that convergence has also taken place over the Commission's external role in Northern Europe and within the Commission there is also greater coherence in the external action. The perhaps most heated Council-Commission debate in regards to the Northern Dimension was that in regards to what mandate the European Commission had as a member of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Council of Baltic Sea States. Many EU member states were reluctant that these memberships would create a precedent for expanded Commission action beyond those stipulated by the EU Treaties. The European Commission would therefore essentially remain the silent partner of these Councils, although its presence was symbolically important to show EU support for the ongoing cooperation in these regions. There were also a number of policies central to the Northern Dimension such as, for example, culture, educational and environmental policy which would fall through the cracks of the inter-pillar system constructed by Maastricht. These legal grey areas created situations of where the Commission was equally likely to be successful in defining the details of how these policies were to be operationalized and implemented as being contested by the Council for overstepping its competences. Beyond these Council-Commission confrontations perhaps the gravest impediment for the sound development of the Northern Dimension in its first years was the seeming impossibility to contain the 'hydraheadedness' of the Commission. The DGs External Relations (Iceland,

Norway and Russia), DG Enlargement (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland) as well as DG Regional Policy (EU member states) has had the hardest time to pull together out of fear of each of having their decision making autonomy jeopardized. Their rivalry has shown up in the tortuous time the financial instruments TACIS-Interreg-PHARE has had in coordinating themselves for meaningful cross-border action.

However, today there is more convergence. The intra-Commission tensions have been alleviated to certain extent by the Amsterdam treaty whereby the Commission's structure is simplified and the creation of DG RELEX to provide responsibility for the planning and policy aspects (Duke 2006). Moreover, the Commission's competences in terms of CFSP and its inter-nexus with external action has been further clarified, given rise to less inter-institutional tension over the Europe's North. The fact that the Commission since 2000 is a regular member of the 'EU troika' in conducting policy dialogue has arguably been one of the major reasons behind why the Commission's role in Northern European regional councils is no longer so controversial among EU member states. In overall, the Northern Dimension is today recognized by most EU member states as a valuable additional channel for EU-Russian relations. In fact the Northern Dimension is since 2006 conceived of as the regional expression of the EU-Russia Four Common Spaces. The tacit approval of the Northern Dimension, even by southern EU member states stems from the felt necessity to interact with Russia. Cohesion in the Council has therefore largely been articulated around a strategy of appeasement toward Russia. The deference shown Russia stem on the one hand from longstanding historical factors, such as the traditional Finnish, Swedish or German caution vis-à-vis Russia, together with on the other hand conjunctural factors boosting bilateral relations such as for example France and Russia over Iraq. There are, however, incidents that show that this policy of appeasement

through the Northern Dimension is not to the likings of all. Denmark has, for example, shown itself more willing to confront Russia on the issue of Chechnya than the average EU member state. This fact is well-illustrated by the willingness to issue visas to Chechen leaders to attend a conference in Denmark in 2002, much to Moscow's dismay. Russia demanded the extradition of these leaders alleging them to be terrorists, something which Denmark denied to comply with. Some of the Central and Eastern European member states, e.g. Poland, Estonia or Latvia, have also tended toward less deference against Russia than the average EU member state since 2004. Emerson et al. (2005: 31) have it down as an expression of "[t]he reverse syndrome of the former occupied states taking a harder line over the democratic shortcomings of the former hegemon." While not looking to upset EU-Russia relations unnecessary, they are still increasingly critical of the EU's timid approach with Moscow on controversial issues. They hold that appeasement is unsustainable in the long term, and as Emerson et al. (ibid.) also put it "[t]hese states are typically saying words to the effect 'we know Russia, and the only language it understands is that of power'."<sup>38</sup> The Central and Eastern European representatives in the European Parliament are therefore notably vocal in criticizing Russia. This has resulted in "manifest confusion of messages from the EU to Russia over whether the development of cooperation between the two parties will be harmed by Putin's de-democratizing tendencies" (ibid.) Such manifestations may prove to be to low-key as to affirm that a rival discourse has emerged in the EU identitarian constructions vis-à-vis Russia, however, if they consolidate they could potentially over time come to foment a shift in EU's identity.

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<sup>38</sup> A good example is the Latvian threat to hold up railway maintenance on the principal route from Kaliningrad to mainland Russia, or encourage re-settlement of Russophone Latvian non-citizens to Kaliningrad, as a retaliation for the Russian failure to repair the pipeline – known as 'Druzhba' ('Friendship') – which carries crude oil from Russia to the Lithuanian oil refinery of Mazeikiai. The pipeline was damaged in July 2006 and has since not received attention from its Russian exploiters.

### **5.3.2. The EU's identitarian 'presence' in the Northern Europe**

The economic importance of the European Community, later Union, would accelerate in Europe's North as a consequence of the launch of the Internal Market in 1993 and the Economic and Monetary Union in 1999. On the one hand, as the economic attraction power of the EU increased, the Fenno-Scandinavian perception of becoming economically marginalized became more acute. The European Community constituted in the early 1990s the main export market and primary source of imports for Finland and Sweden and the fear of being excluded from an economic 'Fortress Europe' would consequently trigger these three countries to submit their membership applications to the European Union in the early 1990s. Iceland and Norway became EEA-members. On the other hand, on the southeastern rim of the Baltic Sea, the fall of the Soviet Union would cause the states there to realign their international relations, starting off in the commercial sphere. If in the pre-1991 period, the Polish and Baltic trade flows had been directed toward the Soviet heartland, their post-communist status would provide an occasion to diversify trade destinations. The prospect of EU enlargement would further motivate rapid economic development and political reform in Poland and the three Baltic States. It is thus fair to say that EU's economic presence in reference to the Baltic, Barents and Arctic regions has above all been steeped in the dynamic of the 1995 and the 2004 enlargement processes.

The launch of the Northern Dimension did perhaps not add much to this already looming economic standing of the Union in Europe's North. However, it could be argued that the Northern Dimension has created synergy for EU's economic presence in Europe's North in that the policy has acted as a catalyst for furthering economic interconnectedness.

As noted above, the policy's principal focus has been on creating transport, communications and energy grids connecting markets across the Baltic Sea. These have clearly been factors behind the notable economic growth of Europe's North in the past decade. In overall the Northern Dimension has therefore added to a positive image of the EU in many Baltic Sea rim countries as a strategy fomenting economies of scale.

For Russia the Union's economic presence in Northern Europe was during the 1990s and until rather recently welcome for the more part (Emerson et al. 2005). Russia has overall been an erratic but, until recently, relatively willing player in terms of the Northern Dimension with the hope that the framework policy would be able to boost the economic development of a part of Russia which the central government had little resources to cater for.<sup>39</sup> However, with buoyant energy prices and growing domestic income Moscow has less inclined to be told what to do from Europe. In recent EU-Russian exchanges, Moscow has therefore become more critical of the Union as an economic referent in Europe's North. A set of legislative changes also indicates that Russia no longer finds itself comfortable playing by the 'EU-rules' or trying to adapt to European versions of liberal economic models.

For Russia the Union's political presence through the EU/Northern Dimension has seemingly, in the view of Moscow, been kept at a sufficient low profile as not to awaken any knee-jerk competition in terms of political sway neither in terms of the Russian Northwest nor in elsewhere in Europe's North. One could also speculate that the Russian perception of the EU's political presence has been highly diffuse, if not confusing, in being

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<sup>39</sup> One could argue that the Northern Dimension has been viewed positively in Moscow in that it has assisted the central Russian government to supplant deficient (or inexistent) public sector services in a corner of Russia which is low on the government's priority list. This interpretation of alleged Russian motives is, however, causing unease in Brussels, where there is a reluctance to see the Union downgraded to a simple paymaster at Russian command.

carried out by such a multitude of actors (the Commission, member states, regional and/or sub-state bodies etc.). The Union's political actuation and power is therefore not accumulated in such a way as to set into motion any Russian logic of balancing or spheres of influence. However, as in the economic area, recent developments within Russia seem to indicate that the EU's political presence is being contested. There was a voiced concern that cross-border cooperation with the EU in the Russian Northwest could (unintentionally or not) fuel separatist fires. The Russian side thus seems ambivalent in its response to the EU's concerns. The EU, in contrast to the image it fosters of itself, does not do much better. It has continuously ignored the Russian demand for a dialogue and binding agreement regarding the status of the Kaliningrad oblast in EU-Russia relations.

However, it is therefore also difficult to argue that the Northern Dimension has allowed for a more concrete political EU presence. The region is radically different from the Cold War time where region-building, networking and transborder cooperation were completely absent. However, perhaps it is too early to hail the region as "a laboratory of innovative ways of dealing with the divisive nature of borders and exclusionary politics" (Hedegaard and Lindström, 2002). And even if the Northern Dimension has gone some way toward fulfilling the liberalist agenda it has been necessary to convince key state actors that pursuing such a course would also positively affect the Realist agenda. Thus, securitizing the soft security agenda has been seen as a way to desecuritize the inter-state agenda, especially between the newly independent states and Russia (Browning and Joenniemi 2004). Russian suspicions have, nevertheless, remained at its hilt. Browning and Joenniemi (2003) have noted that the EU's effort of breaking down traditional negative Self-Other depictions is to be welcomed as such, what the Northern Dimension experience

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indicates is how difficult this seems to be to achieve in practice. Thus, although the Northern Dimension remains alive and kicking and likely to remain on the EU's agenda for some time, some of the more profound aspirations pertaining to the initiative have made scant progress, and to some extent have perhaps even been sidelined altogether.

The Northern Dimension is a vast political undertaking for the EU Commission, basically managed from Brussels by one full-time diplomat, which goes to show that the EU's political identity cannot be safeguarded in an adequate manner. Moreover, the Northern Dimension has attempted to draw together many technical assistance instruments and have suffered from the regular inter-institutional battles in terms of supranational-intergovernmental competences and coordination. The lack of a single budget strand for the Northern Dimension is the clearest example. The Northern Dimension has thus – in spite of being conceived as fairly apolitical – suffered all the same ills as the much more complex Barcelona Process.

In the field of cultural presence, it can be argued that the launch of the Northern Dimension per se has not made much of a notable impact on these pre-existing patterns of cultural referents and identity markers in Europe's North. In terms of Russia the Union's cultural presence is tempered by the noticeable pride over the Russia's heritage. This Russian sentiment is perhaps further stimulated by the 'humiliation' the Russian feel over the loss of the historical position of their nation. This could perhaps explain the noticeable irritation in Russia when faced with discourses of the EU, or one of its member states, where the Union sets itself up as a model for Russia to be emulated (Emerson et al. 2005). As Wennersten has noted, in such a narrative Russia is seen as the student, learning from



the Western states in order to become one of them (1999: 280; cf Neumann 1999).<sup>40</sup> Adding to the Russian exasperation is the fact that certain EU discourses seem to entail that the European Union equals Europe, i.e. that the EU somehow has a monopoly on deciding who is European and who is not. The EU appears to imply that Europeaness, alongside notions of geographical and cultural affinities, requires the fulfillment of certain political and socio-economic conditions as well. The same author goes on to note that “[t]urning its back on communism and embracing capitalism has not automatically made Russia either Western or European”, for want of fulfilling requisites in terms of the implementation in full of market economy and democratic principles, as well as human rights being honored in practice as well as in principle (Wennersten 1999: 280-1). The implications of it all is that the EU seems to consider itself at a higher state of social evolution from where it looks down on Russia, much to the latter’s dismay. Dominant Russian discourses would therefore loath to adopt an additional and European identity as the other Northern Dimension countries have, although particularistic identities within Russia and closer to the EU border might not have a problem doing so.

#### 5.4. Conclusions

The Northern Dimensions which was launched without much ado in 1999 was intended to

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<sup>40</sup> One result of this has been that Russia ultimately remains treated as a clear outsider and continues to occupy the lesser position of the ‘student’ in the mental maps of the EU ‘teacher’ (Neumann, 1999: 107–109).

be a vehicle for upgrading and better structuring relations between the countries in the Baltic and Barents Sea areas. Expectations were high given that the EU's closer involvement would help to level the power differentials among the partners in Northern Europe. Although the Northern Dimension was not furnished with a financial instrument of its own, the coordination potential through the institutional set-up and the promise to be more reflected in intra-EU policies seem to warrant the hopes that the Northern Dimension would help to change dynamics in Europe's North. The Northern Dimension Framework Document also seemed to point to that the intra-EU divergences in regards to this area had been overcome and the regional framework policy finally been accepted as a mainstream EU foreign policy.

However, the potential of the Northern Dimension has still yet to be realized. So far the Northern Dimension has brought relatively scarce added value for the partners and the autonomous subregional entities which intervene in the implementation of the policy. The approach is cumbersome and often the local actors feel left outside relevant agenda-setting and policy making circles. Moreover, the benefit for Russia has been questionable, perhaps mostly as a consequence of Moscow's preference to spend TACIS money in and around the Russian capital, but also due to that the EU has not found ways for connecting with the central concerns of the Russian Federation for its Northwestern regions. The EU has also had a hard time to translate its economic leverage in a positive and clear-cut political or cultural presence. The EU's appropriation of 'Europe' as an identitarian discourse for itself and its values has been met with surprise and resentment in Russia and wariness in Iceland and Norway.

The EU's international identity in its northern borderlands therefore seems to have a hard time finding resonance with the Northern European borderland partners' preferences

and identities. It is fair to say that the EU has been more concerned with intra-EU rivalry and procedures than a proper attention to details in its partner countries. The excessively bureaucratic approach of the Northern Dimension has not helped either to draw borderland partners closer by ways of soft power attraction. The result is a scarce relevance of the EU identity in changing non-member Northern European habits and mindsets in favor of identitarian constructions which could resonate to a higher degree with those of the European Union.



## The EU and its southeastern borderlands: the Western Balkans

The geopolitical upheavals elsewhere in Europe would on the Balkan Peninsula find themselves overshadowed by the events that would unfold in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY). The same changing international circumstances of 1989-91, which in Central and Eastern Europe would generate a ‘velvet revolution’ of largely peaceful state-transformations, would cause the foundations for the SFRY to fall apart as Slovenia and Croatia led the way. The resulting turbulence would create a maelstrom which would draw the EC in, in a way it was institutionally and instrumentally unprepared for in the early years of the 1990s. The magnitude of the different Yugoslav conflicts would, nevertheless, make a concerted communitarian response inevitable and generate the momentum to create the CFSP, and the subsequent ESDP, to amend institutional shortcomings. The war and peace of the Western Balkan has ensured that the region has become an inevitable fixture on the European agenda in the past decade. As generalized violence eventually died down at the end of the 1990s, reconstruction and reform in the Western Balkans have become the core objectives in Brussels. Moreover, a European perspective of integration has also been extended, which guarantees an EU involvement in the area for foreseeable time. That the road of integration will be rocky is laid bare by the tensions in its different forms simmering

under the Western Balkan surface such as for example the ethnic tensions in Macedonia, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, or in Kosovo. The EU's to-do-list in the Western Balkan is thus extensive and will constitute a severe test case of European Union's international identity for the foreseeable future to come.

This chapter will begin with a look at the early post-Cold War years to trace the EU's growing involvement in the area. The following section will be devoted to the description of and reflection on the Stabilization and Association process and supporting EU-led initiatives. The final section will look at how the EU's foreign policy identity has fared in terms of cohesion and presence.

### 6.1. In a Cold War thaw and changing international circumstances

The Western Balkans would place itself on the EU post-Cold War agenda as a consequence of a host of concerns rising from what was to be the decade-long succession of conflicts. The conflicts would on the one hand generate a set of security concerns in the form of refugees and weak or failed states which seemed to threaten to implode the stability of the whole region. The precarious humanitarian situation, with hundreds of thousands of refugees seeking themselves to EU countries, would impact the European public opinion in a very strong way and generate the first demands upon the EC that it should do something. Moreover, the fact that Greece and Italy bordered the former Yugoslav territory had consequences both for refugee flows and for some reason to fear being dragged into the conflict given the potential for reviving claims to territorial revision or awakening the identitarian sensitivities of ethnic, cultural and/or

linguistic communities living on either side of the borders added incentive for the EC's involvement. If Greece, as we have seen, was concerned by the potential effects of the Republic of Macedonia inside its territory, Italy was principally fearful of irredentist claims along its eastern border. What was also going to spur Western European governments was the 'responsibility' it had taken on to provide leadership for the Central and Eastern Europe, including the Western Balkans, as well as its concerns that the Yugoslav fall-out would have repercussions elsewhere in the post-communist Europe.

The first action of the EC/Twelve would be diplomatic support for negotiations to hold Yugoslavia together. The PHARE program was extended to include the Western Balkans and improved trade relations and soft loans were also going to be provided. Such offers would have little impact and in June 1991 Croatia and Slovenia declared their independence. The Yugoslav National Army's re-occupation of the two break-away republics would set in motion the ripple-effects of conflict elsewhere in the region as well as a string of tried and failed EC/EU-sponsored ceasefires and peace initiatives. There would also be some experimentation with limited success with novel ways of EC/EU foreign policy as the EC monitoring missions (ECMM) in Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia, the civil administration of Mostar 1993-4 and the close collaboration between EU and WEU in terms of different peace enforcement actions (Edwards 1997).

The Dayton settlement of the Bosnian conflict in 1995 would, however, give the region a brief respite from warfare and hence the international community began to prepare for post-conflict scenarios. The perspective from the Western Balkans was devastating most of these newly established countries. The war in Yugoslavia had sent already weak economic bases in Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, FRY and Macedonia spiraling to further depths. Moreover, the armed conflict had displaced an

unprecedented number of citizens within and beyond the Western Balkan region and solutions to their precarious situations had to be found. Finally, the aspirations of Slovenia, and close neighbors such as Bulgaria and Romania, in terms of joining the European Union began to have wider reverberations through the region. In being deeply mistrusting of each other, the Western Balkans countries saw in the idea of closer relations and/or even integration with European organizations, principally the EU and NATO, a convenient escape route out of their regional straight coat. The prospects for financial assistance and security guarantees were, in addition, powerful incentives for seeking closer EU/NATO relations (Bremmer et al. 1999: 217).

As a consequence of the precarious situation, two EU initiatives were thus launched in between 1995-6. The first scheme would be the Royaumont Initiative, launched by the European Union in December 1995.<sup>1</sup> Originating from the French Balladur government, few were surprised when the new Initiative was very much modeled on the already existing Stability Pacts for Central and Eastern Europe (see Chapter 5). The Initiative's main focus was to be the civil dimension, such as respect for human rights, as well as on piecing together the region economically through pressing for the free movement of goods, people and services within the Western Balkans. Regional integration was obviously a pre-condition for the latter to occur. The Royaumont Initiative was accompanied by the OBNOVA financial assistance program. In general, aid to the Western Balkans emphasized reconstruction issues and continued paying special attention to humanitarian issues. The Royaumont Initiative would, however, founder in light of two main problems. First, the Initiative did not offer any concrete European perspectives and thus this regional cooperation was perceived at best as a waiting room and at worst as yet another excuse from the EU to avoid further

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<sup>1</sup> Its participants were the EU member states, Russia, the US, Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, FRY, FYROM, Hungary, Romania, Slovenia and Turkey.



accessions. Second, the Initiative was highly geared toward the civil society, especially NGOs. However, in the 1995 post-conflict Western Balkans the civil society was largely obliterated and thus Western NGOs found that there were few homologues with which to work. The success of the Initiative was thus lack-luster in its results during the first years (Anastasakis and Bojicic-Dzelilovic 2002).<sup>2</sup>

The second initiative the European Union would formulate was the 1997 ‘Regional Approach’ for the Western Balkans. The Regional Approach established political and economic conditionality for the development of bilateral relations with Bosnia, Croatia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Macedonia. Since, none of the countries concerned had any significant contractual relations with the EU, it was hoped that the prospect of an improved access to the Internal Market for a large number of their products would entice them to undertake economic reforms and engage in increased regional cooperation (Pippan 2004: 222). The conditionality in the European Commission’s Regional Approach centered on respect for democratic principles, human rights, the rule of law, protection of minorities, market economy reforms and regional cooperation. The long list of conditions and the additional requirements about compliance with obligations under the Dayton and Paris peace treaties slowed down the disbursement of aid and the development of EU relations with these countries between 1997 and 1999 (Anastasakis and Bojicic-Dzelilovic 2002, 22).

The region, however, still appeared as at drift in terms of political direction. For this reason Greece, Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Serbia, Montenegro, Macedonia, Romania and Turkey – on the initiative of Greece and Bulgaria – would launch the South-East European Cooperation Process (SEECP) in 1996 in order to find synergies among the countries in the region. The focus was to be on the development of

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<sup>2</sup> The work of the Initiative has in the light of the creation of the 1999 Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe been transformed into the more limited, but worthwhile, task of ensuring inter-parliamentary

transportation infrastructures, connecting regional energy networks, fighting organized crime and the development of telecommunications. However, the early years of the SEECP were to be characterized for continued instability in the Western Balkans and the Bulgarian and Romanian EU accession process. The SEECP would therefore during these years be more of a high-level but non-substantial political dialogue, lacking a budget, a secretariat and the organization's effectiveness being dependent on the capabilities of the rotating chairman-in-office (Larrabee 2005: 414).<sup>3</sup>

The European Union's commitment to the region would to most analysts, however, seem more an afterthought than a strategy. With the EU being intensively occupied with internal reform (Amsterdam Treaty) and Central and Eastern European transition – and its attention to the Western Balkans was consequently “neither consistent, nor unified, nor decisive” (Bokova 2002: 24). It would take the 1999 Kosovo crisis to prompt the EU and the international community at large to evaluate more critically international policies towards the region and to formulate a new approach. There was also a sense of urgency in bringing the Union's disparate instruments for the region developed since late 1980s together under a more coherent strategy. The initiatives which had proliferated showed either a danger of overlapping with each other, or leaving some issues at the margins, creating dangerous political vacuums in a volatile region. The incoherent EU regional approach from 1996, based predominantly on post-Dayton trade concessions, financial aid and the Royaumont Initiative, had proven to be insufficient to eradicate continued conflictiveness in the region and with

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contacts of the Pact's members.

<sup>3</sup> The SEECP would, however, take a bold step forward in 2005 when the region's Heads of State and Government declared their intention to intensify the SEECP in order to make it into a genuine regional platform for promoting Euro-Atlantic integration.

the outbreak of the hostilities in Kosovo it became clear to most European leaders that a more holistic and long-term approach to dealing with the Balkans was necessary.<sup>4</sup>

## 6.2. Taking EU-Western Balkan relations to a new level?

It was the German EU Presidency which would fairly unilaterally grab the baton during the spring of 1999 for setting up a number of all-inclusive frameworks for the Western Balkans (Friis and Murphy, 2000: 767-86). The Stabilization and Association Process (SAP) was perceived as a comprehensive formula to root out the Balkan instability of the 1990s, because that it combined reconstruction with political, economic and institutional reform and even included an offer of full EU membership once the relevant political, legal and economic criteria has been met (Pippan 2004: 243). The SAP which is essentially unilaterally extended framework policy which included the customary broad range of EU benefits grouped in five issue areas, such as asymmetric trade liberalization until 2010; economic and financial assistance, budgetary assistance and balance of payment support; assistance for democratization and civil society; humanitarian aid for refugees, returnees and other persons of concern; cooperation in justice and home affairs and development of a political dialogue. For its comprehensiveness the SAP thus seemed in a better position than the Royaumont Initiative/Regional Approach to provide the remedy to a decade's worth of

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<sup>4</sup> It is worth noting that EU would make a first attempt to elaborate a more coherent policy on the region as the situation in Kosovo deteriorated. The Vienna European Council 1998 proposed the drafting of a Common Strategy on the Western Balkans; however, the Common Strategy would eventually never be adopted.

conflictiveness, to jump-start their economic recovery, to address different types of soft security problems as well as to draw the Western Balkans countries closer to the EU structures.

The new formula for the Western Balkans thus seemed to inspire hope in the region that it was finally at the station waiting for the train taking off toward their ‘European destination’. French President Jacques Chirac fanned such perceptions by his announcement to host a special summit to launch the Stabilization and Association Process in Zagreb in 2000. The Summit was meant to contribute to “a complete reshaping of politics in South East Europe and of that region’s relationship with the European Union” (Prodi 2000). The expectations on the Zagreb Summit grew as the democracy in Croatia and Serbia began to take hold, after the death of Croatian President Franjo Tudjman in 1999 and the popular ousting of President Slobodan Milošević and the holding of Serbian elections in late 2000 respectively. Moreover, the Summit was further buoyed by its notable assistance, gathering all the Heads of State or Government of the member states of the European Union, of the Western Balkan countries, as well as the Foreign Minister of Slovenia (then still not an EU member), the President of the European Commission, the CFSP High Representative, the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General and the EU Special Representative for the Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe and the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, the meeting was derailed somewhat by the French EU Presidency’s inopportune labeling of the Zagreb Summit the ‘reunion summit’ causing the leaders of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia and Serbia and Montenegro to arrive at the Zagreb meeting on their guard, fearful that EU was scheming to re-unite the former Yugoslav Republic. Moreover, the Summit could not hide that tensions were ongoing in the region. The Montenegrin

President Milo Djukanovic would employ his time at the Summit's speaker tribune to declare that for all practical purposes Montenegro, to his mind, was an independent country and that the continued relations between the (then) region of Montenegro and the central government in Belgrade were simply 'unsustainable'. The SAP would also suffer some set-backs when in early 2001 when ethnic Albanian rebels clashed with the Macedonian central government in the northwestern part of the country. 2002 would above all be marked by the Union's attempt to resolve the Serbian-Montenegrin imbroglio.

Perhaps as a consequence of these obstacles, it would not be until in Thessaloniki in 2003 that the Stabilization and Association process would begin to take firmer shape. The Process general objectives were confirmed at the follow-up Summit in June 2003 – 'EU-Western Balkan Forum' – held at Thessaloniki under the helm of the Greek EU Presidency. The Forum helped begin to shift EU-Western Balkan relations toward a better balance between reconstruction/security provision and economic transitional issues as well as on a much needed political dialogue.

The Stabilization and Association Process' institutional platform is the most developed in relation to the EU's borderlands, a fact which is not surprising given these countries' European perspective. The Thessaloniki Agenda declared the will to hold biannual EU-Western Balkans Fora for multilateral dialogue. Such Fora may when called for be held at the level of the heads of state or government of EU, their Western Balkan counterparts as well as representatives from EU candidate countries. Foreign ministers and ministers responsible for Justice and Home Affairs or Trade will convene annually and other sectoral ministers may meet when appropriate. The Fora are usually chaired by the EU Presidency foreign ministers or sectoral ministers and the agenda is prepared by the EU Presidency in cooperation with the Commission. Stabilization and

Association Parliamentary Committees (Joint Parliamentary Committee) have been established between the European Parliament, EU national parliaments and with parliamentary representations from Croatia and Macedonia, which until date have signed and ratified Stabilization and Association Agreements. The Thessaloniki Summit would also endorse the introduction of European Partnerships, a mechanism for supporting each country's progress through identifying priorities across sectors. Termed European Integration Partnerships in the Commission's original proposal, the mechanism is clearly modeled on the Accession Partnerships in force for the candidates of Central and Eastern Europe. To strengthen the SAP states' institutions, the EU has also launched twinning exchanges with administrative staff from the Member States, and made the region eligible for technical assistance for harmonizing national legislation with the *acquis communautaire*.

Economic and civil society actors have regularly been encouraged to contribute to the Stabilization and Association Process. However, their work has been hamstrung by their lack of channels to access and influence EU policy in Brussels. Moreover, while pledges from the EU have been made to draw the SEECP, Adriatic-Ionian Initiative and the Central European Initiative closer to the work of the Stabilization and Association Process (Council of European Union 2003a), so far no concrete steps have been taken.

The Process is envisioned to function in two steps, first to guide the countries in the region towards the signing of the Stabilization and Association Agreements (SAA), and later 'all the way to their future EU accession'.<sup>5</sup> Although the SAA draw heavily, both in terms of structure and content, on the Europe Agreements which were concluded with the candidate countries in Central and Eastern Europe in the 1990s, the former

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<sup>5</sup> The SAA is administered by DG Enlargement. For an overview of relevant legal agreements between the EU and borderland partners in the Western Balkans cf. Annex 2.

nevertheless also reflect a sui generis type of EU agreement (Pippan 2004: 233). The two main differences between the SAAs and the Europe Agreements are the section requiring cooperation on Justice and Home Affairs issues and that which obliges the countries of the region to affirm their commitment to regional cooperation. So far only Croatia and Macedonia have accessed the new generation contractual relations with EU in the form of Stabilization and Association Agreements. Albania is awaiting ratification and Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro are awaiting the Commission's favorable report to their readiness to be able to sign such an agreement. The SAA negotiations for Serbia have been suspended since 2005 for Belgrade's want of collaboration with the ICTY.

### **6.2.1. The political and security dimension in EU-Western Balkan relations**

Much as the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and the Northern Dimension, when the new framework for southeastern Europe was launched in 2000 there was no pretension that the EU through the Stabilization and Association Process would play any determining role in terms of further 'hard' security needs of the region. The Stabilization and Association Process was to focus on soft security. However, this attitude would change as the first armed skirmishes in Macedonia began in 2001. The EU would become one of the principal external actor in finding a negotiated, diplomatic solution to the crisis. In 2002 EU diplomacy would take on the challenge of Serbia and Montenegro, negotiating the instauration of the State Union with its safeguard clause of allowing for a Montenegrin referendum in 2006. The Union would, moreover, break

with its ‘civilian power’ past as it launched its first ESDP military mission in the Western Balkans in 2004. In 2004 the EU would relieve the NATO military operation in Bosnia with its own mission (EU Althea).<sup>6</sup> Previous to that the EU had launched two police missions during 2003, one in Bosnia (EUPM) followed by another one in Macedonia (PROXIMA).

