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THE EU AND THE WORLD: NEW CHALLENGES AND TRENDS

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The EU Presence in International Organizations

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The growing international ascendance of the EU has been long associated with a debate about the overarching guiding principles and objectives that inform and delimit the broad range of policies articulating the EU's international identity. In 2003, the European Council adopted the European Security System (ESS), which identified what the EU member-states perceived as the main security challenges as well as the appropriate way of dealing with them, multilaterally and in close cooperation with international organizations (IOs). The 2008 ESS revision has not altered substantially the EU security preoccupations, reinstating the increasingly complex nature of threats and challenges at regional and global level and the holistic EU approach to their tackling.

The embrace of effective multilateralism as the cornerstone of the EU's interactions with the international community has added a new dimension in the debate about the EU's international presence and orientation (Biscop 2009). Effective multilateralism suggests a specific modality of going international for the EU, thus shifting the focus of the ongoing debate from policy objectives to the appropriate modality of action (Biscop 2009b:13). In that respect, a new underlying question emerges: is such commitment to multilateralism principle or interest based (i.e another means to pursue European interests)? The argument goes, multilateralism is no Holy Grail per se but rather an instrumental means to pursue specific policy objectives related with distinctive EU or member states' interests.

In any case, proponents of multilateralism attribute a key role to IO in the functioning of the international system. They constitute critical cooperation forums in areas which cooperation entails advantages for all or most of their constituent states (Bennett and Oliver 2002:3). The more representative and legitimized IOs are and the more efficiently they operate, the more they contribute to international order and stability. Therefore, it is in the interest of international actors embracing multilateralism to take the necessary steps to ensure efficiency of the IOs, suggesting among others open ears to reform calls to address changing conditions in the

international setting, either at systemic or institutional base level. Failure to do so undermines the credibility of the multilateralism.

The intensification and extension of international governance through IOs, has evolved in parallel with the quest of the EU for an international identity and a political role in international affairs. Thus, there has emerged a need to explore the interrelationship between the EU and IOs the political aspects of the EU engagement with major IOs and their agencies. A few of those studies target explicitly the EU interactions with IOs. These studies have shown that the EU interaction with IOs has both an internal and an external dimension: the former encapsulates the intra-EU institutional and political implications of the interaction. The latter captures the effect of the EU's presence on the functioning of the respective IOs.

Based on this focus, this volume addresses three interrelated sets of research questions. To begin with, which EU related and IO specific parameters condition such interaction? We identify two broad clusters. The first, comprises, among others, decision-making rules within the EU and/or the IO including potential veto points and the legal status of the EU presence. The second cluster, encapsulates, the political component of the EU-IO relationship in particular member states' preferences. It also considers other third states' membership and role in an IO as well as compatibility among multiple arenas of the EU international presence. Moreover, the changing membership both of the EU and IOs, should be taken into consideration, as well as, the membership expansion of IOs (NATO and WTO), which alters internal balances and affects the EU's role in them. Finally, our interest lies not only with the EU impact on the functioning of the IOs but also with the top down dimension of the EU-IOs interaction, in other words, with the intra EU effect of these interactions.

At this point, we should also, clarify three issues recurring in all contributors. Firstly, our understanding of the EU international presence is not limited to the EU collective actions alone but incorporates the presence and contributions of individual member-states with an effect on the EU dimension, especially given that in several cases the two cannot be easily disentangled. Such an expansionary definition creates

a few analytical and methodological problems, not least those related with the necessity to establish specific criteria to discern between individual (i.e. national) and collective (i.e EU) contributions.

Secondly, we have relied on the explicit distinction between international institutions and organizations. This emphasis on formalized aspects of international cooperation derives from three features of IOs they have agency, (for example they make loans and send peacekeepers around the world), agenda-setting influence and a potentially important socializing effect (Simmons and Martin 2002:193).

Thirdly, the EU interactions with IOs may take various forms. The EU's international identity is not exhausted with its presence in IOs. The EU may and does also function through IOs, outsourcing or delegating tasks to other IOs, with IOs, in parallel institutional structures, overlapping in a symbiotic relationship or even against other IOs in a competitive and antagonistic relationship. These alternative forms of interaction come out in several of the contributions. The variety of IOs covered and the diversification, within the broader research and analytical framework of this collective volume ensure that we have identified and captured hopefully many important aspects of these interactions.

Facets of ' effective multilateralism'

If the Cold War period is to be remembered for something positive that should be its rigidity at the centre of the international system and the deriving predictability of state-action for the majority of international actors. The collapse of the bipolar world after the events of 1989 brought about a new series of international challenges, bringing forward the need for security reconceptualization and the requirement for a new international regime. In this context, multilateralism emerged as an option of systemic organization that would remedy the traumas of the bipolar confrontation. Multilateralism was taken beyond the earlier nominal and formal dimension, focusing on the qualitative and substantive dimension of the concept. Multilateralism is not only about the practice of coordinating states' international actions in groups of three or more (Keohane 1990: 731), but also about the kind and nature of institutionalized

relations. In other words, ' ... what is distinctive about multilateralism is not merely that it coordinates national policies in groups of three or more states, which is something that other organizational forms [like bilateralism and imperialism] also do, but additionally that it does so on the basis of certain principles of ordering relations among those states' (Ruggie 1992: 7).

Embracing multilateralism goes well beyond embracing multilateral organizations. It constitutes a generic institutional form, delineating the space and mode of conduct of international relations. The generalized principles specify appropriate courses of action, without regard to the particularistic interests of the parties or the strategic exigencies that may exist in any specific occurrence. A direct corollary is that these principles entail a behavioural indivisibility among the members of the collectivity that abide to multilateralism (Ruggie 1992: 11). It is not supposed to be a 'pick and mix' option, of which the principles are to be followed or obeyed only occasionally and at will, but rather generates pressure or expectations of cross-time, behavioural isomorphism.

