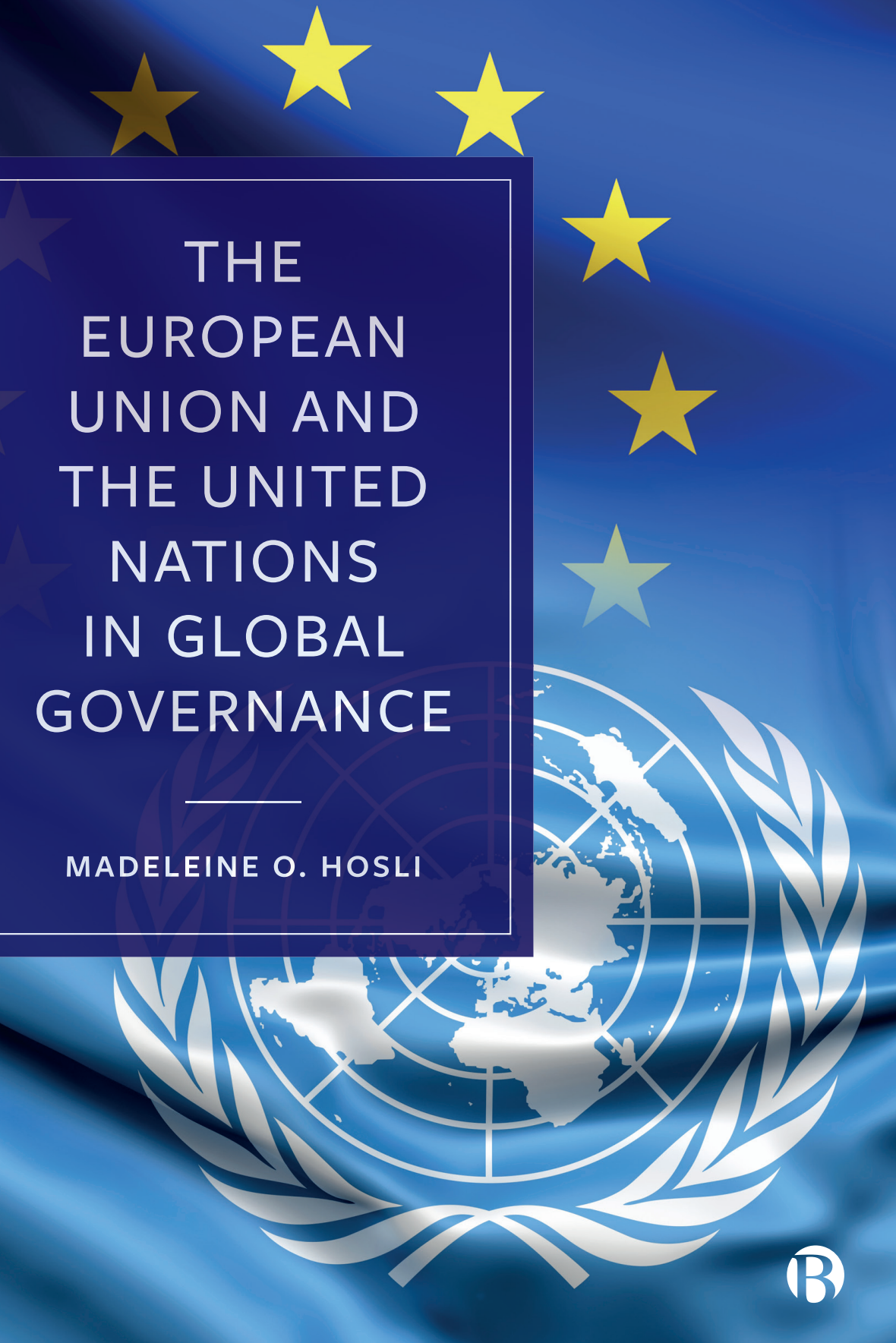
THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE UNITED NATIONS IN GLOBAL GOVERNANCE
MADELEINE O. HOSLI

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACT	Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator
AGRIFISH	Agriculture and Fisheries Council
AU	African Union
BPP	British Politics and Policy
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
CEAS	Common European Asylum System
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CONUN	UN Working Party
COP	Conference of the Parties
COREPER	Comité des représentants permanents
COREU	Correspondance Européenne
CRNA	COVID-19 Recovery Needs Assessment
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
DG	directorate-general
DG INTPA	DG for International Partnerships
EAEC	European Atomic Energy Community
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EC	European Community
ECOFIN	Economic and Financial Affairs Council
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
EEA	European Economic Area
EEAS	European External Action Service
EEC	European Economic Community
EFSF	European Financial Stability Facility
EFTA	European Free Trade Area
EIB	European Investment Bank
EIGE	European Institute for Gender Equality
EMU	European Economic and Monetary Union
EP	European Parliament
EPC	European Political Cooperation

ESM	European Stability Mechanism
ESS	European Security Strategy
EU	European Union
EUGS	European Union Global Strategy
FAC	Foreign Affairs Council
GAD	Gender and Development
GAP	Gender Action Plan
GHRP	Global Humanitarian Response Plan
HR/VP	High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission
IBE	International Bureau of Education
ICC	International Criminal Court
ICJ	International Court of Justice
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDPs	internally displaced persons
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IO	international organization
IOM	Organization for Migration
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
JHA	Justice and Home Affairs
MoU	memorandum of understanding
NGEU	Next-Generation EU
NGO	non-governmental organization
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
PDNA	Post-Disaster Needs Assessment
PEPP	Pandemic Emergency Purchase Program
QE	quantitative easing
QMV	qualified majority voting
QUAD	Quadrilateral Security Dialogue
R2P	Responsibility to Protect
RRF	Recovery and Resilience Facility
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SEA	Single European Act
SGP	Stability and Growth Pact
TEU	Treaty on European Union
TNG	Transnational New Governance
ToL	Treaty of Lisbon
UN	United Nations
UN DPPA	UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs
UN OCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

UN Women	UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNGGIM	Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management
UN-Habitat	United Nations Human Settlements Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNHRC	United Nations Human Rights Council
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
WB	World Bank
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization
WPS	Women, Peace and Security
WTO	World Trade Organization

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1

Introduction

This book deals with the role of the European Union (EU) and the United Nations (UN) in global governance. The UN is the prime international organization dealing with various aspects related to the maintenance of peace and stability, and has an explicit aim to enhance human well-being across the globe. The EU is just one regional integration scheme that interacts – both through its member states directly and as an organization – with the UN on a daily basis, as well as in a more structural way. Obviously, relations between these two overarching institutions encompass many different aspects, from institutional cooperation between many of their sub-entities – for example, UN specialized agencies with the European Commission, the European External Action Service (EEAS) or the European Parliament (EP) – to mutual representation, shared aims and common activities and engagement. In this sense, the book 'zooms in' on the EU as an organization but acknowledges that this is just one example of a 'regional cluster' of states that are collaborating to achieve common goals and endeavours together with the UN as a global actor. Evidently, during the processes of decolonization over recent decades, with many states gaining independence and obtaining UN membership themselves, and with global power shifts, EU–UN relations have changed too. With this, both organizations operate in a dynamic international environment, and their activities cannot be separated from this.

The UN, in itself, constitutes a 'peace project'. Having been created after the earlier League of Nations had become a victim to 'great power politics', the UN as an organization was founded just after the Second World War. Evidently – and similar in some ways to the EU – it aimed to prevent the very destruction, violence and damage that its member states had just endured. 'Swords to ploughshares …' – the preamble of the UN Charter, states that the organization is determined to 'save succeeding generations from the scourge of war'. During the decades that the UN has existed, it has gone through major transformations. While its general institutional set-up has not

been altered all that much, the scope of activities and the range and variety of its specialized agencies, programmes and funds have strongly increased.

In institutional terms, the UN may still be best known for its General Assembly (UNGA), in which each UN member state has one seat. The UNGA consist of several committees, with responsibilities for specific issue areas. It has six main committees.[1] A 'yearly highlight' of the UNGA is the general debate, taking place each autumn at UN headquarters in New York. Each UN member state gets a slot to address the UNGA, presenting its government's priorities and views of current developments in world politics. This is a forum where, for example, the EU member states also speak for themselves, rather than adhering to the general 'EU voice'.[2]

In the UNGA, a multitude of resolutions are prepared, discussed and, if needed, voted on. Thousands of resolutions have been dealt with in the UNGA since its creation (for an overview, see, for example: https://research.un.org/en/docs/ga/resolutions). Clearly, the work of the UN needs preparation by several committees, and much 'background diplomacy' is conducted before a resolution is dealt with by the UNGA. Many resolutions are adopted by consensus. However, voting constitutes an option, notably, for more 'politicized' resolutions. In the case of 'regular' votes, a simple majority of the UNGA membership is needed for adoption. Members to be elected to non-permanent seats in the UN Security Council (UNSC), for example, are chosen based on this pattern. The UN membership is distributed into regional groupings, with the African and the Asia and the Pacific groups being the largest (with 54 and 53 members, respectively). The others are the Eastern European, the Latin American and Caribbean States, and the Western European and Others groups.

More complex are resolutions, for example, focusing on institutional changes. A prominent example is a potential change in representation and decision-making within the UNSC. Formally, to alter the composition of the (permanent) membership of the UNSC, a two-thirds majority is needed in the UNGA, including an approving vote by the Permanent Five (P-5) themselves. In addition to this, the proposed change would need to be ratified domestically by this two-thirds majority of states.

Clearly, with a membership of 51 states in 1945, this threshold for decisions was already difficult to reach. So far, only one formal reform of the UNSC has taken place (based on a 1963 vote of the UNGA), when UNSC membership was expanded from nine to 15 (that is, four and 11 non-permanent members next to the P-5, respectively). However, afterwards, just about every effort for a formal change, while valuable, has failed to overcome this hurdle. With the current membership of 193 UN states, calculations have demonstrated that obtaining a 'winning coalition' to support formal UNSC change is much more difficult than it was with a membership about one quarter of this (see, for example, Hosli et al, 2011).

The UNGA has the advantage that many major issues in global politics can be addressed without its resolutions being legally binding on member states. This contrasts with the UNSC, whose resolutions are legally binding. This is not least one of the reasons why a permanent seat on the UNSC is a valuable aim that has driven many UN member states to propose coalitions of new members that could be seen to 'legitimately' deserve such a seat. Criteria used to justify such a position have been, for example, population size, economic weight and contributions to the UN budget or to UN peace missions. Among potential candidates for this were Germany, Japan, India, Brazil, South Africa and many other states with significant regional weight or strong influence within the UN. Among the most prominent UNSC reform proposals were the ones tabled by the G4 (Germany, Japan, India and Brazil), the African Group, the Uniting for Consensus Group (which, among others, includes Italy, Pakistan, Mexico, South Korea, Malta and Turkey), the L.69 Group (which aims to increase the representation of developing countries) and the Accountability, Coherence and Transparency (ACT) Group. The latter focuses more on cooperation between the UNSC and other UN organs, as well as on a reform of UNSC working methods.

In relations with the EU, from the side of the UN, there is an 'UN Director' in Brussels, who coordinates the activities of UN entities in their contact with EU institutions. The person holding this function is also the UN Secretary-General's representative to the EU and the Belgian authorities. All UN agencies tend to have their own networks and 'entry points' to different parts of the EU institutions; however, it is often prudent for the UN actors to align their positions and to approach the EU for major policy issues as 'one UN'.

The UN agencies, programmes and entities in Brussels – among them, the UN Development Programme (UNDP), the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) – are also 'proactive' when it gets to advancing items on the UN agenda in their contact with EU institutions. Regular meetings, attended collectively by UN organizations with, for example, representatives of the European Commission, ensure that there is a permanent exchange of information and knowledge about new initiatives. The UN agencies are often proactive in the sense of bringing major topics that are on the UN's agenda (including human rights, gender equality, climate, development and so on) close to representatives of EU institutions.

However, there is also a 'natural link' between many items that are prominent on the agenda of the EU and of the UN and its various entities. For example, many aspects of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are, in one way or another, encompassed in EU activities and work. This includes efforts to create or maintain peace, justice and stable institutions (SDG16) or the goal of 'zero hunger' (SDG2). The EU is an important

sponsor of many UN activities. The agendas of the two institutions, in many aspects, are 'congruent' with each other.

Of course, this does not just apply to the EU as a regional integration scheme. For example, many items that are prominent on the agenda of the African Union (AU), including various activities focused on achieving peace and stability, are highly congruent with respective efforts at the UN (Makubalo, 2021). One could even state that the AU has been a driving force behind some of the UN's larger policy priorities over recent decades.

The EU as a regional integration scheme has many ways in which it interacts with the UN and its various specialized agencies, programmes and funds in both a daily and a more structural, medium-term perspective. Clearly, the EU was born of the experiences of the devastation caused by the Second World War. It constituted a deliberate attempt to integrate the economies of former enemies – notably, France and Germany – in areas such as the then (historically salient) sectors of coal and steel. The major aim of early integration efforts was to avoid the outbreak of renewed hostilities and violence between its member states. Based on a cluster of six countries – France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands – the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) was formed. Alongside this, the European Atomic Energy Community (EAEC) was created.

While this integration scheme saw many steps of development over time and changes in terms of its membership constellation, it has gradually developed from a project aimed at integrating core industrial areas of former enemies into a new common market scheme. The original six were joined by Denmark, the UK and Ireland in 1973, by Greece in 1981, by Portugal and Spain in 1986, by Austria, Denmark and Sweden in 1995, and by Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia in a 'big bang enlargement' in 2004. In 2013, Croatia also joined, bringing the total to 28 EU member states. After Brexit, this number decreased to 27 again.

Instead of joining the EU, several potential members either remained in the European Free Trade Area (EFTA) instead or later on in the European Economic Area (EEA). Among these members are Switzerland and Liechtenstein. Similarly, while Norway had a series of votes on potential membership, it has stayed outside the EU to be part of the EEA. More states are currently potential new members of the EU, including Serbia and Montenegro.

While Turkey was a potential EU member for several years, internal changes in its policy orientation, human rights record and pressures on democracy, alongside the fact that it would be one of the largest members of the EU, have hampered its accession. This goes hand in hand with growing sentiments within Turkey that EU membership is not a primary policy objective.

The EU as a regional integration scheme, originating from a deliberate 'peace project', has gradually evolved into a larger economic project (and, gradually, a political one). Most significantly, after having become a customs union – where external tariffs are aligned and internal tariffs are abolished – the predecessor of the EU, the European Community (EC), evolved into an actual 'internal market'. The '1992 project' aimed to remove all remaining barriers to trade among the member states to allow for the free flow of persons, goods, services and capital. With a few years of delay, the internal market project was implemented.

The optimism underlying the creation of the internal market led to incentives to go even one step further in terms of economic integration: to create a monetary union across the member states. While not all EU states aimed to embark on that path, the foundations for the European Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) were largely integrated into the 1991 Treaty on European Union (TEU) and its annexes. This defined the criteria for new members to join, including two aimed at inflation and interest rates, and two focused on fiscal criteria (budget deficits as a percentage of gross domestic product [GDP] that should not be larger than 3 per cent and a debt to GDP ratio not exceeding 60 per cent of GDP, or gradually approaching that target). Although not applied stringently in all instances, these criteria provided measures based on which it could be decided whether an EU state was allowed to enter EMU. It may be important to recall that during the 1990s, for many EU states – among them, Italy and Greece – membership of EMU was seen as a desirable 'target'. Similarly, in many EU states, public opinion clearly supported this project. Only later on, when some pressures on EMU started to evolve, did public opinion – and the political rhetoric of several political parties across the EU – voice opposition to this project in more pronounced ways.

The early construction of the ECSC and of the EEA encompassed the first steps towards the creation of institutional settings that would later support the development of the new, more integrated scheme. In the framework of the ECSC, a 'High Authority' was established as a counterweight to the role and significance of governments in the largely intergovernmentally driven decision-making process. The High Authority was an early version of what would later be the European Commission. It was to initiate further steps towards European integration. Similarly, a Common Assembly was established – the actual predecessor of the European Parliament (EP) – but it was still constituted by representatives of member states' national parliaments. There were no (direct) elections to this institution yet.[3]

In theoretical terms, different approaches have aimed to explain the gradual integration of the participating member states into this regional integration scheme. For example, early approaches incorporated elements of the functionalist logic (see, for example, Mitrany 1966, 1975) to explain

processes of integration based on spillover effects (see, for example, Haas, 1958). In essence, integration in one area induces integration in another one, leading to a gradual extension of the scope of integration, as well as of membership. In the neofunctionalist logic, spillover could be economic, political, functional or 'cultivated'. An example of economic spillover is when having created an internal market, saving transaction costs by creating a monetary union is 'logical'. Similarly, harmonization of a specific technical provision for a product can 'spill over' to similar requirements for this or another product. Political spillover can imply that the loyalties of citizens are gradually shifted to supranational institutions, which creates new incentives for integration. Cultivated spillover, by comparison, is created by these very (supranational) institutions. These dynamics have been described skilfully by, for example, Lelieveldt and Princen (2015).

In institutional terms, early integration efforts already foresaw that another (final) target of the regional integration process would be 'political union'. This was a more difficult path to pursue, however, as many (potential) members were reluctant to relinquish sovereignty in core areas such as foreign policy and security. Gradually, however, the institutions of this regional integration scheme evolved and strengthened. The High Authority turned into what is currently the European Commission, an institution that initiates many new legislative proposals of the EU and is based in Brussels. It incorporates a variety of different directorates-general (DGs) that prepare these initiatives. Admission as an employee to the institution is based on stringent selection procedures in a highly competitive setting (overcoming this hurdle being a 'dream' for many young graduates in terms of future employment prospects in a core European institution).

Over time, the Common Assembly turned into what is currently the EP. It now encompasses more than 700 members, based on a clear allocation scheme across the EU's member states in terms of representation. It is formed based on direct elections to the institution held every five years. The last EP elections took place in May 2019.

Similarly, the 'balance of power' among the EU's core institutions has gradually evolved over time. While intergovernmental negotiations can be said to have constituted the core principle of decision-making in the beginning of this regional integration scheme, the EP has gradually obtained more of a say in the EU decision-making process. Currently, almost all new legislative proposals are drafted by the European Commission but need approval (in two or, if needed, more stages of decision-making or 'readings') by the EP and by the Council of the EU. The latter is composed of representatives of member states serving as ministers in specific substantive areas. For example, there is the Council on Economic and Financial Affairs (ECOFIN), the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) and the Agriculture and Fisheries Council configuration (AGRIFISH). The most

frequent procedure used – encompassing these stages – is called the 'ordinary legislative procedure'.