The principal concern of the EU through the Stabilization and Association Process has, however, been several issues linked to Justice and Home Affairs. One of the main topics has been the Western Balkans countries’ cooperation with the International Court of Justice for Yugoslavia (ICTY). A clause in the SAAs reiterates the parties’ general obligation to respect international law principles, which is essentially a special reminder to the Western Balkans countries’ legal obligation to fully cooperate with the ICTY in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions and the Dayton Peace Agreement (Pippan 2004: 237). The Croatian EU candidacy status was – and the Serbian SAA is currently being – made conditional of collaboration with the ICTY in terms of delivering presumptive war-criminals presumably residing on their respective territories.

Another concern which has engendered a considerable EU-Western Balkan activity is the issues of trafficking, organized crime and corruption. These matters are both seen as obstacles to democratic stability, sound and accountable institutions, the rule of law, and economic development in the Western Balkans. The very weakness of these states (with the notable exception of Croatia) has made them easy victims for organized crimes, paramilitary or international terrorist groups, which exploit the

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<sup>6</sup> Another example is the still unresolved border tension between Croatia and Serbia and Montenegro over Danube and Prevlaka although advances have been made. The debate has been even further revived over some highly polemic statements by Slovenia’s primer minister Anton Rop which in 2004 declared himself willing to veto Croatia’s EU-bid over its intransigence in reference to the unresolved dispute over Slovenia’s coastline. Croatia continues to lay claim to most of the territorial waters along Slovenia’s coast, effectively denying Slovenia full access to international waters. Rop has since rectified his position,



institutional debility to use the territory as a base or as a transit area for illicit exports of drugs, human beings and arms to Europe and to the US. The post- Milošević democratic Serbian government's involvement in arm-trafficking shocked the international public opinion when the news hit the media-circuit. So did the news of potential al-Qaeda linked training camps in Bosnia. However, another powerful motivation has been the drug routes from Central Asia to Europe. An approximately eighty percent of the heroin seized in the EU is supplied via the mafias operating in Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia (European Commission 2002a and European Council 2006). A first conference on the topic of fighting organized crime in Southeastern Europe was held in London 2002 and was followed-up by the June 2003 Action Plan on Drugs between the EU and the Countries of the Western Balkans and the candidate countries. The Action Plan was hailed by the EU as a showpiece of the commitment of the international community in promoting coordinated strategies on the fight against drugs trafficking with the support of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Regional and international police cooperation has therefore been further intensified, with Memoranda of Understanding on police cooperation and the fight against organized crime signed between FRY and UNMIK and with the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Albania, Slovenia and Croatia (European Commission 2003d). The US driven Southeastern European Cooperative Initiative (SECI), established December 1996, has on its hand also complemented the international community's commitment to anti-trafficking measures in that specialized 'Task Forces', affiliated with the SECI Center, have been formed to address trafficking of human beings, drugs, commercial fraud, stolen cars, financial crime and customs evaluation.<sup>7</sup> Notwithstanding all the

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withdrawing his threat, but the incidence shows that multiple problems in the Balkan region as a whole linger under the surface.

<sup>7</sup> Participant states: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Hungary, Macedonia, Moldova, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovenia and Turkey.

efforts, it would seem that the cooperation so far has had little influence given that the relative quantities of heroin reaching Europe remains fairly similar to that of at the inception of the cooperation (European Council 2006).

Another prioritized EU JHA concern has been undocumented immigration. It was estimated that prior to 2004 an approximate 100.000 immigrants, of which only fifteen percent Western Balkan citizens, annually passed into the EU in an unregulated fashion. This caused considerable efforts to find a functioning regional judicial network and cooperation on asylum, visas and readmission. The work of the EU has also been focused on strengthening the customs and police cooperation, training of customs officials and setting up new border crossing check points more in line with EU norms. The undocumented immigration problem has for EU been abated somewhat by the 2007 Bulgarian and Romanian accession and in April-May 2007 visa facilitation and readmission agreements were concluded with Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The visa facilitation agreements will enable Western Balkan students, researchers, business people and journalists to get visas to travel to the European Union more easily.<sup>8</sup>

### **6.2.2. Creating an EU- Western Balkans area of shared prosperity?**

The central thrust of the European Union's relations with the Western Balkans, as with most of its borderland partners, is of an economic character. The situation of recurrent conflict in the region has caused great economic differences between the Western

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<sup>8</sup> Croatia already enjoyed such arrangements.

Balkan countries. The task of re-building infrastructures and industries devastated by war in some Western Balkans countries, and ensure post-communist transitions in others have converged in an urgent trend to create employment and economic consolidation in a vicious spiral for most of the Western Balkan countries. To combat the situation in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, the EU has employed its habitual instruments, mixing free trade, economic cooperation and financial assistance.

#### *6.2.2.1. The freeing of EU-Western Balkan trade*

One of the most important aspects of the relationship between the European Union and the Western Balkans is these countries' progressive establishment of a free trade area on industrial goods as a means to rebuild their war-torn/transitory economies. The free trade is, in particular, expected to act as a catalyst to boost the local economies in their post-communist transition, introducing market economy principles and adopting necessary legislative business reforms. In June 2000 EU autonomous trade preferences were extended to the Western Balkan countries, meaning that most of their exports to the EU are not subject to tariffs. The current EU-Western Balkan trade regime is asymmetric, meaning that more than 95 percent of goods exports from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Macedonia enter the Union duty-free until 2010, although the Western Balkans countries are allowed to dismantle their customs walls against the Union gradually and over time.

Progress toward free trade has been slow in all Western Balkan countries except Croatia and to some extent Montenegro, given the scarce political will to enact the necessary reforms. This has led to unprecedented levels of unemployment and systemic impoverishment that have decimated entire sectors of the Western Balkan economy and society (Krastev 2002). The same author also notes that “[e]conomic recovery, where it exists, is restricted to big cities, and even there it is patchy. The much-needed overhaul of the social-insurance, pension, and health-care systems has sown enormous personal insecurity, psychological volatility, and lack of confidence in the state’s ability to underwrite the conditions of stability and wellbeing” (ibid.).<sup>9</sup> Moreover, while the banking system was been rather successfully overhauled in most Western Balkan countries, the banks tend to be biased against borrowing capital for industrial investment in favor of private household consumption. The embedded EU liberal model has, however, also caused some additional troubles in that it has called for far-reaching and extensive privatization and economic restructuring of the industries still suffering from conflict and a communist legacy.<sup>10</sup>

The EU-Western Balkans trade liberalization is also aimed to align these countries with the European Union for their economic reconstruction and eventual EU membership. However, this has not translated into a blank check in terms of freeing trade. EU trade quotas are retained for wine, certain fishery products and ‘babybeef’ and governed by separate bilateral protocols between the EU and each Western Balkan state. This has been lamented widely in the region in that these are sectors which they consider they have a small comparative advantage on. Furthermore, a double-check

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. Annex 3 for socioeconomic indicators sustaining such findings.

<sup>10</sup> In Bosnia, as in most other Western Balkan countries, many formerly socially owned enterprises have been sold off or liquidated. The level of interest from foreign or even domestic investors has been extremely limited. Most companies have been sold through a process of insider privatization, with shares distributed to workers in lieu of unpaid salaries, or to managers at heavily discounted prices payable over many years. The new proprietors have predictably tried to protect their position by resisting the

system was introduced and only removed in 2005 for the most sensitive textile categories (cotton yarn, cotton and synthetic fabrics, sweaters, trousers, blouses, shirts, coats, suits, bed and table linen, etc.) and is conducted through export and import licenses.<sup>11</sup> Western Balkan countries have also had to remedy their shortcomings in relation to the EU customs and industrial, sanitary, phytosanitary and veterinary standards.<sup>12</sup> Finally, the Western Balkan private sectors are increasingly caught between the rock and the hard place on the globalized market in not having neither a low-cost labor by international standards, nor the modern technology to boost productivity and allow it to compete on the European market.<sup>13</sup> The Western Balkan countries can therefore, despite their ‘European perspective’ not claim to have received a preferential treatment over other EU borderland partners.

Another facet of the EU trade liberalization is the envisaged gradual introduction of the system on pan-Euro-Mediterranean diagonal cumulation of origin, in order to stimulate economic exchanges between all the countries in the Balkan region. The offer does, however, not seem generous if compared to the fact that the now Central and Eastern European member states enjoyed access to the pan-European cumulation of origin since early on in their association process. According to some estimates, this translates into that over 50 per cent of Croatian exports do not have duty-free access to the EU market (Phinnemore 2003). Moreover, early experience of the ground has

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restructuring of the companies. Even so, industrial employment has already collapsed by more than half, and further job losses are expected.

<sup>11</sup> In 1995 the *WTO Agreement on Textiles and Clothing* was signed to gradually phase out all import quotas by 1 January 2005.

<sup>12</sup> Serbia had its autonomous trade preferences suspended in 2003 for alleged customs fraud in terms of its sugar export. The Serbian process to comply with the Internal Market regulations shows how onerous these benefits can become for EU borderland partners. The Serbian legislative framework had to be revised. Customs management had to be improved. The necessary enforcement powers had to be created. And these reforms were seconded by EU experts of the Customs and Fiscal Assistance Office (CAFAO) who were paid for through EU’s CARDS allotment for Serbia.

<sup>13</sup> A recent review of the textile sector in Bosnia noted that “only those companies that are capable of sustained investment in both plant and innovative products will have a share of the international market. Commodities can be bought from low cost emerging economies in SE Asia at prices that Bosnia Herzegovina based textile producers can never hope to match” (FIPA 2002: 6).

revealed that Balkan producers prefer to declare their goods as if they came from a third country rather than undergo the process of satisfying the complicated EU's rules of origin certification, revealing that there are many problems still ahead for the EU-Western Balkan relationship. The hub-and-spoke patterns and the Western Balkan dependency on access to EU markets have thus not been diminished (cf. Annex 3 for trade flows). This of course strengthens the traditional dependency relationship and competition between partner countries to obtain the better trade concessions by the Union.

The EU has tried to remedy the hub-and-spoke pattern by promoting regional free trade forcefully, including mutual concessions on the movement of workers, services and capital. The regional economic integration was first promoted through the framework of the Stability Pact which saw a host of intra-Balkan plus Moldova bilateral free trade agreements concluded in the period comprehending 2000-6. However, as of 2006 the bilateral agreements have been replaced with the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA) upon the membership of Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, Montenegro, UN Mission in Kosovo, and Moldova in December that year. However, it is worth noting that intra-Balkans trade has always been relatively poor and that since 1999 regional trade among Balkan countries plus Moldova under the bilateral free trade agreements has only manage to increase their overall trade to 6-10% (from a previous 3-5 percent) (*European Report* 2006). Moreover, trade liberalization is incomplete, trade relations discriminatory and facing various institutional limitations, such as unreformed customs services or poor and underdeveloped infrastructure (Anastasakis and Bojicic-Dzelilovic 2002: 9). Finally, the Western Balkan countries essentially produce very similar goods and they are essentially competitors for market

shares. Thus there is no incentive for regional trade, hence inherently difficult to create economies of scale by creation of larger markets.

#### *6.2.2.2. EU-Western Balkan technical and financial cooperation*

In the Western Balkans, as in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and the Northern Dimension, economic cooperation is an important facet in the relations with the European Union. Following an initial focus on physical reconstruction and rehabilitation, emphasis of the EU technical and financial assistance has diversified to include institution building, the strengthening of administrative capacity and justice and home affairs necessary to implement the obligations in the Stabilization and Association Process. The physical reconstruction targeting Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia above all, focused on democratic stabilization, reconciliation and the return of refugees. However, technical and financial assistance in the Western Balkans countries have also targeted institutional and legislative development, including harmonization with European Union norms and approaches, democracy and the rule of law, human rights, civil society and the media, and the operation of a free market economy; sustainable economic and social development, including structural reform, as well as promotion of closer relations and regional cooperation among countries and between them, the EU and the erstwhile candidate countries of Central and Eastern Europe (including integrated border management; institutional capacity building; support to democratic stabilization; support to integration of regional transport, and, energy and environmental infrastructure).

The EU's Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilization (CARDS) program would in 2000 replace the Obnova program and PHARE which had functioned in the region hitherto.<sup>14</sup> In the period 2000-2006 the CARDS disposed of EUR 4.65 bn together with EIB commitments of approximately EUR 2 bn in the same period, which marked a significant increase in funds over earlier programs. At the EU-Western Balkans Summit in Thessaloniki of June 2003 community financial support was increased by more than EUR 200 mn over the period 2004-06. The European Union assistance in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia is managed by the European Commission's Delegations in those countries, while the European Agency for Reconstruction (EAR) is responsible for assistance in Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia, including Kosovo. In January 2007 the CARDS program was replaced with the instrument for pre-accession assistance (IPA) which disposes of EUR 12 bn.

The substantial increase in funds available to the Western Balkan countries through the establishment of CARDS was to receive a warm welcome in the region. Another novelty which attracted favorable attention was the fact that the decentralized financial management directed by the EU Commission delegations and the EAR brought the EU closer in contact with the recipient's concerns. The creation of the CARDS program was agreed upon in 2000, however, the programming of CARDS was not formally agreed at the end of 2001, and implementation of strategic priorities did not start until as late as 2002, which ensured that almost two years lapsed before the

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<sup>14</sup> Until 2000 the countries of the Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) were beneficiaries of PHARE and OBNOVA. However, given the complexity of administering programs in the same countries under different Regulations with different administrative and management arrangements, a fusion of the two financial assistance lines (e.g. CARDS) was proposed and later adopted.



benefits of the CARDS program was going to start to make itself felt.<sup>15</sup> The 11 September 2001 would also make an indelible mark in international financial assistance to the Western Balkans with considerable drops and shifting the source of assistance from grant financing to loans.<sup>16</sup> The EU was in 2000 immersed in an internal process of overhauling its financial assistance programs and creating EuropeAid which would last longer than expected and this meant that many regular financial assistance programs could not be disbursed. Moreover, the arrival of CARDS (and now the IPA) has only begun to reduce what must be the most complex and Byzantine of all EU's financial assistance provision to any geographical area. Greece had wanted the EAR to serve the entire West Balkans area. However, the final Council decision extended the Thessaloniki office's jurisdiction to Montenegro and Serbia only, to which Macedonia was added in 2001. The Agency managed the CARDS programs in these areas directly, while schemes in Albania, Bosnia, Croatia and Macedonia were administered by a management committee in Brussels. This has contributed to generally time-consuming consulting and co-ordination procedures between EuropeAid and the Delegations/EAR (Development Researcher's Network Consortium 2004).<sup>17</sup> The Western Balkan countries have had to undertake economic development, education, public administration reform in order to be able to handle EU programs. Alarm bells were set off ringing in regards to the by EU prioritized focus on institution building – much of it designed to Europeanize the partners, creating institutions able to undertake the

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<sup>15</sup> One of the reasons which have been forwarded is that the EU was in the throes of overhauling its financial assistance and institute 'deconcentration' as a principle whereby EC Commission Delegations take charge of the programming. The completion of the process took a very long time and only few months ago (end of 2003) was full operational status reached.

<sup>16</sup> It is estimated that, from 2002 to 2004, grant assistance to SAP countries was reduced by 36%, particularly affecting poorer countries pursuing Poverty Reduction Strategies, including Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro. (Development Researcher's Network Consortium 2004).

<sup>17</sup> The ECHO has continued to deliver humanitarian aid on its separate account. Moreover, the EU's financial assistance to the Western Balkans also extending across the divisions of responsibilities between Directorates-General within the Commission. The DG Economic and Finance continues to manage exceptional macro-financial assistance programs, while CARDS is handled by the DG Enlargement.

international assistance – which meant that other important necessities had to be relegated in view of scarce resources, e.g. such as poverty reduction. At present, many projects are still at the stage where legal frameworks are just being prepared and the basic strategy developed. The delay and the top-down handling of the CARDS program has been criticized by leaders the region and both the relevance and transparency of regional projects have been widely questioned.<sup>18</sup> Apparently involvement of local counterparts in the planning process, and thus commitment in national ministries, was insufficient.<sup>19</sup> In all countries-entities, with few specific exceptions, a low level of participation and ownership by the recipient institutions, both in programming and execution, jeopardizes the program's impact on capacity development. It is difficult to increase the involvement of government and the civil society, without giving them more responsibilities in program design and management, though taking account of their actual capacities and the differences among the various countries-entities. Little use is made of national resources, including the staff of the beneficiary institutions, who would otherwise find new motivation to improve their capacities. According to most stakeholders, this is mainly due to the centralized nature of CARDS.

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<sup>18</sup> See for example the plea by Prime Ministers Stjepan Mesic (Croatia), Boris Trajkovski (Macedonia), Zoran Zivkovic (Serbia) and Fatos Nano (Albania), holding that “[t]he long-term stability of Southeastern Europe depends on the region's economic health, but this does not mean the usual plea for more money. Instead, we want to work out with the EU ways that the money we receive could be spent more effectively. Stjepan Mesic, Boris Trajkovski, Zoran Zivkovic and Fatos Nano ‘The EU and Southeastern Europe need each other’, *International Herald Tribune*, 22 May 2003.

<sup>19</sup> Some of these issues have been recognized in the 2003 Regional Action Program, and attempts have been made to conduct programming in a more transparent and participatory manner. For instance, EuropeAid organized a conference to discuss the Regional Action Plan in Belgrade in January 2003 and sent a programming mission to the region. However, these measures seem to have had limited effects up until the time when this evaluation was conducted. Information had not reached the beneficiary countries-entities to their satisfaction.

### **6.2.3. The socio-cultural dimension of EU-Western Balkan relations**

The socio-cultural dimension of the Stabilization and Association Process is probably the most neglected one so far. The inclusion into SAp of this dimension is surely more a tribute to the EU's, by now, standard formula for engagement with its borderlands. However, this would not stop German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer from stressing that if "the awful conflict in Kosovo has brought something good with it, it is that we understand our belonging together far better" (Fischer, cited in Friis and Murhpy 2000: 779). Notwithstanding such affirmations, many analysts have pointed to that EU rhetoric has regularly painted 'Europe as the solution' to the Balkanized past (Todorova 1997). However, as it is also usually noted, such discourse tends to paint a fairly black and white picture of the EU-Balkan relationship in which the Western Balkans is constructed in a highly unflattering light. The central idea of the European discourse has thus to haul 'backward' Western Balkans into the twenty-first century and leaving behind its medieval mentality of ethnic and/or parochial identitarian specificity.

Education is therefore deemed crucial for changing mind-sets to avoid a return to conflict and for improving the living conditions of the younger generations. Open-minded and forward-looking education systems have the potential to strengthen civil society and democratic structures, contribute to economic development and promote joint initiatives across national and ethnic boundaries. The Tempus Inter-University Program which was created in the early 1990s for the Newly Independent States and Mongolia was in 1999 extended to the Western Balkans (Bulgaria, Romania and Slovenia participate in Erasmus programs). Tempus is designed to promote reform of higher education, university management, curriculum development, institution building

and networking, as well as mobility of students and professors to study at European universities. However, the benefits of the program has been unclear given that until 2007 Schengen visa requirements, for all but Croatia, impeded researchers and students to benefit.

With the aim to boost civil society associations, the EU has granted funding for projects carried out in the framework of the Stability Pact with the aim to create a solid network of human rights activists in the whole region to work together on different topics (advancement of women's human rights, minority rights and refugee issues, cooperation between ethnic communities of the region.) Governmental and (central) state institutions have so far been the main beneficiaries of this kind of assistance, but regional and local bodies, the social partners, cooperatives, associations and NGOs have also been eligible to apply. In the past, such arrangements have proven to be of particular importance, as they create the possibility of a direct, 'decentralized' form of cooperation between the Community and certain local and non-state sector institutions, especially NGOs, which can be maintained even if the government itself falls short of complying with the conditions set out by the EU for official Community assistance (Pippan 2004: 233). However, some of the EU's financial assistance procedures, delays, lack of transparency, and lack of flexibility cause immense frustration and limit the effectiveness of crucial work, damaging the EU's reputation and reducing its opportunity to achieve results in this field.

### 6.3. The EU-Western Balkan relations in a reflective perspective: what of the Union's identity?

The Stabilization and Association Process which was launched in 2000 at the Zagreb Summit was going to be a middle of the road event, neither with the grand fanfares of the Barcelona Conference nor for the inaugural non-happening of the Northern Dimension. However, the Summit still gave raise to modest hopes in the EU and the region that the ambitious Stabilization and Association Process would bring about change. The greatest expectation emanated from the 'European perspective' which was extended by the EU and represented an important improvement over the preceding Regional Approach. Nevertheless, after a decade of conflicts the region was also favorably disposed to receiving deepened bilateral relations, substantial financial assistance and access to EU markets. The EU's willingness to commit as a group, which was forcefully brought home by the Zagreb Summit's show of EU united among the EU representatives – was also a source for hope in that it seemed to entail a powerful policy and decidedly different from the splintered EU approach of the 1990s.

However, how has the European Union fared since in terms of its foreign policy identity? The section below will review any prospective EU identity through the parameters established in the conceptual framework set out in Chapter 2 (cohesion and presence).

### **6.3.1. The EU's 'cohesion' as a foreign policy actor in the Western Balkans**

One might argue that EU's Stabilization and Association Process is the borderland policy which EU member states are most unified behind. It would seem that the repeated EU diplomatic failures of the Yugoslav conflicts finally pulled the member states together in favor of a joint approach and inexorably a common identity.

It was to be Germany and Greece which would essentially drive the EU policy forward, even if Chirac also tried to edge in on it. The other member states would acquiesce to the German and the Greek direction, even if they were against Athens' policy in regards to the name-issue with Macedonia. The European Commission would also have an important impact given that it was charged with making the Stabilization and Association into a concrete policy initiative. Other member states have also played a role from time to time. The EU's Western Balkan policy is thus a modestly plural policy exercise.

For the Germans the Stabilization and Association Process was to serve two purposes. On the one hand it would help overcome the crisis of conscience in the SPD-Grüne government over its involvement in the bombing in Kosovo in 1999. The US was pleased to have Germany figuring out the end-game, given that the US administration had not developed a post-war policy for Kosovo. On the other hand the German diplomacy in regards to the SAp would tacitly make up for the diplomatic disarray Berlin caused in 1991 when it decided to pre-empt the EU diplomatic recognition of Slovenia and Croatia before the other EU member states. For this the Germans have not only been lambasted for a decade as being the cause of the resulting wars across the Yugoslav geography, but also for being close to throw the CFSP baby out with the

bathwater.<sup>20</sup> For the rush, and in not awaiting the other EU member states, it looked as if the newly reunified Germany were looking to become Europe's regional hegemon and start on a new *Sonderweg* with Eastern and Central Europe and Russia away from the rest of the EU members.<sup>21</sup> However, for the Germans the consequences of the early recognition of Croatia and Slovenia reinforced the domestic understanding that Germany needed partners to secure its identity and interests, that there were no alternatives to multilateralism and a common European front – that is, to a deepening of European integration and, in the long run, a CFSP. The German policy on the Western Balkans since has been firmly anchored around the EU policy, almost anxious to seem to be out of line of the dominant EU discourses in regards to the area.

For Greece the Western Balkans is of utmost importance to its foreign policy outlook. Upon feeling passionate in regard to certain issues the Greeks have not always been an easy partner for the other EU members. In the early 1990s, the Balkan countries were expected to rely on Greece to help fulfill their dreams of integrating into the Euro-Atlantic community. Logically enough, these political leaders thought that Greece's membership in that community and its, until then, very good relations with all Balkan countries (simultaneously, even during the last phase of communism) made such development unavoidable. Three years later, with Western Balkans in flames and with the West, often ignorant of the regional issues at stake, it was generally expected that

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<sup>20</sup> From the German perspective two rationales were foremost: the German reunification has meant that self-determination for other countries who wished must be respected. One analysts would therefore hold that as the Yugoslav conflicts began, Germans were “considerably shocked and unprepared” (Decker 2000). The Germans, according to the same, author found it hard to phantom that violence, terror and ethnic cleansing was possible at the end of the 20th century. Germans, and perhaps most Europeans, were unprepared given that the bipolar overlay had, after all, kept the lid on ethno-nationalist conflicts in Europe since 1945. The aftermath of the Kosovo bombings would produce a shift in German policy and enable German troops to intervene for the first time since 1945 beyond its territory as part of NATO's Kosovo Force (KFOR).

<sup>21</sup> Indeed, the George H. W. Bush administration would offer Germany ‘partnership in leadership’, a policy that did not change under Clinton. Germany was thus tagged by the US to become a regional leader supported by the United States. However, this was not a perspective which appealed to Germany's EU partners.

Greece would play the crucial role of guiding the EU and the US in the region. That did not happen, however. Instead of mediating, Athens contributed to the explosive potential of the region in pursuing a foreign policy which deteriorated relations with most its neighbors. Albania's handling of the Greek minority was reported to be terrible and Greek irredentism towards Southern Albania (Northern Epirus) was blossoming even in government circles. Almost all circles of Greek politics and society had become obsessed with the "name issue" and the alleged "Macedonian irredentism" towards Greece. Hence, every policy decision had to take into account Greece's intransigent attitude towards that latest arrival in Southern Balkan statehood. As a result, Greece ended up alienating Greece's Western allies as well as its Balkan neighbors (Larrabee 2005: 409). The pre-1996 weak coalition governments and a strong nationalistic public opinion thus contributed to a Greek foreign policy which sought to maximize its preferences, even at the cost of intra-EU cohesion, and often feeling misunderstood or mistreated by its EU partners for want of support and/or comprehension of the importance it attaches to this identitarian related issue. The unilaterally imposed trade embargo on Macedonia during the Greek EU Presidency in 1994 is a good example. Greece's fellow EU members strongly reproached the Papandreou government for its actuation which came as a consequence of the Macedonian insistence on its rights to use the name Macedonia or its derivative in the name of the independent republic. Posterior to 1996 relations would improve with the government of the more pragmatic Costas Simitis which tried to mend fences in the region and in Europe. However, a real turn around in Greek convergence with EU dominant identitarian perception was to be the ousting of Milošević in Serbia in 2000. Greece was largely brought back to alignment with the Union and Athens has become one of the strongest supporters in the EU of Serbia's democratization and integration into the European structures. Greece has also



become one of the key players in Albania's reconstruction and a major investor in both Bulgaria and Macedonia, despite the name issue. Simitis efforts were crowned by the at the 2003 Thessaloniki EU-Western Balkans Summit, whereby the European vocation of the countries of the region was reconfirmed, while it was clarified that the actual timetable for their accession would depend on the countries themselves (Copenhagen criteria). Moreover, the Summit would pledge an increase in financial assistance to the Balkan countries of an additional EUR 200 mn until 2006. The Greek foreign policy makers have also repeatedly backed full autonomy (while not independence) for Kosovo and, in a gesture to even-handedness, stated that Albanians there have been the victims of human rights violations. These actions reveal a considerable Europeanization – or alignment around the dominant EU discourse – of Greece foreign policy, although not completely given that the Macedonian name issue has not been resolved even if Greece has virtually no backing for its position in EU capitals.

The EU cohesion around the issue of the Western Balkans is also related to the EU's identity as an international actor. The European Security Strategy (2003) notes that the entire 'credibility of our [EU's] foreign policy depends on the consolidation of our achievements' in the Balkans. That the stakes are high is also recognized by former Commission President Prodi. The Union, he admits, faces a 'credibility' problem in southeastern Europe, and it will be the resolution of this problem that will define the future of Union foreign and security policy. It is a problem, as he further admits, born of a decade or more of incoherence and humiliation, a singular failure, in prosaic terms, to prevent the slaughter of a quarter of a million Europeans (Prodi 2000b). There is thus an EU role perception that, while NATO might have ended the conflictiveness in the Western Balkans, the European Union must secure the peace.

The EU member states' staunch, collective commitment to the Western Balkans would thus mean that interregnum between the 1999 Cologne European Council and the 2000 Zagreb Summit was to be refreshingly free from nationalistic posturing (albeit not entirely, economic protectionism would respond to business as usual) on the behalf of EU member states. The perhaps most serious skirmish was over the Greek insistence that the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development should be located in Thessaloniki, not in Pristina as originally proposed. The German EU Presidency had to give in to this demand in exchange for support for Germany's candidate Bodo Hombach as the Stability Pact coordinator (Friis and Murphy 2000).

A final issue reveals the level of cohesion is the EU's consistent discourse on human rights, articulated through the insistence on Western Balkan collaboration with the ICTY. The unanimity in regards to this issue has, however, proven to reduce the Union's flexibility. Serbia, for instance, not only had to ensure its own cooperation with the ICTY, but also had to provide evidence that 'it is using its influence in bringing Bosnian Serb war criminals to justice before the International Tribunal'. As Belgrade's influence on Bosnian Serbs has significantly decreased after the demise of the Milošević regime, the latter requirement has meanwhile lost much of its factual basis. (Pippan 2004: note 20). In March 2005, however, the EU decided to postpone the opening of accession negotiations with Croatia because of Croatia's failure to hand over General Gotovina to the war crimes tribunal in The Hague. The member states that were arguing for immediate start of accession talks could not block this punitive EU position, since the decision to open negotiations required unanimity (Emerson et al. 2005: 9). The member states have become sharply divided on how strict the EU should be in evaluating the affected Western Balkan countries' compliance with the condition to cooperating fully with the ICTY. The dividing line has proven to be geographical, with

Western Balkan direct neighbors, Austria, Greece, Hungary and Slovenia taking a more lenient line on the issue whereas the rest of the member states insisted on firm application of the conditionality principle, not least to send a signal to the other countries in the region that the EU is serious about cooperation with The Hague. This situation has been turned on its head as the Austrian vote in favor of opening accession negotiations with Turkey in October 2005 was, to the mind of many, 'bought' by the most interest member states with a simultaneous opening of accession negotiations with Croatia.