Having acknowledged the institutional nature of multilateralism, the question arises why states prefer such an institutional format for the organization of their international interactions. This question relates with the broader issue'... whether multilateralism is a means or an end, an instrument or an expression, or both' (Caporaso 1992: 55). Assuming states are conscious, goal-oriented international actors with exogenous preferences, multilateralism, as an institutional form of international cooperation and coordination, is one functional means – among others - to resort to, according to the instrumental calculus of each member of the international community (cf. Koremenos et al. 2001; Pierson 2000). By considering multilateralism as a means rather than an end, it is possible to consider alternative organizational options with equal or even superior utility for the constituent multitude, according to the exact configuration of state power and interests in particular issue areas. In that respect, multilateralism is a policy option to which states turn only if it serves their purposes best, whatever such purposes may be (Martin 1992: 91-2). In that respect, the embrace

of multilateralism may derive from calculations of direct influence and control over multilateral forms of cooperation, in which the legitimizing function of multilateralism may be highly evaluated. Alternatively, it may be linked with conditions of international uncertainty in which the lock-in and constraining effect of multilateralism to *all* constituent members may be the issue in demand.

However, in contrast to 'instrumental multilateralism', the multilateral mode of international interactions may also be an end in itself. According to that approach, states simply prefer to do things multilaterally not because of a hidden agenda to pursue own interests but in appreciation of the principled course of action embodied in multilateralism. In that respect, multilateralism is not chosen on the basis of rigorous calculations of costs and benefits, but becomes part of an ongoing, taken-for-granted subjective understanding of international life (Caporaso 1992: 56). Such understanding comprises - among others - deliberative and communicative aspects, an emphasis in cooperation through mutual understanding, and norms-oriented behaviour. In its various applications, this 'principled multilateralism' embodies the values that significant international actors consider as indispensable components of a functioning (not necessarily functional), issue area-specific or more general, international system (Coicaud 2001).

Thus, it is possible to identify two different variations of the institution of multilateralism, each one associated with a different underlying logic of action ('logic of consequences' vs. 'logic of appropriateness') (cf. March and Olsen 1998). These variations run through the relationship between states and IOs. The problem is that in practice it is often very difficult to identify these two variations or associate states' attitude vis-à-vis IOs with either of them, as national positions are hidden behind diplomatic language and rhetorical embellishments. In any case, a longer time frame of reference should be used since they reflect broader states' behavioural patterns not fully captured by one-off snapshots of international interactions. How each international actor conceptualizes multilateralism depends on domestic political factors (administration in office, interest groups and civil society, policy-making ethos, etc.) as well as the

country's status, current engagement and historical trajectory in the international system. All these features point to the distinctive, national, political and security culture that informs a country's conceptualization of and approach to international relations in general and IOs more specifically (Katzenstein 1996).

When it comes to the EU and its recent embrace of 'effective multilateralism,' it is even more difficult methodologically to identify the 'kind' of embraced multilateralism, not least because the EU is in itself a constantly evolving, negotiated multilateral order (Elgstrom and Smith 2000). Thus, the interaction of the EU with the international system is a typical case of 'intersecting multilateralisms'. Because of the need to foster consensus, the EU member-states spend most of the time in intra-EU negotiations to reach a position. If a single one eventually emerges, the EU has little flexibility in subsequent UN negotiations for fear of undermining the hard-reached, internal consensus (Laatikainen and Smith 2006: 19-20). However, such rigidity does not bode well with core working assumptions of multilateralism that presupposes some degree of negotiating flexibility to accommodate the concerns of the others partners engaged in any multilateral order. Inevitably, this situation generates bottlenecks in the practical application of the EU multilateral doctrine, with the EU being unable to pay due consideration to basic principles of multilateralism. Furthermore, especially in IOs with mixed membership and representation (i.e. EU and member-states), it is little surprise that the exact meaning of "effective multilateralism" remains blurred, since different actors may espouse a different conceptualization of the notion. Such is the case particularly in the UN system, in which member-states (i.e. national delegations) as well as intergovernmental (i.e. Presidency) and supra-national (i.e. Commission) EU bodies are interchangeably present in different forums, acting and/or speaking potentially on behalf of the EU.

Still, it seems from the EU rhetoric at least that the EU approach tilts to a "process" mind-set emphasizing multilateral cooperation as an end product in itself rather than its functional appropriateness in any given circumstances (Jorgensen 2009: 5-8). What comes out from the analysis of all official EU statements and documents is

a strong belief in the value of multilateralism *per se*, although adding the effectiveness qualification does give an aura of instrumentality in the embraced security doctrine. Multilateralism seems to have an intrinsic value for the EU order, very much compatible and in congruence with the European values, self-images, and principles that arguably dictate the European political action at an international level (Lucarelli and Manners 2005). In general, such an understanding of multilateralism bodes well with the normative twist in the EU's foreign policy (Manners 2002). In the UN context, in particular, this approach reaffirms the strong self-perception of the Europeans as the 'better peoples of the United Nations,' adopting norms-, values-, and principles-oriented positions. However, a closer look at the European contribution to the promotion of the UN purposes and principles rather reveals a more complex and contradictory picture (Fassbender 2004: 859). In that respect, the reform of the UN system constitutes a critical test for the assessment of the EU 'principled multilateralism' credentials, representing the cornerstone of the EU's investment in multilateralism (Chevallard 2005: 23).

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