The Council of the EU, partially due to EU enlargement, has resorted to less unanimity voting over time. Under a rotating six-month presidency, it still aims to achieve consensus among its members. Many issues do not actually reach the level of the ministers, as represented in the Council of the EU, but are decided by the 'permanent representatives' (ambassador level) or delegates at a lower level of the diplomatic hierarchy. The permanent representatives serve in the Comité des représentants permanents (Committee of Permanent Representatives [COREPER]). With a membership of 27 (after Brexit), clearly, negotiations in the Council of the EU can be complex. Hence, gradually, with several treaty revisions (ranging from the TEU, to the Amsterdam and Nice Treaties, to the Treaty of Lisbon [ToL]), the possibility for qualified majority voting (QMV) has become more extensive in this institution. While for several decades in the EU's history, votes among the member states were simply weighted, with a threshold of around 71 per cent for a decision to accept a proposal, the recent past has seen changes in this allocation. Back in the late 1950s, the possibility to use QMV already existed; however, in practice, decisions were almost exclusively taken by consensus. A weighted voting system among the founding members consisted of a set-up where the largest states (France, Germany and Italy) held four votes in the Council (then still the 'Council of Ministers'; in fact, operating under this label up to the ToL), Belgium and the Netherlands had two votes and Luxembourg had one. As 12 votes constituted the QMV threshold, the three largest states could, in essence, carry a decision (or a coalition could be formed with the two middle-sized powers replacing one of the large ones).

With the more extensive enlargements during the 1980s (and again in 2004), calls were made, notably, by the EU's larger member states, to extend their role in QMV, taking population size into account in more explicit ways. This resulted in a first change incorporated into the Treaty of Nice, where a (somewhat cumbersome) political deal was made, introducing a 'triple majority rule'. This implied that QMV needed a given majority of the weighted votes, of the population as represented by delegates in the Council and of EU member states to pass. This system was not easy to implement and appeared to contain inconsistencies (in the sense that not all three quotas were needed to make a difference between 'winning' and 'losing' coalitions in the Council). After several more rounds of intergovernmental negotiations, the ToL incorporated a simpler decision rule for the Council: a double majority clause. Whereas actors such as the European Commission had favoured a 'double simple majority' rule, implying that more than 50 per cent of the population and more than 50 per cent of the EU's member states would be needed for QMV to be attained, these thresholds were raised after intergovernmental summit meetings to 65 per cent (EU population) and

55 per cent (EU member states), respectively. This is the decision threshold still currently in place after it became operational in 2014.

Different from the decision procedure in the Council of the EU (previously, as mentioned earlier, the 'Council of Ministers') are the procedures used in the European Council. While this institution started off informally in 1974, largely as a venue for the French President and the German Chancellor to conduct high-level informal meetings, it gradually became more institutionalized, bringing together the EU's heads of state and government (that is, presidents or prime ministers, depending on EU member states' domestic political systems). The European Council became an official institution of the EU with the 2009 ToL. At that point, its presidency also got adapted: it became a 'semi-permanent' presidency of two-and-a-half years (alongside the six-month rotating presidency in the Council of the EU). The European Council is a high-level institution that gives overall direction to the policies of the EU. It has obtained a very prominent role, for example, in the framework of the economic and financial crisis and, later, the migrant crisis.

Next to the Council of the EU, the European Council, the EP and the European Commission, since the ToL, there is another entity that is of eminent importance for the role of the EU globally: the EEAS and its head, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, who is simultaneously a Vice-President of the European Commission (the HR/VP). The latter function was largely built on an earlier role of HR/VP – at the time held by Javier Solana – and had as first representatives Lady Catherine Ashton (who took office in 2009 for a five-year term), Federica Mogherini (2014 to 2019) and then Josep Borrell (from 1 December 2019).

The coordination of the various institutions of the EU with the (various parts of the) UN is complex and multifaceted in nature. First, some EU states held or hold a permanent seat in the UNSC. Before Brexit, this applied to both the UK and France; after Brexit, only the latter is left as an EU member state in the UNSC. This has led to increased calls – in the EU and beyond – for the EU to consider creating a 'combined seat'. However, as the UN is composed of states as units (and not regional entities), a combined seat would create its own complications. Next to the permanent members of the UNSC, several non-permanent members of this institution that are member states of the EU have frequently been elected to this role (by the UNGA). For example, Germany has been a non-permanent member several times, as was Italy. The Netherlands and Italy have 'shared' such a seat in the more recent past (Italy for 2017 and the Netherlands for 2018), whereas Belgium occupied it during 2019–21. Despite this (formal) representation of EU states in the UNSC, coordination among the EU members to align their positions constitutes a notorious challenge within this institution.

In this respect, a significant coordination function is assumed by the EU delegation(s) operating in close contact with the UN, such as the EU Delegation in New York. A multitude of (daily) meetings ensure that the priorities of EU member states – both in the framework of more formal UN settings (such as the UNSC) and the UN, including its main committees, and in the many working groups and meetings – get 'aligned' to the extent possible.

In the UNGA, with the ToL and the shift to new patterns of EU external representation, a new mode had to be found to ensure that the EU could be a collective actor in respective deliberations. While previously, the (rotating) presidency of the Council represented the EU member states and could speak on behalf of the EU, this possibility no longer existed with the introduction of the new institutional set-up based on the ToL. Accordingly, the EU had to find ways to be represented in the UNGA as an entity, alongside its individual member states. This led the EU to initiate a draft resolution that would grant it 'enhanced observer status' within the UNGA. A first attempt to achieve this failed to garner sufficient support within the UNGA, but the second attempt made it over the required threshold. Since May 2011, the EU can speak early on in respective UNGA deliberations and speak 'on behalf of the EU'. If this possibility had not existed, it could only have spoken towards the end of the respective meetings, which would have made its voice modest compared to the statements already presented by its member states.

The EU has been involved in the sponsoring of resolutions within the UNGA. However, due to a given sceptical attitude towards the EU's role in the UN – partially based on sentiments related to colonial histories – it is often prudent for the EU to align and collaborate with other parties in the sponsoring of resolutions in order to enhance the potential for acceptance. Clearly, the EU is involved in many other ways in UN practice. For example, the EU and its member states provide almost one quarter of the total financial contributions to the UN's funds and programmes; the EU member states also provide almost one quarter of the UN's regular budget (see, for example, European Commission, 2021b).

The following chapters will delve into these various aspects of relations between the EU and the UN in more detail. Chapter 2, co-written with Martijn Haas, provides an overview of recent developments and trends in the EU as a regional integration scheme. It investigates the historic development of EU external representation and foreign policy, notably, in relation to the UN. After reviewing the early period of foreign policy coordination under European Political Cooperation (EPC), a more in-depth review of the institutional changes created under the Maastricht Treaty and ToL will be given. After discussing these treaty-induced institutional changes over time, the present situation is reviewed, with an emphasis on the current role of

the HR/VP, the EEAS and the representation of the EU in the UN. The final section of the chapter contains a brief outlook on the future, reflecting on the European Union Global Strategy (EUGS), the recent revision of this document in the framework of the 'Strategic Compass' and contemporary trends in the EU's external representation and foreign policy. With this, it discusses the ways in which the EU member states have incrementally shifted some responsibilities for 'external action' to a common institution (currently, notably, the EEAS) and addresses the difficulties that were related to 'pooling sovereignty' in such crucial areas as foreign affairs and security – while demonstrating the ways in which EU member states have gradually developed more common action.

Chapter 3, co-written with Hannah Lentschig and Carolina d'Ambrosio, discusses how different crises have affected the EU, notably, its ability to maintain its 'capacity to act', its internal solidarity and its ability to collaborate with other entities on the global level. Clearly, such developments have also affected the EU's relations with the UN. While both the global financial crisis that triggered the European sovereign debt crisis and the COVID-19 pandemic have created pressures that have pitted wealthier against poorer parts of the EU, the latter generated enhanced incentives to integrate in the realm of fiscal policy and led to the intergovernmental acceptance of the Next Generation EU Recovery Fund. Recent steps taken seem to deepen integration in such areas as fiscal policies and, potentially, taxation – domains that have largely been the prerogative of sovereign member states. This could help to make the EU more 'resilient' in the wake of potential future crises and strengthen its capacity to act where public opinion expects the EU as a collectivity to take action.

Chapter 4 discusses in which ways the EU – as a regional multilateral scheme – and the UN – as a global international organization – tackle challenges to multilateralism. The chapter describes how both institutions have been faced with pressures and criticism in the recent past, despite the range of important activities both are conducting. In times of pressures, a known mechanism is that governments take credit for all that goes well but international or regional organizations are blamed for developments that do not seem to go so well. This does not mean that there cannot be improvements – as is the case for many governments as well – but rather that a scepticism leveraged towards supranational and international institutions seems to have increased with such phenomena as the global financial crisis. The chapter describes how 'multilateralism' and rules-based governance is at the core of the operations of both institutions, and considers some options for the future. Finally, specific cases are highlighted where the 'agendas' of the UN and the EU seem to largely overlap (notably, in the area of human rights), while still showing some differences in practice. Valuable research assistance for this chapter has been provided by David Aranguren.

Chapter 5, for which Sophia Bokhari provided helpful research assistance, addresses recent challenges to the UN, including the COVID-19 pandemic. Of course, the latter has affected the organization in various ways. First, the patterns of deliberation, cooperation, discussion and voting within its institutions had to be adapted on short notice. For example, UN staff at headquarters was asked to work from home and meetings were shifted – as in many other organizations and institutions across the globe – to online events. This even implied that the 'highlight' of the year, the UNGA general debate, was conducted largely remotely in the autumn of 2020. However, the pandemic has also affected the very work of the organization. Think about such UN specialized agencies as the UNHCR, whose work in terms of the protection of refugees and persons of concern has become much more complex in view of the pandemic, while the very effects of the pandemic need more support by such organizations as the UNHCR. Similarly, the UN Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) or the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) have been affected considerably (see, for example, Protopsalti, 2021), with domestic violence within many UN member states increasing and children out of school and no longer able to have their daily school meals; similarly, poverty has been increasing and the expanding 'digital divide' has created a multitude of additional problems. Simultaneously, financial pressures on member states due to not only the global financial crisis, but also the COVID-19 pandemic, make many of them more reluctant to contribute financially to the work of these organizations, creating a gap in funding that has 'double effects' (higher financial requirements but less availability of funds and willingness to contribute), forcing organizations to look for new avenues of funding. While this pattern is not equally salient for all organizations embedded in the UN system, it does affect many.

The institutional embedding of the EU and its member states into the UNGA and the UNSC is dealt with in Chapter 6 (co-written with Nicolas Verbeek). It shows how there is a significant overlap of strategic interests in a rules-based multilateral order between the EU and the UN, whereby their different institutional characteristics – supranational versus intergovernmental – may cause friction. The chapter provides an overview of the role of the EU in the UNGA and the historical development of Resolution 65/276 (2011), which attributed to the EU representative capacities within the UNGA as an 'enhanced observer' with unique rights (compared to other regional organizations, which may follow suit in the future, however). The chapter will illustrate how the EU is now in a strong position to represent its collective preferences in the UNGA, while still being dependent on its member states due to the institutionally limited role of an observer. It will also focus on the voting behaviour of EU states within the UNGA. Finally, the chapter deals with EU representation within the

UNSC, where it held two permanent seats (France and the UK) but has only one (France) after Brexit.

Chapters 7 and 8 provide case studies, focusing on different areas in which the EU and the UN closely interact. Among the themes covered in Chapter 7, for which Lia Venini has provided helpful research assistance, is the protection of children, notably, in the framework of migration. The chapter explores the ways in which the EU and the UN have been addressing this theme, the role of specific UN organizations in this context (such as UNICEF) and collaborative efforts between the EU and the UN in this area. Chapter 8 focuses on the protection of women and girls in conflict situations, on gender mainstreaming, and on various efforts conducted to achieve gender equality. The role of UN Women is described in this context, as well as various other initiatives and schemes developed by the UN and the EU. Gender equality is a topic strongly advocated by the EU as a regional organization, both within the EU itself and globally. The chapter also explores collaborative activities and programmes in which both entities participate, such as the 'Spotlight Initiative'. Valuable research assistance for this chapter was provided by Seldon Bhutia.

Chapter 9 analyses the role of the EU and the UN in the context of a changing global environment. Valuable research assistance for this chapter was provided by Sophia Bokhari. While the EU did not yet exist when the UN was created, it gradually developed into a larger and mostly stronger entity. However, simultaneously, the UN itself has changed profoundly in the decades since its establishment: the UN system has grown in terms of its number of specialized agencies, programmes and funds over time, each addressing specific needs on a global (and sometimes regional or even local) level. Simultaneously, UN membership has expanded to 193 states. While its institutional set-up has remained largely the same, the changes in global constellations have been reflected in the ways of operation of the UN. While, for example, the first decades after the Second World War were characterized by a strong 'East–West' division, a 'North–South' division started to gradually materialize, not least during the phase of decolonization. With the strengthening of regions and several individual member states over time, the EU and the UN have gradually become embedded into an altered global situation and power constellation, with new challenges and dangers, though also recipes for success in tackling them. New models have been reflected upon, such as 'minilateralism' and 'The Third UN', which will be briefly explored in the chapter.

Chapter 10 concludes by providing a synopsis of the main findings and insights of each chapter. It situates EU–UN relations in the broader global context and reflects on the role of the EU as a regional integration scheme that is gradually evolving and its relations with an equally evolving UN. While both organizations share some common agendas, they are

also distinguished by differences in terms of their modes of operation, substantive areas predominantly focused on and different obstacles to their work. Nonetheless, they share many aspects of a global agenda to enhance human well-being, peace and stability: both are global forces supporting the rule of law, human rights, multilateralism and patterns of rules-based governance in a changing world.

2

The Development of EU Foreign Policy and External Representation

Written with Martijn I. Haas[1]

Assessing the external relations of the EU (and its predecessor, the EC) between about 1957 and 1992, it is clear that the EU's scope in terms of its competency in maintaining external relations has incrementally and gradually expanded. At the foundation of the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1957, the Treaty of Rome only created options for it to engage in international economic relations (Bindi, 2010: 14–15; Smith, M.E., 2010: 226). In a classic example of spillover effects of economic integration (Haas, 1958), the EEC complemented its customs union – where it abolished all internal tariffs between its member states and established a common external tariff – to initiate a common commercial policy (Bindi, 2010: 14–15). To achieve this, all member states were called on to coordinate their actions in international organizations in 'all matters of particular interest to the common market' (Bindi, 2010). This led to some successes in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) negotiations during the Kennedy Round, for example, thanks to commercial agreements signed with a number of countries in the years prior to the negotiations (Bindi, 2010: 17).

Although the Treaty of Rome transferred competency to act in external economic relations to the EEC, it did not include foreign policy goals or objectives, nor any clauses on political coordination (Smith, K.E., 2003: 10). This lack of political coordination led to tensions among member states in the 1960s, as the EEC was unable to agree on a common position, for example, in view of the crises in the Middle East (see Smith, M.E., 2003: 63). M.E. Smith (2003) identified three main challenges concerning the member states' engagement with the Six-Day War in 1967. First, the positions of member states were at odds with each other, and there was no mechanism in place that would allow for coordination. This was caused by another factor: member

states did not agree on the appropriate forum in which to tackle the crises in the Middle East. Whereas some member states recognized the EEC as the appropriate forum for coordination, France preferred to engage directly with the US, UK and Soviet Union (Smith, M.E., 2003: 63).

At the time, the EC member states had no secretariat, institutional basis or even fixed meeting place for their coordination in foreign policy matters (Allen and Wallace, 1982: 21). Coordination on foreign policy issues was, however, of marked importance to the future of the EC's cohesion. Future enlargements could create rifts between old and new members, and specifically with the UK: like France, the UK holds a seat on the UNSC and thus possesses its own particular interests in security and foreign policy, as well as a capacity to act autonomously in international affairs (Smith, M.E., 2003: 65).

After the resignation of Charles de Gaulle in 1969, France gradually subscribed to a more Eurocentric foreign policy perspective. De Gaulle's successor, Georges Pompidou, declared in his so-called *Triptique* that the EEC should focus on completing, deepening and enlarging the EC's projects (Allen and Wallace, 1982: 30; Bindi, 2010: 18). Background studies were conducted as to how this could be realized, resulting in the 1970 Davignon Report. The report stipulated that EEC foreign ministers and political directors should meet on a regular basis for mutual consultations and was less ambitious than a number of previous ideas to enhance political cooperation among EC members (Allen and Wallace, 1982: 24–5). Consultations were to take place on request of the chairman and regularly in intervals of at least every six months (Allen and Wallace, 1982: 24–5). This marked the start of EPC.

In practice, however, no budget, finances or staff were allocated to this new coordinating mechanism (Smith, M.E., 2003: 75). It rather represented a small, intergovernmental step towards foreign policy coordination, conveniently placed outside of the EC framework and with no accountability to the EP (Allen and Wallace, 1982: 25).

The EPC, however, was strengthened in 1973 by the Copenhagen Report, specifying the EPC's role and mechanisms, as well as laying down plans for its future development (Allen and Wallace, 1982: 25–6; Bindi, 2010: 19). From then onwards, the member states' ministers of foreign affairs were to meet at least four times a year and EPC was specifically to be used to prepare those meetings. In addition, subcommittees were established, and EEC ambassadors accredited to third countries were encouraged to consult each other. Although many of the stipulations in the Copenhagen Report merely formalized existing practice, it did state that the EPC had already created a 'reflex of coordination' that substantively changed the way member states interact with each other and with third countries (Allen and Wallace, 1982: 25–6).

It is in this framework that the EEC first gained observer status in the UNGA and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in 1974 (Serrano de Haro, 2012: 9). In the same year, the European Council was created, at the time still as an informal mechanism, consisting of heads of state or government and their foreign ministers, including the president of the European Commission (Bindi, 2010: 20). The inclusion of the European Commission president was important, as the EPC formally gathered outside of the European Commission's framework in an intergovernmental setting.