That there is EU cohesion around holding EU's conditionality standards high is also evident from the fact that the EU usual political commitment to regional cooperation hardened in the Stabilization and Association Agreements into conditionality and an explicit condition for the further development of bilateral relations with the EU (Lannon et al. 2001). The member states have also found that intra-EU consensus has best been built around the elements of the Union's multi-vectored foreign policy formula (regional cooperation, multi-sectoral cooperation, interventionism) as they are employed in the Western Balkans. This convergence has also emerged as a consequence of a greater cohesion between the Council and the Commission as well as actions taken by different Commission Directorate Generals. The road to this cohesion has been easier than in the case of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and the Northern Dimension given that these policies had already forced the EU institutions to deal with the major deficiencies left by the Maastricht Treaty. The perhaps most noticeable row has been the Council-Commission difference in opinion whether an independent aid agency, such as the EAR, was really needed or if the Commission could have handled that responsibility from Brussels. Intra-Commission cohesion in regards to the Western Balkans has also arguably increased since the Commission's Communication on

Conflict Prevention in 2001. The Communication put the onus on greater coordination of instruments as managed under an umbrella, traversal policy.

The challenges inherent in the Western Balkans has posed a “tremendous challenge for Europe and for CFSP”, however, has also acted as a powerful galvanizing force on the EU foreign policy and the EU’s international identity (Patten 2000). Patten (ibid.) has referred to French President Chirac as stating that “some members can act as a driving force” to give Europe “a coherent, high-profile foreign policy. But force of will and the appeal to shared values are not enough. That is why the Member States decided at Maastricht and at Amsterdam to combine the Community and the inter-Governmental methods. Only in this way would they be able to sing, if not in unison, at least in closer harmony” (as cited in ibid.). That is to say that intra-institutional and inter-pillar has slowly emerged as a consequence of that realization. The current EU-Western Balkans policy thus stands in sharp contrast with the EU diplomatic and economic instrumental fragmentation in the 1990s. National and institutional identities appear to have converged substantially with the dominant EU discourse and there is a reduced interest for solo foreign policy outplays. Even EU member states further away from the Balkan Peninsula appear to agree with the rectitude of the Union’s framework policy and thus do not try to contravene the dominant EU discourse. The reduced functionality of the Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe furthermore contributes to the notion that the EU is the foremost foreign policy actor in the area and that the EU-Western Balkan framework policy enjoys a broad support from the member states. The linkage between pillars also appears to have improved, where economic instruments are regularly used to support explicitly political objectives.

### **6.3.2. The EU's identitarian 'presence' in the Western Balkans**

The EU haphazard engagement in the Western Balkans of past decade was exchanged for a new global, multilateral framework (Stabilization and Association Process). It was important to send a strong message to the countries in the region that this time around the EU was committed to changing the dynamic of this conflictive region. When the Yugoslav crisis erupted, Jacques Poos, Luxembourg's foreign minister was confident of the EC's future economic and diplomatic prowess. The EC was now the leader of Europe, as Poos explained, and held that "[i]f the Yugoslavs want to enter the Europe of the 20th century, they have to follow our advice" (Poos, as cited in Garton-Ash 2004).

The Union's principal presence in the region is based on its economic attraction power. Trade flows (albeit at lower levels) with Europe has been reestablished after the lost decade of the 1990s. And with exports to over 80 percent directed to Europe, the dependency is clear. Moreover, the EU is the principal foreign donor to the region. In 2001/2002 EC alone responsible for 31 percent of total international ODA to region, 64 percent EU and its member states.<sup>22</sup> Despite reductions in aid flows since 2002 the EU is the principal economic referent for the Western Balkans societies. However, the EU's economic presence has been resented as it has incurred trade restrictions or, more importantly, the EU is publicly associated with hardship conditions. The economic transition has been largely conditioned by outside pressure and constraints in the form of EU or IMF conditionality, currency pegs, and the like. External constraints are aimed at arresting the extraction project of the Western Balkan elites;<sup>23</sup> unfortunately, these

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<sup>22</sup> Other donors include US (17 percent) (Development Strategies 2004: 23).

<sup>23</sup> Which represent a learning curve over the Western handling of the Russian economic transition in the 1990s as well as, in terms of the Balkans, of the collapse of the Albanian state and of the shattering political and economic crisis that gripped Bulgaria in 1997.

predatory elites have learned to cite such external pressures as excuses for their own refusal to take responsibility for the welfare of ordinary citizens. Thus with reforms slow and the economic perspective of most Western Balkans fairly bleak the external conditionality has contributed to worsen relations between the EU and the public (Krastev 2002). In the words of the International Commission on the Balkans the public is pessimistic because ‘the region’s profile is bleak – a mixture of weak states and international protectorates [...] economic growth in these territories is low or non-existent; unemployment is high; corruption is pervasive; and the public [...] distrustful towards its nascent democratic institutions’ (International Commission on the Balkans 2005: 7). The EU aid has not managed to off-set the impact of the macroeconomic stabilization programs in that assistance has overly been geared toward reconstruction and has not paid enough attention to a deepening employment crisis across the region and the need to jumpstart the Western Balkan economies. International aid has not been forthcoming to the extent needed and financial programs marred by delays and complex bureaucratic procedures (Ibid.).

The EU’s political presence in the Western Balkans both draws on a security and a political facet. In terms of security, Bosnia, Croatia and Slovenia, the war in Kosovo was disastrous to the EU's effort to develop a Common Foreign and Security Policy. However, the Western Balkan wars have also given Europe a chance to develop a security presence in this area which is differentiated from the US. This is perhaps above all, most visible is the European efforts to provide security, whether launching a police mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina in January 2003 and taking up peacekeeping duties in FYR Macedonia in 2004. The Europeans today dominate the security scene in the Western Balkans. However, the Western Balkanites would still prefer NATO (and the US) over the EU which they continue to see as weak, fragmented and too bureaucratic

to be able to respond quickly and decisively on the ground, which was evident by the non-action of the European troop in Kosovo when faced by riots in 2004.<sup>24</sup> Some Western Balkans countries still find the US as the key security actor in the region, and as a more consistent, predictable and effective partner than the EU (Batt 2006). For example, from a FYROM perspective, the US had been ‘a friend in need’, while so far FYROM was not confident it could enjoy full support from the EU (this perception no doubt had much to do with FYROM’s unresolved ‘name issue’ with Greece) (ibid.). One might conclude that the EU will have to do a bit more work to convince the region of its credibility as the region’s main security guarantor.

Politically the Europeans dominate the scene. The EU membership is what legitimizes that dominance and the Western Balkan countries tacitly concede to EU political direction. The EU’s diplomatic settlement of the contention between Serbia and Montenegro in 2002 is a good example for how the EU’s political presence has grown posterior to 1999. The EU even dominates international organization’s leadership in the region. The High Representative in Bosnia and the leading international mediator in Macedonia are both EU Special Envoys, and Kosovo’s economy is under the trusteeship of the EU Pillar of UNMIK. It also has come to dominate the political scene to an extent where it is considered an actor at par with the US when it comes to the final settlement of the future of Kosovo. As United States engagement wanes, the Western Balkans has become the testing ground for a specifically European vision of how to spread stability and prosperity beyond its borders. However, while the EU has considerable experience in the terrain of post-communist economic transition, it has less experience in post-conflict reconstruction linked to economic reform. “The split of the

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<sup>24</sup> This concurs with the findings of a WEU Assembly (2007) delegation visiting the Western Balkans, observing “in the course of its visit a distinct difference between the Bosnians’ expressions of confidence in NATO and their perception of Europe, which was seen largely as an economic and social force that might boost the process of reconstruction.”

EU mandate between the European Commission and the Council has, however, not always played out well in practice and at times the two institutional agents have been perceived as speaking with two different voices instead of complementing each other to achieve EU policy goals” (Emerson et al. 2005: 8). “For the post-conflict cases in the Balkans, the game becomes less straightforward, even though the Copenhagen criteria still apply and the Commission has an important role as a tutor in EU norms and executor of the conditionality machine. In this region, the post-conflict task of state-building, as in Bosnia, Serbia and Montenegro, and Kosovo, brings the Council, the High Representative, Javier Solana, and his special representatives into play. This sees roles ranging from heavy mediation in creating the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro to governing a protectorate with Paddy Ashdown exercising his position’s Dayton powers in Bosnia. The two functions – of Commission-led conditionality and Solana/Ashdown-led state-building – have led to unintended contradictions with respect to democracy promotion, or at the very least serious sequencing issues. The picture that emerges is that the security-driven state-building processes may either stultify the development of democratic institutions in Bosnia, or unfortunately empower the ‘wrong’ domestic political actors, as in Serbia and Montenegro, where the State Union is most liked by the old-guard Yugoslav nationalists. Security trumps democracy for an interim period at least.” (Emerson et al. 2005: 29). “In the Balkans, special representatives in the protectorates such as Paddy Ashdown in Bosnia have not been inhibited from exercising neo-colonial gubernatorial powers with gusto, which nevertheless has meant prioritizing security over the fostering of Bosnian democracy” (Emerson et al. 2005:30). The European Union has not managed to compose a credible package which appeals to the locals in terms of encouraging adaptation during earlier stages of democratic consolidation and economic transition (Papadimitriou, Petrov and



Greiçevci 2007: 227). Moreover, the Process does not resolved ‘deep’ political problems (‘high’ politics). While some border disputes, like the Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia at Kostajnica have been resolved, others linger under the surface. There is still unresolved border tension between Croatia and Serbia and Montenegro over Danube and Prevlaka although advances have been made. Croatian claims on by Slovenia disputed coastline has led the Slovenian government to threat to veto Croatia’s EU-bid.<sup>25</sup> These disputes could obviously be resolved outside the Process through EU/CFSP, however, the scarce interest in European capitals for these low-key skirmishes means that they continue unresolved. Macedonia: suffers from perceived institutional confusion of EU/EC representation on the ground. Apart from the EU Special Representative, whose main responsibility is monitoring the implementation of the Ohrid Framework Agreement, the Delegation on behalf of the Commission has the responsibility of the political and policy dialogue related to SAP implementation and CARDS strategy, while the EAR deals with CARDS assistance management. The government and other important stakeholders feel that there is a disconnection between political and assistance related activities. The government and other stakeholders are concerned about the actual establishment of a strong co-ordination between CARDS projects and Proxima in the field of support to the police (Development Researcher’s Network Consortium 2004). There has been some concern that the European preoccupation for drug smuggling may have diverted attention for goals which are more highly prioritized by the Western Balkan public, such as the wider governance problem, with public institutions unable to provide the essential day-to-day infrastructure and services. Moreover, the lack of clear property titles, weak legal systems, a shortage of

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<sup>25</sup> The threat was withdrawn within a week and replaced with more conciliatory language, but this reveals the tensions in EU’s territorial fringes where several border disputes are not yet settled.

domestic finance, underdeveloped transport, telecommunications and water systems, and a lack of effective planning capacity are other headaches.

Moreover, while the Western Balkan countries are not against the punishment of war criminals overall, some nationalist sectors have been allowed to steer the dominant discourse against collaboration with the ICTY. These political requirements have been seen as fairly onerous on the Western Balkan states in question (Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia). Although at the June 2003 Thessaloniki EU–Western Balkans Summit, all SAP countries pledged ‘full and unequivocal cooperation’ with the ICTY, which they agreed is ‘a legal, political and moral imperative’ it is an issue which is relatively low down on the list of political priorities for the average citizens (more concerned about a functioning state and a trustworthy political elite). The EU has allowed prestige to be weaved into the issue of ICTY, whereby the Western Balkans non-compliance of delivering these individuals has been seen as a failure of international player status.

What has damaged the EU’s political presence the most in the Western Balkans is however the Union’s ‘now hot, now cold’ commitment to EU enlargement vis-à-vis the region. France has declared that it will hold a national referendum on any future EU enlargement and Paris has been the dominant voice among those EU members who question whether there should be any further EU enlargement at all. The Western Balkan countries feel that their fortunes does not depend on their own capability for reform, but rather depends on the shifting political winds in regards to other more polemic EU accession aspirations, such as Turkey or Ukraine.

The EU political presence in the region thus come under multiple guises (e.g. as aid provider, institution-builder, peacemaker and security provider) perhaps too many and, the Union’s strategy appears to have suffered major problems of lack of institutional coordination and policy leadership (Papadimitriou, Petrov and Greiçevci

2007: 228). It is striking that Partnership for Peace enjoys a higher public profile in Serbia than the Stabilization and Association Process (International Commission on the Balkans 2005).

Finally, the EU's cultural presence in the region is ambivalent. On the one hand 'Europe' represents modernization, the escape from a turbulent past and looking to a future of economic and social progress. However, people are also aware of the view in the Western press a perspective of the Western Balkans as backwards and primitive in their political views, generating a certain reluctance to get involved in the region. Todorova (1997) has argued that the Balkans is a region geographically inextricable from Europe, yet culturally constructed as the Other. The Balkans has often served as a repository of negative characteristics upon which a positive and self-congratulatory image of the 'European' has been built. From an identitarian perspective the ethnic-nationalistic principles on which some of Western Balkans countries went to war on were radically opposed to the values inherent in the post-modern, integrative Western European countries (Pentland 2003). This generates resentment and reduces the EU soft power. Kosovo may just be an indicator for a broader Western Balkan trend, and here it is Americanism, not Europeanism, which is fashionable. If Russia 'returns' as a foreign policy actor to the Western Balkans (see Chapter 8), the Russian cultural influence over the Slavs centered in and around Serbia may once again become important. In Bosnia Europe may have captured the hearts and minds of the Bosnian-Croats (alleging that they are essentially Mitteleuropa), while Bosnian Muslims and Serbs may be more wary. In Bosnia a Muslim revival is being experienced, with the return of the headscarves among the women etc. Wahhabism was introduced into Bosnia during and after the 1992-95 conflict by aid workers, mujahedin fighters, and others from the Middle East and elsewhere in the Muslim world. Their behavior was often regarded as

heavy-handed, and they frequently alienated local Muslims. But the foreigners provided a source of inspiration and financial support for others whom the Bosnian war left traumatized or disillusioned. The Wahabbist influence is surely not on the rise, but a certain experimentation with the Bosnian Muslim identity. This may have consequences for Bosnian integration in Europe in that the Bosniaks are well aware of the European track record of discrimination against Muslims in certain EU member states.

‘Europe’ is thus viewed by many Western Balkan citizens with ambivalence. The dream of the Western Balkan train stopping at the ‘European destination’ is strong. However, the dream of European integration has not yet proved powerful enough as a force for transforming the societies of the Balkans, especially if we agree that the basic indicator of success is the progress of each country on the road to the EU.[...] The classical enlargement model that worked for Central and Eastern Europe in 1990 simply does not fit the conditions prevailing in the Balkans (International Commission on the Balkans 2005). ‘Europe’ is still seen as essentially distant, strange and too unwelcoming. ‘Europe’ seems poised to pursue an Europeanist policy to the detriment of local formulas.

#### 6.4. Conclusions

The Stabilization and Association process, launched in 2000, was designed to upgrade EU-Western Balkan relations into a much more cohesive and forward-looking EU approach. Expectations were particularly buoyed by the European Union decision to hold out the prospective for EU membership to all the Western Balkan countries.

Attached to a substantial financial package and, subsequently, an elaborate institutional framework it seemed that the Stabilization and Association process was going to be able to break with the negative dynamics generated by the Western Balkan conflicts. Moreover, the EU's 'growth' as a foreign policy actor by jettisoning the EU diplomatic and economic instrumental parallelism of yesteryears in favor of a more integral approach have meant that seven years into the SAp few external observers questions the legitimacy or the benefit of the Union's involvement in the Western Balkans.

However, the EU has had a hard time to deliver on hopes for finding a new dynamic for the region given that its approach has at times put more stone on an already heavy burden. The Union's insistence on regional cooperation or full compliance with the ICTY have been resented or considered as counter-productive to the post-conflict reconstruction. Moreover, many of the outstanding problems in the region which impede the development of closer relations between the Western Balkan countries are not issues which are dealt with in reference to the framework of the SAp, e.g. the unresolved constitutional tension between Serbia and the regional government in Kosovo. Finally, the by EU socially constructed identitarian differentials between itself and the Western Balkans countries whereby the EU and its member states are perceived as the 'future' and the Western Balkan countries anchored in the past has not provided fertile ground for a gradual political and social convergence. The promise of a 'European perspective' for the region has therefore proven to be curiously insubstantial so far. The Union internal cacophony and tendency for hedging on hard security issues have also made that the US (and NATO) is a preferred actor in the region.

Despite the 'European perspective', the EU's international identity in its southern borderland does thus seem to suffer equally from its failure to resonate as it does in the southern and northern borderlands. Indeed, it is not difficult to sustain that

the SAp arises largely as a consequence of intra-EU preoccupations and the expectations of the international community, rather than as an attempt to resonate with locally-derived concerns in Western Balkan countries. Ironically thus, the single greatest pressure for a coherent EU foreign policy has been exerted by the EU experience of its performance in dealing with the wars accompanied the break-up of the former Yugoslavia (Tonra and Christiansen 2004: 2; Jørgensen 2004: 11); however, this cohesion has still not enabled a tailor-made approach for the region in question. The EU impact on the Western Balkans has thus been uneven in the past decade. Perhaps to no surprise the political elite and civil society actors feel estranged from the EU's identitarian discourse.

Part III – *The EU as an actor in the borderlands*





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## The EU in the borderlands: the dissonance of identitarian constructions

Since the end of the Cold War the EU has struggled to find a formula to provide a ‘mooring’ for its borderlands as a way to mitigate the international ‘turbulence’ which was feared in the post-1989 aftermath (Rosenau 1990). The preferred EU approach has been to construct networks of influence by ways of its framework policies with the Mediterranean, Northern Europe and the Western Balkans. These framework policies are steeped in the logics of the Community’s own models of regional integration, cooperation and ‘partnership’ (Bretherton and Vogler 1999: 8). These concepts have become central for the EU’s and its member states’ self-understanding of the Union’s international identity and how it should be projected, i.e. a ‘soft’ approach in international relations. One could infer that they also aspire to mitigate the Union’s asymmetric power through different arrangement and hence they are the most tangible guard against power-politics and exploitation. However, as we have seen in the previous chapters, notwithstanding this soft approach, the Union has had a hard time to find resonance for its foreign policy in the borderlands. The EU’s identity has even at times been contested by borderland partners.

This chapter will look in detail at three of the most prominent and inter-related features of the EU identity in relation to the framework policies that were launched in the Mediterranean, Northern Europe and the Western Balkans: regional multilateralism, multi-sectoralism and interventionism. How do these prominent EU identity facets resonate with borderland partners? In this chapter the EU identity thus comes into a dynamic tension with the outside in different ways and counterpoised in a dialectics of identities. The first sections will look at each of these particular set of identity traits – multilateralism, multi-sectoralism and interventionism – both from the view of the EU and its borderland partners. The final section will ponder whether these identitarian facets truly assist the EU to mitigate power structures as it is frequently claimed.

## 7.1. Regional multilateralism

A determining feature of the EU's foreign policy identity is regional multilateralism. The Union's penchant for grouping countries together "is a striking and unusual feature of its foreign relations; no other international actor does this to the same extent" (Smith, K. 2003: 70) and has, according to Whitman (1998: 10) become "the chief characteristic of the diplomacy of the Union today." The Union's promotion of multilateral policy frameworks in its geographical vicinity is in part, as we have seen, a reflection of the Western European integration experience since the World War II. This foreign policy trait thus finds echo in the EU founding myth and the Union regularly attributes most of its current achievements (e.g. peace, prosperity) to that initial impulse of regional integration within the ECSC and later the EEC. The logic which drives this particular

foreign policy objective is the member states' staunch – and rarely questioned – belief that “efforts on the part of (usually) neighboring countries to address issues of common interest” is to the benefit for all parties involved (European Commission 1995a).

This identity is also in part informed by organizational logics. One might argue that there has been a will among EC/EU members to organize the world order in a ‘rational’ manner (Monar 1997), thereby avoiding the obvious pitfalls of ‘externalization’ and competing claims of special treatments (cf. Schmitter 1969). The post-bipolar multilateralization of EU relations with borderland countries thus stands in sharp contrast with Cold War relations where bilateral relations were subject to ‘differentiation’ and often a reflection of the strategic and commercial importance to the Community’s member states of the third country in question. The EC’s pre-1989 external economic relations in essence represented a hierarchy of gradually preferential agreements based on differentiated commercial and political privileges (cf. Chapter 3). The trend since the early to mid-1990s has rather been to offer fairly standardized relations across a determined regional space, seemingly divorced from considerations of strategic and/or commercial importance. Such homogenization has also meant that there is now lesser tension among EU member states in terms of prioritization for one set of borderland partners or other.

Structural forces have also helped to steer the EU along the path of regional multilateralism. In the early 1990s the United Nation would recognize the value of multilateral cooperation at the regional level in that it carries a potential as a valuable interlocutor between the global and the nation-state, as well as it could potentially help reinforce global governance (order) and the spirit of the UN Charter (rights and obligations) (Gamble and Payne 1996). Moreover, it is widely held that regional collective approaches are more effective in coping with global challenges, such as

economic internationalization and underdevelopment, than unilateral or individual actions by nation-states (Regelsberger 1990: 8). There was hopes that the constant growth of group-to-group relations in European foreign policy in the 1980s, together with the general trend towards a 'regionalization' of international politics, were a sign of that a new model had emerged for the conduct of international politics. This was hailed as encouraging since multilateral cooperation in restricted groups or "[c]ollectivity helps alleviate the feeling of inferiority in size and number that single states increasingly perceive" (ibid.: 14).

The EU's principal means to group neighboring countries together in multilateral, institutionalized regional framework in the post-1989 era was the creation of the Barcelona Process, the Northern Dimension and the Stabilization and Association process, accompanied by regionally-configured financial assistance programs, such as MEDA or CARDS. The Commission has, for this reason, as the responsible for these framework policies been seen as the main driving force behind the creation of 'regions', sometimes coinciding with historical and/or geographical divisions, sometimes creating new ones, for the expediency of said financial allocations.<sup>1</sup> This confirms Neumann (2001b: 58) postulate that regions are not "simply waiting to be discovered," rather they are "invented by political actors as a political programme."

The creation of the EU's cognitive regions has met mixed reviews by the borderland partners. On the one hand, a majority of EU partners would in the 1990s accept to engage in multilateral framework in regional contexts as a consequence of feeling that there were few alternatives in a world of economic internationalization and

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<sup>1</sup> The EU's division of countries into cognitive regions suitable for EU management has meant that Arab-Maghrebi Union country Mauritania belongs to ACP, not the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership as the other UMA members. Mauritania has since petitioned the EU to become member of the Barcelona Process, but so far received a cold shoulder in Brussels. The Balkans in the 1990s was also re-conceptualized by the Commission whereby Bulgaria, Romania and Slovenia came to form part of 'Central and Eastern Europe' and not the other southeastern European countries. The Baltic States would also become 'Central and Eastern European' as opposed to 'Former Soviet Union' space/Newly Independent States.

where the West seemed to have monopoly on the political initiative. The regional grouping thus seemed in the early 1990s to promise for a better deal, the overcoming of political isolation one or other country was experiencing at the time or, at least, less marginalization in the world economy and hence confirming the notion above that regional collectivities give states refuge against global forces. The latter is probably why when in 1992 at a meeting of the EU-Egypt Cooperation Council an Egyptian official heard of EC's plans to create a EU-Maghreb free trade area, he urged the Union to instead 'embrace the Mediterranean as a single entity' (as cited by Gomez 2003: 55). These same considerations would also motivate other countries traditionally reluctant to engage in 'deep' cooperation with the EC/EU e.g. Algeria or Syria.

On the other hand, however, the multilateralization of borderland relations has not been an uncontested exercise. The EU multilateralized regional framework policies suffers from the same ills as most public policies where there has to be a trade off between the utilitarian 'greatest good for the greatest number' and the due attention which each individual of a collective merits. The EU multilateralization of its relations with its borderland partners has translated into that EU regional solutions apply to all countries and only a minor degree of differentiation can be tolerated without annihilating the group logic and/or overburdening the EU internal bureaucracy.<sup>2</sup> Such an approach has meant that even if efforts have been made for accommodation, due regard to the specific circumstances to each its borderland partners cannot be taken.

For this reason, the EU borderland partners have sometimes come to resent the EU's multilateral frameworks in that they feel that their concerns have been overlooked. Egypt, Israel, Russia and Turkey, for example, see themselves as too special to be grouped together with smaller/poorer third countries in Union's cognitive regions.

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<sup>2</sup> That this logic has not changed with the introduction of the ENP – despite of EU's discourse on the 'principle of differentiation' – is that the ENP Action Plans carry striking similarities among them. This goes to show that the EU require policy standardization in order to function minimally well.

Russia has always seen itself as above and beyond EU-created multilateral format. It considers itself an actor of equal (or more) standing to the EU and not to be reduced to 'one among many'. This perception is surely a tribute to the psychology of the former superpower which is accustomed to setting international rules rather than following them (Nikitin 2006). Egypt and Israel see themselves as regional powers or leaders in their own right stemming from Egypt's standing in the Arab League or Israeli military might. This is a factor of historical links, geography, resource-richness as well as weapons accumulation. Egypt, Israel and Russia thus resist EU's 'one-size-fits-all' frameworks and have regularly demanded special treatment. Del Sarto and Tovias (2001) have even ventured to describe the Israeli perception of the Barcelona Process as a form of 'straightjacket'.

Regional frameworks have been seen as an obstacle for closer bilateral relations with the EU also for smaller EU partners when this has been the preferred option. Morocco, for example, has consistently been looking for a special relationship with the Union since its 1987 EU membership application. When its petition was turned down the Moroccan government's efforts were re-channeled into requesting a *statut avancé* from the EU. Rabat was therefore in the mid-1990s rather wary of the creation of a 'Mediterranean region', which it saw as undermining its relatively closer relations with the EU at the time compared to many other southern Mediterranean countries. Morocco's unease with the multilateral format in the Barcelona Process would increase with the EU's unwillingness to grant certain specificities in the EU-Moroccan Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement given that such concessions would have escaped the Commission's general mandate for all Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreements.<sup>3</sup> Such misfit between expectation and offer has meant that Rabat since

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<sup>3</sup> The EU-Moroccan negotiations were held up for this reason, but in the end Rabat had to yield although it retaliated by letting the EU-Moroccan fishing agreement lapse in 1995.

1995 has regularly demanded more. The launch of the ENP in 2003 in some sense met some of the Moroccan aspirations in that it in principle allows for a more individualized track and flexibility in inter-relations, even if not completely removed from multilateral logics (all ENP Action Plans are based on the same template, in addition to that Morocco must also pay heed to the Barcelona Process).<sup>4</sup> Croatia is another case of a country wanting to proceed faster in its relations with the Union than at the speed of its regional partners. Whereas regional cooperation was encouraged among the Europe Agreement countries, southern Mediterranean and Northern Dimension partners it was never made a conditional feature of their associations. They were simply encouraged to cooperate in order to develop good neighborly relations among them. In the case of the Western Balkans it is an explicit condition for the further development of relations with the EU.<sup>5</sup> Zagreb has regularly shown concern about being constrained by the regional logics of the Stabilization and Association Process, fearing that it will be held back in its aspiration to a quick EU membership by the structural problems of the other SAP participants. This feeling is mirrored in other Western Balkan capitals to a greater or lesser degree. Most Western Balkan countries simply feel that they have little in common and what is worse that their disparate socioeconomic conditions and disparity in closeness in cooperation with the EU is becoming a liability for the European aspirations for each other.

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<sup>4</sup> Moroccan Prime Minister Driss Jettou noted in an interview in 2005: “[t]o ask if we are satisfied with level of [EU-Moroccan] cooperation and assistance, I should say no. Europe should do more for Morocco, because Morocco is the country that is exerting the efforts in the field of promoting democracy, human rights, and equality. [...] We hope that through a new neighborhood policy, Morocco will receive the status, help and attention it deserves from Europe” (*Time Europe Magazine* 2005). Darbouche and Gillespie (2006: 10) also report a certain Moroccan reluctance over the the name ‘European Neighborhood Policy’ given that “[i]t seems to give Morocco a status (or even *demote* Morocco to a status) already conferred on the country by geography, whereas Morocco has sought a special, privileged status with Europe ever since making approaches to join the EC in the 1980s.”

<sup>5</sup> Title III of SAA requires regional cooperation. This is in line with existing EU policy to the region, as exemplified by the Royaumont Process launched in December 1995, and gives prominence to each associate ‘actively promoting’ regional cooperation “[i]n conformity with its commitment to peace and stability, and to the development of good neighbourly relations.” Regional cooperation is also viewed in Brussels as key to stabilization in the Western Balkans (Phinnemore 2003: 84-5).

Second, borderland resentment has also built over the way the Union has not looked at the individual benefits of each component part of a region, but sometimes seemingly held the regional interest above the particularistic. In 2005 the EU, in the form of Javier Solana, voiced its opposition to the proposal by the Montenegrin government to create a union of two independent, internationally recognized republics Serbia, on the one hand, and Montenegro, on the other.<sup>6</sup> The Union thereby seemed to come down on the side of Serbian interests rather than trying to help find a solution for the peaceful aspirations of the Montenegrin population. The rationale within the EU, it has been argued, was probably that at the time it was considering its wider Balkans strategy, in particular the potential domino-effect the independence of Montenegro would have on the constitutional arrangements in Bosnia or on the future of Kosovo (Keane 2004; Friis 2007).<sup>7</sup> In the Baltic Sea area, Estonia and Latvia have sometimes felt themselves the target of EU policies which have appeared more in tune with the Russian version of a problem than any attempt to finding a compromise and balanced solution to the problem (whether borders, minorities or commercial). The regionalist format has therefore in their eyes seemed more a cover for the regional stability and less with finding individualized solutions to regional borderland partners' problems.

It would thus appear that there is certain misfit between the EU's multilateralist foreign policy identitarian projection and the receptivity of the outsiders to EU logics. The EU side has been guided both by the logics of consequences and logics of appropriateness. The multilateral cooperation schemes have been mounted both to

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<sup>6</sup> Solana indicated then that such a change would "push away" Serbia and Montenegro from EU accession (cf. Tocci 2004).

