

## INFOCUS

### All for one and one for all – should the EU develop a united foreign policy?

C4EP analysis on the subject – *Giving a foreign policy leg to the EU – assisting, complementing or substituting member states?*

“Ever since states try to achieve their foreign policy goals, they create various forms of cooperation with each other: this ranges from ad hoc alliances (keeping the option of abandoning the connection practically anytime) to forming federal states (practically terminating the existence of the state for becoming part of a presumably stronger state entity). Where is the European Union today? An ad hoc alliance, or already a federal state? The truth is – as usual – somewhere in between, with ideas and dreams – or fantasies – on the table about its possible development in the near future.

Does the EU have foreign policy goals at all?

The European Union has declared foreign policy goals, with its foreign and security policy aiming to preserve peace, strengthen international security, promote international cooperation, and develop democracy, rule of law, and human rights. Currently these are determined by the Lisbon Treaty, in force since 2009.”

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*Ukraine Has Not Transformed EU Foreign Policy*

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*The geo-political imperative for the EU is to both widen and deepen*

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## C4REPORT

*Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies: Hostile Actors and Migration: Responding to Weaponised Population Flows – 14 November 2023*

„The aim of this conference, hosted by the Martens Centre, was to shed light on the challenges and perspectives surrounding the instrumentalization of migration flows, discuss the most effective strategies to tackle this issue, and provide additional insights following the publication of the policy brief “The Power of Opacity: EU Responses to Weaponised Migration” authored by Vladimír Šimoňák.”

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*EPC: Ending the HIV epidemic in Europe: Towards the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals – 14 November 2023*

This EPC-organised event, in partnership with Gilead, tried to give an overview about the current European HIV-situation.

[click here](#)

*Matthias Corvinus Collegium Brussels: How did the LGBTQ lobby take over the EU? – 16 November 2023*

This event report reflects the author's opinion and not any official reaction from C4EP.

"I usually write event reports in a descriptive way, but this time, I had to try to balance out some thoughts and ideas. Reader discretion is advised.

When talking about the Fidesz-linked MCC, I always suggest the same: go to one of their conferences and then you'll know for sure if you ever want to go back. It was time for me to take my own advice."

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## C4EPOSITION

Balázs Brandt, Former Blue Book Trainee, Current President of the Hungarian Section of Young European Federalists

### **EU Foreign Policy – Shrinking room to manoeuvre?**

The past couple of years of the foreign policy of the European Union has been characterised by a desperate search for its rightful place on the food chain.

The rise of geopolitical uncertainty, increasing crises on the flanks, and the return of war to Europe puts the external action of the EU to a very valid question; to what extent is it an impactful actor in foreign policy? Of course, impactful is a matter of perspectives. Perspectives about relative power, military strength, smart and economic potential, geographical influence, and diplomacy.

The answer of the European Union to the collapsing world order and to foreign policy challenges? Punchy slogans, blame-shifting, and mediocrity. The Global Gateway, European Strategic Autonomy, a Geopolitical Commission, are all but falling short of answering to the three key elements of today's biggest issues of EU foreign policy:

### **GEOGRAPHY, UNANIMITY, CREDIBILITY**

A global superpower first and foremost controls its own neighbourhood. Stabilizes and nurtures political relations, exercises strength when needed, and never lets another global actor question its supremacy. The author believes that the European Union's biggest weaknesses in the terrains of foreign policy are

- a) its lack of adequate and realistic geopolitical ambition to engage the Western-Balkans through genuine dialogue,
- b) its inability to establish a clear sphere of influence in the East,
- c) and its failed attempts in consolidating and strengthening the MENA region.

Make no mistake, I fully support the European Commission's numerous strategies and legislative proposals in this field, and as a federal thinker I would want to see even further powers attributed to a centralised foreign policy body like the EEAS. But as it stands,

unfortunately, the European Union's foreign policy is way more restricted than for the European Commission and its punchy proposals to make genuine change.

In foreign policy, the EU itself is divided on many fronts. We need a stronger push for the abolition of unanimity, and a hard-line approach against strongmen like Orban who undermine the international reputation of EU foreign policy. National sovereigntist politicians often say that we need to respect the "united in diversity" approach. Let us remind them that this respect and acceptance has to go both ways. A European Union with unanimity can never achieve its full potential.

Lastly, a pre-condition to an effective foreign policy is credibility. In rhetoric, just as much as in action. When the EU talks about sanction packages it really has to mean it. When we face Russia or China, we really have to have a firm, credible stance. When we deal with enlargement and the neighbourhood, our credibility is our strength. The Union cannot have multiple and sometimes even contradicting views on sanctions, the Israel-Palestine conflict, or on which president is the "real" president of the European Union.

Internal divisions and the lack of credibility make us a mediocre foreign policy actor, and mediocrity serves no good in the foreign affairs of the 21st century.