With the signing of the Single European Act (SEA) in 1986, the EC embarked on a new step towards foreign policy coordination. The EPC was integrated into the EC's setting and provided with a secretariat, and a framework for the relations between the EPC and the EP, European Commission and Council of the EU was created (Bindi, 2010: 24–5). This had been a long-term wish of the smaller member states, which had been eager to make the EPC more supranational and to integrate it into the EC's institutional framework (Smith, M.E., 2003: 71).

Although the EPC has certainly helped to make the EC member states a recognized partner in international affairs, opinions on whether the EPC was successful or not were mixed in 1982 (Wessels, 1982). Coordination had helped increase the presence of the then nine member states of the EPC/EC in international politics, but it was criticized for its intergovernmental character (Wessels, 1982: 2–3).

The EPC did, however, become an important mechanism through which its member states engaged with the UNGA, as shown, for example, by Lindemann's (1982) evaluation of the EPC's functioning in the 1970s. Harmonization and consultation meetings between ambassadors took place in weekly settings, and upcoming UNGA resolutions were discussed more intensively in the main committees (Lindemann, 1982: 110). Since the UNGA was the only UN body in which all EPC member states were represented, coordination was restricted to the UNGA; activities in other UN bodies did not constitute part of these regular consultations (Lindemann, 1982: 111). Since many political issues for the EPC were rather controversial among the developing countries that dominated discussions in the UNGA in the 1970s, the nine EC member states (the 'Nine') would often seek to bring in their policy proposals in organizations containing more like-minded countries advocating similar interests, such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), GATT, North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) or International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Lindemann, 1982: 111). The UNGA was thus not nearly as important a platform to the member states then as it currently is.

Although the Nine issued a significant number of joint statements within the UNGA, it remained difficult to coordinate voting behaviour on controversial political issues, such as on important economic topics or

decolonization (Lindemann, 1982: 119–22). This weakness to coordinate on controversial topics was partially a result of the EPC's set-up: it did not have institutions of its own until 1987, and its presidency changed every six months, providing only limited scope for continuity and long-term planning (Dover, 2010: 242).

The intensive EPC consultations, however, also led to a certain disconnect between the EPC and other Western member states in the UN, as these Western partners were rarely included in the consultations of the EPC (Lindemann, 1982: 130). The early phase of EPC engagement in the UNGA can thus be considered to be relatively successful in the ways it established regular consultations and harmonization of behaviour, yet its output was somewhat constrained: limited internally due to the difficulty in reaching common positions on controversial topics; and limited externally not least due to a growing presence and importance of developing countries in the UNGA.

Despite the incremental shift towards the expansion of the European Community's competencies in foreign affairs, the development of external relations mechanisms was slow and mostly limited to the areas in which the European Community has exclusive competencies, such as trade and economic relations. Cooperation on political issues within the EPC was hindered by countries preferring to negotiate political issues directly with the great powers – such as France under de Gaulle – or by countries that were not willing to supranationalize part of their foreign and security policy. The intergovernmental nature of the EPC was relatively successful in reaching joint positions within the UNGA, but this success was mostly limited to uncontroversial or politically uncontested topics.

This early stage of European external relations stands in stark contrast to developments since the 1992 Maastricht Treaty. Over the last 30 years, the European institutions have increasingly become involved in political and security issues, while adjusting to the reality of a post-Cold War world and a significant increase in terms of their own membership size and composition.

The 1992 Maastricht Treaty – also called the 'Treaty on European Union' (TEU) – and the 1998 Treaty of Amsterdam induced some significant changes to the way the (predecessor of the) EU conducted its external relations. In essence, new roles and mechanisms for coordination were created. The most significant example is the start of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) in the second pillar of the TEU (Bindi, 2010: 26). This replaced the EPC, which ceased to exist after the signing of the Maastricht Treaty (Bindi, 2010: 26). The main objectives of the CFSP were to project an image of an EU foreign policy as strongly embedded in international institutions and to promote global norms and universal values aimed at safeguarding the common values and fundamental interests of the EU (Bindi, 2010: 26–7).

Although the CFSP was still part of the intergovernmental pillar at the time, it did have a more supranational character than the EPC did (Dover, 2010: 244). The CFSP was embedded in the EU; this stands in contrast to the EPC, which was deliberately kept outside the EC framework. Moreover, the European Commission gained the right of initiative in the CFSP alongside member states, and the EP was to be kept informed of any initiatives under the CFSP in a similar way as was the case under the EPC (Bindi, 2010: 27). This essentially created three sources of EU external relations: the foreign and security policies of member states; the CFSP framework; and the external relations over which the European Commission presided, mostly in the sphere of international economics and trade (Dover, 2010: 245).

These three sources of EU external action led to a complicated system of managing EU external action; they were based on compromises between the member states. Furthermore, while the CFSP only represented the beginning of a common European security policy, it did impose new obligations on the EU members represented within the UNSC. In this institution, member states usually preferred to go their own way instead of consulting with fellow EU members, as was expected for the UNGA (Smith, 2020: 46). However, the Maastricht Treaty (the TEU) stipulated that the European permanent members of the UNSC were now to keep other EU states fully informed about ongoing discussions in the UNSC and to defend and protect the interests of the EU in the UNSC (European Union, 1992: 126–7).

EU coordination in the UNSC, however, has traditionally been tough. France and the UK have, in the past, vehemently defended their autonomy as permanent members of the UNSC (Smith, 2020: 50–1). In other parts of the UN system, like the UNGA, coordination efforts have been more successful. Since 2000, the Council of Ministers has produced an annual list of priorities for the EU at the UNGA's upcoming general sessions, and the EPC's original coordination mechanisms have developed further in the framework of the CFSP (Galariotis and Gianniou, 2017: 64).

The pre-ToL engagement of the EU (or, earlier, the EC) with the UN system had a dual character, a fact that was acknowledged by the UN itself (Serrano de Haro, 2012: 8–9). The representative of the EU member state holding the presidency of the Council of the EU was the primary representative of the EU in most UN bodies, while also representing itself as a member state in the UN system. Since the EC only enjoyed observer status at the time, having the presidency represent it brought considerable benefits to collective representation in the UN. The EC representative, as observer, was usually among the last speakers on the speaker list of the UNGA. However, the presidency would usually be among the first to speak, allowing a more powerful agenda-setting influence of the EU statement on the topic discussed in the UNGA (Serrano de Haro, 2012: 9). The presidency also held full membership rights and could thus take part in debates more

easily. The EC representatives themselves usually did not speak up, unless the issue in question fell under the exclusive competency of the European Commission (Smith, 2020: 47).

By comparison, the coordination mechanism for EC member states in the UNGA has developed significantly since the start of the EPC. Coordination among the member states went through a couple of stages before the final position could be represented at the UNGA. Before the signing of the ToL, EU-sponsored resolutions and statements were drafted in Brussels and refined in further coordination meetings at permanent representations in either Geneva or New York (Smith, 2020: 47). The member state holding the presidency of the Council of the EU was important in this process, as it presided over the coordination meetings and ultimately presented the EU's position in the UNGA (Smith, 2020: 47).

This increasingly supranational trend in European external relations and within the UNGA continued with the Treaty of Nice, which instituted minor adaptions to the patterns of decision-making and institutional structures underlying European foreign policymaking. Article 24 of this treaty stipulated that QMV could also be used for internal matters, such as institutional design and joint actions (Dover, 2010: 250). Moreover, the treaty consolidated the HR/VP's role as chief of external affairs. The Treaty of Nice stipulated that the HR/VP could chair the Political and Security Committee at the expense of the member state holding the presidency (Dover, 2010: 250). With the implementation of the treaty, CFSP ambassadors no longer needed to travel from capital to capital, as they instead became based in Brussels on a semi-permanent basis.

The next larger step in terms of foreign policy coordination was the eastern enlargement of 2004. Ten new member states joined the EU and, with this, then started taking part in its foreign policy mechanisms. Adequate coordination by EU member states could now allow for enhanced representation within the UN system, as the post-2004 EU was, in essence, spread out over three regional UN groups. This implied that for institutions such as the UNSC or the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC), more EU members had a chance to be represented simultaneously than ever before.

The ToL, however, represented the most significant change since the Maastricht Treaty of 1992 had been implemented. The ToL induced several institutional changes that also had clear implications for the ways in which the EU and its member states coordinated their work within the UN. The most important changes included the establishment of the EEAS, a supranational diplomatic representation and 'foreign policy bureaucracy'. It implied the delegation of agenda-setting powers from the member states to the HR/VP and, accordingly, to the EEAS, which in a way helped overcome collective action challenges related to EU foreign policy behaviour (Häge, 2020: 635). The HR/VP, moreover, became increasingly influential as an

agenda setter, notably, based on the 2016 presentation of the EUGS. The EUGS was the successor of the 2003 European Security Strategy (ESS) and emboldened the EU with a strategic vision about the objectives and priorities of the EU's foreign policy and for its engagement with external actors globally (Novotná, 2017: 181–2). These changes were crucial to improving the collective performance of the EU on the world stage and represented a new step in terms of the EU's political order (Blavoukos and Bourantonis, 2017b). The expected performance gains created by the ToL were essential to appeasing those who opposed integration in policy fields that traditionally belonged to the member states, such as foreign affairs (Blavoukos and Bourantonis, 2017b: 8).

Due to the ToL, decision-making in foreign policy areas again shifted more towards a supranational model, with more space for the EU to act on behalf of its member states and as a unitary actor. The central figure in the EU's new foreign policy structure, the HR/VP, experienced some significant changes compared to earlier stages: the role as head of the Council of the EU no longer applied; instead, the position was combined with a Vice-Presidency of the European Commission. This new double function of the HR/VP is a key characteristic of the position and aims to serve the reduction of the fragmentation of EU external relations (Von Ondorza and Scheler, 2017).

Besides its double (institutional) hat, the HR/VP also chairs the post-ToL FAC (Smith, 2020: 47), that is, the Council of the EU in which the member states' foreign ministers are represented. The HR/VP replaces the presidency in this capacity, and the EU member state holding the presidency only chairs FAC meetings in the absence of the HR/VP. Despite the national incentives of the presidency to insert its own agenda in the FAC while replacing the HR/VP, the HR/VP still wields considerable power on the agenda-setting process, and the presidency tends to fully include the HR/VP's agenda in the sessions it chairs (Schmid, 2014: 87).

As the person charged with implementing the CFSP, the HR/VP has access to a significant number of resources embodied in the newly established EEAS – the EU's diplomatic service that assists the HR/VP in carrying out the duties related to this function (Rehrl, 2014: 60). Besides geographical and thematic directorates, the EEAS also includes the EU's intelligence centre, the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and the corresponding EU military staff (Fägersten, 2015; Rehrl, 2014: 60–1). In third (that is, non-EU) countries and international organizations, the EEAS delegation formally represents the EU and holds precedence in EU affairs over the embassy representing the rotating presidency (Dialer and Austermann, 2014: 110). The EEAS thus resembles a mix of a defence and a foreign ministry, serving the HR/VP in Brussels, member states and third countries.

With the implementation of the ToL, the institutional structure of EU foreign policy and external relations changed significantly. This also affected

the way in which the EU interacts with other international organizations, such as the UN.

In its post-ToL stage of integration, the EU enjoys several benefits in the UN and UNGA compared to other regional organizations.[2] In the post-ToL era, the EU can take on the role of a unitary actor in the UNGA, bolstering the EU's leadership capacity in this institution (Ojanen, 2011: 64). Furthermore, since the EU member states are still formally members of the UNGA in their own right, the limits to the funding provided to the UN do not apply to the EU as an organization, technically allowing the EU to provide funds to the UN beyond the established limits created to prevent excessive influence over the UN (Ojanen, 2011: 64).

The ToL also changed the way in which the coordination of EU member states' positions in the UNGA is structured. Coordinating positions has been shown to be crucial to the EU's influence in the UNGA, and the EEAS has now taken over some of the coordination formerly in the hands of the presidency (Panke, 2014). Whenever there is a common stance, members of the EEAS now present the EU's position in the UNGA. The UNSC is an exception to this due to the sensitive nature of several issues discussed in this institution. In the UNSC, an EU member state may invite the HR/VP to represent the EU's position on the issue being discussed, but coordination within the UNSC among EU member states is rare (Smith, 2020: 50–1).

Clearly, a major step towards the EU 'speaking with one voice' was set in the UNGA with Resolution 65/276, adopted by the UNGA in May 2011 and representing an ambitious step for the EU as a more unified 'global actor', as well as in the UN. The resolution granted the EU 'enhanced observer' status, providing it with new privileges, such as the right to present oral proposals and amendments, circulate documents, make interventions, and participate in the general debate (Serrano de Haro, 2012: 7). The achievement of the status – reached after initial difficulties in getting the resolution passed – presented a new milestone for the EU in the UNGA.

The decision to strive for enhanced observer status is directly related to the ToL's institutional rearrangement of the EU's foreign policy institutions (Blavoukos and Bourantonis, 2017c: 49), as the EEAS and HR/VP took over, or 'inherited', the EU's observer status seat instead of the full membership that was enjoyed by the rotating presidency. This meant that the EU delegation would get to speak only at the end of debates and would be unable to distribute written communications as official documents or make use of procedural rights (Serrano de Haro, 2012: 13). This significantly reduced its agenda-setting power for debates in the UNGA and was a clear downgrade compared to the situation before the ToL (Guimarães, 2015: 89). The process of achieving this enhanced observer status has been studied in depth, as it is characteristic of the challenges the EU faces in terms of being an unitary

actor within the UNGA (Blavoukos and Bourantonis, 2017c; Blavoukos et al, 2017; Serrano de Haro, 2012).

After the implementation of the ToL, EU member states initially considered different options to shape the EU's future involvement in the UNGA (Laatikainen and Palous, 2018: 16, cited in Blavoukos and Bourantonis, 2017c: 49). The preferred one, however, was to strive for an enhanced observer status, representing a sustainable structural remedy for the post-ToL changes that would constitute a downgrade. Introducing such an enhanced status for a regional organization, however, runs counter to the principles on which the UNGA is structured: the UN Charter puts states at the core of the system and does not allow for regional organizations to be conferred similar rights as UN member states possess (Serrano de Haro, 2012: 10).

After internal negotiations, the EU came up with an ambitious draft resolution (Blavoukos and Bourantonis, 2017c: 50). This was presented to the UNGA at a time when the EU's external relations mechanisms were still in transition after the implementation of the ToL, which meant that the acting head of the EEAS delegation in New York, the Council of the EU presidency and the EU member states themselves had to take action to convince other UNGA members to agree with Resolution 65/276 (Serrano de Haro, 2012: 11–12; Blavoukos and Bourantonis, 2017c: 50).

This first proposal of Resolution 65/276 did not find the required support and, consequently, failed to be accepted by the UNGA. The EU had probably miscalculated the weight that smaller and medium-sized states have in the UNGA, as the one-state, one-vote principle provides them with relatively large bargaining power (Blavoukos and Bourantonis, 2017c: 50). These states disagreed with the way the resolution was phrased, as it was solely concerned with the position of the EU in the UNGA and even referred to the ToL and other EU concepts that have little to do with the UNGA. This led to an impression that the EU was looking for a disproportionate increase of influence in the UNGA, and European insistence on this proposal towards the other UNGA member states enhanced this concern (Blavoukos and Bourantonis, 2017c: 51). The accusation of over-representation is voiced more often on the international stage when the EU is identified as being over-represented, and the EU tends to be responsive to this argument (Ojanen, 2011: 66). Some opposition came from the African and Caribbean states, who eventually moved for the postponement of the EU draft resolution, which represented a major setback for the EU's role at the UN (Serrano de Haro, 2012: 18).

Following this setback, the EU launched a second round of consultations. The first HR/VP, Lady Catherine Ashton, launched a global campaign of the EEAS, supported by the rotating presidency and diplomats of EU member states, in order to garner broader support for the EU draft resolution (Guimarães, 2015: 92; Serrano de Haro, 2012: 18–19). This campaign

made full use of the EEAS delegations in capital cities, whereas the first round of consultations mostly took place in New York. Due to these more inclusive consultations through the global network of the EEAS and the consequential amendment of the original draft, Resolution 65/276 was, in the end, approved with just two abstentions (Serrano de Haro, 2012: 18–19).

Although the EU managed to successfully upgrade its status as a regional organization in the UNGA, the benefits of this new position can only really be used when the EU agrees on a common position in the UNGA (Panke, 2017: 28). Generally, EU group coherency has been consistently high over time, with disagreements among member states mostly occurring in the fields of security, disarmament and legal questions (Panke, 2017: 30–1; see also Jin and Hosli, 2013). Panke (2017), inspired by Putnam's (1988) work on multi-level negotiations, describes the involvement of regional organizations in the UN as a three-level game: first, a member state must formulate its own preferences; second, member states will have to agree on a joint position; and, third, the regional organization then engages with third states in the UNGA to reach agreement (Panke, 2017: 32). To better understand the role the EU plays in global governance, the following passages will notably focus on what Panke sees as the second level.

At the basis of the EU's actions and output at the UNGA are a variety of EU documents. As such, the basis for the EU's action in the UN is delineated in Brussels. Every year, a paper on the EU's priorities for the UN, and specifically the UNGA, is drafted, which lays out all policy issues on which EU member states commit themselves to finding a common position in the UNGA (Galariotis and Gianniou, 2017: 64). To draft this paper, consultations are first held with the UN Working Party (CONUN), which falls under the Council of the EU (Galariotis and Gianniou, 2017: 63) and aims to develop common EU policy on UN issues of common interest to EU member states. With this, CONUN aims to provide guidance towards achieving strategic EU policy objectives and thematic issues in the UN by coordinating member states' priorities (Council of the European Union, 2021b). After CONUN, consultations are held with the different working groups of Council of the EU that deal with topics relevant to the EU's work in the UN, such as human rights or the CFSP (Galariotis and Gianniou, 2017: 63). After consultations are concluded, it is the FAC that ultimately adopts the draft. Other relevant documents include the 2003 ESS and the EUGS, which succeeded the ESS in 2016 (Galariotis and Gianniou, 2017: 65). These documents, including more recent steps, will be discussed later.