<sup>7</sup> It is worth noting that the differences between Montenegro and Serbia were not of ethnic origin, but in political outlook. The independence movement in Montenegro consisted of the national minorities, mainly Bosniaks/Muslims and Albanians as well as an estimated half of the Slav orthodox population. The former harbored a deep distrust of Milošević and Serbian nationalism and the Slavs were essentially skeptical of the Serbian government's intentions towards Montenegro. This made it a movement which bridged ethnic nationalities and constituted a regional majority. Such a multi-ethnic movement is absent elsewhere in the Western Balkans where aspirations for independence have been declared or flouted such as for example in Kosovo or in Bosnia/Republika Sprska (Friis 2007: 73).



satisfy rational calculations of security (regional stability), economies of scale (global trade) and rationalization of otherwise cumbersome bilateral relations. Multilateral framework has also come about, as we have seen in preceding chapters, based on individual EU members concerns about the politics of scale of its national foreign policy through Europeanization and this or that EU member states' relative standing within the EU. Other prominent rationales for the regional cooperation schemes have followed the logic of appropriateness. On the one hand, multilateral framework policies are seemed as natural for the EU due to its own integration experience and it can therefore hold up its integration know-how as a model for inter-state relations which could potentially usefully be applied in the borderlands. On the other hand, by ways of promoting regional multilateralism, the Union could potentially be aiming to overcome some of the glaring asymmetries in power which exists in the bilateral relation with borderland partners. By multilateralizing the relationship there is scope for that borderland partners join forced and deal and negotiate with the EU more at par with the Union. Karen Smith (2003: 96) has, thus, held that the European Union by advocating the creation of strong regional groupings, "the EU is effectively pursuing a strategy which in the long run corrects the power imbalances between it and other regions". In sum, the EU's pursuit of multilateral relations is thus an expression of its composite identity.

However, borderland partners have come to resent the multilateral dynamic given that instead of finding strength in numbers, many of them have seen their individual politico-economic situations since the 1990s stall or weaken. The EU's firm conviction that "regional cooperation is beneficial for others" (Smith, K. 2003: 70) has thus (at least) not (yet) resonated with outsider identitarian constructions.<sup>8</sup> In cases

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<sup>8</sup> We leave the door open to that reiterated processes of socialization may over time whether in the medium or long term come to produce such resonance.

where their economic situation and leverage have improved since the 1990s, these evolutions are more often explained due to global conjunctures (e.g. raising energy prices, such as Algeria or Russia) or unilateral action (e.g. signing trade agreements with third countries, e.g. Morocco and Jordan with the US), than as a consequence of engaging in regional cooperation with the EU. The EU-driven regional multilateralist arrangements have neither alleviated much the political marginalization of determined countries. The institutional frameworks developed may not be solid enough for those countries which had hoped in the Barcelona Process, the Northern Dimension or the Stabilization and Association Process a political dialogue by which to gain some leverage over neighboring countries. The Arab southern Mediterranean countries, for example, cautiously welcomed the 1995 Barcelona Process as an opportunity to sway Israeli policies or have a greater *droit de regard* over events in the Middle East. However, Israeli's negative to engage multilaterally to any significant extent, and the EU's concessions in this regard, have undermined the multilateral character of the cooperation.<sup>9</sup> Israel has had no incentives for compromising with its Middle Eastern neighbors. Moreover, the EU has been highly reticent about allowing the Middle East conflict-related issues being discussed in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership framework, lest bringing the whole cooperation to a ground halt. In regards to other neighborhood problems outside the Middle East, such as for example intra-Maghrebi tensions, there were also initial hopes that the larger regional framework would neutralize these. However, such ambitions have come to naught, even if Algeria and Morocco have regularly attended all the Barcelona Process meetings.<sup>10</sup> It would thus

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<sup>9</sup> Del Sarto (2003) has argued that Israel's unsettled national identity has made it an unlikely partner in Mediterranean region-building even if the peace process was placed on a better footing.

<sup>10</sup> Algeria seem even intent on taking its rivalry with Morocco beyond the region, by trying to isolate Morocco and discredit its efforts before the EU as it did, for example through the flagrant Algerian 'boycott' of the Euro-African conference on migration held in Rabat in July 2006 (Darbouche and Gillespie 2006: 18). The Darbouche (2007) also note that Algeria is trying to impede a further Spanish-

seem that the avowed EU's ambition "to reflect abroad what is best about our own model [... i.e.] the balance we seek to strike between national freedoms and common disciplines" (Patten 2000) has not materialized. Perhaps for this reason, Spencer (2000) has therefore sustained that the vision of a Mediterranean region "is held more by European partners than by southern Mediterranean partners", with even those Arab southern Mediterranean states furthest from the Middle East conflict demonstrating extreme reluctance to cooperate with each other largely because they find scarce compensation in what the EU is able to offer them (Spencer 2000, Smith, K. 2003).

Finally, by replacing Cold War bilateral relations with regional multilateral ones, it looked like the EU was attempting to treat its neighbors at par with itself. However, if that was the intention, the posterior evolution has made this vision increasingly difficult to sustain. There is a generalized perception that the partners' standing vis-à-vis the EU has not improved since the 1990s and the relations continue much according to the Cold war hub and spoke model. The asymmetric power of the EU may just have increased as the EU foreign policy further consolidated in the late 1990s. The EU member states may not be speaking with one voice at all occasions, but they do represent the more cohesive part in the relations with its borderland partners. Finding a balance within is mutually beneficial without creating too much intra-EU tension is therefore a difficult task for borderland partners. The only country which can be said to have reversed this dynamic in the past decade, and enhanced its standing vis-à-vis the European Union, is perhaps Russia with the launch of the 2006 Northern Dimension pact.<sup>11</sup> The result has been

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Moroccan bilateral rapprochement on Western Sahara and its supply of arms to the Hashemite Kingdom cost it a 20 percent increase in the price of its Algerian gas imports in 2007.

<sup>11</sup> The Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has expressed his satisfaction with the changes made to the principles of the Northern Dimension. According to him, the Northern Dimension initiative had previously been considered to be a mechanism that the EU used to solve problems in Europe in line with its own principles, while non-EU countries were only allowed to watch from the sidelines. The new principles ensured equal cooperation (Lavrov, cited by Heikkilä 2006).

more a situation of the borderland partners finding themselves in dissonance (rather than consonance) with the EU's multilateralist dynamics.

## 7.2. Multi-sectoral cooperation

A second prominent trait of the EU foreign policy identity in the borderlands is the recourse to multi-sectoral – or holistic – policies, spanning a broad range of political, economic and socio-cultural fields of cooperation. The Union's promotion of multi-sectoral framework policies can be held as policy which stem from a 'self-styled logic' reflecting "an indigenous and uniquely European quality" (Ginsberg 1989 and 2001) by trying "to apply the EC model of functional cooperation" with origins in the European Coal and Steel Community (Bretherton and Vogler 1999: 161).<sup>12</sup> The Union's comprehensive multi-sectoral approach in foreign policy – economic (trade liberalization, improved financial and economic assistance), political (regularized political dialogue, cooperation in justice and home affairs) and cultural (e.g. education, social affairs, gender aspects) – can be said to be a reflection of the widely held understanding among EU institutions and member states that most international problems have an economic as well as socio-political facet.

An organizational logic also informs the EU's identitarian understanding. The Barcelona Process/ENP, Northern Dimension and the Stabilization and Association process can be taken as unique ensembles of framework policies spanning different

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<sup>12</sup> The 'self-styled logic' reflects "a unique European brand of diplomacy and foreign policy moulded by an internal dynamic of cooperation among members and common institutions. Unlike neofunctional externalisation, the self-styled logic focuses on the EU's own internal dynamic, foreign policy interests, and mission and initiative in the world independent of external stimuli" (Ginsberg, 2001:31)

issue areas and competences among EU institutions. The framework policies with the EU's borderlands thus respond to a growing tendency within the EU to create "global approaches" that cover matters of all three pillars (Smith, K. 2003: 66), in which economic instruments and other benefits ('carrots') may be put at the service of political objectives. In principle, the use of framework policies has indeed managed to produce "a greater consistency between the various pillars of the EU's external relations" and consequently "improved the EU's profile as a collective actor" (Alecú de Flers and Regelsberger 2005: 339) by providing a single, coherent frame within to coordinate different EU instruments. This stands in contrast to the EC's relative inability during the Cold War to engage in a multi-sectoral manner for its institutional disconnect between the EC economic instruments and EPC objectives (cf. Nuttall 1992 and 1997). The Single European Act, the Maastricht Treaty and posterior Treaty reforms paved the way for increased EU capability in terms of linking different foreign policy sectors together.

The EU's multi-sectoral approach has been vindicated by the changed thinking on security in the international community which arose after the Cold War, whereby it was argued that economic underdevelopment and poverty are causal factors contributing the social disorder that might threaten the stability of states (Buzan et al. 1998). There was also a feeling that internationalization and interdependence in the post-bipolar era created a disjuncture between the scale and scope of public policy problems and the capacity of traditional political actors (i.e. states) to deliver such cooperative solutions. The EU – for its long-standing experience of inter-state cooperation – seemed to perceive itself eminently well placed to take on this multi-sectoral agenda. Solana (2002) has, for example, held that "[s]ecurity is nowadays a much broader notion than it used to be. This is to some extent an advantage for the European Union. The EU is an

organization covering a broad range of issues and policies. It can react to a variety of different aspects of a security challenge.”

The EU’s promotion of multi-sectoralism has above all been expressed in the legal agreements signed with borderland partners (Euro-Mediterranean Association-, Partnership and Cooperation- and Stabilization and Association Agreements), whereby an EU-defined standard for different sectoral pursuits are set and around which it is thought that participating actors’ expectations would converge. The broad agenda of these accords pretended to highlight that the European interests in their closest neighbors was politico-strategic, with emphasis on economic transition and development, rather than merely commercial or concessionary. The social and cultural dimension of the agreements would also conspire to lend the new ‘partnerships’ a more balanced feel, where reinforced cooperation on cultural relations, links across borders between civil societies could help to improve understandings between societies.

Concern has, however, been raised by outsiders in the way the EU has rather indiscriminately used the same broad multi-sectoral ‘template’ for all its borderland partners. The regional frameworks developed for the Mediterranean, Northern Dimension and the Balkans, drawing much inspiration from EU’s early relations and later accession process with the Central and Eastern European countries, revealing a powerful path-dependency to employ formulas already ‘tried and true’ elsewhere. The complexity of EU’s foreign policy system and institutional set-up (deficit in foreign policy planning and the scarceness of Commission staffing) is perhaps what explains the best the fact that solutions invented for one area has been used as a source of inspiration for other areas, creating a sort of roll-around model for EU’s interaction with borderland countries (Flaesch-Mougin 2001: 69).<sup>13</sup> The fact is that since there is so many

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<sup>13</sup> Raux (2001) has noted that this has inevitably contributed to certain ‘banalization’ of the EU-outsider relations. This observation can also be drawn from Phinnemore’s (2003) findings on the similarities

complications involved in the making of one regional framework in terms of the negotiations which has to be done (consensus among all member states), perhaps makes for using the same model of relations to avoid reopen the negotiations every time what ‘ingredients’ to put and what to exclude. This can be seen as a lack of, what Bicchi (2006: 288) has termed ‘institutional reflexivity’, i.e. the capacity of EU foreign policy makers “to critically analyze the EU’s policy and adapt it according to the effects the policy is expected to have on the targeted area.” This inevitably opens the EU to outsider critique in terms of that EU foreign policy seem to transpire from internal EU logics and limitations. An evaluation of the European Commission’s Macedonia country strategy notes, for example, that existing priorities were “not based on any specific assessment” of the Macedonian situation, even if in theory all the Stabilization and Association Agreements are the end-result of negotiations between Western Balkan governments and the European Commission (Investment Development Consultancy et al. 2001).

Second, outsiders have resented the formula based on its Europeaness of the agenda, or the overly European reading of the tasks at hand, both impeding the due attention to mechanisms which suit the borderland partners’ political, economic and culturally specific circumstances. In the political sphere, for example, the principal problem is that the comprehensive EU formula is perceived as discursively framed by EU in a biased manner which is closer to European security needs than the partners. The borderland partners have complained that the EU-promoted economic development, environment, culture and education in third countries have largely been subordinated to the logics of European security and stability.<sup>14</sup> Habib Ben Yahia, Tunisia’s Foreign

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between the Europe Agreements (CEECs) and the Stabilization and Association Agreements. The ENP Action Plans adopted in 2005 and 2006 do neither add much real differentiation in this sense, cf. footnote 2, this chapter.

<sup>14</sup> The 1992 Spanish EC-commissioned report on the situation in Maghreb, presented by foreign minister

Minister, has sustained for example that despite the launch of the Barcelona Process with its emphasis on economy and culture nothing has essentially changed since the end of the Cold War in that “the north’s [i.e. the European] interest in the southern shore has always been about security” (as cited in Gomez 2003: 26).<sup>15</sup> Indeed, this has been confirmed to some extent by former External Affairs Commissioner Chris Patten (2001), and other European officials, who have at different occasions affirmed that ‘Europe is ringed – from Kaliningrad in the north, to the Caucasus and Central Asia, to the Balkans – by an arc of danger and instability’. Outsiders’ perceptions are thus that the efforts to build a European identity are increasingly being linked to the issue of security whether “with the ulterior motive of creating a larger European regional security order” (Charillon 2004: 254) or fear that external insecurity could represent risk to the whole European project (Waeber 1996: 123). To Perthes (2000), the EU seems almost ambivalent –

“the European discourse alternatively emphasizes Europe’s common destiny with the peoples of the region and its responsibility for furthering peace, democracy and development among its neighbours, or European security and economic interests which require both socio-economic development and political

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Fernández-Ordóñez, represented Maghreb as a ‘time-bomb’ which Europe, by means of a greater commitment of resources and new approach would manage to disarm (Gillespie 1997: 36). To no surprise, Klaus Hansch, President of the European Parliament, would therefore state just before the Barcelona Conference in 1995 that there could be no dilemma in the EU’s choice: “[e]ither we export stability, or we import instability” (cited in Xenakis 1998). The Finnish Prime Minister Lipponen would employ the same technique of securitizing Northern Europe in terms of ecological challenges, organized crime etc. in order to achieve the area’s entrance on the European agenda. The Western Balkans obviously made its way onto the European radar as a consequence of the Yugoslav wars, where Europeans perceived a return to their own experience during the World Wars of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

<sup>15</sup> The cultural basket of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership was, for example, put there to foment ‘confidence building mechanisms’ (i.e. security overtones). France and Spain wanted to use the cultural dialogue to diffuse a widespread anti-Western stance in the Maghrebi societies and the increasing tension between Arab identities and Western ones which had surfaced in and around the Gulf War.



progress in the region including, prominently, the peaceful regulation of the Arab-Israeli conflict.”

While in theory both objectives are compatible, the complaint of the borderland partners have been that the EU-provided socioeconomic cooperation has seemed too instrumentalized to guarantee intra-EU security against terrorism, migration etc. than to provide genuine and well-founded development cooperation and thus produces a disequilibrium and doubts about the genuineness of the Union’s wish to help in their struggle for transition and/or socioeconomic development. The southern Mediterranean partners and the Western Balkan countries also perceive themselves a bit cornered by the strongly held EU’s security priorities (especially WMD and terrorism) which many borderland partners see as matters to be dealt with in the longer term. In contrast, the security matter with most Arab southern Mediterranean countries feel are most urgent – to renew efforts to find a solution to the Middle East conflict – appears to receive no more than a lukewarm support from European capitals. Western Balkan countries have also felt that the EU attention to security has gone so far as to work to impede alternative formulas based on economic development (beyond basic reconstruction) and they feel that their possibility of building a more positive future is sometimes held back by the rigid security concerns of European governments to which they are essentially captives.

In the economic sphere, the EU has promoted macro-economic stability, reliance on export and the gradual opening up of domestic markets by ways of joining global economic institutions. However, by doing that the Union is often accused of promoting a liberal formula – only infrequently questioned in the West for its correctness – but which is perceived as unfit for or threatening in some countries outside the West.

Moreover, outsiders take issue with that the EU seems to promote one *specific* formula of embedded neoliberal economic development and growth, while EU members are obviously allowed many different approaches to market management or state-society relations, such as the role of the state in sustaining social development (Nicolaïdis and Howse 2002: 774). This has led an increasingly self-assertive Kremlin to begin to defend its ‘right’ to economic specificity, whereby the modernization of the Russian economy is increasingly seen as necessarily passing through a stage of increased state interventionism into the Russian economy. The Russian government does not link the economic development with social prosperity (as the EU would), but rather with the country’s economic greatness and global power ambitions. Moreover, Putin’s government seem increasingly less inclined to follow through on the hitherto Russian ambition to join the WTO, and has argued that “[t]he developed countries [... i.e. the G7] were dominating the institutions of world trade in an ‘inflexible’ manner, even as their own share of the global wealth is diminishing.” The Russian President has also alleged that the world needs a “new architecture of international economic relations based on trust and mutually beneficial integration,” which he envisions to be based on regional economic areas – rather than on global institutions – centered on emerging market economies like Russia, China, India and Brazil (*International Herald Tribune* 2007b). Whatever the merits and feasibility of such proposals, the statement still reflects the Russian unease with the EU approach. Along similar veins, many southern Mediterranean partners have come to question if the EU formula is the correct developmental recipe for them. The Arab UNDP report (2004) has for this reason advocated for cherry-picking the best of the Western economic model while not renouncing on autochthonous developmental methods.<sup>16</sup> Finally, perhaps the most

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<sup>16</sup> Such as for example the linking up with trans-European transport networks, maritime cooperation, energy interconnections and cooperation through the information society. The most extreme form of this

serious shortcoming of the EU formula is that the embedded liberalist approach entails a bargained reduction of trade restrictions by ways of dealing with the influence of protectionist, rent-seeking interest groups, and more generally paying off the ‘losers’ from trade liberalization (Nicolaidis and Howse 2002: 776). However, EU financial assistance has, in many cases, been arriving late and in too mince quantities to really off-set the sectoral conversions where they have been attempted.

Finally, in the cultural sphere, the European-centered approaches have also been resented. The lack of enthusiasm for the European approach stems from its bluntness and lack of adaptation to Southern Mediterranean, Russian or Western Balkan societal constructions and mental imaginary. The EU has had important difficulties in adapting its formulas in non-EU contexts. Evidence from Albania, for example, highlights that local families and clans are – as they have been for centuries – the main organizational pillars of Albanian society (Papadimitriou et al. 2007: 236). These same problems are inherent to a majority of the EU’s borderland partners. A different example can be drawn from the southern Mediterranean. There are some Arab Mediterranean observers who find the notions of ‘civil society’ or ‘decentralized cooperation’ problematic. These same observers would argue that these concepts respond to necessities, history and traditions in the Western societies as they developed in the wake of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Industrial Revolution (Baroudi 2004). As directly transposed concepts onto the current Arab world these concepts have, however, little meaningful resonance. Indeed, their argument would sustain that voluntary, non-profit associative networks are alien to many Arab societies, in which traditional structures of society such as the family and especially the religious institutions are the natural outlets of social organization (ibid.;

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search for autochthonous formulas is perhaps Algeria. Darbouche and Gillespie (2006: 18-9) note that “Algeria appears to be opposed to any initiative pertaining to affect its political identity particularly given that its leaders believe that home-grown experience is worth more than any form of imported model regardless of the price to pay”, especially as it is buoyed by high energy prices.

cf. Johansson-Nogués 2006b). The EU's associative formula, seen from such a perspective, becomes a threat against the existing culture and models of society and rejected from the instinct of wishing to preserve the distinctive traits of these societies.

Moreover, the reluctance of the European institutions to finance cooperative ventures involving religiously affiliated Muslim organizations, even moderate ones, together with certain diplomatic incidents (e.g. the 2006 'Cartoon Crisis') have spurred a sentiment among Muslim Arabs that Europeans are disdainful of their religion and identity. Some civil society activists in the southern Mediterranean have, for this reason, resisted their European homologues' overtures for cooperation to a greater extent than what occurred in Central and Eastern Europe because of "a widespread suspicion that EU democracy and human rights promotion has a subtext in the Mediterranean of undermining the Islamic identity of societies" (Gillespie 2004: 6).

From the above argument we can see that the EU and its member states have been guided both by the logics of consequences and logics of appropriateness in regards to applying the multi-sectoral approach on its borderlands. The multi-sectoral approach has enabled the Union to combine its security interests, stemming from logics of consequences, with the logic of appropriateness, i.e. the holistic scheme shows concern for the developmental situation of a third country and cultural aspects, although its approach has come across as biased to outsiders. By securitizing the soft security agenda the EU has seemingly wanted to desecuritize the inter-state agenda with the borderland partners, moving it away from the issues of state-building or conflict. The Union's rationale has been to work alongside conflicts or other related sovereignty concerns to avoid the stalemate the latter create in cooperation.<sup>17</sup> The EU's cooperative approach has instead been based on techno-bureaucratic management of transborder

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<sup>17</sup> A prominent example would be the many headaches which the Twelve had in trying to have any impact at all in the Middle East during the Cold War. Given the then focus to resolve the conflict, other areas (development cooperation, education etc.) were left unattended.

concerns according to the logic that “creative association in [...] problem-solving provides a learning-situation in which participants are gradually weaned away from their [...] nationalistic impulses toward a self-reinforcing ethos of cooperation” (Pentland 2003). The securitization of ‘soft’ security issues has also been constructed as a way to overcome otherness in the cooperation, to reinforce the feeling of interdependence and the naturalness of the cooperation (‘we are all in the same boat’) (Browning and Joenniemi 2004: 239). The EU’s actuation is thus consistent with its composite identity.

However, the strategy of securitization of soft security concerns may have backfired to the extent that it has not acted to diminish the Union’s asymmetric power. The EU’s strategy may, at one level, have foundered on the question is whether the logic of cooperation in economic, tourist, or civil society areas can generate the positive dynamic necessary for a common approach to resolving on the most controversial and divisive security matters within a region. The EU’s strategy may also, at a different level, have for its Europeanness failed to produce a low politics cooperation which is strong enough to push politics in the direction of sustainable EU-borderland rapprochement. Experience from Eastern enlargement process has, for example, shown how the huge power asymmetries between the EU and the Central and East European applicants has allowed the former to remain firmly in control of both how these conditions were set and the way in which they were assessed (Papadimitriou et al. 2007: 227). This monopolistic pattern is also repeated in the EU’s relations with its borderlands. The borderland partners have therefore found it difficult to accept the EU’s self-proclaimed neutrality or supposed ‘non-coercive’ approach as a consequence.

### 7.3. Interventionism

A third prominent feature of the EU's foreign policy is its propensity for interventionism. An interventionist foreign policy actor displays a decided will to supply political direction beyond its territorial confines. Karen Smith (2003: 199) notes that this EU foreign policy trait has even reflected an EU "reconceptualization of the practice of state sovereignty" in its willingness shape the international environment through various instruments or mechanisms to limit the freedom of states to do whatever they wish domestically and externally. This characteristic of the EU foreign policy has implicit roots in the Union's own integration experience of 'pooled sovereignty' and of a supranational institution which is allowed intrusive monitoring of the domestic affairs of the participant members. During the Cold War the member states were divided on the usage of conditionality, whether economic or political, and only applied it rarely. This was a direct consequence of the special ties different EC members had with third countries or with determined political elites. However, interventionism would make inroads in the EU foreign policy identity in the early 1990s. The formerly inward-looking Western Europe that existed during the Cold War has thus seemingly been replaced by outward- or "a projection oriented actor, with increasing foreign policy responsibilities" (Charillon 2004: 252).

This identity is also in part informed by organizational logics. Conditionality is the cognitive bridge which brings political objectives into dialogue with the Union's economic instruments and technical and financial assistance. EU has used conditionality as well as Stability Pacts to try to forge the dynamics of the borderland regions. One could also infer that this is part of the Union's particular quest to become a more active

(as opposed to reactive) foreign policy actor. Moreover, there is an element of policy standardization of EU foreign policy which entails that both financial assistance and bilateral agreements contain the inclusion of a human rights and democracy clause (in the form of an essential element clause) into all major Community instruments regulating external assistance, complementing similar clauses embodied in most trade and cooperation as well as association agreements concluded between the EC and third countries since the early 1990s. Progressive compliance with the conditions established by the EU is rewarded with intensified bilateral cooperation, including the establishment of contractual relations. In case of serious and repeated non-compliance with the conditions underpinning the respective level of cooperation, however, trade preferences may be withdrawn, Community assistance may be frozen and, where applicable, an agreement may be suspended (Smith, K. 2003).

The current international structure is also conducive to interventionism (Charillon 2004; Maull 2006). Political conditionality is widely employed by international donors (e.g. IMF or the US). Interventionism is increasingly accepted at the level of United Nations to more effectively stave off humanitarian catastrophes and the state abuse of its population. According to liberal interventionism thinking it is a duty of the international community to act according to certain values against the backdrop of interdependence in an age of globalization.<sup>18</sup> The EU's experience with the Central and Eastern European countries would in particular fuel the EU belief that interventionism could usefully be applied elsewhere in the European borderlands. However, perhaps the concept would not come to fruition until after the Kosovo crisis in 1999, which opened up a new view in the West on interventionism. To make its

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<sup>18</sup> The UN debate as of the 1990s has increasingly become informed by the thinking that rights only pertain to individuals, and that nations and governments only acquire any rights or privileges by virtue of the civilians giving them power. On this basis, interventions whether political, economic or cultural, in support of rights are morally justifiable.

interventionism more palatable to its borderlands it has used concepts such as ‘partnership’ and ‘co-ownership’. Bicchi (2006: 288) has termed this ‘inclusiveness’ meaning that EU foreign policy-makers permit a role (in theory or in practice) in its policy making for borderland partners actors affected by the Union’s regional framework policy. By appearing to give equal standing it is supposed to take the edge out of the controversy of interventionism.

The EU has applied a great variety of types of interventionism, from ‘light’ (e.g. political demarches) to ‘hands-on’ in the form of a de facto tutor. The EU Special Envoy/UN Office of the High Representative (OHR) to Bosnia, Lord Paddy Ashdown, had until the end of his mandate in 2005 virtually unlimited powers (so-called ‘Bonn powers’) and was not subject to any control by elected Bosnian officials.<sup>19</sup> More than once the EU Special Envoy/OHR has found himself in the position of overruling or sacking elected officials – who happen to be nationalists – in the name of promoting democratic values. Similarly, the 2002 Constitutional Charter of the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro would have been an impossibility had it not been for the “very prominent role played by the EU” whose “proactive role in the constitutional engineering of Serbia and Montenegro far surpasses the policy model known as conditionality” (Teokarevic 2003: 45-6). In 2002, the Union stepped up its involvement, mandating High Representative Javier Solana to mediate an agreement. Solana’s direct intervention was considered by some in the region as excessively intrusive. But few dispute the fact that without it the agreement may not have been reached (Tocci 2004).<sup>20</sup>

However, interventionism is controversial in the EU’s relations with borderland partners as it is in international relations in general. Maull (2006) sees the EU’s principle of interventionism as cosmopolitan in a postmodern world and clashes with

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<sup>19</sup> The new EU Special Envoy/OHR to Bosnia has greater restrictions on his powers, but continues to escape Bosnian democratic control.

<sup>20</sup> When in 2006 the Montenegrin referendum paved way for independence, the EU nevertheless accepted the will of the local population and thus to its credit relinquished its earlier negative stand.



the insistence on non-interference upheld mostly by authoritarian regimes or newborn democracies. However, having to accept the whole package is difficult on those countries concerned with their sovereignty whether democratic or authoritarian. Most EU borderland partners are essentially opponents of any evolution of international society which involves a dilution of the concepts of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and self-determination. Their opposition comes in all gradients, from strongly reticent, for example, Egypt or Algeria where both government and opposition are against receiving aid from the EU given that it is politically tied. For Russia or Serbia the matter is less sensitive, but even if they accept low politics, they would prefer to avoid infringements on what they consider their legitimate right to defend its territorial integrity (Chechnya, Kosovo). During speeches or press conferences in Russia or abroad President Putin, for example, often refers this idea of an inalienable Russian sovereignty in the country's democratic construction (Vinatier 2006: 11). Russia thus seeks "to reduce the issue of values in the framework of negotiations with Europe. It is about avoiding that these moral and political concerns take up the majority of [EU-Russian] discussions, to the detriment of the mass of economic and commercial interests, mutually bearing substantial benefits" (Vinatier 2006: 12; Nikitin 2006).<sup>21</sup> It is within this interaction that the problems in the EU's approach have become visible, as the teacher/student relationship built into the relationship "does not gel well with Russia's own ideas about the relationship. In fact, the Union's well-meant insistence on common values and normative convergence are seen as being overly intrusive and basically demanding Moscow's full capitulation in the face of Europe" (Haukkala 2005).

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<sup>21</sup> The issue of 'partnership' may be interpreted differently by different audiences. The controversy in the EU-Russia partnership is over whether it should be based upon a deep unity of values (the liberal interpretation of partnership), or if it should be more pragmatically limited to coordinated actions towards common goals, irrespective of differences in values and motivations (the conservative interpretation of partnership) (Nikitin 2006). In Moscow the partnership with the EU is mostly interpreted in a pragmatic conservative sense, in terms of a partnership based upon a coincidence (which may be temporary) of national interests, rather than values (ibid.).