Based on these documents, the EEAS staff in Brussels drafts and then circulates draft resolutions via the Correspondance Européenne (COREU) among the member states in Brussels (Galariotis and Gianniou, 2017: 73). COREU is a communication network of the EU, encompassing the Council of the EU, the foreign ministries of EU member states, COREPER, the

European Commission and the General Secretariat of the Council of the EU, aiming to align positions in foreign affairs matters. Based on this, the first rounds of negotiations between member states take place in the FAC, chaired by either the HR/VP or by EEAS representatives (Smith, 2020: 47). As soon as the member states agree on a text for the draft resolution, it is transferred to the EU delegation in New York (Galariotis and Gianniou, 2017: 73), where the process is repeated. The EU delegation in New York circulates the document to the EU member states' missions to the UN, which then enter negotiations between the permanent missions, coordinated by the EU delegation (Galariotis and Gianniou, 2017: 73).

Despite its enhanced observer status in the UNGA, however, the EU does not have the right to propose draft resolutions or to co-sponsor (draft) resolutions. Hence, it is usually the EU member state holding the rotating presidency in the Council of the EU that introduces a draft resolution, which is then sponsored by other EU member states (Galariotis and Gianniou, 2017: 73). The actual outreach and consultations with other states and regional blocs is then coordinated by the EU delegation in New York again (Smith, 2020: 47). EU member states and the EU delegation create a work division based on time availability, traditional alliances between states and the issue specialization of the respective delegations (Galariotis and Gianniou, 2017: 64–5).

Of course, these mechanisms only come into play when EU member states have agreed to pursue a joint position in the UNGA (Panke, 2014: 1052). This is now the case for most of the draft proposals heading to the UNGA, which puts the EEAS into an increasingly important position with respect to EU diplomatic activity within the UN.

Besides formal institutional changes such as the implementation of the ToL and the acquisition of the enhanced observer status at the UN, several other important trends for a more coordinated European foreign policy can be discerned. First, the 2016 EUGS was launched by HR/VP Federica Mogherini in the lead. The EUGS can be seen as the successor of the 2003 ESS and essentially determines what can be seen as the EU's foreign policy doctrine. The document describes the foreign policy and defence objectives of the EU and the challenges facing the EU now and in the future. In a sense, it describes a European 'world view', painting a rather bleak picture characterized by unilateralism and a slow decline of the liberal-democratic world order that is very much upheld by the EU and most of its allies. The ESS mantra of 'effective multilateralism' was replaced in the EUGS by 'principled pragmatism', reflecting the need for the EU to come to terms with the decline of the liberal world order and the rise of countries like China and Russia, which have a different understanding of what the international world order should look like (Blavoukos and Bourantonis, 2017a: 5–6). Both terms used ('effective multilateralism' and 'principled

pragmatism') leave room for interpretation. They in some ways constitute compromise solutions that were acceptable to the EU member states required to support the strategies. Nonetheless, they capture the basic orientation of the EU's evolving collective foreign policy perspectives. The EUGS almost coincided with the (somewhat unexpected) result of the Brexit vote in the UK; it was a deliberate decision by the HR/VP to issue the document, as the need to do so in view of a then potential withdrawal of the UK from the EU seemed even more urgent.

Founded on the core premises of an international rules-based order, the EUGS recognizes the UN as a key institution in the international political system. The UN is seen as forming the cornerstone of a multilateral system supported – and preferred – by the EU. Accordingly, intensifying cooperation between the EU and the UN is considered to be a core objective in the EUGS.

The EUGS also shows the increasing difficulty of creating a grand strategy or narrative for a European foreign policy strategy that has required agreement from an increasing number of member states. Whereas the 2003 ESS was adopted by the European Council and received with great enthusiasm, the 2016 EUGS was quietly launched as the results of the Brexit referendum came in (Novotná, 2017: 181). Moreover, the EUGS was not adopted by the European Council as such; rather, the EUGS was merely presented to the European Council, making it less legally binding than its predecessor (Novotná, 2017: 181).

The sense of realpolitik of the 2016 EUGS and the need for a more pragmatic foreign policy focus appears to be shared by the European Commission under president Von der Leyen. She has pledged to lead a 'geopolitical' commission, while at the same time, HR/VP Borrell proclaimed that the EU will have to learn 'the language of power' (Gstöhl, 2020: 1). On an institutional level, practising geopolitics may pose a challenge to the European Commission and to the HR/VP. Whereas such states as China and the US can instrumentalize trade policies for security purposes or to gain leverage with other states, by comparison, the EU strictly isolates its external economic policy from foreign and security policy (Gstöhl, 2020: 1–2). This is clearly reflected in the history of European external relations, where economic relations have been at the heart of the European Commission's exclusive competencies. The CFSP and its institutions are, however, still developing, and the HR/VP is still heavily dependent on the consent of the member states in the Council of the EU before being able to implement any foreign policy decisions. Implementing a foreign policy item based on (economic) power relations will thus be a challenge to the European Commission and the HR/VP due to the fragmented competencies concerning European foreign policy and external relations.

Another challenge consists of the identity of the European Commission as an 'international bureaucracy', as its sources of power are moral and contain expert authority; thus, the European Commission relies more on soft power than on the coercive measures commonly associated with geopolitics (Zwolski, 2020: 4, 8). Engaging in geopolitics also requires the European Council and the EEAS to change their 'world view' and ways of engagement with external actors (Gstöhl, 2020: 4). It is yet unclear whether the EU will be able to speak the 'language of power' and how that will affect its traditionally values-based engagement with third countries and international organizations.

As Zwolski (2020) notes, the European Commission might have to develop its own type of geopolitics, combining its identity as an international bureaucracy pursuing objectives valuable to society with the reality of power-based engagement with systemic rivals in the international system. The former point is shared with the UN: both organizations strive to create a more stable, fair and better world, rather than pursuing basic national or institutional interests. In this sense, the European Commission's approach to geopolitical realities could benefit from further pursuing cooperation with the UN in such areas as nuclear non-proliferation, climate security, peacekeeping and humanitarian relief efforts. This would not only strengthen the legitimacy of both organizations through enhanced moral authority, but also show that the EU is willing and able to stand up for security interests and stability abroad.

In June 2020, the EU's defence ministers started a process of developing a strategic compass for security and defence. The new document, aiming to unify the EU's response in security and defence, is expected to be issued by the end of 2022. It is likely that some of the potential new elements mentioned earlier might be more explicitly reflected in this document as compared to the EUGS.

As this chapter has demonstrated, the EU's external engagement and coordination in foreign policy matters has come a long way since the ECSC started engaging with third countries. Major institutional milestones were reached by the EPC, the establishment and development of the post of HR/VP, and the founding of the EEAS. The EU's collective foreign policy orientation is also increasingly international in the way it is conducted as a type of 'multilateral-bilateral diplomacy', engaging with third countries in their respective capitals instead of merely reaching out within the framework of international organizations, for example, as located in Brussels, New York and Geneva.

Yet, despite all these steps and developments, the challenges to the establishment of a truly European foreign policy have remained remarkably stable over time. National interests of member states still pose a considerable challenge to efforts to form a more unified EU external affairs strategy. This

was already reflected in the EPC, being placed outside the EC's institutional framework and only allowing for limited participation by the European Commission. Although there has been a gradual supranationalization of EU member states' foreign policy approaches through the launch of the HR/VP post, the EEAS and the CFSP, it is still hard to reach agreement on topics that affect the very core of state sovereignty. This is particularly true for themes in the realm of international security, such as the establishment of a European military structure or a 'European' seat on the UNSC.

Nonetheless, the EU has been shown to be a remarkably coherent actor within the UNGA. With the new EEAS-led coordination mechanisms and the EU's enhanced observer status in place, EU member states tend to 'speak with one voice' on a clear majority of resolutions. This makes it easier than before to upload European ideas and perspectives to the global level, and to reach out to third countries in an effective and inclusive manner.

However, in controversial policy areas, the fragmentation of the sources of foreign policy power continues to be a challenge to forming a coherent European foreign policy approach. Although successive European Commission and treaty reforms have resulted in a gradual reduction in the fragmentation of European foreign policy actors and competencies, economic relations remain isolated from the CFSP and CSDP. Economic engagement with third parties remains an exclusive competency of the European Commission, whereas EU member states remain particularly resistant to supranationalizing the CFSP and CSDP in order to bring them more in line with the EU's external economic engagement. This fragmentation could become a challenge at a time when the EU increasingly finds itself in competition with great powers globally that instrumentalize their economic, military and political power to pursue their national interests.

The upcoming years will also show how geopolitical developments may change the EU's engagement with external actors. The values-based foreign policy and ideological attraction power of the EU relies on a stable, rules-based international environment. The EUGS makes it clear that the EU considers the UN to be the cornerstone of this rules-based international multilateral order, and the EU will have to intensify its relations with the UN and in the different UN bodies in order to face upcoming challenges, such as climate change and increased systemic competition between upcoming great powers. It remains to be seen how the replacement of the 'effective multilateralism' approach by 'principled pragmatism' will affect future relations between the EU and the UN, and how the new strategic compass may further intensify coordinated EU foreign and security policies. As Chapters 4, 7 and 8 of this book notably demonstrate, cooperation between the EU and the UN may become even more important in terms of facing common threats, such as man-made climate change or the rise of unilateralism.

Clearly, the EU is a unique regional organization, not only because of its far-reaching integration processes and coordination on internal policy matters, but also because it has developed a unique framework for its external representation. Ever since the founding of the EPC in 1970, member states have been working towards a coordinated foreign policy approach – an area usually considered a key core competency of a sovereign state. This coordination offers an opportunity to enhance the voice of EU member states in international organizations, such as the UN (Panke et al, 2015). Over the years, the loose coordination in the EPC framework developed into an institutional setting for external representation created by the ToL: the EEAS. The EU is unique among regional organizations in terms of having an enhanced observer status in the UNGA – a status other regional organizations may develop in the future – and, in addition to this, its own mechanisms for the coordination of member state foreign policy positions and institutionalized collective external representation.

3

Crises, Integration and the EU as an External Actor

Written with Hannah Lentschig[1] and Carolina D'Ambrosio[2]

Building on Chapter 2, which demonstrated how the EU has gradually developed more coordinated foreign policy positions over time, this chapter focuses on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and other crises on the modes of operation of the EU. It addresses relations with the UN in this context and offers an evaluation of enhanced European integration efforts in the area of fiscal and macroeconomic coordination. To gauge the strength of the EU as a regional partner to the UN, the chapter analyses developments within the EU by comparing the effects of the EU's responses to the sovereign debt crisis (or 'Euro crisis') to the one generated by the COVID-19 pandemic. In terms of the strength of integration as a response to the latter crisis, it is likely that the EU has further developed its supranational mechanisms by taking incremental steps towards the formation of a fiscal union. By having created immense socio-economic challenges, as well as across the EU (including rising levels of inequality within and between EU member states), the pandemic has been a driving force for further integration, as national political responses were gradually seen as inadequate to addressing the magnitude of the challenges. With this, the COVID-19 health crisis, while initially characterized by disjoint answers taken by EU member states and a resort to national-level measures, is hence likely to create incentives for EU member states to take further integrative steps. Clearly, this will also affect prospects for the EU to gradually develop into a (quasi-)fiscal union and, with this, partially close the gap between the expectations it faces and results generated. Such developments, in turn, are likely to affect the ways in which the EU deals with actors on the global level, including the UN.

Generally, EU priorities on macroeconomic governance and stability have been coordinated with the UN agenda in the context of two main areas.

These are the Disaster Relief Response (DRR) and the SDGs. Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) is of specific interest in this context, as the economic response to COVID-19 has been identified as a special instance of the PDNA protocol. The PDNA framework was started in 2008 as a collaboration between the UNDP, the EU and the World Bank (WB), with the intent to harmonize post-disaster assessment methods at the international level, aiming to improve the support for affected populations (see UNDP, European Commission and World Bank, 2013).

As a response to the global COVID-19 pandemic, this framework has been adapted to the specific necessities that arose after the societal tissue had to deal with the consequences of the health crisis, being renamed as the COVID-19 Recovery Needs Assessment (CRNA). The tool provides national governments with an inter-institutional crisis-response platform, obtained through the alignment and common efforts of the UN and EU economic agendas, which also ensures common planning and financing outcomes (International Recovery Platform, 2020). This project constitutes a first instance of alignment between the EU and the UN in terms of economic responses to the pandemic. Indeed, it presents a generally inter-institutionally driven framework of disaster response, which is especially tailored to the macroeconomic impact of the confinement measures, as well as the financial impact on international financial markets and private companies (International Recovery Platform, 2020).

Another, more wide-ranging instance of an UN–EU coordinated agenda that is inclusive of macroeconomic developments is the explicit adoption of the 2030 UN Agenda by the European Commission and its implementation in the European context. Specifically, in 2016, the European Commission set out a strategy by which the EU committed to tackling the SDGs, as specified in the document 'Next steps for a sustainable European future' (Widuto, 2021). The commitment to implement the SDGs in the context of a European framework was later renewed by European Commission President von der Leyen, who centred her political programme on the creation of a 'comprehensive approach to sustainable development, the European Green Deal' (European Commission, 2021d).

The SDGs have been tackled by numerous European policy initiatives and progressively institutionalized into EU strategies by means of monitoring at the national level of EU member states. In particular, by integrating the SDGs into the European Semester since December 2019 (Widuto, 2021), a strong trend towards the harmonization of EU and UN agendas has been initiated, as the European Commission strives explicitly for the implementation of the SDGs in the social and economic policies of its member states. In line with this aim, the country reports that are periodically issued include an analysis by the European Commission of the application of the SDGs on the part of EU member states. This application constitutes the core of the

harmonization of the institutional agendas, in that the EU closely monitors and collaborates in drafting the macroeconomic policy framework aimed at the delivery of the SDGs at the national government level (Widuto, 2021). It is, then, evident that the SDGs, being the fruit of the UN economic and development agenda, are placed at the centre of the current and future orientation of EU (economic and social) policymaking.

These coordination efforts have also been implemented in the EU recovery plan. Indeed, as reinstated by the European Commission, the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated that full implementation of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is crucial to strengthen resilience and prepare the world for future shocks as we embark on the 'twin green and digital transitions' (European Commission, 2021d). Harmonizing the objectives of the Next Generation EU (NGEU) project with the developmental and climate-change goals set at the level of the UN has also been a main driving force behind the EU's health response: 'Member States are to develop their own national multiannual investment strategies … bearing in mind the Paris Agreement adopted under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change … as well as the UN Sustainable Development Goals' (2021 Regulation 2020/0104/COD of the European Parliament and of the Council).

As the EU recovery plan highlights the importance of (re)building sustainable and resilient national economies, its three main pillars – (1) supporting member states' recovery; (2) kick-starting the economy and helping private investment; and (3) learning from the crisis in the long term – cover a broad range of aspects related to the SDGs, especially in regards to employment, economic growth and education (Borchardt et al, 2020: 26). For example, the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) particularly focuses on SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy) with the country-specific conditions it has attached to the funds to promote investments in green and digital technology throughout all European national economies (Borchardt et al, 2020: 29).

In addition to harmonizing the EU's recovery plan with the SDGs, the European Commission has initiated a global response to the health crisis, consisting of €15.6 billion financial aid to its partner countries (European Commission, 2020b). These resources have been bundled from the EU, its member states and financial institutions, such as the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) (European Commission, 2020b). Above all, this so-called 'Team Europe Approach to fight the COVID-19 pandemic' seeks to 'leverage the EU position as a global actor and major contributor to the international aid system to promote a coordinated global response, notably in the framework of the G7, the G20, and at the United Nations' (European Commission, 2020c). As Charles Michel, president of the European Council, phrased it in

his speech celebrating the 75th anniversary of the UN: '[I]t is international cooperation which offers, for example, the best guarantee of being able to deploy anti-COVID vaccines and treatments that are accessible to all. ... And this spirit of cooperation is undoubtedly what constitutes the DNA that the EU shares with the United Nations' (Council of the European Union, 2020b).

As such, a strong and global European response to the crisis entails both a normative and a strategic aspect of power. On the one hand, the EU seeks to coordinate with major international institutions in order to reinvigorate a multilateral order based on shared norms and values that the partnership with the UN reflects. On the other hand, the pandemic presents a 'window of opportunity' (Brovdiy, 2020: 5) to strengthen the EU's role as an important geopolitical player. From its very onset, the pandemic has exposed shortcomings in existing global health governance structures, with the World Health Organization (WHO) having been caught in the midst of the geopolitical contest and 'mask diplomacy' employed by both China and the US (Cimmino et al, 2020: 1). Thus, as the global response to COVID-19 'has become a new frontier of geopolitical competition and propaganda' (Jones et al, 2020: 2), the EU can seek to take much stronger leadership globally by 'using its normative and transformative power' (Roloff, 2020: 29) as an independent third party in the international arena, for example, by playing a more active role in the UNSC (Fusiek, 2020: 13). Most importantly, the EU's Team Europe Approach could aim to move beyond traditional instruments of mere financial aid that make the EU a rather 'meagre payer, but not really a global player' (Jones et al, 2020: 1). Instead, according to some observers, financial assistance must be paired with a focus on the shared normative foundations of the EU and its global partners in order to foster not only a multilateral, but also a multi*polar*, world in which the EU can take a central place (van Middelaar, 2021: 173).

Clearly, the ways in which the EU is able to collaborate with the UN is affected by the strength of its internal integration, including in the macroeconomic realm. While the capacity of the EU to act as a 'harmonized entity' globally is reflected by the degree of its coherence in terms of external action and foreign policies, it is also determined by its internal economic cohesion and strength, affecting its potential to act globally as a unified economic player. However, internal economic strength and unity in approach require not only similar levels of economic development within the EU, but also a certain capacity to act in unified ways in the realm of macroeconomic policies and responses to potential future crises based on more coordinated fiscal policies.

It cannot be ignored that the EU has been faced by major challenges in this regard. Similar to crises related to migration – as occurred, for example, during 2015 and are still ongoing – the EU as an entity has been affected in

economic terms by the 'Euro crisis' that resulted after the global financial crisis, as well as by the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, as we will argue, the consequences of these two crises were different in terms of the extent to which they led EU member states to integrate more deeply in the realm of macroeconomic and fiscal policymaking. To explore this in more detail, this chapter will now provide a background to the two crises and show their effects on the EU in terms of its level of integration in these areas.

While the COVID-19 crisis has left traces globally, according to former German Chancellor Angela Markel, the global pandemic resulting from the outbreak of the SARS-CoV-2 virus has also been the biggest test for the EU (*Der Tagesspiegel*, 2020). It is also likely to have caused the hardest socio-economic shock to the euro area since its creation in 1999 (Cecchetti and Schoenholtz, 2020: 1). Moreover, while the virus does not discriminate between the different EU member states (as it does not between the various member states of the UN), it has inevitably left an asymmetric impact on some national economies within the EU, with countries such as Spain, Italy and Greece potentially having been affected severely. With this, it contains a risk of deepening economic divergence across the EU in the long term, thereby risking accelerating some already existent disintegrative dynamics (Odendahl and Springford, 2020: 1).

Indeed, the global pandemic-induced chaos has been pushing nations across the world, including the EU member states, to close their borders in desperate attempts to save human lives (D'Ambrosio, 2021: 131). In the meantime, the European Commission and other European institutions have tried to parallel nationally directed restrictions in the movement of goods and people with EU-level fiscal and economic policies to fight the economic impact of COVID-19. The question was whether the EU – for some observers, the greatest multilateral experiment of the contemporary world (Keohane, 1990: 731) – would be able to find a common stance in facing the consequences of a new economic recession (D'Ambrosio, 2021: 131).

Facing this challenge, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has taken the crisis to be 'Europe's moment': a chance to invest in and empower the European project for future generations (European Commission, 2020c). A first attempt at tackling this grand goal has been the agreement in July 2020 to establish the NGEU Recovery Fund, which provides €750 billion emergency aid to address the impact of the pandemic (European Council, 2020a). Due to the unprecedented issuance of common European debt to finance this fund, the agreement has repeatedly been referred to as Europe's 'Hamiltonian moment'.[3] The centrepiece of the package, the RRF, was adopted on 11 February 2021 and supports the 27 EU member states with €672.5 billion in the form of grants and loans based on recovery plans submitted by each national government (Council of the European Union, 2021a). As this new regulation attaches reforms and

country-specific recommendations to the support to be received by each member state, discussions about European solidarity took a centre stage in this context. Southern European states – most notably, Italy and Spain, backed up by France – demanded the issuance of common debt titles in order to face the crisis, the so-called 'Eurobonds' (D'Ambrosio, 2021: 132). On the other hand, the 'Frugal Four' economies – Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands and Austria, in the beginning, supported by Germany – initially opposed this measure, as they perceived it as too costly for their more developed and fiscally healthy economies, as well as potentially dangerous in terms of the risk of affecting other policy areas as a side effect. It appeared as if this conflict could eventually lead to a breaking point after years of clashes, as debates over fiscal and economic policy within the EU, notably, in its Eurozone arena, continued to raise frictions between member states.

Clearly, the steps taken on the European level to address the economic (and social) effects of the COVID-19 crisis testify to the depth of integration among the 27 EU member states. While other regional integration schemes globally are facing similar challenges generated by this pandemic – including the AU, Mercosur and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) – the EU's steps taken to create collective responses on the regional level are comparatively wide-ranging. They include new possibilities to borrow on a large scale from global financial markets when faced with severe macroeconomic challenges, while transferring much of the authority to deal with the new schemes to the supranational level (notably, the European Commission).

In light of such more recent developments, one is inclined to 'take a walk down memory lane' to the Euro crisis of 2010 to 2012 that followed the 2008 financial crash (Ladi, 2020: 1). At the time, there were no effects of an international pandemic, but macroeconomic challenges related to the 2007–08 global financial crisis and its subsequent effects on the European continent. A comparison between the past and the COVID-19-induced crises on the level of the EU has been subject to recent discussion, with both similarities and differences being highlighted (on this, see, for example, Quintet Private Bank, 2020). However, many of these approaches have been focused on individual financial policies, rather than placing current events into a broader theoretical framework of interpretation to gauge the impact of these crises on European integration and resulting political implications of lessons drawn. While acknowledging that the theoretical understanding of the 'Euro crisis' remains disputed, revisiting the debate in light of the effects of COVID-19 can provide valuable knowledge and even predictions, as existing theories 'advance our understanding of the crises that have shaped the EU over the past decade' (Hooghe and Marks, 2019: 1128).

The ways in which the EU interacts with global partners and institutions is also affected by its collective macroeconomic strength and extent of

unity. With the European project being tested once again in the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is therefore important to evaluate its possible effects on the directions and dynamics of future (dis)integration on the European level.

Drawing upon recent European integration scholarship – with a partial focus on the 'failing forward' hypothesis presented by Jones, Kelemen and Meunier (2016) – it is possible to address the effects of the impact of the Euro crisis on EU integration and explore potential new effects in terms of the EU's depth of integration and potential strength as an increasingly unified actor on the global level. Crises can affect the balance of a regional actor in terms of the extent of intergovernmentalism and supranationalism driving its patterns of decision-making. Despite some of the initial responses within the EU having been uncoordinated and piecemeal, the COVID-19 crisis has clearly led to new and ambitious steps at the EU level. While it has earlier been assumed that answers to the Euro crisis might have strengthened supranational institutions within the institutional balance of power of the EU, this shift could be even more pronounced as a result of the more recent COVID-19 health crisis. Of course, the redistributive dimension of the health crisis, as well as member states' immutable sovereignty concerns, can risk undermining integrative steps in the long term. A neat integration–disintegration dichotomy may not be useful in explaining EU integration in light of the past and current macroeconomic challenges; rather, the European project seems to be continuously moving closer towards enhanced fiscal and economic harmonization, despite occasional 'failure' on this path.

In spite of recent challenges – ranging from migration and asylum pressures, to the effects of the global financial crisis and COVID-19 – the EU has been described as 'the contemporary world's most extensive and ambitious multilateral institution' (Keohane et al, 2009: 3). It grounds its foundation in the belief that through cooperation and the pooling of sovereignty, state entities are able to achieve policy goals that would be impossible to achieve through unilateral conduct only (Keohane et al, 2009: 4). Nonetheless, recent crises and their consequences have clearly presented severe challenges to the multilateral regional construct and partially led EU states to resort to national-level answers instead of collective ones, before more collective answers were formulated.

Many developments related to the past crises, as well as the consequent relationship between European-level and national-level institutions, can be interpreted based on important theories of European integration. The relations between the EU's member states and its supranational and intergovernmental institutions also clearly affect the ways in which this regional organization scheme interacts with global actors and institutions. In essence, these relations largely affect the EU's capacity to 'speak with one voice' in its external relations. Several theoretical frameworks have been

developed to describe the balance between sovereignty and integration, as well as developments in terms of the EU's supranational as compared to intergovernmental character.

For example, neofunctionalism emphasizes the functional interdependence among various policy fields, which creates pressures for further integration; with this, effective governance through supranational institutions gains authority (Hooghe and Marks, 2019: 1114–15). As such, neofunctionalist theory focuses on spillovers, that is, the ways in which integrative steps taken in one field of European integration (for example, economic governance) can spill over into other spheres of EU politics (for example, health) due to their functional interdependence (for original work on such dynamics, see, notably, Haas, 1958, 1964). According to this line of theoretical reflection, the result of this is an increasing (and inevitable) transferral of decision-making power to the supranational level over time. According to this framework, in a longer-term perspective, one may also expect that the economic integration achieved over the course of several decades and potentially strengthened due to the recent health crisis can 'spill over' into other areas, including enhanced fiscal integration and, possibly, more coordination of member states' health policies.

Intergovernmentalism focuses instead on national governments, which, albeit bundling some competencies in common institutions when required, remain central decision-makers and powerholders (Hooghe and Marks, 2019: 1115–16). It has been argued that the EU's institutional capacity is deeply constrained by its lack of fiscal, administrative and legal competencies, thereby leaving most power and legitimacy with European national governments (Moravcsik, 2002: 5). When exploring initial reactions to the COVID-19-induced health crisis, this perspective again seemed to be very prominent. Similarly, the macroeconomic crisis (Euro crisis) induced by the global financial crisis seemed to strengthen intergovernmental patterns of decision-making. In essence, in the wake of such (external) pressures resulting in a crisis, governments tend to focus more on the needs of their own national situations than to contribute to collective, overarching approaches taken on the level of the regional organization as a whole.

Linked to such discussions, theoretical work has focused on the extent to which specific steps in European integration have been characterized by strengthened trends of supranationalism compared to intergovernmentalism in the EU. In view of the two most recent fiscal-economic crises – the Euro crisis and the crisis related to COVID-19 – it could be argued that without intergovernmental agreement, further integrative steps would have been impossible. On the other hand, without the agency and agenda setting by supranational institutions, most notably, the European Commission, intergovernmental decisions to deepen integration in the fiscal-economic realm would be difficult to imagine. Similarly, answers to the COVID-19 pandemic would have been difficult to find.

While neofunctionalism and intergovernmentalism regard integration as an actively cooperative process (albeit differing in views in terms of its intensity and outcome), postfunctionalists emphasize domestic politicization and ideologies as determining factors for (dis)integrative dynamics (Hooghe and Marks, 2019: 1116–17). Central to this theoretical angle is the presence of redistributive policy issues (compared to purely regulatory EU policies), which are increasingly politicized among the European public, resulting in Eurosceptic attitudes that question the legitimacy of EU governance (Börzel, 2016: 9).

Attempting to explain the impact of the Euro crisis for the further integration of the EU, hybrid scholarship has sought to cut across these different theoretical approaches and their underlying assumptions. This is an important contribution to the overall theorizing on European integration, in that it aims to overcome the traditionally rather harsh separation of the main theoretical camps and is thereby likely to provide a more organic and exhaustive understanding of (dis)integrative dynamics in the EU. The following passages will therefore focus on this hybrid understanding of the impact of the Euro crisis on integration (and with this, indirectly, the relative strength of the EU as a unified, global actor, based on coordinated responses in the realm of macroeconomic and fiscal governance).

A well-known theory of EU integration in light of the Euro crisis has been developed by Jones et al (2016). Fusing neofunctionalism with an intergovernmental approach, the authors argue that the EU has essentially been 'failing forward': the implementation of only piecemeal reforms due to national governments' resistance to giving up part of their decision-making power in the wake of the Euro crisis, in line with intergovernmentalism, has nevertheless contributed to a tighter integration of the Eurozone (and with this, European integration) in the long term. This is largely due to functional interdependence between the different policy fields, in line with neofunctionalism. When threatened with the collapse of the interconnected EU banking system in 2010 as a result of the 2008 financial crash, European leaders were not willing to move beyond 'lowest common denominator' reforms (Jones et al, 2016: 1023). Instead of showing solidarity through a transfer of resources and authority in order to bail out insolvent member states, the European Financial Stability Facility (EFSF) and its successor, the European Stability Mechanism (ESM), were set up as cash-for-reform programmes – an incremental attempt at creating intergovernmental solutions that would nevertheless leave regulation in the hands of national governments. These steps demonstrated how important governments were in the context of EU integration in this area. Despite much supranational agency to find collective responses, it was largely intergovernmental processes that determined the dynamics.

However, as this turned out to be inefficient in light of the severe crisis several countries faced – mainly Ireland, Cyprus, Spain, Italy and

Greece – their leaders increasingly turned to the European Central Bank (ECB) as an actor to address the effects of the crisis. Following former ECB President Mario Draghi's promise to do 'whatever it takes' to save the euro, national governments agreed to extend the ECB's mandate from supervision to the regulation of the euro system itself – an example of a spillover effect that neofunctionalism emphasizes (Nicoli, 2020: 908). As a result, the ECB was able – through quantitative easing (QE) – to relieve several member states from their debts and reduce the financial fragmentation caused by the crisis across the EU (Nicoli, 2020: 909), though the strategy also contained some risks. Thus, while incomplete reforms were initially taken by national leaders to address the crisis in the short term, these turned out to be inefficient, leading to new steps that tightened EU integration through the functional transferral of regulatory authority.

Furthermore, Genschel and Jachtenfuchs (2018: 181) argue that the regulatory response of the EU to the Euro crisis was particularly pronounced due to the involvement of 'core state powers' – resources that are derived from states' sovereignty in given areas, such as control over the military and police, border security, public administration, and monetary policy. The creation of a single European market in the 1990s is likely to have interfered with such core state competencies, demanding that member states' economic and fiscal policies be more unified under a supranational institutional framework. The authors argue that, unsurprisingly, national leaders thus resisted such dynamics and opted for the smallest compromise possible (Genschel and Jachtenfuchs, 2018: 189).

Moreover, because of the redistributive dimension of the 'Euro crisis' – a demand for solidarity and burden-sharing – the problem was intensified by a pre-existing situation of 'horizontal differentiation' (Schimmelfennig et al, 2015: 767) of the integration process. Indeed, impulses towards deeper economic integration have been further hindered by the fact that being an outsider to the Euro area was perceived as a net gain by some (Dyson, 2010: 218). In fact, such states as Denmark and Sweden may enjoy some benefits of a special regime on exchange rates when interacting with the members of the Euro area while being free to adjust their interest rates as they believe fit in case of asymmetric shocks (Dyson, 2010: 217). This contrasts with the situation of smaller insider economies, such as the Greek or the Irish ones, which in times of exogenous shocks, had to combine the shortcomings of the crisis to the responsibility of complying with the, for them, costly standards of the Stability and Growth Pact (SGP) (D'Ambrosio, 2021: 135). The most historically opposed among them was the deficit rule of a 3 per cent of total GDP limit (Hopkin, 2020: 177). The resulting reality may have created disincentives to commit to deeper economic integration (D'Ambrosio, 2021: 135), especially because of the high political damage national politicians could incur when forced to perform

costly domestic cuts in wages and non-wage budgets under the respective European directives (Dyson, 2010: 217). While answers to this crisis may have facilitated cooperation in the short term, they are likely to have hindered long-term integration (beyond regulation) through the politicization of the issue among Eurosceptic national leaders and their fellow constituencies (Schimmelfennig et al, 2015: 776–7). The view of the crisis as a common challenge by those member states hit hardest stood in direct contrast with that of actors regarding it as a result of states' individual lack of economic and fiscal discipline (Genschel and Jachtenfuchs, 2018: 188).

Due to the domestic politicization of the crisis and its distributive dimensions, burden sharing and capacity building among member states was difficult to achieve. According to Genschel and Jachtenfuchs (2018: 188), 'instead of solving the crisis, the tightening of regulatory integration increased asymmetry within the EU' through the conditions attached to the fiscal regulations adopted or intensified in the wake of the crisis. Hence, while regulatory integration, as such, is likely to have deepened due to the Euro crisis, the integration of core state powers – especially those that are highly interdependent across member states and very politicized due to their distributive dimension – has been only partial, leading to a differentiated EU system that was prone to further diverge (Börzel, 2016: 14–16).

A similar trend has been apparent in the course of the 2015 migration crisis – which has not been substantially solved to this day – and is also starting to reveal itself in the challenge that the European project has been facing due to COVID-19. It is 'rooted in the mixed or partial nature of European integration … a monetary union (of 19 states) without a fiscal union; a borderless interior (linking 25 states) protected by largely nationally managed frontiers; [and] central institutions (representing 27 states) of contested democratic legitimacy' (Bergsen et al, 2020: 5). Compared to other regional integration schemes, the EU is highly integrated in general; however, in some areas, it is nonetheless the national level of the EU's member states where policies are largely determined (this includes many aspects of macroeconomic governance, migration pressures and tax policies).

As some authors have argued, a further harmonization of the EU's fiscal policies and correcting measures for the distributive economic effects induced by the health crisis due to COVID-19 are particularly relevant, as the poor economic resilience of some member states can be seen as, at least partially, a long-term consequence of fiscal governance requirements during and after the Euro crisis (Bergsen et al, 2020: 6). In particular, an asymmetric recovery from the economic shock generated by the global financial crisis, underpinned by the re-emergence of a north–south narrative in light of arguments regarding the issuance of 'Eurobonds', risked undermining the Eurozone to a certain extent. Accordingly, answers on the EU level were needed.

To see how these two major macroeconomic crises have affected the EU and its capacity to act cohesively in the economic and fiscal realm, Table 3.1 serves as a means to classify the expected effects of both the Euro crisis and the health crisis in view of the path and depth of EU integration. For simplification purposes, general expectations are formulated for the impact of the health crisis on European integration, based on the (dis)integrational developments within the EU during the Euro crisis. Accordingly, selected literature is classified according to the authors' views on whether there is likely to be (1) enhanced EU fiscal integration and (2) effects on the institutional balance of power (notably, a potential shift towards increased supranationalism), both during and after the crisis. Furthermore, the table encompasses predictions in terms of (3) the enhanced role of the EU globally based on these developments (particularly relevant in the context of the health crisis).

Based upon this scheme, one could expect, for instance, a mild increase in fiscal integration as a result of the momentum created by the COVID-19-related health crisis. Indeed, as a first instance of collective reaction, on 15 April 2020, the Joint European Roadmap emphasized the need for the values of solidarity, cohesion and convergence to be the driver of joint efforts aimed at recovery (European Council; Council of the EU, 2020: 2). The document also highlighted that the shock provoked by COVID-19 was largely symmetric among member states and that it is imperative for EU institutions to avoid recovery becoming asymmetric (European Council; Council of the EU, 2020: 2). Based on this, enhanced fiscal integration might be expected, as the roadmap also states that the financial efforts to be undertaken would need to be 'inclusive' and 'co-owned' by all member states involved, in the spirit of a 'team effort' (European Council; Council of the EU, 2020: 2). While much of this is rhetoric needed to drive action at a more supranational level, it is likely to have also reflected a new awareness of the EU as an entity that aspires to an undifferentiated, collective response mechanism in order to overcome frictions and obstacles to its internal patterns of multilateralism in the field of macroeconomic governance (D'Ambrosio, 2021: 140).

However, due to the still divisive nature of EU member states' national preferences in terms of more harmonized fiscal policy approaches, we would assume no real shift towards increased supranationalism, but rather intergovernmental bargaining to prevail in this area. In other words, just like during the Euro crisis, the EU could be likely to have to 'muddle through' given national pressures on supranational governance. On an international level, however, an enhancement of the EU's role as an economic actor might be expected, not least due to the collective character of responses by supranational institutions, the global nature of the health crisis and the effects of a more unified EU in terms of fiscal approaches and potential increased tax authority.