Second, the concept of ‘partnership’ (or ‘European perspective’ for the Western Balkan countries) has not palliated concerns over interventionism. The Barcelona Process, in particular, would raise hopes in Algeria, for example, that “the preoccupations of the south were finally taken into consideration by the Europeans” and that the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership marked “the end of a relationship between the north and south of the Mediterranean based on dictated cooperation” (Darbouche and Gillespie 2006: 15). However, despite early hopes there has not been a significant development of partnership/co-ownership, i.e. the EU has not been really willing or able to ‘share’ its sovereignty with others. Internally the EU is such a cumbersome entity that its foreign policy cannot truly reflect outsiders’ input to a large extent. The multilateral negotiations involving the EU-27 and the European Commission are such as to make it difficult for outsiders to have an input. The internal negotiation is difficult, the final offer is usually a thinly veiled consensus and renegotiation is not really on the menu. The Commission usually says, ‘this is the offer, take it or leave it’ (cf. Gomez 2003). Although in some cases outsiders are still allowed to affect the outcomes in the margins. Being pressed, the Union is prepared to negotiate to correct such impressions and accept compromises, albeit within relatively strict limits. Gillespie (1997: 39) has shown that the European drafters of the Barcelona Process (France and Spain) tried to find formulas which would be palatable to the southern Mediterranean partners.<sup>22</sup> However, once different logics and conceptualizations collide, the EU does not opt for discussion between equal partners but basically insists on the application of its own existing departures – understood as the only conceivable basis for commonly agreed norms (Pippan 2004). The perception among some southern Mediterranean partners (e.g.

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<sup>22</sup> Darbouche and Gillespie (2006: 15) also note the relative cohesion on the Arab side in 1995 with Algeria acting as “a catalyst amongst Arab ranks” in the consultation phase leading up to the Barcelona Conference. Algiers even produced a document that would serve as a common platform contributing to the Declaration.

Algeria) is that the ENP, in this sense, represents a step back in terms of partnership given that the ENP partners were essentially presented with the policy without first having been consulted as to the sectoral issues which the policy encompassed (Darbouche and Gillespie 2006: 16).

The situation has not been much better in the Western Balkans, although these countries are supposedly to become EU members one day. The compliance of governments in the region with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) is central to the development of good relations between the international community and the Balkans. The EU has defined compliance with The Hague-based court as a threshold conditionality when it comes to the process of integration. In addition, the EU regards the success of the ICTY as critical in its struggle to confer legitimacy on the International Criminal Court. However, a number of surveys made in the last year demonstrate that the Tribunal is distrusted by local people and that nationalist politicians like the Radicals in Serbia or nationalist Croatian parties have exploited this resentment in order to fuel anti-European and anti-democratic sentiments. The focus should be much more on the ability of the domestic judicial system to deal with war-related crimes and on the effectiveness of the educational system to promote tolerance and reconciliation, than on 'delivering' certain individuals (Krastev 2002).

Third, EU ambivalence has led to the seemingly arbitrary differences in treatment of different neighboring countries can become a source of resentment towards the EU. Western Balkan countries have not failed to note that EU applies a strict conditionality to qualify for an upgrade in status, while some southern Mediterranean countries have arguably been quite indiscriminately handed their association status without always fulfilling all the stipulated pre-conditions. Pippin (2004) notes: "if compared to similar policies in other fields of EU external relations, the application of

the conditionality principle vis-à-vis the Western Balkans reveals some distinctive features, such as the exceptionally broad range of political and economic conditions used by the Council, their separation in general and country specific conditions, and the introduction of a graduated approach to compliance. This stands in contrast with both the less demanding Eastern enlargement process as well as, for example, the accelerated negotiations with Algeria, Egypt and Lebanon, which one might infer is more testimony of EU's hurry to get the Barcelona Process back on track than these countries' readiness.<sup>23</sup> Moreover, in the case of Algeria, its petition for a Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement in 1994 had been met 'with satisfaction' by the Commission. But the political support of the Twelve was only extended on the condition that the Algerian government undertook economic stabilization and established a precise electoral calendar to get the democratization process in Algeria back on track. Exploratory contacts followed until 1996. Then, allegedly after having secured some promises from the Algerian government, the Council opened negotiations despite lack of progress on the above stipulations and continued instability in the country. This leniency stands in sharp contrast to the severe conditions on major economic and political reform for Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia even to have the negotiations for their Stabilization and Association Agreements opened (Raux, 2001; see also Soler i Lecha and Mestres i Camps 2003). In addition, even within the Western Balkan region there have also been some perceived inconsistencies, in that Macedonia was granted the association agreement in 2001 as a way for EU to support the country's democratic government at a time when it was faced with armed insurgencies in some Macedonian ethnic Albanian provinces. However worthy the reason behind EU's act to bestow association on Macedonia – or the fast-tracking of

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<sup>23</sup> As Schmid (2002: 14) has pointed out, the Commission was seeking to obtain a 'critical mass' in terms of Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreements signed to appear to have the Process back on track, after the 11 September 2001 put a new urgency in the EU's relationship with the Mediterranean south.

Macedonia's EU candidacy and the proposals in regards of Serbia for EU membership which has become an almost inevitable price of the prospects for independence for Kosovo – this gesture has nevertheless created some resentment over the reform programs some of the other countries in the region have to undertake before they can even become eligible for the same preferential status.<sup>24</sup> A country's too hasty rush through the various stages of the SAP is all but helpful for the effective implementation, internalization and sustainability of democratic reforms (Pippan 2004: 245).

Viewed from below, the Balkan democracies are regimes in which the voters can change governments far more easily than they can change policies. International donors see nothing wrong with parties that win office on a populist ticket but govern on an EU-Western oriented ticket. However, there are grounds to think that conditionality in these democratic societies resent externally imposed conditionalities which come at the expense of domestic dialogue among different interests within a given country. The manner in which the international community has imposed constitutional change in Macedonia is a very clear example in this respect. On the one hand, this was a reasonable and necessary change. On the other hand, it had the appearance of an imposition and fed public mistrust in Macedonian institutions and elites. The recurring failure to translate voter preferences into policy changes can, according to Krastev (2002) lead to three undesirable developments: first, it can bring an anti-European party to power (e.g. Serbia, Macedonia); second, it divorces election campaigning from the actual practice of governance and makes it impossible to hold politicians accountable; and third, it makes political learning ineffective. The growing mistrust that publics feel toward democratic institutions is the most salient political facts in the Balkans today.

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<sup>24</sup> The 2001 Macedonia example, where Macedonia was rushed into the SAP in order to prevent an ethnic conflict was also probably providing the policy makers with an incentive to maintain the State Union until enough momentum had gathered behind its accession to the EU that conflict becomes unthinkable.

The elites think that these facts betoken only a failure to communicate. The World Bank and the EU have as a consequence begun to spend on the task of “communicating reforms.” But as Krastev (*ibid.*) notes, the present crisis is not a crisis of communication. It is a failure of representation and a failure of allowing choice.

The EU has in other words, attempted to combine an identitarian projection of the ‘logic of consequences’ (e.g. stability in borderland partners) with the ‘logic of appropriateness’ by prodding on economic and political reform in the borderland partners and attempting to inculcate a feeling of co-ownership. The EU has tried to portray its interventionism as justified on a basis of disinterested ‘responsibility’ at service of borderland partners.

However, outsiders feel that in spite of ‘partnership’ they have little say over EU policies directed toward them and they resent that EU benefits are tied to conditionality. The EU has failed to live up to those hopes, like in the Mediterranean, where “[a]ll the partners expect the EU to meet its obligations as a benevolent dispenser of resources from north to south and as the keyholder of access to the lucrative single European market” (Gomez 2003: 177). Moreover, the legitimacy of the EU’s use of conditionality in its foreign policy has been tainted by the fact that in the past decade the Union has given the impression that it is applying double-standards. The Union is seen to be coddling international autocrats while failing to support fledgling democratic regimes or pro-democracy groups in the name of political stability on its borders. This is lamentable as far as it opens the Union up to criticism of conducting a lofty foreign policy, long on rhetoric but short on substance. Such criticism, in turn, is unfortunate for the credibility of the EU as a foreign policy actor.

#### 7.4. The EU identity dialectics with its borderlands: post-modern vs. modern

In Chapter 2 we noted that the EU tries to style itself as a ‘post-modern’ power or a ‘post-power’ power. Such narratives of projection are important in that they represent the way the EU understands itself and its role in the international environment. These narratives are in essence about being different from a nation state and they are the way the EU constructs itself as a foreign policy actor. However, as we have seen in the preceding sections, the EU has had troubles in advancing its identity-projection in the borderlands. One of the reasons behind the Union’s troubles is that these EU narratives are not clear-cut. The EU’s identity is ambiguous on power. One could argue that since the EU’s power is not steeped in a traditional logic of strategic or compulsory power, the Union cannot escape projecting its power in a mixed fashion. Its post-modern power therefore straddles structural power (hegemonic resource power) and soft power, aiming to produce subjects through co-option and voluntary adaptation by the use of discourse, knowledge, and social relations. This section will, however, look at three factors impeding the EU’s post-modern identity-projection. First, there are clear structural deficits and deficiencies/impracticability of the power-sharing arrangements between the EU and borderland partners. Second, intra-EU problems cause difficulties in the Union’s power-projection. Finally, the borderland partners have relatively low receptivity to EU post-power projection.

#### **7.4.1. The impracticability of true power-sharing arrangements**

First, there has been certain impracticability of true power-sharing arrangements. Cooper (2000) has argued that the countries which make up the European Union belongs to the post-modern setting, where the concept of balance of power has been relatively overcome and sovereignty has been transformed as the states have increasingly accepted as artificial the division between domestic and international affairs. There is also some evidence that the EU has tried to transpose its internal experience of power-neutralization beyond its borders, whether in the form of regional multilateralism, legal arrangements or ‘co-ownership’ approaches. However, in spite of the Union’s efforts, these attempts to level the inherent power differentials have not worked. We readily grant that the task of mitigating the power differential between EU and its borderland partners is perhaps much more difficult to do away with compared to countries further away (e.g. ACP countries) given that the fault line between power differential is naturally sharper close by to the EU. However, the problem is not only one of structural imbalance, but also to some extent of access and lack of empowerment.

On the one hand, we have seen that the EU’s utilitarian approach to level power between big and small countries through regional multilateralism beyond its borders have run into two basic problems. The fundamental problem of any public policy is finding the correct equilibrium between dominant and less dominant interests, big and small, majorities and minorities. The equity cannot be gained among outsiders if they perceive that they are warranted differentiated treatment, that they feel slighted by the imposition of the EU’s homogenizing policy framework. Moreover, any regional multilateralization of EU-outsider relations still depends on a European Union nucleus.



There is thus a ‘hub-and-spoke’ pattern whereby the Union is the stronger actor. The EU has tried to remedy this power differential through summitry or minister meetings, by financial assistance, trade or other carrots, as well as through ‘partnership’ approaches to enable certain sense of co-ownership. However, the experience of the past decade and half is that for all its pledges to co-ownership the EU is institutionally set up in a way which makes outsider input very difficult. The negotiation process among the EU member states and institutions are so cumbersome that the member states are highly reluctant to allow outsiders have more than marginal voice on its policies. The European foreign policy is, in other words, situated in a ‘policy space’ in which the political opportunity structure carries both strong incentives to collective action and significant obstacles to it (Smith, M. 2003). One could infer that the very post-modern intra-EU organizational complexity makes it exceedingly difficult to achieve the post-power objective of power-sharing.

On the other hand power-leveling has also been difficult for a different reason. It can be argued that the EU’s foreign policy identity has been forged on casting the non-EU outside in the role of the threatening Other. Larsen (2004) has noted that the articulation of threats may also be an important ingredient of creating the inside-outside distinction between the domestic and the international which is arguably necessary for the establishing the distinctiveness of a foreign policy actor and its identity. However, the role casting creates further obstacles for cooperation with outsiders. The outsiders are being cast as objects, not subjects of a foreign policy which inevitably leads to the Self/Other hierarchy which impedes the partnership being conceived of as equal partners. Such notions inevitable impedes the empowerment of the borderland partners in those EU policies concerning them.

#### **7.4.2. The intra-EU problems impeding efficient power projections**

The EU's ambition to be and behave as a 'post-power' power has also been hampered by a set of intra-EU problems. Prime among these are obviously the Council-Commission rivalry and the difficulty of the inter-pillar relationship. There has been considerable controversy about the Commission's role in EU foreign policy in the past decade. Inter-pillar tensions have led to unintended contradictions with respect to the EU's foreign policy, by which it has been difficult to produce a coherent foreign policy.

A second source of intra-EU problems which have impeded a successful projections of 'post-power' is the Commission's management problems of the EC financial assistance. Irregularities in the financial assistance has led to periods of suspension of parts of the EU financial assistance, insufficient planning or area-knowledge has led to a scattered approach not always supportive of EU foreign policy 'post-power' objectives (e.g. civil society, cross-border cooperation etc.). Moreover, other complaints ranges from the scarcity of funds made available by the EU for reforms (Darbouche and Gillespie 2006) to the fact that EU fund distribution seemed arbitrary. Tunisia, as we noted in Chapter 4, has been a relatively larger per capita beneficiary of MEDA despite lack of a commitment to pursue EU mandated reforms, compared to Morocco which has undertaken timid transition.

A third source of intra-EU problems is the existence of the rival discourses (protectionism, human rights etc.) among EU member states, which have either cancelled out action or – in two opposing discourses being projected at once – has led to a decided ambiguity of EU foreign policy identity projection. Practitioners and analysts alike have noted the difficulty in pursuing cooperation for development policies based

on a liberal logics of trade and aid, if you at the same time restrict trade in all areas where the partner have a comparative advantage. The situation becomes even more curious when the Union has helped partner countries to export (e.g. in the form of help to export promotion and subsidies) the produce not allowed into the EU market elsewhere in the world. This shows that there is a clear tension – or trade-off – between the ‘logics of consequences’ and the ‘logics of appropriateness’ which is not always easy to resolve. There are, in other words, noticeable inherent contradictions within the EU’s composite identity which have yet to be dealt with by the European Union. These contradictions cause ‘fuzziness’ in the identitarian projection and perhaps unnecessary strain with outsiders who hold the EU as given to double-standards.

#### **7.4.3. Low receptivity in the borderlands to the EU identity**

The third factor which has affected the EU’s identitarian projections negatively is the outsiders’ seemingly low receptivity to the Union’s post-power identitarian constructs. This has depended on two principal factors. On the one hand, outsiders have wanted differentiation and financial assistance to priorities defined by themselves or at least in greater cooperation with Brussels. The development of an EU mode of interaction with its borderlands has been based on that the Union’s concessions and assistance is conditional on the borderland partners’ willingness to adjust to the by EU pre-determined model. Domestic economic reform and restructuring, for example, are usually pre-conditions demanded before any EU economic assistance is made available. The EU liberal free trade model makes it difficult for third countries with alternative

plans of economic development (boosting internal market structures or allowing a more intrusive role to the state) to receive financial assistance.

On the other hand, there seem to a cognitive gap between the EU's intended post-power identity and the identitarian understandings of its borderland partners making suspicions and misunderstandings a constant impediment in the smooth cooperation between the EU and its borderland partners. The EU's actions and rhetoric are undoubtedly different from the identitarian narrative of Russia, Israel or the majority of the Arab countries in the EU's borderlands.<sup>25</sup> The Western Balkan countries feel European culturally, but feel torn between their feeling of safety in the local/ethnic and the EU demands of post-modern multilevelness and networking of identities. The EU's identity and those of its borderland partners therefore do not mix easily and their relative cognitive and communicative disconnect is not conducive to close and practical relationship. The findings of Darbouche and Gillespie (2006: 20) is that EU policy-makers are generally "poorly informed about diversity in Europe's southern neighbourhood, [and therefore] have made unrealistic assumptions about the structural power of the Union. They have underestimated, not only the importance of 'local history' and conditions, but also that of the history of relations between Europe and North Africa back, going back into the colonial period." These analysts' findings could, however, easily be generalized in regards to most EU borderland partners. Kagan (2002) would have us believe that this phenomenon is due to the fact that the European Union does not inhabit the same world (or even the same planet) as its neighbors and close partners. Where the EU is held as Kantian post-modern the rest of the world is essentially Hobbesian, "where international laws and rules are unreliable and where true security and the defense and promotion of a liberal order still depend on the possession

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<sup>25</sup> Only Barcelona Process partners Turkey and Morocco have expressed their feeling of Europeanness.

and use of military might” (ibid). The same author also goes on to note that the traditional ‘modern’ states behave as states always have, following interest, power and *raison d’état*. That is to say, they strive for peace, prosperity and sovereignty of their states (as a modern state), and thus see relatively little in what the EU is offering as something substantial which will help them along the way in their pursuits.

One could to some extent agree with Kagan’s narrative of two worlds – the modern and the post-modern – which agree on little and understand one another less and less. The EU indeed appears at times to have a difficulty in connecting with the outside world, perhaps for being too post-modern. The Europeans seem so consumed by an idealistic identitarian projection based on their own values, norms, perceptions, and prejudice (‘EUtopia’) that they fail to make a correct appraisal of its borderland partners’ political and social situation. The EU and some of its member states seem from time to time too warped up in their post-modernism thinking that their perception of outsiders become distorted and a consequence of frustration is inevitable. The lack of understanding generates policy failures if not corrected. Some member states occasionally show signs of frustration and wonder why Russia, the Middle Eastern countries, Serbia, or Bosnia does not seem to learn to play ‘effectively’ the new kind of politics in the competition for regional growth in Europe or internationally, a competition in which you weaken yourself by setting up too strong political structures — not to speak of relapsing into the old agenda of threats, security and distinct, exclusive identities and borders — instead of concentrating on dynamization, integration, free flows and networking (Joenniemi 1999; cf. Joenniemi and Wæver, 1992: 27).<sup>26</sup> The post-modern outlook of the EU may thus impede a clear sighted

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<sup>26</sup> The same frustration is sometimes expressed among some of the EU member states against some of the Central and Eastern European member states, especially in the latter’s relationship with Russia. Another example is provided by Krastev (2002): “Over the last decade, experts, commentators, and decision makers developed a habit of viewing the Balkans from the perspective of the most endangered country. In

appraisal of a situation in a determined country or region and thus hamper the creation and implementation of a suitable policy, adapted to the local circumstance.

Outsiders – whether candidates, potential candidates or neighbors – thus feel alienated in differing degrees from the dominant EU discourses. The EU therefore faces a profound challenge of articulating a new language which will set a genuine partnership on a new footing. For the countries of the southern Mediterranean, Europe has been as much a source of inspiration for their efforts to build modern states and societies as well as perceived as a set of exploitative colonizing powers against whom they have constructed their national identities throughout the 20th century. The challenge to the *mission civilisatrice* of Europe/the West is therefore strong, in particular with the rise of political Islam since the 1980s. An observation made a decade ago still rings true, southern Mediterranean partners “feel that little effort is expended on trying to understand the region and its problems in its own terms and that, instead, a European perspective is applied to analysis which fundamentally distorts both the prescription and the prognosis” (Joffé 1997: 21). In Russia, as well as in the Western Balkans, there is a perception that there is little space for outsiders to join the construction of an integration-related Europe and gain subjectivity and a legitimate voice in the constitutive discourse pertaining to the configuration that unfolds. Joenniemi (2002) has noted in regards to Russia that the window of opportunity in which Russia could still be tempted by Western integration has passed and that Russia increasingly “refuses to recognise the over-all order imposed by the EU and searches for a jointly agreed outcome that would bolster its subjectivity in the process of constitution

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1993 it was Bosnia that shaped the picture of the region. Later, the Balkans was typically viewed through the lens of the dramatic developments in Kosovo and Belgrade. More recently still, Macedonia has become the paradigm shaper. But when daily headlines and a concomitant sense of “emergency” dominate analysis, distortions can easily occur.

of an internal rather than external Other, one located at the margins, in a jointly recognised manner.”

## 7.5. Conclusion

The EU’s own integration experience has, as we have seen, been the foremost source of inspiration for the European Union’s attempt to create partnerships with its borderlands in the post-Cold War era. The ‘self-styled logic’ has thus been a powerful one behind the setting up of the Barcelona Process, the Northern Dimension and the Stabilization and Association process. This in itself is not so much a problem. The EU and its member states have indeed excelled to create a working institutional entity based on heterogeneity. The institutional apparatus and the power-sharing arrangements within the European Union have arguably worked rather well for its member states and has frequently been object for praise by the international community at large for its successes in managing internal diversity for the benefit of peace and prosperity. There is thus no surprise why the EU would want to draw on its own identity and its experience as a model for styling EU-borderland relations. The Barcelona Process, the Northern Dimension and the Stabilization and Association process seem to be eminent examples for how the EU is trying to help countries in the former Soviet Union, Northern Africa, the Middle East and the Western Balkans to become more stable, democratic and prosperous – in short, to become a bit more like the EU itself (Trenin 2005).

However, as we have seen the expression the EU’s identity take on in its relations with the borderland by ways of regional multilateralism, multi-sectoral

cooperation and interventionism is troublesome for various reasons. The Union's pursuit of regional cooperation arrangements to achieve politics of scale and economies of scale has failed to transpire given the persistence of a 'hub-and-spoke' model in the EU-borderland relations. The multi-sectoral cooperation which was designed to provide holistic solutions to problems have ended up skewed against the interests and preferences of the borderland partners. Finally, EU interventionism was perceived as justified precisely as a consequence of the European construction's integration success. However, the once double-standards and veiled interest began to show up behind the ostensibly 'neutral' EU formula, together with the lack of reciprocity in the relation, the basis of legitimacy for EU interventionism has lost ground.

Arguably thus there is still a gap between the EU's identitarian projections based on a soft approach and the overcoming of power differentials in international relations. What perhaps distorts the EU's attempt to communicate and project its identitarian constructions to its borderlands the most is that the formulas offered by the EU are perhaps not the most adequate for the contexts they are dreamt up. Perhaps there is a grain of truth in the depiction of the EU's post-modernity ('EUtopia') having a hard time resonating with countries which constructs social reality in a differentiated mode. Such dissonance can only be confronted by employing modes of interaction which both addresses 'modern' concerns as well as 'post-modern' simultaneously.



## In Europe's shared borderlands: United States, Russia and the European Union

As the world's only truly global military power at the moment, and given the longstanding relationship between the EU and United States as close allies, it is also relevant to consider the US' direct or indirect influence on EU's foreign policy identity in those geographical areas bordering the European Union. Moreover, through its membership (and *de facto* direction of) NATO, the United States is inextricably linked to the management of stability and security of the European continent and beyond. The EU-US relationship over different aspects related to the European borderland has been conflictive at times, and more often than not the US has had its way. The Cold War patron-client relationship between the US and the European Community surely continues to be a mental obstacle on both sides of the Atlantic today as, one might infer, the post-bipolar process of appraising the other as an international actor is still ongoing.

The Russian Federation, although not such a power on the world stage as its antecessor the USSR, is still, however, a factor to count on in terms of how EU can and will manage the borderlands it shares with Russia. The EU accession of Finland in 1995 made the Union a direct neighbor with Russia, and the Union's 2004 enlargement towards the east has brought the Union deeper into Eastern Europe with all its

implications. There are many issues in EU's/Russia's new shared borderland which produces both conflict and cooperation between the two neighbors, many of which are undoubtedly linked to the yet unconsolidated nature of both actors. As EU is evolving as an international post-modern entity towards an unknown end-goal, Russia is also at an unfinished stage, still struggling with the construction of the state and coming to grips with its Soviet 'imperial' past as well as with its role in the new international system.

It is worth noting at the outset that in overall the launched Barcelona Process, the Northern Dimension and the Stabilization and Association process have, in overall, been welcomed by the US and the Russian Federation. This chapter will therefore rather focus on specific policy issues which enables and constrains the EU's 'autonomy' as a foreign policy actor (and thereby distinctiveness in terms of political identity) in the borderland policy spaces which it also 'share' with the US and USSR/Russia. The chapter will also ponder the effects of such policy space sharing on the EU's international identity. The first sections will examine the US-European relations from the Cold War until present day through the prism of the borderlands, and the last two sections will do the same in terms of USSR/Russia-EC/EU relations.

## 8.1. The EC/EU and the US in Europe's shared borderlands

### **8.1.1. The EC and the United States in the Cold War European vicinity**

Western Europe was to become the principal battlefield as the Cold War was launched. The stalemate between the two rival superpower on this particular frontline – as

physically represented by the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1963 – would entail that alternative areas of influence was going to become the main turfs of conflict. The EEC borderlands would thus obtain a primordial strategic importance for the United States and the Atlantic Alliance. Greece and Turkey landed NATO membership in 1952 and were rewarded US and European aid as a way to impede any prospective Communist advances in these countries. Strategic financial assistance was also heaped on Yugoslavia and in various southern Mediterranean countries; the Mediterranean was conceived by the transatlantic allies as a significant secondary ‘southern’ flank to the superpower standoff in Europe. Northern Europe, especially the sea accesses to the Barents Sea and the North Atlantic, was primordial to the USSR submarine activity in the Atlantic, which meant a febrile activity of espionage and counter-espionage in the region. The watchful US engagement in the European Community’s periphery up until the fall of the Iron Curtain was therefore a natural prolongation of its national territorial defense.

The Europeans shared the US overall objective of wanting to contain the Soviet threat in and around Europe. However, even during the frostiest years of the Cold War the Europeans and the US would diverge over how to best manage the EEC/EC borderlands (Lundestad 2003). The clashing visions of the United States and the Six/Nine/Ten/Twelve over pan-European matters and the Mediterranean area were intrinsically linked to the disparate visions on both sides of the Atlantic of what role the Community should play on the international stage. The US would throughout most of the Cold War consider the Community as a subservient part of a Western whole, under the leadership of the United States. The European political autonomy in the international sphere, as epitomized by EPC, was to a certain extent seen as a threat against the unity of the North Atlantic Alliance and was considered by some circles in

Washington as a ploy by the ‘chauvinist’ French to undermine United States’ position in Europe. Moreover, Washington had been alarmed by “European attempts to make the [EC] Presidency their sole negotiator and feared that this development would cut off their access to individual states, reducing the possibility of intervening in the EPC process” (Nuttall 1997).<sup>1</sup> The essence of then Secretary of State Henry Kissinger’s 1973 ‘Year of Europe’ speech would therefore be to warn the Europeans that, even if they had become economically powerful they should keep to their “regional responsibilities” within an “overall framework of order” managed by the United States (Kissinger 1973).

EPC would, however, emerge, as we have seen, as a consequence of a set of European grievances over not perceiving to be sufficiently consulted by the White House in regards to international matters of importance to the Six, especially in terms of its borderlands (cf. Chapter 3).<sup>2</sup> On the European side EPC was therefore interpreted as a “form of self-defence to try to ensure that the Community’s preferences were not discounted, or even ignored” (Peterson and Bomberg 1999: 229). EPC was thus to become a much needed escape valve when the Europeans from time to time wanted to beg to differ from the Americans over concrete issues related to the international arena (Allen 1992; Nuttall 1997) – many of which were closely tied to the geographical vicinity beyond the Nine/Twelve’s borders.

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<sup>1</sup> At The Hague summit in 1969 when the EPC was created, the institutionalization and development of US-EPC relations were rejected by Paris, with the French Foreign Minister stressing: “the US must on no account be allowed to become the tenth member of the EC.” France thus refused to provide Washington with a permanent right to consultation over Community affairs (Gegout 2002: 339). However, by 1973 the Gymnich meetings with off and on US participation were begun, entailing an ability to be able to influence the Europeans on international issues important to the US. For a more detailed discussion of transatlantic relations during these years (Nuttall 1997).

<sup>2</sup> The Suez Crisis back in 1956 had brought things to a fore, and a later symbolic example of European grievances in the early years of the EPC was the unilateral revocation of the dollar convertibility by Washington on 15 August of 1971. Things came further to a hilt when on 22 June 1973 the Nixon-Brezhnev accord on nuclear war prevention (SALT) was announced, negotiations to which the Europeans had not been party. The Nine’s negative reaction was immediate, in that they considered that they should have been consulted in or at least informed of these negotiations as they concerned the Nine’s immediate environment. Michel Jobert, the French Foreign Minister, quipped that the lack of consultation showed that international politics was, in effect, hostage to the American-Soviet condominium (Gerbet 1999: 372).

The disparate transatlantic visions of the role of the Europeans in international affairs would lead to a string of squabbles during the Cold War. The already difficult EC-US relations would of course become even tenser as the Reagan administration took office in the White House in 1980, the Nine/Ten would again try to assert their autonomy in international affairs. As Gordon and Shapiro (2004: 30) have noted –

“[t]o much of European public opinion, the hawkish new US President seemed to represent an irresponsible cowboy culture whose control over a vast nuclear arsenal put their very existence at risk. Reagan soon fulfilled their worst expectations by denouncing the Soviet Union as an ‘Evil Empire’, calling for the deployment of a missile shield that threatened to destabilize the nuclear balance, and standing up to significant public resistance to the deployment of intermediate-range nuclear missiles on German soil.”

Their common aversion for the trigger-happy foreign policy style of the Reagan administration would provide the cohesion the Nine needed to try to “draw a politically significant line between its preferences and those of the Reagan administration” (Peterson and Bomberg 1999: 229). Relations did obviously not improve when the White House, on its part, did not stoop from calling the Europeans a ‘bunch of wimps’ as a result of their less than solid response to the challenges of international terrorism sponsored by organizations with home base in several EC neighboring countries (Nuttall 1997: 22). As a result, during the 1980s the transatlantic tension would reach new heights, whether over East-West relations, Libya, or a host of other international problems of the day (Smith, K. 2003).

In an attempt to improve transatlantic dealings between the White House and the Community, regular Troika meetings of political directors were instituted in 1986 and contacts on other levels were also strengthened, as a result of a European initiative. The Twelve were reluctant, however, “to agree to contacts at the Working Group level. These were not accepted until four years later, and the whole relationship was put on a formal footing, with the addition of regular summit meetings,” by the Transatlantic Declaration of November 1990 (Nuttall 1997: 28; cf. Wallace 2005). The end of the bipolar rivalry enabled the 1995 New Transatlantic Agenda (NTA), which included, among other things, joint actions on human rights, nuclear proliferation, assistance to Palestine and to Bosnia, as well as banking reform in Ukraine.