Table 3.1: Effects of two crises on the strength of European fiscal integration and the EU's role as a global actor (expectations)

	Enhanced fiscal integration	**Institutional balance of power (shift towards supranationalism)**	**Enhanced role of the EU as a global actor**
Euro crisis	+ Nicoli (2020) – (Bergsen et al, 2020)	– Genschel and Jachtenfuchs (2018), Schimmelfennig et al (2015) and Börzel (2016) + (weak) Nicoli (2020) and Jones et al (2016)	–
	Only weak increase in strength of integration and supranational approaches (ESM, ECB policies); inhibited by conditionality and austerity policies; politicization of national identities.	No real shift towards supranationalism; intergovernmental solutions prevail; approach characterized by 'muddling through'; gradual formulation of collective approaches.	Weakening of the EU's role as a global actor due to external perception of the EU as fragmented and characterized by an internal north–south division.
COVID-19 health crisis	+	=	+
	Expected increase in fiscal integration; response to the COVID-19 crisis symmetric among member states (suspension of the SGP, Recovery Fund, partially issued in the form of grants, issuance of recovery instruments by means of common EU debt).	No real change towards supranationalism expected in the overall structure and balance of power between the supranational nature of European institutions and national levels of governance, as momentum has been created only in the financial realm. The status quo of 'failing forward' is most likely to prevail as sovereign concerns remain strong and are strengthened by the recent rise of populist movements.	Expected increase in the internal coherence of the European macroeconomic structure; EU has a common stance in international governance, based on more coordinated fiscal (and possibly tax) policies. Furthermore, expected increase in the EU's global role due to the harmonizing momentum created by the pandemic, as evidenced, for example, by the alignment of the EU's macroeconomic agenda with the SDGs.

Note: + increase; –decrease; = status quo

There are important similarities and differences, however, between the Euro crisis and the current health crisis (and with this, their effects on the EU's role in external relations). While the Euro crisis can be considered to be primarily endogenous – that is, caused by the interactions of financial institutions (albeit triggered by the global financial crisis) – the COVID-19 pandemic has been exogenous, constituting a sudden and external shock to the European (and global) economy (Danielsson et al, 2020: 1). Furthermore, whereas the economic impact of COVID-19 is likely to have been worse than that of the financial crisis, its effects within the EU are likely to have been asymmetric. This is similar to the effects of the Euro crisis, as Germany, for example, seems to have been affected less than were Italy, Spain or Greece (Buti, 2020: 1). However, as was the case during the Euro crisis, 'the shape of the recovery as well as its distributive impact will depend on the ambition and effectiveness of the policy response at national and EU level' (Buti, 2020: 1); in this sense, both crises have led to similar demands for coordinated monetary and fiscal policies to cope with socio-economic consequences within the EU.

Similar to the Euro crisis, the COVID-19-induced health crisis has revealed the complexity of high interdependence between European economies while their leaders tend to be concerned with regulating at a national level (Strauss-Kahn, 2020: 1). Yet, in both cases, regional institutions have been called upon to lead a coordinated and unified response; an example of this is the ECB, whose 'whatever it takes' campaign in 2012 has recently been reformulated into a 'whatever it costs' approach (Strauss-Kahn, 2020: 1). Yet, the response of European leaders to the COVID-19-induced crisis seemed different, notably, due to the speed and scale by which the virus spread. Part of this was a temporal suspension of EU budgetary rules, which allowed national governments to substantially increase their spending (Eurogroup, 2020). Moreover, the ECB reacted immediately by expanding its balance sheets to obtain greater liquidity, as well as establishing a Pandemic Emergency Purchase Programme (PEPP), with the goal to aid highly indebted countries (Eurogroup, 2020). According to Buti (2020: 1), this is one of the main differences in terms of the reactions to the two crises. Whereas during the Euro crisis, a certain lack of trust and sense of solidarity led to largely intergovernmental solutions and fostered a narrative focused on the north (the 'creditors) versus the south (the 'debtors), quick EU-level responses to the COVID-19 health crisis reflected more of a 'community method'. Supranational actors, such as the ECB, gained a capacity to act quicker compared to the earlier crisis. Hence, despite initially uncoordinated responses of European leaders to the outbreak of COVID-19, the crisis thus also presented an opportunity to further deepen integration (Bongardt and Torres, 2020: 4).

Similar mechanisms triggered by such crises could have affected other regional integration schemes in the global context. However, pressures to

protect their own citizens compared to a belief that supranational action can be more fruitful to combat the effects of the pandemic have frequently hampered such increased integrative steps.

In the European context, Webber (2019: 1149) suggests that the quasi-supranational position that the ECB took during the Euro crisis can be viewed as that of a hegemon who was able to stabilize the economic impact of the crisis, despite having been initially bound by provisions that limited its capacity to assume such a role; one can argue that with its immediate reaction to the pandemic, the ECB was able to take up this role once again with remarkable quickness in reaction capability. However, actions taken by the ECB have also been subject to criticism, for example, its emergency programme has been legally challenged by the German Federal Constitutional Court on the basis of its proportionality (Camous and Claeys, 2020: 8). This 'highlights a vital problem of the euro area architecture: Two decades after the launch of the euro, there are still uncertainties regarding the range of instruments the ECB is allowed to use to fulfil its mandate' (Camous and Claeys, 2020: 9). After all, the main aim of the ECB when it was established was to keep inflation within the Eurozone under control (see, for example, Hosli, 2005); in its decisions, it was to be fully independent of political developments. Although the ECB may be considered an expert or 'technocratic' (non-majoritarian) institution rather than a truly supranational one, the EU may nevertheless need similar 'hegemonic' actors or coalitions of states in other areas – such as fiscal governance patterns – to withstand the effects of potential new crises (Webber, 2019: 1150).

The creation of the NGEU Recovery Fund as an answer to the COVID-19-induced crisis reflects the recognition of such a necessity to an arguably unprecedented extent. Whereas in the onset of the pandemic, Germany – along with the 'Frugal Four'– strongly opposed a common debt instrument to address the damage done by the crisis to European economies, it decided to 'change camps' in the course of mid-2020, resulting in the Franco-German proposal (similar to Webber's 'hegemonic coalition of states') for the European Commission to borrow substantively from markets so as to finance grants to member states in order to support their economic recovery (De Witte, 2021).

With its official adoption on 21 July 2020 – the result of a 'historic' 90-hour meeting by the European Council – the NGEU package has been termed a 'major institutional innovation' (Camous and Claeys, 2020: 2) due to this first-time implementation of redistributional measures financed through the issuance of common EU debt – possibly reflecting Europe's (alleged) 'Hamiltonian moment'. Compared to steps taken before, this can indeed be considered to constitute a major policy shift in terms of EU governance: in the past, health policy in the EU 'was tightly constrained by member states, and fiscal governance difficult to enforce on member states' (Greer et al,

2021: 748). By developing the fiscal capacity for the European Commission to borrow from international markets in order to finance this fund, the EU has transferred substantial authority to a supranational actor:

> Compared to other federations, [the EU in the past] has combined an unusually deep regulatory reach into the affairs of its member states with nugatory fiscal capacity and essentially no implementation capacity. But now, it [has issued] European debt to sustain its member states through at least one big crisis … with a role for the European institutions in allocating money. (Greer et al, 2021: 760)

While this boost in EU budgetary capacity is likely to only be temporary – for the exclusive purpose of funding the NGEU Recovery Fund – it can nonetheless be considered to constitute a step towards stronger supranationalism in the EU (De Witte, 2021).

Moreover, the RFF – the centrepiece of the fund – has been established 'to provide effective financial and significant support to step up the implementation of reforms and related public investments in the Member States' (Council of the European Union, 2020a). The provision of €672.5 billion in the form of grants and loans to national governments will be based on country-specific recommendations and national recovery plans, in line with the objectives established under the European Semester (Council of the European Union, 2021a), largely set up as a response to the earlier Euro crisis. However, the question of 'conditionality' attached to EU-level support has been tapping, once again, into the 'blame narrative' of 2010, as some of the less affected countries have attributed the hardship of, for example, Spain, Greece and Italy to individual economic and fiscal failure prior to the pandemic (Ladi, 2020: 1). The burden of conditionality present during the Euro crisis, however, is still vivid in the memory of these countries; reluctance to apply for EU support has already been expressed by some, risking undermining the impact of the recovery fund as a whole (Tamma et al, 2020: 1). The rationale of earlier conditionality was to avoid individual behaviour of EU member states in terms of fiscal policies that could undermine the strength of the monetary union, the Eurozone, as a whole.

On the one hand, it has been argued that the European Semester and its objectives comprise merely a form of 'soft conditionality', encompassing a lack of obligation and national commitment due to vague conditions and country-specific recommendations that are open to interpretation; as a result, the 'goal of a common EU economic policy [may be] pushed into the background' in a longer-term perspective (Morwinsky, 2020: 4–5). On the other hand, the fact that EU grants under the RRF are determined based on the consistency of national plans with EU criteria for reforms and investments – the European Semester – can be considered to constitute a

step towards further integration. The compromise is one between conflicting objectives, such as leaving authority with member states while ensuring compliance with EU priorities, balancing out trade-offs between making progress in the EU's overall aims (for example, the green energy transition and digitalization) while addressing country-specific problems incorporated into the RRF, which creates a potential for integrative dynamics (spillovers) due to the inherent functional interdependence between such objectives (Pisani-Ferry, 2020: 3–5). In other words, a neofunctional logic creates expectations that the RRF, while being a result of integrative pressures due to crisis, may further enhance integration in other areas, such as the green energy transition and digitalization agendas. In these areas, the priorities of the EU and the UN are clearly largely aligned.

Salvati (2020: 2) suggests that another important 'missing piece' in the puzzle of European integration has been its 'inability to forge its own autonomous capacity to extract resources from European society'. In the absence of the political authority at the supranational level to extract financial resources (for example, in the form of direct taxation), minimal reforms and compromises between member states and EU institutions – intergovernmental solutions – were prevalent at the beginning of the crisis. Especially as core member state competencies – monetary policy, as well as public administration and border security – were at stake, member states were induced to take defensive positions, leading to further intergovernmental bargaining (Salvati, 2020: 7–8). With the European Commission's decision to somewhat relax fiscal discipline for member states, as well as to initiate the NGEU, an important milestone towards fiscal harmonization and patterns of ideas of 'collective solidarity' has been set; still, these policies mainly increase member states' capacity to spend, rather than provide the European Commission with the supranational capacity to extract resources (Salvati, 2020: 11). Hence, as long as core state powers remain subject to intergovernmental rather than fully supranational authority, the EU may not be facing a 'Hamiltonian moment' after all (Salvati, 2020: 17).

However, a recent proposal by European Commission President von der Leyen to additionally finance the NGEU through the introduction of a new digital tax, a carbon border tax and a single market tax can be considered a first attempt at increasing the European Commission's supranational authority to generate its own resources (Angelov, 2020: 3) – Salavati's 'missing piece'. These steps very much correspond to some of the core activities taken at the UN level (including addressing climate change). Generally, the similarity of the economic crisis triggered by COVID-19 to the earlier Euro crisis may have had beneficial effects in terms of policy learning: the 'muddling through' (or 'failing forward') during the Euro crisis, largely due to lacking fiscal competencies at the collective EU level, is likely to have led to a 'double-loop learning' during the COVID-19 health crisis,

where reactions have been quicker and more radical, touching upon the fundamental structure of the EU, such as the initiation of the NGEU (Ladi and Tsarouhas, 2020: 1047–9). Immediate responses by the ECB and the European Commission reflect a move away from strict economic governance based on fiscal and monetary indicators (such as during Euro crisis, following up on earlier criteria underlying the creation of monetary union in the first place) towards a mixture of such rules with redistributional measures. It is the first time, moreover, that the European Commission has obtained a truly supranational capacity to borrow on international markets in order to finance the NGEU, thereby breaking 'a major taboo of the Euro area era' (Ladi and Tsarouhas, 2020: 1049). Medium-term effects of this approach still need to be seen, including in terms of overall fiscal stability prospects, but the approach has clearly addressed economic challenges generated by the pandemic in the short term.

Both intergovernmental and supranational actors have thus been in charge of the EU's response to the economic effects of the COVID-19 health crisis – as was the case during the Euro crisis. Put differently, a strictly binary conception of integration versus disintegration neglects the fact that processes of disintegration in some sectors can be paralleled by integrative dynamics in other policy fields (Rhodes, 2019: 9). Albeit often being incomplete and piecemeal – 'lowest common denominator' solutions – reforms adopted at the EU level have nevertheless been politically inventive and creative in light of their immediate political necessity. The argument of this 'adaptive creativity' (Rhodes, 2019: 6) of the EU thus criticizes the harsh separation of integration and disintegration in some of the existing literature; a complex quasi-federal system like the EU rarely produces linear developments, but is rather characterized by phases of centralization and decentralization – a 'complicated dance' of integration with two steps forwards, one step back (Rhodes, 2019: 8).

Postfunctionalism can therefore add a third layer to this interpretation of EU integration. In particular, the politicization of the issues at stake during the COVID-19 pandemic may, in fact, have generated a positive impact on EU cooperation and solidarity in many regards (for example, in the economic and public health realm) that has given common institutions, such as the ECB and the European Commission, more legitimate power to act (Schmidt, 2020: 14–16). According to Genschel and Jachtenfuchs (2021: 350), postfunctionalism's main idea – the trade-off between the gains from functional integration (for example, the Schengen Agreement or the Single Market) and the persistence of member states' authority regarding core state powers (such as security or fiscal policy) – has been reversed. Initially, the onset of the crisis was characterized by horizontal differentiation due to the refusal of the 'Frugal Four' to participate in the recovery plan, which led to a high domestic politicization of the redistributive

nature of EU support and frustration about the imposition of regulations 'from above' (Dhian Ho and Powell, 2020: 1). At this point, security may have trumped collective effectiveness, leading to a 're-bordering of the market' through border closures and export restrictions – exactly those areas where functional integration had been most advanced. In the months following, EU member states remained mostly in charge of border security while attempts were made by the European Commission and other EU institutions to further integrate fiscal policies in light of the advance of the crisis – a 'de-bordering of fiscal solidarity' in which burden sharing through harmonized fiscal governance was increasingly prioritized. This was possible as solidarity during the pandemic was increasingly framed as 'issue-specific rather than identity-specific' due to the inherently global nature of the crisis (generated by a virus), creating a form of transnational solidarity (Genschel and Jachtenfuchs, 2021: 365). Hence, in contrast to the focus on national identities and the creditor–debtor narrative that consistently undermined European solidarity during the Euro crisis, the politicization of the crisis due to the involvement of core state powers may, in fact, have increased a sense of European solidarity.

Without a doubt, if the EU were, partially induced by crisis, to integrate more in the fiscal realm and to potentially fund collective approaches based on a share of direct taxation across its member states, it would have an enhanced budget available for its supranational institutions to draw upon and apply in the case of emergencies. Whereas the EU is currently strongly integrated in areas related to its internal market – allowing for the free movement of goods, services, persons and capital across the EU – it is still only gradually forming a more uniform actor in terms of its foreign policy, as well as its responses to external crises, such as a global pandemic. More integration among EU member states' fiscal policies would not only build stronger foundations for monetary union, but also support collective action among its member states in such areas as responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. While in relations with global actors and institutions, including the UN, the EU can act as a strong partner, not least due to the delegation of responsibilities to its supranational institutions, a stronger fiscal basis for the EU internally could undoubtedly further strengthen such capacities.

To sum up the concurrence of both integrative and disintegrative dynamics in the EU in the recent past, according to Fabbrini (2020: 9–11), there have been three competing visions of the European project as a whole: a 'polity vision' that aims at greater solidarity and burden sharing (led, most notably, by France and the Southern European states, as well as subsequently Germany); a 'market vision' demanding more individual sovereignty (embraced by the perspective of the 'Frugal Four'); and an 'autocracy vision' that appeals to national identity concerns (for example, the demands of Hungary and Poland). Such competing visions are, as Fabbrini (2020: 13) states, a product

of the 'fundamental shortcomings in the EU institutional system, and in particular … its inter-governmental decision-making regime'. The future of European integration, according to the author, depends on how firmly those countries that embrace the 'polity vision' insist on their demands for Europe as an entity.

Accordingly, on the one hand, European leaders have shown more willingness to transfer authority to supranational actors, such as the ECB and the European Commission, due to functional pressures generated by the health crisis, which were recognized rather immediately. This is similar in some ways to perceptions globally that a crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic can only really be tackled by global approaches and coordinated action by international actors and institutions.

Intergovernmental bargaining in the EU induced by the health crisis has been comparably effective in the sense of allowing the European Commission to substantially borrow from international capital markets in order to provide extensive assistance to EU member states in the form of the NGEU recovery plan. Such steps are certainly more than just the 'lowest common denominator' compromises also inherent in much international-level decision-making. The creation of the NGEU Recovery Fund at the EU level is arguably a deviation from any – largely intergovernmental – approach characterized by 'failing forward'. Conversely, an EU that is seen as a more coherent actor in terms of its internal responses to global crises is likely to also be perceived as more of a coherent actor in such areas at the global level. Such a friction as the one between the EU's 'northern' and 'southern' member states risked fragmenting the union, as reflected in member states' behaviour on the global level, not least due to the visions articulated by individual EU member states on this topic in international contexts. More aligned approaches, displaying (internal) EU solidarity based on collective approaches to generate funds in times of crisis are likely to also lead to a more visible (and credible) 'voice' of the EU as a regional actor externally. If international actors perceive the EU as a divided entity or one severely affected by (externally generated) crises internally, its potential role and capacity to act on the global level will be weakened; conversely, strengthened capacities of the EU to address macroeconomic and monetary challenges internally are likely to translate into a stronger perception globally of the EU's 'capacity to act'.

Undoubtedly, the divide over individual elements of the recovery plan, especially regarding such principles as conditionality versus solidarity, as well as the unwillingness of some EU member states to fully participate, have exacerbated a certain degree of asymmetry and differentiation throughout the EU system. The intrinsically redistributive conflict surrounding the EU's health governance, as well as enduring sovereignty concerns, have risked accelerating disintegrative dynamics that could undermine the integrational

efforts that have been made. Taken together, however, the necessity for reform and innovation in the EU in the face of crises has arguably produced solutions that – albeit partially incomplete or compromised based on national concerns – are compatible with enhanced European integration in the longer term, as the Euro crisis and, even more so, the COVID-19 health crisis have demonstrated. Compared to other regional organizations globally, it should also be emphasized that the EU is remarkably 'unified' in terms of the depth of its integration. With this, it is more prone to be affected by global crises, not only in terms of the situation of its individual member states, but also as an entity. Again, this demonstrates differences between the EU and other regional integration schemes globally that are less economically and politically integrated than is the EU and are usually judged more by effects generated on individual states than the regional organization they belong to. A perception of a 'lacking capacity to act' of a regional organization is related to an expectation that this entity is capable of addressing effects generated in principle.

The investment efforts undertaken by European institutions in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis are certainly a sign of a renewed capacity of the EU to implement common action when facing economic or fiscal challenges. Not only did an external crisis lead to a (temporary) suspension of requirements incorporated into the SGP, but despite respective hurdles and concerns, considerable financial aid instruments by means of European common borrowing activities were also created, not least based on the agency of supranational actors (in this case, notably, the European Commission and the ECB). Indeed, the document presenting the guiding principles of the Roadmap for Recovery asserts that 'a functioning system of governance is a key requisite for overcoming the crisis and ensuring recovery' (European Council; Council of the EU, 2020: 5). D'Ambrosio (2021: 144) even puts it as follows:

> [The] magnitude of the crisis seems to be functional in making the Union reflect on its own rules, as well as in creating the momentum to finally take the leap and create a more inclusive and coordinated system of economic governance, which is the missing piece in achieving a non-differentiated Europeanization in economic terms.

It is clear that recent developments and potential future perspectives have also sparked a renewed interest in the discourse on fiscal federalism given the current 'quasi-federal nature' of the EU. In a long-term perspective, increased fiscal harmonization might be a solution that would not least appease potential clashes between 'blocs' of EU member states.

The EU has been identified in much literature as a case of 'multilevel' governance, characterized by 'several levels of governing with overlapping

consequences', as well as by intense interaction at the political, public–private and private–private levels among the different layers of governance constituting its networked structure (Fossum, 2017: 363). Even if presenting certain federal features, however, the EU lacks an agreed-upon federal constitution. The exogenous shocks that hit the EU over the last two decades have not least highlighted the need to address structural inequalities between different Euro area economies (D'Ambrosio, 2021: 145), as well as to improve the current macroeconomic structure in order to better counteract asymmetric shocks (Hinarejos, 2013: 1621). In the future, such challenges might be addressed by a regime based on more explicit patterns of fiscal federalism.

Fiscal federalism has been defined as a theoretical approach that 'aims to find a normative framework for the assignment of functions and fiscal instruments to different levels of government' (Hinarejos, 2013: 1636; see also Börzel and Hosli, 2003). Currently, the EU is set up as a decentralized federalist system, in which national sovereignty is preserved by its member states, which have the prerogative of raising revenue through taxes and allocating it on their own policy terms (Hinarejos, 2013: 1634). The lack of an overarching supranational fiscal structure has proven to be among the causes of increased inequalities among Euro area economies, which, under the requirement that European budgets are in balance, were hit differently by the (austerity) reforms put in place in the wake of the Euro crisis (Heywood and McLaren, 2010: 118).

The economic recession deriving from the COVID-19 pandemic could, potentially, constitute a pivotal moment towards the gradual creation of a 'European federal budget', or a new form of central spending power devoted to the implementation of response mechanisms in times of asymmetric shocks (D'Ambrosio, 2021: 145). While there are many political obstacles on that road, the general trend seems to point in such a direction. In respective academic discussions, two alternative models of fiscal federalism are usually envisaged: the surveillance model and the classic fiscal federalist model (Hinarejos, 2013: 1635). The surveillance model constitutes a 'softer' transitional model, enabling the pursuit of macroeconomic integration while largely preserving the sovereignty of member states (D'Ambrosio, 2021: 145). Under this model, EU member states are attributed full fiscal competence over their territories, yet the EU as a regional organization acts as a discipline enforcer through budgetary surveillance and disciplinary rules, which are created by means of agreement among member states (Hinarejos, 2013: 1634). This clearly shows a mix between supranational and intergovernmental elements. The implementation of this model of fiscal harmonization would enable the eventual implementation of mechanisms of debt mutualization, such as Eurobonds, already advocated by some EU member states as a possibility during the COVID-19 crisis. The classic

fiscal federalist model, by comparison, focuses on the centralization of fiscal surveillance at the supranational level through the creation of a new central authority that raises revenue and allocates it based on the delegation of sovereignty in this area (Hinarejos, 2013: 1635). Even though this model might appear to be more functional in terms of addressing the structural inequalities and exogenous shocks affecting European integration, its viability is likely impeded by the democratic legitimacy concerns of EU member states (D'Ambrosio, 2021: 146).

Without a doubt, a more united EU in the fiscal realm too would affect its propensity to deal with international actors in a more unified way. It would strengthen capacities at its supranational level to interact with international actors and institutions in terms of economic and monetary governance, while more explicitly sharing (internal) risks. National-level actions of individual EU member states would then likely also be less visible in an international context, whether this concerns approaches to countering COVID-19, measures to address climate change or, in fact, any area of foreign policy that is relevant to the EU as a whole.

In this sense, the space for further integration of the EU in the fiscal realm has been provided by the economic crisis resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. Considering the direction of economic instruments envisaged as a response to COVID-19 challenges, prospects for further fiscal harmonization in the EU have become more relevant (though certainly politically contested). Possible scenarios for the future could include the creation of a European fiscal authority devoted to providing a structural fund supporting member states' economies in times of economic or fiscal shocks and working towards a diminishing of inequalities at the budgetary expenditure level (D'Ambrosio, 2021: 146).[4]

In the history of the Euro area, economic crises, such as the global recession of 2008 and the consequent Euro crisis, have enabled the European political elite to uncover the limitations of the EU's 'soft' institutional mechanisms (Dyson, 2010: 222) in terms of fiscal policy, even though this revelation may not have led to immediate structural reforms. The COVID-19 crisis and the institutional framework of response it entailed could constitute a pivotal stimulus towards the establishment of further fiscal harmonization by means of structural reforms. Clearly, several political hurdles and obstacles on the domestic political levels of EU member states would need to be overcome for this to be a realistic path given patterns of Euroscepticism and the politicization of major developments, but recent initiatives certainly provide a first impetus in this direction.

In terms of the EU's overall approach to macroeconomic governance at a more international level, capacities are somewhat limited, while collectively, the EU is a strong actor in terms of its combined economic weight and share of trade globally. While patterns of free economic exchange and of

multilateral cooperation are at the core of the very functioning of the EU (D'Ambrosio, 2021: 133), Henry Farrell (2020: 2) has pointed out that the EU 'is most comfortable when the outside world mirrors its traditional internal principles of organization'. In fact, the role of the EU in the globalized arena is likely to have resulted in the creation of a 'feedback loop between European integration and global markets' (Farrell, 2020: 6). This also implies that the EU's position in terms of the effects of future crises could be different once its own institutional basis to address these is more resilient.

Based on the preceding analysis of EU integration and fiscal harmonization in light of the COVID-19 health crisis, as well as the EU's role in a global context, the expectations formulated earlier in Table 3.1 can now be classified as observations in Table 3.2. The overall and perhaps most important finding is that quite a substantial increase in EU fiscal integration can be observed, as well as a comparably strong shift towards supranationalism – contrary to the (rather 'meagre') expectations initially formulated based on some existing analyses of EU integration, both during and after the Euro crisis. As such, we argue, recent institutional innovations like the NGEU and its European debt instrument reflect a significant increase in EU fiscal integration, and the rise of a form of 'transnational solidarity' during the crisis has underpinned this. Despite processes of the domestic politicization of such developments and the inconsistencies they create with member states' eagerness to preserve national sovereignty, the latest steps taken could further strengthen the EU's capacity to match external expectations for it to act with an actual capacity to do so. In this sense, the EU would not be seen as an actor 'incapable of addressing crises', but due to institutional shifts and a redelegation of policy competencies, acquire the possibilities to create adequate answers at the EU level to combat such crises.

Clearly, the fact that the European Commission plays a significant role in implementing, overseeing and financing the EU's recovery plan indicates a shift of the EU towards enhanced supranationalism compared to the institutional effects of the previous crisis. Nonetheless, in the absence of strong conditionality and related austerity policies formulated earlier, the European member states need to comply with the rules framework set out in the recovery plan. As the European Commission as a supranational institution has been able to coordinate the objectives set out in the NGEU with many aspects contained in the SDGs, as well as to formulate its 'Team Europe Approach' to address the global economic impact of the COVID-19-induced health crisis, the EU's overall crisis governance presents an enhanced opportunity for it to play a stronger role on the international level – normatively as well as strategically.

According to Genschel and Jachtenfuchs (2018: 192), the 'history of coming-together federations tells us that the creation of central capacities is a very long and conflictual process', and the COVID-19 health crisis

Table 3.2: Effects of two crises on the strength of European fiscal integration and the EU's role as a global actor (observations)

	Enhanced fiscal integration	**Institutional balance of power (shift towards supranationalism)**	**Enhanced role of the EU as a global actor**
Euro crisis	+	=	–
	Only weak increase in integration (for example, ESM, ECB policies); inhibited by conditionality and austerity policies; politicization of national identities.	No real shift towards supranationalism; intergovernmental solutions prevailed; approach of 'muddling through'.	Risk of a perception by external actors that the EU cannot deliver in combatting effects of a crisis internally, as reinforced by, for example, the Euro crisis and migration crisis later on. Weakened EU role as a global actor.
COVID-19 health crisis	++	++	+
	Substantial increase in integration due to NGEU (European debt instrument); 'transnational solidarity'.	Shift towards supranationalism: European Commission has substantial authority in overseeing and financing the NGEU; strong incentives for member states to comply with the applicable rules.	Alignment of SDGs with the NGEU and the 'European Semester'; 'Team Europe Approach' developed; increased fiscal means to counter effects of crises on the EU level are likely to translate into more actual capacity for the EU to do so; expectations for the EU to act due to enhanced fiscal collective action likely to be more in line with actual capacity to act.

Note: + increase; –decrease; = status quo

constitutes no exception to this. While the already high economic and fiscal EU interdependence in many policy areas continues to exert functional pressures for further European integration, this also reveals the dilemma between purely regulatory and substantially redistributive demands that continuously weakens EU cohesion. With investments in patterns of 'public

health security' having been a minor priority – not only in the EU, but also globally – many voices are now being raised that demand a 'mandatory solidarity' (Greer and de Ruijter, 2020: 623) in order to deal with the effects of the COVID-19 crisis effectively.

Given the reality of EU governance in the face of COVID-19, solutions that can tighten and empower the European project seem difficult, though not impossible, to achieve; many of the immediate steps taken by European leaders reflect a response that has reached beyond the minimal compromises seen during the Euro crisis (which nonetheless constituted considerable steps to counter some of its effects). For a regional integration scheme, this is undoubtedly a considerable step taken. At the same time, with core state powers and redistribution at stake, anti-EU sentiments and sovereignty concerns have risked undermining such efforts. While EU fiscal and economic policies in response to the crisis present a step forward regarding tighter integration on a supranational EU level, the duration of the COVID-19 pandemic, the severe economic disruption and distributional questions regarding vaccines have been, and continue to be, a difficult test for European solidarity (Greer et al, 2021: 761); more often than not, answers to these questions in the past have relied on intergovernmental mechanisms that produce 'lowest common denominator' solutions. In an international comparison, the dynamics are no different: when faced with a challenge like the COVID-19-induced health crisis, UN member states, first and foremost, deal with their domestic situation (including in economic terms) and only in a second instance seek to approach a global challenge at a collective, international level. Even worse, global power rivalries often risk impeding truly global action – such as presented by international institutions, including the UN. In a global perspective, the delicate balance between the action of global institutions and the force of nationally driven politics is what determines new approaches, with potential improvements often hampered by the domestically defined national interests of the member states of international organizations.

Nevertheless, the creation of the NGEU and its common debt instrument is particularly exemplary of a break with the 'failing forward' mode of governance in European integration observed during the Euro crisis. This is a reason to expect European cohesion to further strengthen overall, particularly in the fiscal realm, despite occasional 'failures' or more hurdles on this path.

As this chapter has shown, the EU's responses to the recent health crisis, though seemingly highly uncoordinated in the beginning, are likely to provide an impetus to further fiscal integration in the EU that could not be discerned in the framework of the earlier Euro crisis. The 'failing forward' mode of governance continues to be observable in many regards, as the preceding analyses have shown; however, given the sheer magnitude of the challenges that had, and will have, to be addressed, the most recent measures

taken are likely to imply a gradual shift towards a strengthened European fiscal union. While the EU is still far removed from being based on fiscal federalism, some steps – in the middle of the political turmoil related to the COVID-19 health crisis – provided an impetus for exactly that. After comparing responses in the framework of both crises and reflecting on the role of the EU at the global level – including in its interactions with the UN – it can thus be concluded that the most recent crisis may, in fact, have strengthened the EU as a collective entity. It may also have created a counterforce against dynamics seen in recent years demonstrating increased scepticism of the activities of international organizations and of rules-based multilateralism (see, for example, Hosli et al, 2021). A crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrates the truly global effects that such a crisis can generate and, with this, reinforces perceptions among a wider public that the challenges generated can only be tackled by patterns of international coordination.

The role and strength of a regional integration scheme in the global arena is very much conditioned by its internal structures and capacities. The EU is undoubtedly one of the most highly integrated regional organizations in the world. It may even be so strongly integrated that many criticize its 'lack of action' when crises emerge, as they have expectations for the institution to constitute an effective, unitary actor. In reality, the EU as an organization is still very much constituted not only of individual EU institutions with different aims and mandates, but also of its individual (now 27) member states. The perception of the EU as a global actor is certainly affected by its internal degree of cohesion. As Chapter 2 of this book has shown, for example, the gradual alignment of the foreign and security policies of EU member states has translated into the institution having more of a 'single voice' within international institutions and organizations. However, similarly, it is the gradual alignment of macroeconomic and fiscal policies, as well as a certain shift of related competencies to the collective level, that are likely to not only make the EU more resilient when another crisis hits in the future (after the Euro crisis and the COVID-19 crisis), but also add to the perception that it constitutes a 'unified actor' offering effective responses, based on collective means and budgetary capacities to actually do so.

The expectation that a regional integration scheme acts based on such capacities and policy competencies is a demanding one – definitely as compared to other regional organizations that are often more clearly constituted by the opposed voices and visions of their individual member states. However, the EU is gradually walking that 'fine line': developing from an agglomeration of individual (sovereign) member states with their own foreign policies and patterns of economic and fiscal behaviour to a union based more clearly on shared patterns in such (traditionally) core areas of member state sovereignty. It is the interaction between the strengthening of collective powers at the EU level – based on delegation to shared supranational

institutions – and individual member state behaviour that determines the path towards enhanced integration. More coordinated approaches in such areas as foreign policy, security, fiscal policy or taxation are characteristic of a highly integrated integration scheme. While EU foreign and security policy have seen incremental steps towards unification, the latter – fiscal coordination and taxation – have arguably been based predominantly on voluntary coordination schemes so far. They have, however, obtained a 'push', induced by crisis, towards enhanced integration. More cohesion in such areas – if not blocked by member states – could make the EU not only more 'crisis resilient' in the future, but also more visible (and credible) as an actor in the international arena.

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4

Tackling Challenges to Multilateralism: Shared Agendas of the EU and the UN

Multilateralism has notably been used in the post-Second World War setting as a foundation to global cooperation, based on negotiations and the work and activities of international institutions. Rules-based global governance had already been initiated towards the end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century, with the creation of a number of important international organizations. Examples of institutions set up then are the International Telegraph Union, established in 1865, which in 1934 – due to the extension of its scope of activities to radio and telephone – became the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). In 1949, the organization was formally integrated into the UN as a specialized agency. Another international institution created early on was the International Labour Organization (ILO), which started in 1919 as an affiliated agency of the League of Nations and became a specialized agency of the UN in 1946.

Currently, the network of international institutions is dense. Their important role in global governance has already been acknowledged and described in more detail by Harold K. Jacobson (1979). Many international institutions explicitly operate based on the principles underlying multilateralism and rules-based governance, implying that negotiations are conducted between the organizations' member states and their decisions are always based on rules the members have set up and are obliged to adhere to. This pattern of governance is likely to have contributed to stability on the international level in the post-Second World War era. Although the UN, as the prime international organization in that era, has been characterized by cleavages between the East and the West – at the time, notably, rivalries between the communist and the 'Western' worlds – and, partially intersecting with this, between the Global South and the Global North, the organization has always adhered to the basic principles of multilateralism and rules-based global

governance. Expansion of its membership since its creation and changes in global power constellations may have affected the modes of operation, but the rules and principles underlying decision-making have remained rather constant throughout the years.

It would currently be difficult to imagine global politics without the work of the UN and its various specialized agencies, programmes, funds and other entities. Ranging from well-known institutions – such as the WHO, the IMF, the WB, the World Food Programme (WFP) and UNICEF – to smaller UN entities or related organizations – such as the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UNGGIM) – the daily work of the various parts of the UN is of quintessential importance to supporting progress in human well-being across the globe. Next to this, the major decision-making entities of the UN as an organization, that is, the UNGA and the UNSC, are explicitly based on patterns of multilateral negotiation and diplomacy. Clearly, representation within these two institutions differs – one being based on the principle of 'one state, one vote'; the other on a seat distribution reflecting global power constellations after the Second World War – but both are core elements of the global rules-based order of the last several decades.

Similarly, the EU works based on the principle of 'multilateralism' in its own, regional setting and as a partner in international negotiations. While it consists of both supranational institutions (notably, the EP and the European Commission) and intergovernmental ones (for example, the Council of the EU and the European Council), its ways of operation are strongly characterized by negotiations and compromises that had to be found between the governments of its numerous member states (27 after Brexit in 2021 and 28 before that). Rules-based governance is core to this regional integration scheme, as is 'multilateralism' in the ways the EU defines its strategies and formulates goals in terms of overall policy trajectories.

The EU as an entity has been advocating 'effective multilateralism' (Kissack, 2010; Bouchard et al, 2013), aiming to strengthen this mode of operation on the global level too. With this, the EU can be seen as an active force aiming to uphold this principle on the international level and to avoid that pure 'power politics' might determine the ways in which global affairs are conducted. While the EU has more recently shifted to the term 'principled pragmatism' (see, for example, the EUGS [European External Action Service, 2016]), it is clear that multilateralism is still a principle driving its overall orientation and actions on the global level (on this, see also European External Action Service, 2019). Both terms – 'effective multilateralism' and 'principled pragmatism' – are somewhat vague in themselves, which is likely to be a result of the very fact that the EU's member states had to find compromises as regards how to define the EU's overall principles and goals in terms of external action.