The end of the Cold War created another major challenge for the relationship between the United States and the European Union. As the bipolar epoch came to an end, the standing of the United States in the transatlantic relationship, in view of the economic and political changes in the international system, began to change. With the decline and disintegration of the USSR, Western Europe became less reliant upon the United States for its defense in that Europeans feel increasingly secure in a world where there is not large-scale military threat aimed at them. As a result, the EU member states are no longer under such pressure to subsume their foreign policy interests to the wider interests of NATO (Whitman 1998: 141). Moreover, the large economic costs of the East bloc socioeconomic transition was a burden that Washington could not bear alone, especially not given the economic tribulations the US was experiencing as a consequence of a decade of large-scale, unrestrained defense spending.

The emergence of EC/EU as a more consolidated political actor in the early 1990s – symbolized by the creation of the CFSP – is something which Washington has viewed with ambivalence. On the one hand the George H. W. Bush administration

encouraged the Europeans to take on greater responsibility for its Central and Eastern European periphery. In 1988 the G-7 would, for example, bestow upon the European Community the role of coordinating the foreign aid destined for the post-communist countries in that geographical area. Moreover, within a month of the fall of the Berlin Wall US Secretary of State James Baker, on the occasion of a visit to Berlin, said that the Community should use its economic and political instruments to pursue “[t]he promotion of a political and economic reform in the East [in that it] is a natural vocation for the EC” (as cited in Buchan 1993: 141). The logic behind such a move was clear: if Washington was to do less in Europe and more in other parts of the world, the European capitals had to do more in Europe. The American reassessment of the EC was illustrated in a concrete form in the CSCE Paris Charter and the Transatlantic Declaration both of November 1990, conferring on the Community a role of greater equality in international affairs in terms of the unfolding events in Central and Eastern Europe and Soviet Union (Sbragia 1998: 157; Peterson 1994).<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, as Lundestad (2003: 243) notes, in the late 1980s and early 1990s in Washington the assumption continued to be that the United States would act as the undisputed leader of the West, despite the relative rise of Western Europe. This assumption could be expressed with surprising bluntness, at least as much bluntness as in the heydays of US domination, as when Under Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger in 1989 stated that regardless of how big the EC got, or what issues European governments devolved to common decision-making, the need for a strong American voice in Western affairs would not be diminished. The dominant American perception was that, “the President [of the United States] will remain the pre-eminent spokesman for the free world in the decade ahead” (Eagleburger 1989, as quoted in *ibid*).

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<sup>3</sup> Another, more subtle, sign of the George H.W. Bush administration's reevaluation of the Community was the decision to accredit the permanent representative of the Community to the White House, rather

Hence, as negotiations for the Maastricht Treaty (and the CFSP) began, US policymakers would initially respond fairly relaxed manner giving their approval and support. Although when the more long standing implications of the European Union (internal market) and CFSP (autonomous political actor and potentially so in the field of defense) became clear, this attitude began to change. As the Maastricht talks began to take firmer shape in 1992, Washington began to show signs of cold feet (Nicoll and Salmon 1994: 202). The United States became anxious about the economic and strategic implications of European unity, and feared that it might be excluded from certain key developments.”<sup>4</sup>

Given the constraints of the superpower confrontation and the US ambivalence in regards to EPC, the Nine/Twelve foreign policy autonomy was essentially to be an intermittent affair during the Cold War (Sibeon 1997). On occasions, when the US was distracted elsewhere (or indifferent) the Europeans would have some independence of action, as in the case of the negotiations to establish the Helsinki Process in 1975 (see Chapter 3).<sup>5</sup> However, in overall the Europeans would find, time and again, throughout the Cold War that there were limits to their ability to conduct autonomous policies

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than merely to the State Department as previously.

<sup>4</sup> This is evident from both the US initiative to draw up a new NATO security concept, which conferred on the US a continued central role in European security, as well as the US close involvement in the development of the CFSP through parallel negotiations in the seat of NATO (Forster and Wallace 2000: 466; see also Menon et al., 1992).

<sup>5</sup> The United States was hardly at all interested in the CSCE project in the years 1969-72, thus making the preparations of the security conference more or less Europe’s playground. As late as in November 1971, the US National Security Adviser Henry Kissinger pointed out to the West German ambassador in Washington that the Americans did not see the use of such a conference, nor were they convinced that the possible advantages would outweigh the risks involved. Nevertheless, “if the Europeans wanted this conference, Washington would not obstruct them and would take part in it.” (as cited in Hakkarainen 2006: 8) . When US realized the extent and possible implications of the policy, the negotiations were already under way and Washington would limit itself to ensure that the CSCE would not go against the interests of the United States (Lundestad 2003). However, as the same author has also pointed out, the US would soon benefit from the European-negotiated CSCE when it discovered that it could use the Helsinki Process to press for humanitarian improvements within the East bloc especially among the Soviet Jews. The Europeans, in contrast, were disconcerted when they grasped the fact that a large sector of dissidents in Eastern Europe would use the Helsinki Act as a means to pressure their governments for economic and political liberalization. The West Europeans had only been interested in alleviating the worst Communist abuses, not in fomenting dissident movements which could eventually translate into destabilization close to their borders.



without seriously compromising their security dependency on the United States (Forster and Wallace 2000: 466). Telling examples were to be both the 1975 Euro-Arab Dialogue and the 1980 Venice Declaration. Although the Venice Declaration, for example, was to be considered a significant move forward in European policy on the Middle East, it was considerably less bold than in its original draft form, and this was the direct result of US intervention (Nuttall 1997: 26-7; Hill 1992; Regelsberger 1990). Thus while EPC would lend the Nine/Twelve intermittent foreign policy autonomy, the pressures exerted by the US on the EC member states acted to construct a constraining environment for EPC action in the EC borderlands to the extent that it would be difficult to argue that a well-defined or coherent international identity by the Nine/Twelve vis-à-vis these areas was projected.

### **8.1.2. US/EU topics in the changing EU's borderlands**

When after the fall of the Berlin Wall Washington encouraged the Community to provide trade agreements and financial assistance for ensuring the Central and Eastern European countries' transition, this was therefore above all a gift to the EC as an economic, not a political, actor. The Europeans were allowed *laissez-faire* in the East bloc because the US saw the situation there initially as primarily an economic problem. However, by 1992 the perceived instability in Central and Eastern Europe would draw the United States – and NATO – back into European affairs. Thus, as Hill (1998b: 35) has observed –

“far from fading quietly from the scene, as seemed possible, NATO [...] strengthened its position in the politics of European security, and through the lead which [the NATO] enlargement process has on the EU (indeed, it is helping to shape EU enlargement) it is drawing the United States back into a geopolitical relationship with both Russia and the mass of European states.”

The impact of the NATO enlargements in terms of conditioning EU's policy towards the Central and Eastern Europe was inevitable. Washington's involvement in the shaping of the EU enlargement process has been quite literally hands-on, ranging from discrete diplomatic tours of different European capitals to subsidies for ads in major European newspapers, as has been the case of US support of the Turkish EU accession. In 1997 the United States would in the months previous to the Luxembourg European Council (December 1997) strongly back the opening of EU accession talks with all, or at least one, of the Baltic countries. The objective was to achieve a linkage between EU enlargement and NATO expansion. In the case of the three Baltic states, the Clinton administration wanted to ensure that one of the three was included at Luxembourg as a way of compensating for failing to achieve NATO membership in the 1999 expansion round (including only Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland). As US Undersecretary of State, Strobe Talbott, stated in May 1997 that –

“we [the US] support EU's deepening in the West and broadening to the East and view NATO's enlargement as creating an environment that is conducive to the EU's enlargement as well. The two processes are parallel and should both support a deeper transatlantic community.”

The US overtures met a stern rebuttal by various EU member states in 1997, alleging that the Union was going to enlarge based on its own set of criteria and when the candidate states were deemed as ready. However, notwithstanding the diplomatic EU posturing of independence, the debate quickly died down as Estonia made the first-cut among the Luxembourg-group of six (Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia).<sup>6</sup>

Estonia, and the other two Baltic States, has also been the focus of several other US initiatives during the 1990s. Washington has taken a very strong interest in supporting the Baltic States since their independence in 1991.<sup>7</sup> Early on after independence the Clinton administration tried to convince the EU and individual Nordic countries to assume the responsibility for the Baltic States, in the latter's pursuit for security guarantees against what they saw as an essentially hostile Russia. Washington's overtures would, however, be to no avail and Clinton would eventually in 1998 have to provide an American 'all-but' outright military security guarantee for the Baltic States through the signing of the 'Baltic Charter'. Moreover, in 1997 the US would also launch the Northern European Initiative (NEI) to support the ongoing Baltic Sea regional cooperation.<sup>8</sup> With the 2004 Baltic accession to the EU the Bush administration appeared to be on the verge of cancelling the NEI for lack of continued US interest in

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<sup>6</sup> The Union's request for the US to not intervene on behalf of one or other candidate states – or proposing new candidate states – has, however, since largely gone unheeded by the Clinton and the George W. Bush White House. It is worth noting that in 2004, with the pending decision whether to open accession negotiations with Turkey at the December 2004 European Council, various European leaders have made public statements to the effect of asking Washington to desist from trying to influence the European decision, a fact which did not stop George W. Bush – symbolically enough standing on the shores of the Bosphorus Straits which geographically divides Europe from Asia – to expressing his support for the Turkish EU candidacy.

<sup>7</sup> This is in part a consequence of historical reasons (never formally recognized their Soviet annexation) and in part consequence of the successful Baltic diplomatic service and lobby in the US which kept the Baltic issues on the US political agenda between 1940 and 1991.

<sup>8</sup> The NEI pursues three broad objectives: to integrate the Baltic states into a regional network of cooperative programs with their neighbors and support their efforts to prepare for membership in key European and Euro-Atlantic institutions; to integrate northwest Russia into the same cooperative regional network to promote democratic, market-oriented development in Russia as well as to enhance Russia's relations with its northern European neighbors; and to strengthen US relations with and regional ties

sustaining the regional cooperation the Baltic Sea area. However, the initiative was eventually saved and refurbished into a modestly funded Enhanced Partnership in Northern Europe (e-PINE) initiative, but allegedly only keeping the program after considerable insistence by those US officials involved in the previous NEI (Browning and Joenniemi 2004).<sup>9</sup>

Another issue which would loom large on the European horizon throughout the 1990s was the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia. As the armed skirmishes broke out, it at first seemed that the Europeans had the situation under relative control and would be able to broker a peace-agreement. The administrations of George H. W. Bush and Clinton (first mandate) appeared somewhat miffed by European suggestions that the American role could be minimized, but still certainly willing to let Lord Carrington (the appointed the EC's mediator) and Cyrus Vance (United Nations) have a go at resolving the situation (Edwards 1997; Forster and Wallace 2000: 477). In the words of the then Secretary of State James Baker (1995: 636), the feeling in Washington was "that it was time for the Europeans to step up to the plate and show that they could act as a unified power. Yugoslavia was as good a first test as any." Even as the conflict escalated the Clinton White House hesitated to engage in a military peace-intervention, in that for most Americans the Balkan conflicts was a largely European affair.<sup>10</sup> However, by 1994 the United States decided to get involved after the satellite pictures of the mass graves created by Serbs after they overran Srebrenica, moved the US public opinion.

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among the Nordic states, Poland, Germany, and the European Union.

<sup>9</sup> The e-PINE focuses on three broad areas for regional cooperation, including cooperative security; healthy societies; and vibrant economies.

<sup>10</sup> When the Yugoslav Federation disintegrated in the early 1990s, the first Bush administration made diplomatic efforts to keep it together. However, as the situation deteriorated Washington concluded, in the inimitable words of Secretary of State James Baker, that the US simply had 'no dog in the fight'. Yugoslavia in the post-Cold War era was no longer a matter of vital US national security interest. The only military commitment the United States made was at Christmas 1992, when it warned it would use military force if Serbia provoked violent conflict in Kosovo (Serwer 2003: 170-1).

The Clinton administration now reacted by proposing its 'lift and strike' strategy involving air strikes, while not committing any troops on the ground, a measure initially opposed by various European countries but later agreed upon through NATO (Edwards 1997: 188). As the hot conflict moved into a cold stage the US appointed Richard Holbrooke as special envoy to Bosnia (and later Kosovo) to conduct peace talks. The US special envoy was not going to become popular with EU governments for his overbearing, hectoring style and for doing his best to block EU (as an entity) involvement in any peace settlement. This was a part a reflection on that there was simply no patience in Washington to deal with fifteen EU member states and their different opinions (with all its time-consuming negotiations) in order to reach a common position. The Americans would, however, tolerate European involvement through the Contact Group made up of the United States, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, and Russia.

The same Contact Group would later try to broker the Rambouillet peace accord with Serbia over Kosovo in 1999. However, given the refusal of Milosevic to accept the terms of the accord, the US took the initiative to transfer the impasse to NATO. A bombing campaign ensued, during which the Quint – United States, France, Germany, Great Britain and Italy – stayed in close contact. The positive experience of the Quint cooperation, Gegout (2002) argues, has entailed a continued discrete consultation between these five countries even on other issues, such as over the armed insurgency in Macedonia (2001), the situation in Turkey, the EU/NATO enlargement processes and Russia. The Quint, or indeed any type of *directoire* involving the US, with possible ramifications for EU foreign policy making has been vehemently opposed by the smaller member states of the Union.<sup>11</sup> However, it has begrudgingly been accepted that

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<sup>11</sup> The Netherlands has expressed the resentment felt in a pithy slogan "no taxation without participation", as a net contributor to the EU budget The Hague feels that it should be involved in major policy decisions

in certain situations the Quint – or the EU-3 plus Solana, as in the case of the negotiations with Iran to abandon its nuclear program – is convenient when coordination with US is needed over a global issue involving both European and US, or when a *directoire* types of group could be more effective than 27 members when addressing crisis situations.

Once the Kosovo crisis had blown over the US was again willing to allow the EU to take the lead in the economic reconstruction and eventual EU accession process for these countries. Moreover, with the George W. Bush ‘war on terror’ in Afghanistan and Iraq, Pentagon has ordered a withdrawal of troops from the Balkans, essentially leaving European soldiers in charge of the peacekeeping missions in Bosnia, Kosovo and Macedonia.<sup>12</sup> The EU’s role in conflict resolution in Macedonia in 2001, its subsequent deployment of its first ever peacekeeping mission there, its role in brokering the new deal between Serbia and Montenegro in 2002, and its assumption of leadership in the international police mission in Bosnia in 2003 – which subsequently was followed up by the EU military mission to this same country – demonstrate that, as an institution, the Union increasingly willing to pick up some of the challenges in its Western Balkan borderlands. These initiatives have also in general been well-received in Washington. However, there is no doubt that the perception in Washington continues to be that the political leadership of the Western Balkans rests ultimately with the US. This is evident from the way Washington has set the agenda and the breakneck pace of the work of the special UN-envoy assigned to produce a plan for the future independence of Kosovo which is set to be voted on at the UN Security Council in 2007. Only after independence will Washington step aside and allow the EU to supervise Kosovo’s process from international protectorate to full-fledged statehood.

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(Gegout 2002: 338).

<sup>12</sup> The US has, however, kept a minimal presence in the form of NATO-stationed troops in Bosnia-

The EU-27 on their side however, currently remains divided on independence for Kosovo. While some EU member states favor the UN-proposed plan, Slovakia, Italy and Cyprus are voicing reservations out of fear that Kosovo would set an international legal precedent with ramifications either for their respective domestic situations or other areas of the world looking to self-determination. Kosovo is thus an issue which gives rise to competing discourses within the EU.

Nevertheless, where EU-US relations have perhaps experienced the most tension in regards to the EU's borderlands is in the Mediterranean, especially in the Middle East. The United States still maintains many of those clientele relations it had built up with different southern Mediterranean countries during the Cold War (Morocco, Egypt, Israel etc.) and, at times, seem to bank its credibility as a global power on its ability to manage the Broader North Africa and Middle East (BMENA) understood as stretching from the Western shore of the Mediterranean all the way to south Asia (Pakistan). Principally it is the United States and France which have clashed over different worldviews related to the Mediterranean. So far the US has come out on top. For example, in Algeria the United States was more open to a negotiated solution between the government and the Islamic-led insurrection than was France; in the Middle East the traditional differences continued between a US friendly to Israel and a France much more sympathetic to the Palestinian/Arab cause.<sup>13</sup> In the Middle East conflict the Europeans have finally managed to obtain a formal role (through the Quartet: US, UN, Russia and the EU), but it is a very junior partner indeed, and with very little real influence over major developments on the ground. Nonetheless, it should be noted that

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Herzegovina (much to the dismay of the French) for the purpose of fighting international terrorism.

<sup>13</sup> The French-US power struggle was well exemplified over the command of the Sixth Fleet. America would not yield its hold on NATO's Southern Command which supervised US ground forces in Bosnia and the American sixth fleet in the Mediterranean. The result was that France did not join NATO's military integrated structure after all, but only took up its seat on the main military-political bodies in SHAPE (Lundestad 2003).

even if a subordinate associate in the Middle East, the European discourse and finances have allowed it to mark a differentiated EU policy line from that of Washington, especially on 'soft' issues where the US has scarce strategic interest (e.g. human rights and humanitarian conditions). This is a consequence of the public opinion in different EU member states putting pressure on their respective governments to react against the worst excesses of Israeli retaliation against the Second Intifada, such as the destruction of the refugee camps in Jenin, the selective assassination of Hamas leaders and the construction of the Security Wall (on Palestinian territory), none of which solicited any noteworthy reaction from Washington (Soler i Lecha and Vaquer i Fanés 2005: 122). The European public opinion was also relatively quicker, as compared to their American counterpart, to argue for a rapid solution to the Israeli-bombing campaign over southern Lebanon in August 2006. The Americans have at all times maintained the Israeli right to defend itself, while the Europeans have called for a more measured (preferably diplomatic) response.

The US opposition to certain EU foreign policy action in the Middle East has also been linked to the divergent views that the transatlantic allies have over how to best engage with the countries in the area. Transatlantic differences arose, for example, in early 2006 over how the West should act when the Parliamentary elections in the Palestinian Authority brought Hamas to power. The Europeans showed themselves initially ambiguous over how to approach Hamas, given that the organization had been voted in through democratic elections but was on their post-2001 list of terrorists. The US would quickly react to the European will to 'study the situation' by pressuring for an economic boycott against the Palestinian government, to which the Europeans would eventually agree. The fact that the Europeans gave into Washington's pressure appear to

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run in counter with its professed international identity. The EU has shown itself to be a firm proponent of a policy of engagement and the maintenance of diplomatic channels, while the US in similar situations favors cutting ties and employing sanctions. The Union appears profoundly convinced that political dialogue and trade appears is the best recipe for guaranteeing stability. The incident over Hamas thus goes to show to some extent that even if more consolidated today, the EU's international identity can still at time be intermittent.

In sum, there has been a gradient of enabling and constraining elements in the US-European relationship vis-à-vis the EU borderlands since the early 1990s. In terms of Northern Europe and the Western Balkans the US would essentially see these areas as the responsibility of the European Union, although it has still been drawn in, in different ways, in order to supply hard security whether in the form of 'security guarantees' for the Baltic States or by settling conflict (ex-Yugoslavia). As the EU's political willingness and corresponding capabilities have improved in recent years, the American presence in some of these borderland areas have been reduced and thus giving more room for EU's autonomy. What is more, the US – currently preoccupied with global security concerns elsewhere – takes kindly to the EU involvement in these two geographical areas. However, in terms of the Middle East the US is reluctant to have its diplomacy constrained by the EU (or any other actor) and therefore the EU's political headroom for having autonomy is rather limited. Although in the wake of the 11 September 2001 and the Iraqi conflict there is a convergence among EU and US foreign policy objectives such as fomenting democracy, prosperity and human rights for Northern Africa and the Middle East, the basis for EU-US cooperation in the Mediterranean is relatively thin. The EU-US worldviews are quite different in terms of how such objectives should be achieved, which as was evident after the 2006 Hamas

victory in the Palestinian parliamentary elections. A spokesman for Patten has stated that in regards to the Mediterranean: “[i]t is clear we [the EU] share the same objectives as the US [on] human rights, terrorism, democracy and WMD. But [...] we do not share the same tactical approach” (as cited in *The Guardian* 2004).

Such findings support the view that the US – almost two decades after the end of the Cold War – continues to be hesitant about the EU as a foreign policy actor. There are essentially two rivaling discourses in Washington. On the one hand it is frequently noted that the EU has a population that is already almost a hundred million larger than that of the US and a gross national product somewhat larger than that of the US. There are thus those who fear the economic strength and resulting influence of the EU in the European borderlands would provide the stepping stone for a globally-engaged ‘superpower’ Europe which could come to rival the US. Such a discourse would hold that if and when the EU is truly able to develop a common foreign and defense policy, then the US–EU relationship is bound to change dramatically. The other dominant discourse in Washington is that which sees the EU foreign policy (and the ESDP) as a nice complement to US efforts. This is a discourse whereby the EU foreign policy is seen as dovetailing with US action in stabilizing areas such as Northern Europe and the Western Balkans which are important to the US (i.e. ‘burden-sharing’). This in part stems from the realization in Washington that no matter how militarily powerful and capable of unilateral interventions, the United States will always need friends and allies to share its undertakings (legitimacy, financially etc.). Nevertheless, it is worth noting that both discourses labor under the assumption that the EU foreign policy at all times should be amenable to US direction (i.e. US ‘plays’ and the EU ‘pays’).

For the EU, the US has perhaps been the single most important influence on the emergence of an EU’s foreign policy identity. The US has also consistently acted as the

'Other' for the EU to define its foreign policy persona since EPC times (external federator).<sup>14</sup> Moreover, it was the US choice to 'pull-out' economically from Europe (transferring responsibility) which has been the basis for the EU's growing political autonomy in the borderlands. Nevertheless, the emergent European identity in the borderland is to a large extent still heavily contingent on its intersubjective relations with the US, whether in supplying security or in the way Washington often sets the agenda and supplies the pressure for the Europeans to react.

The perception among borderland partners in regards to an EU international identity which still in the post-Cold War era from time to time seem sub-edited by Washington is of confusion and of vulnerability. Confusion stems from the difficult time to distinguish the EU's international identity from the American one when they work together (stabilization) in that the EU identity disappears behind the better defined American one. Confusion also stems from the fact that the EU has seemingly from time to time positioned itself on important international issues related to their regions more as a consequence of the American posture, rather than a levelheaded calculation of what the EU's policy should be based on given its interests and values combined with the reality on the ground. The feeling of vulnerability stems from the way the EU's international identity is often defined simply as being about being different from the US rather than a consistent projection of the proclaimed post-modern foreign policy identity of the Union. Thus, even if we have seen that the borderland partners do not want the EU to replace the US as an international referent for their country, they would in most cases wish for more constancy in the Union's foreign policy and to be able to depend on

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<sup>14</sup> Outsiders are well aware of this complex identitarian autonomy battle between the EU and the US. Southern Mediterranean politicians and/or observers have, for example, for time to time accused the Union for having too 'Americanized' policy views (e.g. the debate on the 2005 Code of Conduct on Countering Terrorism in Chapter 4). Such labelling, whether factually based or not, has usually jolted the EU to try to take a slightly differentiated position in order to avoid being seen as pursuing a policy line dreamt up Washington.

the European Union as a reliable actor standing firm on its collective identity and beliefs.

## 8.2. The EC/EU and USSR/Russia in Europe's shared borderlands

### 8.2.1. The EC and the Soviet Union in Cold War Europe

On the other side of the Iron Curtain the Soviet Union reigned supreme. Moscow would make very clear both with its intervention to crush reform movements in Hungary (1956) and in Czechoslovakia (1968) that it was not going to tolerate any of its satellites to be pried away from the Soviet controlled East bloc or allow them to adopt independent policies away from the USSR line. The subsequent Brezhnev Doctrine would mean a stern control of the East bloc satellites, leaving scarce margin for maneuvering neither for the countries it comprehended nor for the West.<sup>15</sup> The East thus faced the West off straight through Central Europe, and most issues related to the Cold War division of Europe were dealt with by the USSR and US directly, often over the heads of Western Europe. With the exception of Tito's Yugoslavia, and to some extent Romania, there were thus no co-habitation issues between the EC and the Soviet Union in the Cold War period, in that a shared borderland did not really exist. In terms of EC's

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<sup>15</sup> The 'Brezhnev Doctrine' was introduced by Leonid Brezhnev in a speech to the Fifth Congress of the Polish United Workers' Party on November 13, 1968. The Soviet leader expounded – “[w]hen forces that are hostile to socialism and try to turn the development of some socialist country towards capitalism, it becomes not only a problem of the country concerned, but a common problem and concern of all socialist countries.” This effectively meant that no Warsaw Pact country was allowed to experiment with internal social, political or economic reform which deviated away from the policy set in Moscow. The Doctrine was used in posteriori to justify the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, and – curiously enough – also to justify the invasion of (non-Warsaw Pact) Afghanistan in 1979 (Nationmaster Encyclopedia 2004).

non-East bloc neighbors, the USSR did not oppose (more than on a formally ideological level) to EC's extension of networks of association- and trade and cooperation agreements in its dealings with the EFTA or Mediterranean non-member countries in that these belonged, according to the Yalta logic, to the Western sphere of influence anyway.<sup>16</sup>

In perceiving the EC as essentially yet another American ploy to contain Soviet in Europe, Moscow would not initially see the Community as a political actor worth attention nor, in the logical extension, was it an actor with which spheres of influences should be shared (Nicoll and Salmon 1994; Herrberg 1998: 88). Moscow would view the Community merely as the economic arm of NATO and “an organ of Western European monopoly capitalism doomed to inevitable destruction because of its internal contradictions” (Nello 1990). Khrushchev would at first largely ignore the EEC, preferring to continue to deal with each Western European country individually (on economic matters, with a special penchant for divide and rule) or directly with the United States (security). However, by the early 1960s the economic success of the Community had become evident, and in a 1962 article in the Kremlin controlled newspaper *Pravda* the EEC was acknowledged as an indisputable economic and political reality (Smith, K 1999: 23). The early economic success of the EEC, and the economic and political attraction power which the new Community would soon come to hold over the East bloc countries was an indirect challenge to the Soviet Communist system, which in spite of break-neck modernization and direct state control over the

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<sup>16</sup> The 1944 Yalta agreement would influence generations of Soviet leaders. Finland's status as ‘semi-sovereign’ was in this case emblematic in that Moscow would refuse all petitions from Helsinki to join regional organizations in the West which had a political or economic component. This rigidity would only be loosened up by the 1970s, when this Nordic country and the other members of European Free Trade Association (EFTA) entered into industrial free trade agreement with the EC in late 1973. In the Mediterranean there were occasionally episodes in which the USSR tried to “leapfrog the containment” (Kissinger 1994) and get a foothold of influence in the Middle East (Egypt, Syria), however, in general they were an expensive adventure for USSR to undertake and were never directed against Western Europe (as opposed to the US).

production means had failed to produce similar economic growth. Moreover, the emergence of an economically potent Western Europe seeking an independent international role obliterated any Soviet hope of extending its political influence westward, which had been one of USSR's postwar objectives. Finally, the creation of the Common Agricultural Policy 1962, and the 1 January 1970 deadline to submit national member states trade prerogatives to the Common Commercial Policy, additionally reinforced the image of Western Europe as an economic actor of considerable significance on the continent. As a consequence, when Leonid Brezhnev seized the reigns of the USSR in 1964, Moscow was left to pursue two main lines of foreign policy. On the one hand it would reassert itself as the only and indisputable power over the East bloc, which it did through the military intervention in Czechoslovakia in August 1968 and the subsequent Brezhnev Doctrine. However, on the other hand, Moscow intensified its overtures towards Western European states in terms of proposing a pan-European conference on security and economy.<sup>17</sup>

The Nine would jump at the proposal as EPC got under way (Allen 1992; Herrberg 1998: 89). They saw the negotiations for the 1975 Helsinki Act as a way to decisively improved East-West relations which had been profoundly shaken by the Soviet reaction to the Prague Spring. The Nine also countered the Soviet uni-sectoral concern – the recognition of the East German borders – with their own more comprehensive agenda including economic cooperation and human rights concerns. The CSCE-negotiations and EPC would therefore serve to cohesion the Nine around a

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<sup>17</sup> During the 1950s and 1960s the Soviet Union had at various occasions forwarded proposals to the Western European states in regards to holding talks on European issues related to security and economy. The Soviet aim was to have the division of Germany legitimated and the Yalta conference's European border revisions fully recognized. Moreover, Moscow wanted to boost trade between West and East and if, on top of that, the Six could be lured away from the American fold Brezhnev's gamble would have been a 'full house' (Herrberg 1998: 89). In tune to a US-USSR rapprochement after the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, Washington and its European NATO allies agreed to the proposal in exchange for a Soviet commitment to engage in talks on force reductions in Europe (Smith, K 1999: 23).

common stance vis-à-vis the East bloc, thereby raising the profile of the EC and reducing Soviet pressure on individual member states.

EC-Soviet relations would further change for the positive in connection with the 1979 election of Ronald Reagan to US President. Frustrated by the shortcomings of the Soviet Union to live up to its optimistic rhetoric about the 'relaxation of tensions', which was not matched by any internal liberalization in the Soviet Union or its satellites, the Reagan White House coming into power in 1980 would radically revise the US policy of détente towards the USSR. As the Reagan administration fulminated about the 'empire of evil' and wanting to starve the USSR economically, the Soviet Union would unexpectedly find allies among Western European states opposing a return to a US policy of containment in preferring continued engagement. Trade relations would thus in this period continue and even expand between Western Europe and the Soviet Union.

This tendency would accelerate as Mikhail Gorbachev became Secretary General of the Soviet Community Party in 1985, introducing *perestroika* and *glasnost* economic and political reforms. The priority of the new Politburo became to boost the Soviet economy and the return to the world economy was an important factor in that calculation in order to avoid outright economic collapse. The EC hence became a natural partner in this pursuit, leading to the upgrading in Moscow of the Community as an entity with common, or complementary rather than hostile, interests to the USSR.<sup>18</sup> Cooperation with the EC was seen by the Soviet leaders as positive in many ways. It

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<sup>18</sup> Gorbachev seemed acutely aware of the dangers of how identitarian borders drawn between the 'ins' and 'outs' could affect posterior (European) aid flows, when he noted that [s]ome in the West are trying to 'exclude' the Soviet Union from Europe. Now and then, as if inadvertently they equate 'Europe' with 'Western Europe'. Such ploys, however, cannot change the geographic and historical realities. Russia's trade, cultural and political links with other European nations and states have deep roots in history. We are Europeans" (Gorbachev as cited in Neumann 2001: 153).

allowed the Soviet regime to avoid having to depend on its erstwhile foe the United States for any favors. Moreover, as one observer notes –

“[c]ooperation with the EC was seen by the Soviets as an attractive foreign policy option that posed no immediate dangers: the EC’s relatively weak political cooperation structure and its largely civilian nature prevented a potential military threat” (Herrberg 1998: 91).

As Europe began to change in the late 1980s, there was considerable concern in Western Europe of a reversal of Gorbachev’s reformist policies and a military lash out as communist regimes fell in Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia and later in other Central and Eastern European countries. To prevent such a retrenchment, the EC and its member states began to give substantial financial assistance combined with ‘soft’ credits and in 1989 a trade and cooperation agreement was concluded between EC and the Soviet Union. Moreover, several EC G-7 member states (most notably Germany), together with the Commission President Delors, would lobby the other G-7 member states in the coordination of aid to Russia. The G-7 cooperated actively with the Community; however, the EC would still be the largest provider of humanitarian aid to Russia (80 per cent of total) (Serra 2000: 175-6).

These strengthened economic links between the European Community and Russia undoubtedly changed the Russian perception of EC’s international actor capability for the positive. Given that the USSR was increasingly busy at home with its own reform efforts, as well as increasingly bankrupt, it had no doubt no problem in subscribing to the CSCE Charter of Paris (November 1990), where it – together with the Twelve and the US – would endow the EC with an increasingly larger role in the



building of a 'New Europe' and thus in effect conferring implicit international actorness on the Community.

The Cold War era in the Nine/Twelve would see themselves constrained by the USSR in terms of policy environment and it was not until the rise of Gorbachev that the EC was to be truly viewed as an autonomous international actor in Moscow. The *perestroika* in particular helped the Soviets to reappraise the EC in a new light and generated the needed policy space for an incipient EC-12 international identity. However, Moscow as Washington would base its reappraisal of the Community at the end of the Cold War on the Union's economic identity rather than any political equivalent.

### **8.2.2. The EU, Russia and their changing borderland**

As Soviet's successor state, the Russian Federation, shrank back both in terms of territorial size as well as loss of influence over the former Soviet 'empire', a shared borderland would begin to take shape. Russia, under the leadership of the erratic Boris Yeltsin, would remain essentially pro-Western during the period 1992-97, mirroring the Russian public opinion at large, which held a fairly positive view of the West as foreign aid began to trickle in (Wagnsson 2000 and 2001). Moreover, the positive Russian view of the EU was also based on a feeling that the introduction of democracy and market economy had put the Russians essentially in the same boat as the Western Europeans. However, the Russian positive reading of the EU during this period would still be somewhat dented by the delays in the EU member states' ratification of the 1994 EU-

Russian Partnership and Cooperation Agreement as a consequence of the first Chechen War. Another irritant for Russia was the Western tendency to pledge substantial aid and then fail to deliver or exact onerous conditions to USSR debt-repayments.

The main bone of contention between Russia and the West during this period would, nevertheless, be the creation of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) and the Partnership for Peace (PfP) in 1991 and 1994 respectively, and the intense diplomatic campaign Moscow launched against NATO's expansion towards the East. Kremlin argued that in the changed international environment, where military security no longer played such an important role, NATO had become redundant. It was in Moscow's minds now time for entities such as the CSCE/OSCE to manage European security. When the Russian arguments seemed to fall on deaf ears, Moscow would try other arguments, like the proposal launched by Yeltsin of a 'European Security Council', inspired by the UN Security Council, which would be given the task of coordinating all efforts to promote security on the European continent. These Russian overtures, however, would not have the desired effect. Desperately, Yeltsin reacted by issuing a warning at the CSCE summit in Budapest in December 1994, arguing that the NATO expansion could result in a division of Europe, and that Europe risked being plunged into a "cold peace." Likewise, in 1997, he warned, "the times are getting critical for Europe" (*ibid* 2001).

The Russian opposition to NATO enlargement would be especially vehement in the mid-1990s when it became clear that the former Soviet republics Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania wished to join the Atlantic Alliance (Rubinski 1997; Kionka 1994).<sup>19</sup> Germany, always sensitive and sympathetic to Russian concerns, would initially seek to

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<sup>19</sup> Russian opposition was presumably in part based on the Baltic States' NATO-membership would upset the fragile Russian domestic political environment, fanning the fires of the anti-Western and non-reformist forces in the opposition. The perspective of stationing of NATO troops and military materiel only a short drive away from the heart of Russia (i.e. Moscow) was neither something most Russian

appease Russian apprehension. German Foreign Minister Kinkel, with the sanction of Chancellor Helmut Kohl, would launch a dual-track foreign policy campaign within different European organizations based on the premises that the Baltic States should not become NATO members, but they would instead be compensated with becoming EU members. Germany's 'Russia first' attitude would undermine its standing in the Baltic States. The German government had perhaps been one of the least supportive of EC governments of the Lithuanian struggle for independence out of fear of annoying the Soviet Union, although the USSR was already locked in a death-battle.<sup>20</sup> Moreover, whereas in 1991 many Estonians viewed Germany as a country that could neutralize Russian pressure against their country, by 1994 there was resignation. By then nobody believed that Germany would risk its special relationship with Russia for Estonia's or any of the Baltic countries' sake (Blank 1997).

Russian opposition to the Baltic States' accession to NATO has not had any clear parallel in regards to their joining the European Union. However, always ready to draw linkages, the situation of the Russian-speaking minorities, especially in Latvia and Estonia, would become a bone of contention in several organizational contexts (OSCE, EU enlargement). The topic first arose in the framework of the implementation of the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty, in which Moscow had committed itself to withdraw the 43,000 troops still present in the territory of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in 1992.<sup>21</sup> Even with the international community's stamp of approval in terms of Estonian and Latvian citizenship's normative being in order, and the creation

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politicians relished.

<sup>20</sup> However, it is worth noting that there was a brief period of German-Baltic closeness. After their independence and diplomatic recognition, the then German foreign minister Genscher (a major proponent of Baltic and Baltic Sea affairs) would be the first to plead EC to start negotiations on Association Agreements with the Baltic trio, while the majority of EC members opposed not viewing the Baltic states as yet ready to undertake the obligations inherent in such an agreement (Garton Ash, as quoted in Arnswald 2002: 25).

<sup>21</sup> But it is worth noting that *during* the negotiations for the CFE Treaty there was no Russian attempt to establish linkage. This Russian grievance on emerged after the Treaty had been concluded (Arnswald

of a special status for the stateless Russophones not wanting to obtain the citizenship in these countries, Russia remains unsatisfied. However, apart from the status of Russian brethren in Estonia and Latvia, in overall there has been very little Russian reaction to the seven year-long EU accession process, a fact which in itself has perhaps been a bit surprising to some Russia watchers. The Russian apathy in regards to Eastern enlargement was only broken at a relatively late stage. Moscow's different demands on a diverse set of topics related to the EU enlargement were only forwarded to Brussels as Eastern enlargement entered into its final stage. Curiously, most topics – such as for example, a workable transit arrangement for the Russian exclave Kaliningrad, squeezed between Lithuania and Poland, and a last minute Russian flurry to ensure that EU accession did not jeopardize its access to some of its principal markets in Central and Eastern Europe – were thus not mooted by Russia until the EU accession agreements with the Central and Eastern European countries were already signed. In 2004, Moscow and Brussels would, however, clash over compensation for trade diversion losses Russia claimed to incur from Eastern enlargement. When Russia was denied continued favourable access and/or compensation, Moscow threatened (and have posterior implemented) trade retaliations against goods from the new EU member states.<sup>22</sup>

The Russian sensitivity over its international status has been a recurrent item in EU-Russian relations in the past decade in relation to the EU-Russian borderland. However, one can argue that Russia's national pride received an especially grave shock over the 1998-9 Kosovo crisis. As armed conflict in Kosovo broke out in spring 1998, the Contact Group, formed over the Bosnian conflict in 1994, was resuscitated. The Contact Group (United States, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, and Russia) would function until the final Rambouillet attempt to find a peaceful solution to the crisis came

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2002: 32).

<sup>22</sup> See for example the Russian ban on Polish and Romanian beef as a response to a similar Polish ban

to nothing as Milosevic defied the peace terms. In the year-long consultation process over Kosovo, the Contact Group would continuously experience troubles in that the Russian position (adamantly against air strikes against Serbia and/or outside intervention into the Yugoslav conflict over Kosovo)<sup>23</sup> became more and more isolated as the remaining partners in the Group edged towards a NATO intervention.<sup>24</sup> Moreover, as United States, France, Germany, Great Britain and Italy had since the start of the crisis pursued different forms of arms- and economic sanction (e.g. freeze on Yugoslav state assets, banning flights to and from their countries by Yugoslav airlines etc.), Boris Yeltsin had at all stages put up his resistance and only belatedly agreed to enforce the arms ban against Serbia. The differences between the members of the Contact Group were thus so disparate that continued cooperation did not seem to make sense beyond the Rambouillet meeting on 23 February 1999.

However, as the 72-day long NATO bombing campaign over Serbia and Kosovo began on 24th March 1999, the reaction of the Russian Federation was very strong. The then Russian Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov, was on his way to meet with his US homologue in Washington. Upon hearing the news, however, he ordered the plane to divert mid-flight. Moreover, the NATO representative to Moscow was asked to leave the country, allegedly because the Allied intervention in Kosovo violated the spirit of the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security. Russia, who had engaged in an intense but essentially failed diplomatic effort to reign in Milosevic, did not believe that the Western powers would intervene without a Security Council resolution (which Russia was blocking). When the NATO bombings began

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from 2005 on Russian beef.

<sup>23</sup> Russia had, similarly, been staunchly opposed to air strikes over Bosnia in 1992-4. Moreover, the Russian (and Serbian) veto in CSCE in 1992 had prevented this organization from being involved in the international operations in Bosnia.

<sup>24</sup> That is not to say that there was not initially a considerable transatlantic difference of opinion of how to best settle the matter of the Serbian incursion in Kosovo. However, eventually Franco-British reluctance

meant that Yeltsin's foreign policy concerns had been blatantly sidelined and amounted to a terrible blow to Russia's international prestige (Medvedev 2000). What the Kosovo crisis painfully drove home in Moscow was that Russia in the late 1990s no longer enjoyed the same automatic primary international standing as the Soviet Union before it. During the Gulf Crisis Gorbachev had been informed of all the details of the US-led intervention, down to the exact hour of the start of allied action. The 1999 Kosovo crisis would thus become a defining moment for posterior Russian foreign policy, putting an indelible mark on Russia's posterior worldview, the conceptualization of security policy as well as the practice of foreign policy. The Kosovo debacle would usher in the resignation of Boris Yeltsin and the rise of a new Russian government under the leadership of Vladimir Putin, as well as a realignment of Russian foreign policy in the medium to long term. This shift has, in essence, meant a relative retreat from global politics in favor of geopolitics (the former Soviet Union area), while maintaining diplomatic and economic influence niches in other parts of the world where the USSR used to be a player. In terms of the Western Balkans this has meant that Russian political presence is reduced to a minimum. It has withdrawn its military presence in the region (Larrabee 2005: 422) and shows relatively little interest in the day-to-day matters of the region. Moscow does not dispute the EU's principal role as a facilitator of reconstruction, which is evidenced by its non-confrontational attitude in the Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe.<sup>25</sup> Putin's government had relatively little to say on the EU's diplomatic role to settle the Macedonian crisis in 2001 or the Serbian-Montenegrin contention in 2002. However, Moscow does maintain a diplomatic niche

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towards a 'surgical' air strike-only solution for Kosovo was worn down in face of the insistence of the Clinton administration.

<sup>25</sup> Moscow does, for example, not dispute, oppose or constrain that the EU appoints the Special Coordinator who chairs the Stability Pact's most important regional table. Similarly, during the negotiations for the Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe in 1999 Moscow rejected all clear references

in the Western Balkans through its relations with Serbia. Russian is no longer as close to Serbia as it was in the 1990s, but Kremlin still supports Belgrade on the Kosovo issue. Putin allegedly less views the unresolved status of Kosovo as way to continue to construct itself as a defender of its Slavic brethren, as well as a way to gain Western concessions for its interests elsewhere and access to Serbian markets and natural resources.

Putin's reluctance to cede more terrain in terms of Russian ability to keep itself relevant to global politics is also evident from its engagement with the Mediterranean and the Middle East. Although Moscow no longer hold the region as central to its foreign policy identity as the USSR did in the Cold War era, Russia under Putin seems to want to maintain appearances of Russia's formal international standing in the region, in particular through its participation in the Middle East Quartet. However, there may be some indications that Russian passivity in the Middle East is about to change. In early 2007 Vladimir Putin traveled to Saudi Arabia for the first ever official visit for any Russian or Soviet leader. Putin also visited Jordan and Qatar. In a posterior interview with the broadcasting company Al-Jazeera, Putin delineated a Russian Middle Eastern policy at odds with Western policy where he noted his disagreement with the holding of the 2006 Palestinian election and the fact that Hamas and Hezbollah were listed as terrorist organizations. Putin (as cited in Cohen 2007) summed up Russia's new foreign policy and Middle East policy as follows –

“[f]rom the point of view of stability in this or that region or in the world in general, the balance of power is the main achievement of these past decades and indeed of the whole history of humanity. It is one of the most important

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in the Pact to any future NATO enlargement in the region, while voicing no opposition to a similar proposal for EU enlargement.

conditions for maintaining global stability and security....I do not understand why some of our partners [Europe and the US]...see themselves as cleverer and more civilized and think that they have the right to impose their standards on others. The thing to remember is that standards that are imposed from the outside, including in the Middle East, rather than being a product of a society's natural internal development, lead to tragic consequences, and the best example of this is Iraq.”

This may very well be one of the first indications that the Russian absence in its, with EU, shared borderlands is about to be altered by a much more pro-active approach and, in essence, standing out for distancing itself from the EU foreign policy identity.

In sum, there has been a gradient of enabling and constraining factors on the EU's international identity projection deriving from the EU-Russian relationship vis-à-vis their shared borderlands in the post-bipolar era. In terms of the Western Balkans and the Mediterranean, Russia appeared to have largely withdrawn its influence until recently, maintaining merely a marginal presence, and correspondingly allowed the EU to take more political initiative, even if this state of affairs may now be about to be altered. This seemed to correspond to a domestic logic of focusing the Russian foreign policy agenda on a fewer range of geographical areas, although Russia obviously continued to keep tab on these areas, in particular, through its UN Security Council permanent chair. In contrast, EU-Russian relations over Northern Europe have been tenser because of the Baltic States' and Polish willingness to challenge Russia on a number of issues and the period just before the 2004 enlargement was thus particularly intense.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, the EU's inflexibility in its trade regime for the Russians to

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<sup>26</sup> For example, the Estonian and Latvian demands for official retractions and/or compensation for the Soviet occupation between 1940 and 1991 which were issued in relation to the 400<sup>th</sup> St Petersburg



continue their trade with the Central and Eastern European countries as well as the EU reluctance to respond favorably to a series of Russia outplays in terms of integrating the Russian oblast Kaliningrad further into the West (e.g. special economic zone, visa-free travel etc.) have also contributed to tension. The Kaliningrad issue even seems to have brought the EU to the logical hilt of its post-modern foreign policy identity, in that the proposal from Moscow was framed in a way meant to appeal to the Union's own rhetoric about openness, freedoms, de-bordering as well as sub-state region-building (Joenniemi 2002). That the proposal was rejected reveals that there are limits to the EU's multilateralist and multi-sectoral inclusiveness, openness and horizontal approaches and that there are differences in worldviews between EU and Russia in regards to how these should be breached in Northern Europe.

The Russian outlook on the EU as a foreign policy actor has thus become increasingly skeptical. The Russian discourse on the EU has been divided since 1991. Two contrasting logics would mark the more part of the 1990s, where by the 'great power' (*derzhava*) school of thought stood in sharp contrast with the 'Europeanist' school. The 'great power school' would treat West/Europe with suspicion and animosity, holding Europe part responsible for the downfall of the USSR and the economic hardship the Russian Federation had to suffer during the first years of its existence.<sup>27</sup> The 'Europeanist school', however, would dominate the Russian political thinking for the more part of the 1990s and the first Putin mandate. Europe, according to this school, was constructed as a partner in the Russian modernization, useful both for providing a liberal economic and democratic model as well as technical and financial assistance for the Russian state-consolidation. Moreover, it would not see the Union as a

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Anniversary in 2004.

<sup>27</sup> The truth is that European debtors were, as Pinder and Shishkov (2002) has noted, not very forthcoming with their assistance, and would even begin to exact onerous conditions for that Russia show repay its debt earlier than scheduled thereby contributing to further economic tribulations.

major rival in that its foreign policy retrenchment since mid-1980 meant that it had no major interests where the EU began to become involved in the wake of the end of the Cold War. However, as energy prices have risen since 2003, Russia has been flushed with external revenue and been induced to take on a more assertive foreign policy identity. In its wake a different more skeptical Russian discourse on the EU has taken hold (Haukkala 2005). Russia has found new self-confidence as an ‘energy superpower’ and is increasingly poised to direct and not be directed.<sup>28</sup> A new dominant discourse has emerged, which could be termed ‘selective Europeanism’. While not renouncing on cooperation with EU, Russia is less likely to want to follow EU direction. Russia does not disagree with the EU that values such as democracy, human rights or others are important, but they are given a different importance and reading than in the EU member states. Rather, the new dominant Russian discourse portray Russia as culturally distinct from other international actors and should not be forced to adopt or be subordinated to external, in particular Western, cultural, economic, or political logics, but rather should be encouraged find its own path. The EU’s foreign policy is therefore instrumentalized by the Russians as a vehicle for the selective modernization and transformation of Russian economy can take place (e.g. the Northern Dimension Treaty or the Russian enthusiasm for EU-Russia cooperation in terms of higher education).

For the EU, the relationship with Russia has exerted a strong contradictory pressure on the EU foreign policy identity. Russia has also acted as an important ‘Other’ in the development of the EU’s foreign policy persona since EPC times, albeit to a lesser extent than the US. The Russian withdrawal into the Russian heartland has opened up areas for EU action with some foreign policy autonomy. However, at the

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<sup>28</sup> The Russian disagreement with the EU/US on Kosovo’s independence could in this light also be interpreted as a potential first indication of a desire to recover policy standing in a region such as the Western Balkans where Russia has lost out since the USSR disintegrated.

same time the relations with Russia have divided the EU to a point where its foreign policy identity has either seemed non-existent or incongruous. The EU-Russia relationship can thus be thought of as a complex patron-client relationship where they take turns in being objective/subjective of each other policies. This has as a consequence that while the EU in the wake of the Iraqi crisis appears to be fairly good at standing united to the neoconservative logics emanating from Washington, it reacts with incoherence to Putin's seamless mixture between post-modern and realpolitik approaches. The British daily *The Guardian* (2006) has labeled the EU indecision as a form of diplomatic self-restraint or 'Finlandization' of its foreign policy in its dealings with Russia. Indeed the EU seems currently equally unable as in Cold War times to impose its agenda on Russia. The future of the European foreign policy identity in the borderland will thus to a large extent be contingent on its intersubjective relations with Russia, whereby Russia, if it chooses to, directs the agenda.

Given the Russian relative political absence until recently from most borderland regions treated in the present work, an EU international identity which is highly malleable to Russian input does not have much impact for the borderland partners under survey here.<sup>29</sup> Previous to the 2004 EU enlargement, however, Estonia and Latvia, as we have noted, felt that their preferences did not resonate in EU capitals as those of Moscow. The irony was thus that these countries, as many other Central and Eastern European countries, which had explicitly 'returned to Europe' in order to find a political anchorage and shelter away from an unpredictable Russia, would in the end find themselves fairly unprotected. Perhaps their experience is what generates the present dissatisfaction in the new member states with the timid post-modernist international profile of the EU. Moreover, their experience shows that for all the merits of the EU's

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<sup>29</sup> However, the situation is different in Eastern Europe where EU-Russian preferences and identities clash more readily (cf. Barbé and Johansson-Nogués forthcoming).

regional framework policies, they do not amount to sufficient guarantees for the safeguarding against many of the most pressing issues related to borderland partners' sovereignty and state-consolidation. Many borderland partners are therefore likely to continue to press for EU membership given that it would seem that only by acceding to the Union a country ceases to be an object of EU policy and instead become a subject in its own right.

### 8.3. Conclusions

The United States and the Russian Federation are two non-EU countries which have a determining effect on both the Union's foreign policy and on European Union's relations with its borderland. Both countries exert enabling, as well constraining, pressures on the Union's foreign policy in relation the shared borderland areas. In comparison to both the US and Russia, the European Union represents a different mode of international relations, which might be the source of considerable confusion for all partners involved. While European security ties with the United States does limit the full autonomy of the European foreign policy, the reduced pressure and the greater margins granted by Washington in the past decade have, however, enabled the EU to become a more active and independent foreign policy actor in the Union's periphery. Russia is for its size and closeness to the European Union's territory brings to bear a great influence on EU's foreign policy. While each a vital partner for the other for any positive-sum continental undertaking, old habit of mistrust and ambivalence linger in the EU-Russia relation. From the EU viewpoint perhaps there is something to that the

vastness of the Russian space and the mostly belligerent past has aroused an “anxiety complex in the Western psyche” which is difficult to erase (Medvedev 2000: 15).

The EU's general unwillingness to challenge the US and Russia over issues related to the EU's borderlands is an evident characteristic. Although some EU members would like the EU to stand up more in benefit for some of the Union's neighbors and to provide them a post-modern alternative to Russian or US modern influence – such as for example France in the Mediterranean or Poland in terms of Ukraine or Moldova – overall there is little consensus among EU member states that the EU should act as a regional hegemon challenging Russia or the US. This alerts us to that the EU's international identity in its borderlands can only be considered as a subordinate one rather than truly autonomous.

The ‘intermittent’ foreign policy identity of the European Union – i.e. an identity which stands up for deeply held communal beliefs with the same ease as it backs down when US or Russian pressure is applied – is yet another factor explaining borderland partners' failure to resonate with the EU identitarian projections. The inconsistency in the EU's identity projection, and the Union's willingness to heed the wishes of Washington and Moscow, do lend the European Union an air of unreliable partner. Moreover, such inconsistencies seem to go against the grain of what the EU projects itself to be: an anti-dote to power politics. Borderland partners cannot thus help by become surprised over how easily a post-modern power succumb under the pressures of traditional great power projections.



## – Conclusions –

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The exploration into the EU's international identity undertaken by the current dissertation has attempted to usefully add to the longstanding academic debate in regards to the nature of the European Union as an international actor. The objective of the present doctoral dissertation has been to examine **the EU's identity as a research parameter which usefully elucidates on a series of troubles the Union is facing when setting up and implementing its framework policies in the borderlands** in the time period that has been under survey here. The research can therefore be seen as a valuable complement to Realist and Liberal Institutional scholarship.

In order to explore the EU's foreign policy identity, both to understand the mechanisms which bring it about, as well as what happens when this identity comes into contact with its sociological 'Other(s)', the present dissertation put up three interrelated research questions to be answered throughout the pages of this work: What is the EU identity? How is it constructed? How does it play out in relation with third countries, in particular with three by the EU highly prioritized areas such as the Mediterranean, Northern Europe and the Western Balkans? These questions will also structure our conclusions.

The first section will try to examine the most relevant features of the EU's identity in relation with the borderlands and what we can deduce thereof in regards to the nature of the EU as a foreign policy actor. The second section will look at how the mechanisms which construct the EU identity impact the EU's foreign policy agency in the borderlands. The final section will look at the concrete outcomes when the EU identity is inserted in its social context (the borderlands) and in active interaction with two sets of sociological 'Others'.

### 9.1. The EU identity in the borderlands

The present dissertation set out to verify the question of what the EU's identity is in the borderlands and our primary conclusion, in this regard, corroborates our initial assumption that **the principal features by which the Union characterizes itself are regional multilateralism, multi-sectorial cooperation, interventionism and with a pronounced discourse on 'responsibility'**. Moreover, we have seen that these traits are mediated by ways of a **value-composite identity** which both accounts for both 'possession' and 'milieu' goals. The underlying logics driving the framing of the framework policies based on the tripartite foreign policy formula for the borderlands (regional cooperation, multi-sectorial cooperation and interventionism), as well in the notion of felt 'responsibility', in other words, stem both from rational, instrumental calculations and rule-based action. Evidence which point us in this direction can be drawn from EU member states and EU-own preferences.



First, in terms of member states' preferences we have seen that the European Union has essentially become the repository for its member states' failed ambitions whether in terms of the tripartite formula or in terms of assuming 'responsibility' for parts or entire borderland areas. France, Spain, Portugal, Sweden, for example, all had a go at projecting their national identitarian constructions in terms of regional multilateralism, complete with multi-dimensional cooperation schemes, whether in the form of the Western Mediterranean Forum, the CSCM or the Council of the Baltic Sea States. However, they all found that it was only by involving the Union that such projections could prosper. Moreover, in terms of interventionism, those member states with a colonial legacy or a history of conflictive relations with a borderland partner have found that by working through the Union they have managed to blur such negative national legacies while still at the same time be able to project values and 'responsibility' in these same countries. These uploaded national preferences have also to an extent been molded by reiterated intra-EU interaction and socialization processes. Examples, as we have seen in the preceding chapters, are the French and Swedish visions of limited regional cooperation being expanded into macro cooperation projects. Other examples encompass gradual convergence on work to lessen EU protectionism, the promotion of environmental issues, or the use of conditionality to promote values such as democracy and human rights, the protection of minorities, or in support of the International Criminal Court. Some identitarian inputs in the EU's composite identity also have a clear EU preference behind them. For example, the Union has in its relations with the three borderlands under survey here shown, on the one hand, proof of wishing to satisfy rational interests such as economies of scale or serving to off-load the Commission and/or other EU institutions by multilateral management of a set of bilateral relations which otherwise could become cumbersome for the Union's

institutions. Moreover, the EU, supported by some of its member states, has deliberately promoted itself as the principal responsible for the borderlands in terms of many foreign policy issues – at the expense of other international referents such as, for example, the OSCE, the Council of Europe or the Arab League<sup>1</sup> – and thereby engaging in instrumental calculations designed to noticeably increase the international actorness of the Union. Other prominent rationales have, on the other hand, responded to normative concerns, e.g. where the European integration experience can be used as a model for more balanced and beneficial international relations among borderland partners or as a means to help mitigate but the worst effects of economic globalization.

This brings us to the first of three secondary conclusions in this section. First, our findings refute theses based on the idea that the EU is an exceptionalist creature which is predisposed to act in a normative-only manner. The Union's foreign policy identity is inherently much more complex and multi-dimensional than such scenarios reveal. There is thus **little in the current dissertation which supports that the Union somehow has a sui generis foreign policy character**, rather altruistic and self-serving features are both found to co-exist within in the EU's international identity.

The second conclusion is that **the Union's composite identity** – as expressed through regional multilateralism, multi-sectorialism, interventionism and 'responsibility' – **is the principal catalyst for 'cohesion' between member states and EU institutions** in terms of the Union's relations with the borderlands. By spanning an

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<sup>1</sup> For example, as the current work has shown, there is a subtle, but widespread, agreement in current EU official discourse that today the centrality of the EU as an actor for its borderlands cannot be denied. This perception stems from the relative decline of other European institutions' actorness. The institutional paralysis of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the stagnation of the Council of Europe have catapulted the EU into a central position for its different European borderlands. In relation to a majority of its southern Mediterranean borderland partners the Union sees responsibility stemming from the decline of an alternative political referent. For example the post-Cold War withdrawal of the Soviet Union/Russia and the declining engagement of the US have left the Mediterranean region increasingly marginalized in international politics. The Union has also noted the inability of the Arab League to assume full leadership and become a referent for the Arab southern Mediterranean countries, as well as the UMA failure to coalesce as a political project in the Maghreb.

increasingly broad spectrum of both preferences and motivations the member states have gradually found resonance between their national identities and discourses and those of the Union. The value-composite identity, tolerant of a wide-spectrum of preferences and motivations, when addressing the partners in the Barcelona Process, the Northern Dimension and the Stabilization and Association process therefore seems to guarantee that all EU members' foreign policy identities are catered to. It is thus plausible to sustain that as a consequence of the EU's value composite identity Wendt's (1999) three factors of defining a common and cohesioned identity – we-feeling, solidarity and loyalty – have slowly emerged within the EU's foreign policy making in its borderlands.

Finally, the EU's identity is not just the simple sum of its member states, as we have seen. The EU's identity is a **'marble cake' identity** in which differentiated identitarian layers are not extinguished by each other but definitively reciprocally influenced. The logical extension of such findings is to **corroborate that it is possible for a non-descript sui generis actor such as the Union to have an international identity** which and in spite of not having been melded into a political community in the Haasian sense.

## 9.2. The EU's identity construction

A second objective set out for the present dissertation was to examine the ideas and mechanisms flowing into the European Union's identitarian construction. The primary conclusion in this section confirms our initial assumption that **the EU identity is**

**constructed predominantly as a consequence of intra-EU dynamics.** The EU's international identity stems largely from a 'self-styled' identitarian construction which inserts itself in the international context with little reference to or social communication with the preferences and identities of its borderland partners.

Evidence that we have exposed to support our conclusion is that **EU member states may have shown great disparity in motivations in terms of acceding to the creation of the framework policies for the borderlands, but the unifying factor among them is have more often than not been intra-EU concerns.** The EU member states' motivations have spanned the whole range from (Realist) balance of power dynamics, (Institutionalist) off-setting side payments within the EU structure, to (sociological understandings of) identities usually with an eye to what other EU member states are up to. Balancing dynamics, as we have seen, played a role when France chose to get involved in the Western Balkans both with the Royaumont Process in the mid-1990s as well as with organizing the Zagreb Summit in 2000, given that Paris was concerned with a loss of influence on the terrain as a consequence of Germany's powerful presence in that borderland area. Balancing was also a part of the logic to redress the EU agenda in favor of greater equity between northern and southern European member states' concerns in terms of Eastern enlargement and the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (and again over the posterior Northern Dimension) in the 1990s. The solution of these and other tensions among EU member states have been off-setting side payments. Such side payments are a regular feature of the EU's foreign policy, but the most illustrative examples are for example the complex bargaining over EC budget allocations for different borderlands which are more driven by relative bargaining gains within the EU structure and as according to real necessities in the borderlands. This was, for example, well-illustrated when the decision to allocate

CARDS a determined sum in 1999, close attention had to be paid to the MEDA allocation of the same year in order to ensure the southern EU member states' support for CARDS. Side payments were also a factor when Germany was given Athen's support for appointing Bodo Hombach to the Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe in return for Berlin's support over the decision to station the European Reconstruction Agency in Thessaloniki.

Identities have also played a role as we have seen in terms of the Spanish wish to Europeanize its contested kinship with Morocco, or the Finnish shared culture-linguistic traits with Estonia which was one of the main drivers behind Helsinki's decision to include Estonia, among others, in the Northern Dimension scheme. However, it could be sustained that perhaps much more prominent motivation behind the launch of these regional framework policies for the borderlands has been the desire of individual member states to enhance or better profile their national identities within the EU structure. Spain was eager by ways of its activeness in regards to the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership to make itself noted as an independent policy player within the EU and hence more differentiated from the looming policy presence within the EU and in the Mediterranean of France. Finland was also looking to create a foreign policy identity with the Northern Dimension both within the EU framework as well as vis-à-vis its neighbors. Above all, perhaps was a desire in Helsinki to escape the label of being a merely secondary or junior partner in the Nordic cooperation by showing that important initiatives with far-reaching consequences for Europe's North could also be taken in Finland. In terms of the activity that Greece displayed in terms of the Western Balkan Forum which reinvigorated the Stabilization and Association process, it is plausible to argue that here the intention was in Athens to reconstitute its foreign policy identity

coming out of the negative shadow Greece had created for itself by the act of imposing sanctions on Macedonia over its constitutional name.

Final evidence for that the Union's identity is constructed largely based on intra-EU dynamics is found in its dominant discourse. As we have seen, the EU's composite identity is constructed in broad and variegated fashion in order to be able to resonate with the majority of its member states' preferences, identitarian expressions as well as motivations. This fact notwithstanding, there is a distinct tendency for the European Union's discourse to only focus on the more positive cognitive nodes/features (or, some would say, inherent potentials) of the EU identity stemming from the unique European integration experience (e.g. *telos* myth or intra-EU organizational logics). The jubilant discourse stemming from most EU officials in regard to the Union's undertakings in the borderlands usually downplays or outright overlook all the 'fuzziness' or lack of effectiveness in the EU's action in regards to these areas.<sup>2</sup> The European integration is steeped in such positivistic discourse that the EU portray itself as a superior entity to nation states and narratives relate to the Union as a 'post-modern' power or a 'post-power' power. The Union's rhetoric also like to affirm that the EU represents a new way in international relations, trying to overcome the age-old forces of self-help and power politics through the right distribution of interests, side-payments and respect for identities. It is possible to sustain, however, than more than a message directed to external audiences, this is for internal consumption. We will here argue that the single-minded focus on the more positive aspects of the EU's identity is directed at the member states for a dual purpose. First, the discourse is to remind member states of the tragic history of the European continent of two World Wars prior to the signing of the Rome Treaty and, second, the message of the positive impact of the EU's policies in the

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<sup>2</sup> Former External Relations Commissioner Chris Patten was an exception to this extent in that his evaluations of EU external action in the borderlands were usually more nuanced.

borderlands is designed to boost the morale and to keep the fragile edifice of the European foreign policy together. It would seem that there is a generalized fear that the EU's foreign policy would fall apart if any slighted pressure or criticism were lodged at the Union's actuation in the borderlands.

Such findings lead us to the first of two secondary conclusions. The first secondary conclusion is that the prominent concern for intra-EU dynamics tends to reduce the accent on policy delivery or output. For example, **coherence between different framework policy objectives, on the one hand, and effective resource mobilization and policy implementation, on the other, is still lagging.** In objective terms the EU and its member states are the most generous international donor, indeed the sheer sums of its financial assistance has been allocated for the borderlands are (even if never sufficient) considerable. However, the one of the main problems has been the Commission's difficulty in translating the EU multi-sectoral objectives into a coherent, sequenced and effective, implementable approach fitting the socioeconomic circumstances of each borderland partner. A related problem has been the many delays in the financial assistance programs and the cumbersome application procedures at the EU level. Finally, we have found that the EU's finances projects which are not always very relevant to the social realities of the countries addressed have also reduced the EU policies potential impact. **We have noted that EU member states' interest in micro-managing the Commission's actuation in the borderlands in order to safeguard their preferences or normative considerations has contributed to such shortcomings.**

A second secondary conclusion would be **that in spite of the ample amount of cognitive nodes upon which the EU forges its identity, it has chosen to emphasize its more idealistic features at the expense of a more well-rounded identity**

**projection.** While most Self tend to favor putting the accent on its more flattering traits, the complete absence of a discourse or self-awareness on shortcomings may have serious consequences when the Self is inserted in a social context. There is thus a prospect for that the by EU projected identity stem more from the EU and its member states' enthusiasm for the idea of a common European foreign policy and their collective hopes that the Union will prove to be a force for goodness in the world than a well-founded identity kept in check by reality. There is therefore something to the argument that there are grounds to believe that the EU is rhetorically constructing a 'EUtopia' rather than a well-grounded reality based identity. Such misidentification or outright delusion is problematic in that it distorts the perceptions of policy options and pursuits open to the EU in its relations with the borderlands, as we will have a chance to discuss in further detail in the section below. Nevertheless, this all tells us that **although the EU increasingly knows what kind of actor it would like to be, it has little control or strategy for how that identity should be constructed to have its identitarian projected to ring true in its borderlands.**

### 9.3. The EU identity in its borderlands and two sets of sociological 'Others'

A final research objective of the present dissertation was to establish the main characteristics of the European identity as it derives from the EU's interaction with its borderlands. The primary conclusion on the EU's identity when confronted its sociological 'Others' in the borderlands is the idea that the **Union's scarce foreign policy impact on its borderlands is in part explained by the dissonance between the**



**EU's composite identity projection with the national identitarian constructions in those areas.** The EU's identity construction in relation to its borderland partners has, as we have seen, linked the Union's founding myth, intra-organizational logic and member states identities in a way which conjures up a compelling identity based on post-modern considerations. However, the Union's international identity has largely been developed largely independent from borderland partners, as we also have seen. For this reason, we have sustained that the EU's composite post-modern identity tends to seem out of step with its borderland partners.

Evidence for such dissonance can be found in the EU's discourse on responsibility. While the Union may construct its identity as acting responsible vis-à-vis the borderlands given that its policies are designed in a broad, holistic fashion, this perception may run in counter to the logics of its borderland partners. The EU has designed regional framework policies which are all-embracing, encompassing regional multilateralism, multi-sectorial cooperation and interventionism. It styles itself as an actor which goes beyond the limited in favor of a looking both at the parts and the whole – an approach which, as we have seen, has become the Union's trademark identity in international affairs. However, as also we have seen, most borderland partners that have approached the EU for assistance have merely been looking for a piecemeal response to some of their concerns. The Union's broad approach thus seems to serve intra-EU cohesion better than the needs of its borderland partners. The broad approach has managed to get all EU members onboard, given that all sorts of concerns are addressed. Meanwhile, borderland partners would soon discover that the regional-cum-multi-sectorial-cum interventionist formula of the EU would neither shield the borderland partners from the harshest winds of the economic globalization, nor put partners in the fast track for economic development. Partners have realized that their

needed hands-on attention to economic concerns (debt-relief, preferential trade agreements) was not going forthcoming. The EU's approach in regards to regional multilateralism, multi-sectoral cooperation and interventionism has moreover in overall yielded benefits for the EU, whether in the form of concrete access, regional stability, fending off external demands for EU reform, rationalization of bilateral relations or in terms of lessening of internal tension. However, we have also argued **that there is relatively little in the Union's 'tool-kit' which assuages the most urgent concerns which the borderland partners have.**

Evidence for dissonance can also be found in the way **great power preferences (e.g. the US and/or Russia) enable or constrain the EU's international identity and hence condition the Union's ability to play out its foreign policy identity fully in the EU's borderlands.** The resulting 'intermittent' foreign policy identity of the European Union – i.e. an identity which stands up for deeply held communal beliefs with the same ease as it backs down when US or Russian pressure is applied – is yet another factor explaining borderland partners' failure to resonate with the EU identitarian projections. While some of the Union's neighbors would like the Union to provide them a post-modern alternative to Russian or US modern influence, there is, however, little consensus among EU member states that the Union should act as a regional hegemon challenging Russia or the US. The inconsistency in the EU's intermittent identity projection, and the Union's willingness to heed the wishes of Washington and Moscow, moreover, act to lend the European Union an air of unreliable partner.<sup>3</sup> The Union remains of course central to those Western Balkan countries which aspire to join the EU

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<sup>3</sup> We argued that this was a consequence of the EU increasingly viewing the world in a post-modern fashion (resources, networking, information flow) while most borderland partners have pending modern concerns related to borders and state consolidation. Moreover, such inconsistencies seem to go against the grain of what the EU projects itself to be: an anti-dote to power politics. Borderland partners, as we have noted, cannot help but become surprised over how easily a self-proclaimed post-modern power succumb under the pressures of traditional great power projections.

soon. However, for those Western Balkan countries who view EU membership in a less immediate fashion (e.g. Serbia), Russia and most southern Mediterranean countries there seem to be a generally held view among the different borderland partners that **they still on the whole prefer a predictable, action-poised actor, such as the US, over one such as the EU which is slow, confusing and given to non-action in important situations as a consequence of internal decision making deadlocks.**

Finally, evidence for dissonance can also be drawn from the dimension of power and requires some in-depth discussion. Whatever the merits of the EU's involvement in the borderlands in the past decade and half, it has clearly not succeeded in mitigating power differentials between the Union and the borderland partners. Indeed, **the EU's asymmetric power vis-à-vis its borderland partners has steadily grown since 1989** with three successive enlargements between 1995 and 2007, which have more than doubled the number of member states and added a third in population. The EU's geopolitical size, its role as an international donor and its impact on the world economy are important sources of EU power whether in the borderlands or elsewhere. Moreover, as noted above, the EU has made considerable effort in strengthening its foreign policy actorness and supporting institutional mechanisms and, while not completely successful, this still represents a source of power which is relatively more cohesive than most its borderland partners.

The dominant discourse of the European Union has consistently narrated the Union's regional framework policies as a means to reduce power asymmetries by ways of different mechanisms. However, the resulting track record is far from clear. In some cases there seem to have been a genuine wish to empower borderland partners, but the mechanisms through which such empowerment was to take place have not materialized.

In other cases it is far from clear whether the intention to mitigate power differentials was a genuine objective.

First, there are many pieces of evidence which points to power mitigating in potential but essentially frustrated. We have already noted **the Union's inability to swing its financial resources behind a swift and efficient policy implementation to reduce EU-borderland partner asymmetries in the framework policies.** The EU also seemingly wanted to voluntarily restrain its power by entering into bilateral legal agreements in the spirit of turning its former power into positive influence by ways of a non-coercive approach. The regional framework policies are structured through comprehensive legal agreements to foment transparency in terms of the rights and obligations inherent in the EU-partner relationship. This appeared to point to a will to replace power politics with the rule of law between states. The EU discourses reveal pride over this contractual approach in that it is meant to show the EU's restraint as a power, whereby third countries agree on the objectives of the relations rather than coerced. However, if this legal component is to truly replace power politics the Union has failed to take into account that these legal arrangements need to reflect the concerns and preferences of partners. **The way the European Union has employed a 'take it or leave it' tactics to negotiate these agreements does not appear to differ much from age-old power politics.**

Second, there are, however, occasions where the EU's approach does seem less post-modern and directly more 'modern' in character. The regional multilateralist frameworks was meant to level the power differentials by inviting others to group together to gain leverage vis-à-vis the EU, but in reality the EU has pursued political regionalization and economic bilateralism, which has had little effect to reduce the power differentials in either field. Political because the partner countries are so diverse

and economic because by negotiating individually they have less leverage than negotiating together. The result is that the EU longstanding dynamic of hub-and-spoke has not changed. **In the Mediterranean and in the Western Balkans the relationship clearly continues to be an asymmetric multi-bilateralism.** Similarly, the EU has also attempted to set up institutional frameworks (association councils and minister meetings) in order to allow greater voice for outsiders over the EU policies which directly affect them. The rhetoric in regards to ‘joint co-ownership’ and ‘partnership’ inspired hope beyond the Union’s borders, but so far these concepts have provided little clarity in terms of how they contribute to altering inter-state practices. The institutional set-up of the European construction, as an institutional composite of supranational institutions and nation-states, has been the principal culprit. Taking a decision at EU-27 is difficult and it would be even more difficult if the EU also had to accommodate outsider’s views. The result is clearly an EU agenda imposed. **The EU has thus chosen to preserve rather than share power and decision making autonomy.** The Northern Dimension Framework Document adopted in 2006 may, in this sense, be more the exception than the rule that the EU’s regional framework policies are a ‘laboratory’ and ‘explorer’ of a new typology of political deals between and beyond states. Russia has been given equal status, in sharp contrast with most EU partner countries, which is surely a reflection of the complex ‘now patron, now client’ relationship between the EU and Russia. The likelihood of similar political deals being extended to other borderland partners is, nevertheless, scarce. Hence the hurry of the Western Balkan countries to attain EU membership, in order to become a subject in the EU politics as opposed to merely an object.

The EU’s asymmetric power over its borderland partners is also projected through the discursive construction as having responsibility. The EU subtly construct

itself as superior by ways of casting borderland partners in the role of not ‘well-governed’ and in need of direction as in a ‘surplus’ of a set of liberal values, while borderland partners are found in ‘deficit’. **The role the EU has cast for itself is based on the modern assumption of power over, that of a classical regional power which needs to look after the countries around it (‘sphere of influence’).** If you portray yourself as more successful, the tendency is that you think it is natural that you should direct the evolution of the ‘wards’ in your sphere of responsibility. This unabashed ‘Europe-as-a-leader’ is not a controversial concept for those countries which wish to be guided (i.e. some of the Western Balkan countries); but may cause friction (and non-cooperation) with countries which feel that they would like to choose their own way, or in those societies where the discourse on ‘Europe’ does not have unconditionally positive connotations.

Our findings thus lead us to two secondary conclusions. The first secondary conclusion is that there are, for this reason, some grounds to argue that as the EU’s foreign policy identity has eventually coalesced over the past decade and half, its international identity has come to increasingly diverge– and sometimes clash – with those of its borderland partners. One of the major challenges facing the European Union currently is thus that its international identity fails to resonate with those of its borderlands partners. In other words, there is a clear disconnect in the role the EU casts for itself and its borderland partners in relation to the roles and identities constructed by the latter about themselves and their expectations on the EU. A collective identity is limping when it is shaped only by the particularistic identities of its members but with scarce regard to the social context in which the foreign policy is inserted. One could perhaps sustain that **the EU’s identitarian construction in the borderland is partially ‘asocial’ or ‘autistic’ given that it fails to respond or responds incorrectly to the**

**signals emitted in the social context in which it is inserted (with exception to the US and Russia).** Such dissonance could create problems of compatibility in cooperation, which in turn reduce the reach of EU's influence, especially its 'soft power' capacity to set the standards for normalcy for its borderland regions. There is also something to the idea that the EU represents too little, too late to have an effectual impact on borderland partners. There are thus still many factors which point to an EU as a political actor which raises expectations rather than actual potential. Moreover, if the EU's global ambition hinges on the borderland dimension it might be sustained that the EU is still far off consolidating its borderlands to be able to leapfrog onto the international stage.

Our second secondary conclusion in regards to how the EU constructs its identity is that the EU track record in the EU borderlands thus both points to the Union as 'powering over' as well as 'powering to'. The EU's discourse is curiously ambivalent between post-modern and modern practices. **It would be difficult to accuse the Union of outright exploitation of borderland partners in the pure pursuit of power enhancement. However, the cumulative effect of its policies has not necessarily acted to mitigate noticeably the power-differentials inherent between the EU and its borderland partners either** (with the above noted exception of Russia). The EU can thus be found a post-modern actor which has a muddled approach to project its power in the borderlands. It is thus unclear whether the EU holds the promise of becoming an actor which will live up to its potential of replacing power politics with the rule of law between states and contribute to a reconceptualization of the practice of state sovereignty.





Part IV –  
Annexes



Annex 1 –  
Maps



## The Barcelona Process partners



EU-27 + Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Lebanon, Jordan, Morocco, Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey

Note: on the map Bulgaria and Romania are not marked as EU member states, which they are since 1 January 2007.

*Source: European Commission*



– Map 2 –

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## The Northern Dimension partners



EU-27 + Iceland, Norway and Russia

*Source: European Commission*





## The Stabilization and Association process partners



EU-27 + Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia

*Source: BalkanPeace*



Annex 2 –  
EU-borderland relevant agreements



– Relevant Agreements –

The Barcelona Process partners

	<b>Agreement</b>	<b>Status</b>
Algeria	Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement	Signed on 22 April 2002 In process of ratification
Egypt	Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement	Signed on 25 June 2001 In force since 1 June 2004
Israel	Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement	Signed on 20 November 1995 In force since 1 June 2000
Jordan	Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement	Signed on 24 November 1997 In force since 1 May 2002
Lebanon	Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement  Interim Agreement for Early Implementation of trade measures	Signed on 17 June 2002 In process of ratification In force since 1 March 2003
Morocco	Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement	Signed on 26 February 1996 In force since 1 March 2000
Palestinian Authority	Interim Association Agreement awaiting a Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement	Signed on 24 February 1997 In force since 1 July 1997
Syria	Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement	Negotiations concluded (Council to decide on signature)
Tunisia	Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreement	Signed on 17 July 1995 In force since 1 March 1998
Turkey	Agreement establishing the definite phase of the customs union  Agreement establishing an Association between the European Economic Community and Turkey	Signed on 6 March 1995 In force since 31 December 1995 Signed 29 December 1964

*Source: European Commission*



– Relevant Agreements –

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The Northern Dimension partners

	<b>Agreement</b>	<b>Status</b>
Iceland	European Economic Area Agreement	Signed on 2 May 1992 In force since 26 January 1994
	Schengen Agreement	Signed on 18 May 1999 In force since 26 June 2000
Norway	European Economic Area Agreement	Signed on 2 May 1992 In force since 1 January 1994
	Schengen Agreement	Signed on 18 May 1999 In force since 25 March 2001
Russian Federation	Partnership and Cooperation Agreement	Signed in June 1994 In force since 1 December 1997

*Source: European Commission*





– Relevant Agreements –

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## The Stabilization and Association process partners

	<b>Agreement</b>	<b>Status</b>
Albania	Stabilization and Association Agreement	Signed on 12 June 2006 In process of ratification
Bosnia and Herzegovina	No contractual relation	n/a
Croatia	Stabilization and Association Agreement	Signed in 29 October 2001 In force since 1 February 2005
FYR Macedonia	Stabilization and Association Agreement	Signed in April 2001 In force since 21 April 2004
Montenegro	No contractual relation	n/a
Serbia	No contractual relations	n/a

*Source: European Commission*



Annex 3 –  
EU-borderland socioeconomic indicators and trade flows



## The Barcelona Process partners

	Population (millions) <sup>a</sup>		Life Expectancy at birth (years) <sup>a</sup>		Infant Mortality (per 1000 life births) <sup>a</sup>		Human Development Index <sup>b</sup>		GDP per capita (current US\$) <sup>c</sup>		Gross Domestic Product (current Billion US\$) <sup>c</sup>		Democratic Values – Political Rights; Civil Liberties; Status <sup>d</sup>		Corruption Perception Index <sup>e</sup>		Current Account Balance (Billions US\$) <sup>c</sup>	
	1994	2007	1994	2007	1994	2007	1994	2004 <sup>e</sup>	1994	2006 <sup>f</sup>	1994	2007 <sup>f</sup>	1994	2007	1994	2007	1994	2007
<b>Algeria</b>	27.5	33.3	67.9	72.7	45.2	32.2	0.737	0.728	1543	7600	42.43	125.87	7;7:NF	6;5:NF	---	3.0	-1.82	24.45
<b>Egypt</b>	62.0	80.3	65.7	70.7	57.3	33.9	0.614	0.702	923	4200	52.06	127.93	6;6:NF	6;5:NF	2.8 <sup>l</sup>	2.9	0.19	1.75
<b>Israel</b>	5.2	6.4	77.6	79.2	9.1	7.2	0.913	0.927	1461	26800	75.72	154.28	1;3:F	1;2:F	7.4 <sup>l</sup>	6.1	-3.46	5.72
<b>Jordan</b>	4.1	6.1	76.2	78.1	26.9	18.1	0.730	0.760	1507	5100	6.24	15.70	4;4:PF	5;4:PF	4.9 <sup>l</sup>	4.7	-0.40	-1.98
<b>Lebanon</b>	3.3	3.9	69.4	72.4	36.3	25.5	0.794	0.774	2973	5900	9.11	23.995	6;5:NF	5;4:PF	---	3.0	-4.10	-2.55
<b>Morocco</b>	26.9	33.8	67.2	70.4	61.0	43.2	0.566	0.640	1171	4600	30.35	72.764	5;5:PF	5;4:PF	3.7 <sup>l</sup>	3.5	-0.72	0.53
<b>Palestine</b>	2.3	5.1	70.9	72.2	31.4	21.8	---	0.736	---	---	---	3.45 <sup>h</sup>	---	4;6:PF	---	---	---	---
<b>Syria</b>	13.9	19.3	66.4	69.7	42.4	30.6	0.755	0.716	1100	4100	15.16	37.41	7;7:NF	7;6:NF	---	2.4	-0.85	-2.10
<b>Tunisia</b>	8.8	10.3	72.1	74.7	37.8	25.8	0.748	0.760	1772	8900	15.63	34.14	6;5:NF	6;5:NF	5.0 <sup>l</sup>	4.2	-0.65	-0.87

<sup>a</sup> US Census Bureau, International Data Base

<sup>b</sup> UNDP, United Nations Development Program

<sup>c</sup> International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook

<sup>d</sup> Freedom House (NF – Not Free; PF – Partially Free; F – Free)

<sup>e</sup> Transparency International

<sup>f</sup> International Monetary Fund estimates

<sup>g</sup> Latest available

<sup>h</sup> Latest available: 2003

<sup>i</sup> Average 1993-1996

<sup>j</sup> First available: 1998



## The Northern Dimension partners

	Population (millions) <sup>a</sup>		Life Expectancy at birth (years) <sup>a</sup>	Infant Mortality (per 1000 life births) <sup>a</sup>	Human Development Index <sup>d</sup>	GDP per capita (current US\$) <sup>e</sup>	Gross Domestic Product (current US\$) <sup>e</sup>		Democratic Values – Political Rights; Civil Liberties; Status <sup>d</sup>	Corruption Perception Index <sup>e</sup>	Current Account Balance (Billions US\$) <sup>e</sup>						
	1991	2007					1991	2007 <sup>f</sup>			1991	2007	1991	2007 <sup>f</sup>			
<b>Iceland</b>	0.27	0.3	78.4	80.2	4.1	3.3	0.912	25682	38000	6.820	19.521	1;1;F	9.3 <sup>i</sup>	9.2	-0.27	-2.263	
<b>Norway</b>	4.26	4.6	77.0	79.2	6.2	3.7	0.900	27936	46300	120	369	1;1;F	8.7 <sup>k</sup>	8.7	4.40	53.835	
<b>Russia</b>	148.3	141.3	68.2	66.8	22.2	16.0	0.809	575 <sup>b</sup>	12200	85.57 <sup>h</sup>	1223.7	3;4;PF	6;5;NF	3.3 <sup>k</sup>	2.3	-1.20 <sup>b</sup>	72.543

<sup>a</sup> US Census Bureau, International Data Base

<sup>b</sup> UNDP, United Nations Development Program

<sup>c</sup> International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook

<sup>d</sup> Freedom House (NF – Not Free; PF – Partially Free; F – Free)

<sup>e</sup> Transparency International

<sup>f</sup> International Monetary Fund estimates

<sup>g</sup> Latest available

<sup>h</sup> Earliest available 1992

<sup>i</sup> Earliest available 1996

<sup>j</sup> Earliest Available

<sup>k</sup> Average 1988-1992





## The Stabilization and Association process partners

	Population (millions) <sup>a</sup>		Life Expectancy at birth (years) <sup>a</sup>		Infant Mortality (per 1000 life births) <sup>a</sup>		Human Development Index <sup>b</sup>		GDP per capita (current US\$) <sup>c</sup>		Gross Domestic Product (current US\$ in billions) <sup>c</sup>		Democratic Values – Political Rights; Civil Liberties; Status <sup>d</sup>		Corruption Perception Index <sup>e</sup>		Current Account Balance (Billions US\$) <sup>e</sup>	
	1991	2007	1991	2007	1991	2007	1991	2004 <sup>i</sup>	1991	2006 <sup>f</sup>	1991	2007 <sup>f</sup>	1994 <sup>j</sup>	2007	1999 <sup>m</sup>	2007	1991	2007 <sup>f</sup>
<b>Albania</b>	3.3	3.6	69.8	78	67.6	20	0.697 <sup>g</sup>	0.784	385	5700	1.26	10.3	3;4;PF	3;3;PF	2.3	2.9	-0.175	-0.76
<b>Bosnia-Herzegovina</b>	4.4	4.5	74.0	78	15.6	10	---	0.800	318 <sup>h</sup>	5600	1.42 <sup>i</sup>	13.536	6;6;NF	3;3;PF	---	3.3	-0.39 <sup>l</sup>	-2.07
<b>Croatia</b>	4.5	4.5	69.46	75	11.5	7.0	0.801 <sup>g</sup>	0.846	2136 <sup>k</sup>	13400	9.82 <sup>k</sup>	50.053	4;4;PF	2;2;F	2.7	4.1	0.31 <sup>k</sup>	-4.196
<b>FYROM</b>	1.9	2.1	72.9	74	25.9	10	0.748 <sup>h</sup>	0.796	1201 <sup>k</sup>	8300	2.32 <sup>k</sup>	7.322	4;3;PF	3;3;PF	3.3	3.3	-0.01 <sup>k</sup>	-0.479
<b>Montenegro</b>	---	0.68	---	77	---	11	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	3;3;PF	---	---	---	---
<b>Serbia</b>	10.2	10.2	---	75	---	12	---	---	1709 <sup>l</sup>	4400	13.89 <sup>l</sup>	40.5	6;6;NF	3;2;F	2.0	3.4	-0.66 <sup>l</sup>	-5.965

<sup>a</sup> US Census Bureau, International Data Base

<sup>b</sup> UNDP, United Nations Development Program

<sup>c</sup> International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook

<sup>d</sup> Freedom House (NF – Not Free; PF – Partially Free; F – Free)

<sup>e</sup> Transparency International

<sup>f</sup> International Monetary Fund estimates

<sup>g</sup> 1990

<sup>h</sup> 1994

<sup>i</sup> Latest available

<sup>j</sup> Earliest available: 1994

<sup>k</sup> Earliest available: 1992

<sup>l</sup> Earliest available: 1998

<sup>m</sup> Earliest available 1999

<sup>n</sup> 1995



– Trade balance –

## The EU and its borderland partners

	EC/EU imports (bn € <sup>f</sup> )		EC/EU Export (bn € <sup>f</sup> )	
	1991	2006	1991	2006
<b>Barcelona Process partners</b>				
Algeria	4.6	9.8	5.9	24
Egypt	4.6	7.5	2.8	8.8
Israel	9.0	9.8	4.1	13.8
Jordan	1.0	0.3	0.15	2.6
Lebanon	2.2	0.2	0.09	3.0
Morocco	4.4	7.2	3.7	10.3
Palestinian Authority	---	---	---	---
Syria	1.6	3.5	1.6	2.9
Tunisia	3.8	7.6	3.0	8.6
<b>Northern Dimension partners</b>				
Iceland	0.6 <sup>m</sup>	2.0	0.9 <sup>m</sup>	2.9
Norway	9.3 <sup>m</sup>	79.1	16.3 <sup>m</sup>	38.2
Russia	11.2 <sup>m</sup>	137.0	16.2 <sup>m</sup>	71.9
<b>Stabilization and Association Partners</b>				
Albania	0.17	0.5	0.06	1.4
Bosnia-Herzegovina	0.14 <sup>n</sup>	1.6	0.02 <sup>n</sup>	2.6
Croatia	0.9 <sup>k</sup>	4.8	0.8 <sup>k</sup>	12.1
FYROM	0.7 <sup>o</sup>	1.2	0.5 <sup>o</sup>	1.5
Montenegro	---	---	---	---
Serbia	0.17 <sup>n</sup>	3.0	0.02 <sup>n</sup>	6.0

Source: European Commission (DG Trade)



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