In general, regional organizations can be important for principles of multilateralism. This has been demonstrated, for example, by Diana Panke, Stefan Lang and Anke Wiedemann (2019). Based notably on a sample of case studies, the authors demonstrate how regional organizations can be influential in multilateral negotiation processes, describing the functions, abilities and challenges of multilateral regional actors in global affairs. By comparison, Bouchard et al (2013) have explored the extent to which the EU can pursue 'effective multilateralism' in several policy areas (including trade, climate change and conflict resolution), providing an overview of how multilateralism could be made effective and how global governance has been changed and adapted over the recent past.

Muldoon et al (2010), in their edited volume titled *The New Dynamics of Multilateralism: Diplomacy, International Organizations, and Global Governance*, described some of the fundamental features of the evolution and establishment of the multilateral reality of the first years of the new millennium, considering the global governance challenges faced at that time. Their book partially explores the role of international organizations in the changing practice of multilateral diplomacy. By comparison, the criticisms of multilateralism, the limits of international cooperation and the debate over multilateralism from the 1980s until the early 2000s have been discussed by Zartman and Touval (2010).

Lavelle (2020), in her book titled *The Challenges of Multilateralism*, offers a history of multilateralism from its origins to the present, and focuses on the creation and development of international institutions as important problem-solving organizations. Moreover, her book examines the governmental challenges that these organizations have confronted and continue to face from both domestic and transnational constituencies, while she demonstrates how non-governmental organizations (NGOs) may facilitate and complement their work. In some ways, her book follows up on earlier work conducted by Jacobson (1979) in this area. As Lavelle describes, international organizations often struggle with the nationalist impulses and reactions of their member states, with different and shifting goals, as well as a lack of enforcement methods. However, they are clearly of quintessential importance to the fabric of international governance.

More recently, Gstöhl and Schunz (2021) collected contributions focused on the external action of the EU, focusing on concepts, approaches and theoretical foundations. Presenting a rich array of case studies, their book demonstrates and discusses the evolution of EU external action over time.

Zooming in more specifically on challenges to multilateralism in the (post-)COVID-19 timespan, Alhashimi et al (2021) discuss how the future of diplomacy may be affected by the crisis, notably, exploring the context for UN-related negotiations and international bargaining processes, based on multilateralism. Similarly, Hosli et al (2021) focus on the effects

of recent developments and the COVID-19 crisis, analysing effects on several international organizations, regional institutions and a number of other organizations, including those focused on security. The work of the aforementioned authors illustrates how multilateralism has been evolving over time and how such entities as the UN – as an international organization – and the EU – as a regional integration scheme – have developed within these larger trends.

Clearly, the UN and the EU are both based on – and advocate – the principles of multilateralism and of rules-based governance. However, at the same time, both organizations have been faced by criticism and decreasing trust. Clearly, nationalistic tendencies among member states are likely to have fuelled such criticism. The paradox of the criticism of multilateral institutions when they may be needed even more due to the severity of recent crises (including COVID-19) is discussed by Hosli (2021).

Among the areas in which the UN and the EU clearly share common agendas on the international level is the protection of human rights. Both organizations favour and support human rights in general, and promote their safeguarding within their own various mechanisms, as well as in the context of their external action. The EU and UN have long histories of attempting to hold accountable those who have violated human rights (see, for example, Boockmann and Dreher, 2011; Schembera, 2016) and to incorporate the norms and values associated with the protection of these rights within the very foundations of their respective institutions, for example, in such core foundational documents as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights or the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. However, the implementation of the values- and norms-based human rights agenda is not without fault, and as with all matters of global governance and multilateralism, challenges of consensus and variance in those same norms and values make the implementation of the agendas and policies challenging in practice. Additionally, the human rights agenda is one that is vast and encompasses various actors, ideas, current events and norms. Contemporary challenges, such as addressing the reported human rights abuses perpetrated by state actors or seeking the protection of human rights of marginalized communities, highlight the intricacies and difficulties in trying to reach any one goal sought by a multilateral institution. Finally, there are different perspectives as to what human rights imply, with some powers putting more of an emphasis on social rights (for example, China) compared to human rights more generally. Nonetheless, the upholding of human rights can be seen as a core endeavour of multilateral action and needs the crucial backing by international and regional organizations, including the UN and the EU.

The EU is a core example of a regional entity that is primarily comprised of European states that uphold promoting social liberties and the respect of human rights. The creation of the EU (and its predecessors) was largely

based around a desire to promote a peaceful end to centuries of conflict in Europe, which had culminated in two world wars in the 20th century. This first phase of what is today the EU would continue to shape its discourse, norms and values over time, for it attempts to strongly adhere to them both within the organization and in relations with third countries. As such, these norms are largely mirrored and ingrained within the various EU institutions and their activities. Many schemes, including trade agreements concluded by the EU, include explicit provisions targeting human rights protections in partner countries. Such agreements often entail clauses that target substantive areas, such as security sector reform, the abolition of torture, freedom of the media and the press, or other areas seen to be important to the protection of liberty and human rights.

The EU is known to have called out violators of human rights in the past and to promote the protection of human rights within its member states (see, for example, Council of the European Union, 2021c). In terms of enforcement, the EU uses its sizeable economic power and influence to try to hold accountable those whose crimes it believes have violated the human rights of persons abroad (see, for example, McKenzie and Meissner, 2017; Léonard and Kaunert, 2012; also see Meissner and McKenzie, 2019). This puts into perspective the notion of enforcement and shows how multilateral institutions often have a benefit in acting in such ways due to operating on behalf of a large number of member states. Within a globalized society, the impact that an institution like the EU has is largely based on the outcomes it can realistically expect, and the utilization of its economic influence gives the EU a voice in projecting the values it deems important. In spite of internal challenges (such as selected EU member states not fully adhering to its own human rights agenda), the EU has been upholding human rights principles with steadiness and in consequential ways.

Similarly, the protection of human rights in general is core to the work of the UN. Born out of the breakdown of the former League of Nations, the UN also traces its beginning to a yearning for peace and cooperation following global warfare. The organization is currently the highest level of institutional governance that exists within the global (still largely anarchic) system. As such, the UN places the adoption and safeguarding of human rights norms and values high on its agenda. They are mentioned throughout its founding charter (see, for example, Freedman and Mchangama, 2016). Internal mechanism, such as the UNHRC – a subsidiary organ under the UNGA – or the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), are of crucial importance in the area of the protection of human rights. Similarly, various other specialized agencies, funds and programmes target and address the advancement of specific human rights, including the UNDP, the WFP, the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), the UNHCR, UNICEF and UN

Women. Collaboration between such different parts of the UN is dense and demonstrates how ingrained the agenda is within the institution overall. There is doubtless some rivalry between UN institutions and entities, but more than that, there are important synergies and complementarities.

In terms of accountability, the UN is equipped to at least attempt to hold abusers of human rights accountable. The creation of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the adoption of the Rome Statute by several of its member states that established the institution set in place a mechanism that could be used to hold individuals accountable for crimes that violate human rights. Although the treaty was negotiated within the UN framework, the ICC is an independent judicial body. Adoption of important principles and norms in this context, such as the Responsibility to Protect (R2P), further expands on this and even calls into question such matters as state sovereignty, with the aim to protect persons from human rights abuses. This includes mass-atrocity crimes like genocide, ethnic cleansing or crimes against humanity.

Perhaps the UN's most valuable weapon comes in the form of its sheer size. The 193 member states of the organization may constitute their own best asset, and the danger or risk of being named and shamed or highlighted as a possible abuser of human rights largely acts as a deterrent to most states (DeMeritt and Conrad, 2019). Even though not all UN member states are members of the ICC, the latter's effect is likely to be important in upholding core norms related to human rights protection and the prevention of crimes against humanity. By putting perpetrators on trial, the institution helps to not only get justice for crimes conducted earlier, but also prevent them from occurring again. The institution cannot stop atrocities, but may put important breaks on their occurrence by creating transparency, visibility, accountability and justice.

Both the UN as an international institution and the EU as a regional scheme draw their beginnings, as shown earlier, from the ending of serious and violent conflict. The institutions share similarities in their creation in relation to the two world wars that ripped through the globe in the first half of the 20th century (see, for example, Abdenur, 2016).[1] As a result, the themes and narratives revolving around the agenda of human rights are strongly imbued in the foundation of both the UN and the EU. A shared belief was core to their establishment that violent conflict and the violation of human rights had to be prevented, based on global and regional, multilateral approaches. There are clear similarities in the core principles of the UN and the EU, while the methods and perhaps channels of action for achieving these agendas may differ from time to time.

Within the overall human rights agenda, values and norms created over time and adopted by states and institutions largely help shape the conversations and policies created within multilateral forums. For the EU and the UN,

the values and norms created from the ashes of mass violence can be seen to be a vital characteristic. Institutions like the ICC, which, among other things, brings to trial those who have committed crimes against humanity, can be almost directly linked to the Nuremberg trials that followed the horrific systemic murder of millions during the Holocaust (Jeschek, 2004). In the case of the EU, such norms seem to have transformed a partnership that began on an almost entirely economic basis into an institution placing the respect for human rights at its core.

An obvious distinction between the EU and the UN is their respective sizes in terms of membership, as well as the EU's regional as compared to the UN's global representation. This may sometimes complicate an understanding or analysis of the values and norms underpinning the work of these institutions. Assuming that norms and values are, in fact, constructed over time, then the construction of these may differ from country to country or may entail a constant evolution globally. However, it would be no stretch to assume that generalizing or constructing norms and values in an institution of 27 member states in the EU should be easier than for the case of the 193 members of the UN. Nonetheless, the EU does face some internal challenges, notably, in terms of selected member states defying some of the principles that are seen as core to liberal democracy (with Hungary and Poland being cases in point in terms of constitutional challenges and the ways press freedom and individual liberties are being handled).

The simple fact that within the UN, there are states that are still heavily criticized for their lack of respect for human rights shows how difficult it can be for an institution of its size to successfully uphold human rights within its member states. Nonetheless, the institution as a whole is a core global actor in terms of the defence of human rights. In one way or another, several UN institutions, agencies, funds, programmes and other entities crucially defend the protection of human rights, in all their various shades.

Based on similar values and norms, the actual activities and policies of the EU and the UN draw many parallels. From an economic standpoint, the UN and EU both take active roles in trying to hold violators of human rights accountable by utilizing economic sanctions and their respective economic influence and power (Schrijver, 1993; McKenzie and Meissner, 2017). In the EU context, this is based on action in either a supranational framework (notably, as initiated by the European Commission) or an intergovernmental setting (for example, decisions taken by the European Council). In the UN, respective decisions are taken by the UNSC (for an analysis of expert recommendations and selected sanctions, see, for example, Dörfler, 2021; on UNSC sanctions more generally, see Dörfler, 2019). As an institution that is still largely driven by its original economic rationales of integration (see, for example, Chapter 2), the EU has relied heavily on its role as a trade bloc and economic strength to attempt to sway states or influence other

countries to adhere to basic principles of human rights protection. Both internally and abroad, the EU takes an active role in trying to project these principles and ideals through economic diplomacy (Woolcock, 2012). The rule of law, democracy and the protection of human rights and freedoms are core to its (external) action.

At the UN, the process of implementing human rights protection schemes can sometimes be difficult, as parts of the organization do not hold power to actually enforce sanctions or decrees (Subedi, 2017). Decisions by the UNSC are legally binding, but the UN often has to rely on the cooperation of states and enterprises to follow through with the sanctions having been put forward. While this affects the effectiveness of sanctions, it does not take away from their intended purpose, which is to enforce in some capacity the norms and values surrounding human rights that the institution supports on the global level.

Despite difficulties of enforcement, on the international stage, the game of naming and shaming has become a powerful tool in trying to hold states or individuals accountable for acts that may violate human rights. In understanding its own limitations, the UN as an institution has taken a stance of being able to call out states when violations of human rights occur, even when the institution's hands are tied in terms of actually moving forward with any specific policies. At its core, the UN faces limitations due to discrepancies in the ways some of its member states treat human rights, specifically within the UNSC, where there are clear differences among the P-5 in this regard.

Similarly, the EU is no stranger to the strategy of naming and shaming, and in combination with economic power and diplomatic strength, as a collective institution, its influence certainly carries weight. Similarly, individual EU member states, such as France and Germany, tend to actively utilize this power to call out actors who are observed to violate human rights, and as an institution, the EU is likely to mirror and enhance such efforts. Unlike the UN, however, the EU does not have the same roadblocks to patterns of representation and accountability that are present with the UNSC. If anything, the EU can be seen as a forum for states to put in place policies of accountability against human rights violators that may not have been possible to implement at the UN level. It is also important to point out that even within the UN, the EU holds enhanced observer status (see Chapters 2 and 6), which allows it to get a 'front-row' seat to the machinations of the UN and a first-hand account of the limitations it can observe within the much larger institution. Close collaboration between the different institutions of the EU and the various UN agencies, programmes, funds and entities, moreover, strengthens the alignment between core items on the two institutions' overall agendas and priorities.

Of course, not all similarities between the activities and actions of international organizations are straightforward. Within the shared agenda of

human rights protection, both the UN and the EU also share a slew of faults and difficulties that shine a light on the hardship of multilateral cooperation. These difficulties range in importance and impact, and each roadblock to progress shows how international organizations must grapple with the costs and benefits of operating in a framework that relies on the participation of various (state) actors. The human rights agenda is one that is perhaps, first and foremost, in the mind of what international organizations and global governance might hope to achieve significant progress in. Therefore, understanding the difficulties and critiques of such institutions may help in adapting and progressing their activities in as efficient and equitable manner as possible.

Starting from one of the most basic critiques of international organizations, both the EU and UN have faced criticism in the past due to the largely 'Western' approach they take to handling human rights (see, for example, Nathan, 2010). It is not hard to understand where this criticism might come from. When looking at the UN, one does not have to go further than the UNSC to see where Western values and representation are strong. Of the P-5 members of the UNSC, three – the US, UK and France – largely represent traditional Western values (Binder and Heupel, 2021). One of the P-5 members, Russia, has been in a 'grey area' as to how it should be viewed in a 'Western versus Eastern' debate (Diligensky and Chugrov, 2000). However, in the more recent past, it seems to have followed a rather authoritarian path that has deviated from defending basic human rights, even at the domestic level. China is represented as a P-5 member in the UNSC with a clear non-Western orientation.

Africa still lacks any representation within the P-5, and even 'Westernized' regions, such as Latin America, have no permanent seat in this institution. Representation as non-permanent members, by comparison, is frequent (see, for example, Hosli and Dörfler, 2017, 2020). While these overlooked regions in terms of permanent membership still have some say due to their rotational seats within the UNSC, their lack of representation on a permanent basis and with the ever-powerful 'veto' creates power asymmetries between the Western and non-Western world.

With regards to human rights, one of the most well-known examples of this critique of the UN specifically, and of organizations closely working together with it, concerns the institution seen as the highest legal body prosecuting those who have violated the most heinous crimes against humanity: the ICC. The ICC is an institution that is no stranger to criticism, and critics of the court are quick to point out the lack of convictions to come out of The Hague (Schneider, 2020). In addition to this, criticism of the ICC has also focused on the 'Western' lens that the court allegedly uses when deciding who to bring to trial: of the 30 cases at the ICC, all were against non-Western, primarily African warlords (see International Criminal Court,

2021). In comparison, none were against European criminals or those from other Western or Westernized regions, such as the Americas (International Criminal Court, 2021). However, defenders of the court point out that European criminals, such as those who perpetrated crimes against humanity in the former Yugoslavia, have been held accountable by means of tribunals and that the ICC represents a flawed but necessary mechanism by which people guilty of committing devastating damage can be brought to justice. The ICC, they state, is one of the best deterrents to those who wish to trample on the human rights of others.

The 'Western focus' criticism of the UN is perhaps more prevalent than it might be when discussing the EU, simply due to the fact that the UN is supposed to represent a global community for which either Western or non-Western dynamics should not, in theory, prohibit the organization's work. By comparison, rather than the EU being criticized because of its largely Western make-up, critics point out that the organization will often impose its Western values on other states and on trade partners. The very same methods mentioned earlier by which the EU utilizes its economic power to incentivize states to follow human rights values and norms, or to deter actors from violating them, are often criticized for imposing a Western idea of human rights on non-Western communities and states (Hafner-Burton, 2005). To some, the EU's use of economic sanctions or incentives largely plays into a very similar state of power imbalances that shaped the world during the height of European colonial dominance. While it is hard to argue that the EU does not at least try to push forward the advancement and respect for human rights, the question becomes: who made the EU the final judge of what the human rights agenda entails in its entirety?

Apart from critiques of the 'Western' nature of such organizations, roadblocks to successful action within the human rights agenda in both the UN and the EU can also be observed in the very nature of the organizations. That is to say, the very make-up of international organizations creates issues in the execution or implementation of many of their agenda items, including human rights. From a cultural perspective, international organizations, such as the EU and UN, are comprised of several diverse states and communities, with sometimes opposing values, norms and cultural perceptions on topics such as human rights. Both the EU and the UN must, then, navigate these differences in order to successfully follow through with the objectives they set out to achieve.

An example of where the search for the advancement of human rights has encountered issues with being implemented is that of the rights and protections of Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex and other gender variants (LGBTQI+) persons. Such examples as same-sex marriage and the protection of the rights of people within this community continue to be a controversial subject, even within institutions often thought of as

'progressive', such as the EU. In 2015, the European Court of Human Rights announced that all of its member states had the obligation to provide legal recognition for same-sex couples (European Court of Human Rights, 2015). While this was openly accepted in such countries as Spain, the Netherlands and Belgium, it was criticized within conservative EU member states, such as Poland and Hungary. Within these countries, cultural norms have prohibited governments from easily following through with instructions that have been decided upon in the framework of EU institutions. Additionally, within civil society in these states, progressive LGBTQI+ legislation was also not openly supported or, some might say, not even tolerated. The protection of LGBTQI+ people and their rights, and the avoidance of discrimination and of violence, is a matter of human rights, and legislation that ensures this constitutes part of the larger agenda. However, within the context of global governance, this is sometimes easier said than done, as it can prove difficult to do so even at a regional level.

These issues are perhaps even more clearly exacerbated at the UN, where the mixture and vast number of differing cultures is displayed on a larger scale. In this context, LGBTQI+ issues are only one of many cultural legislative matters that cause diverging opinions that impede the progress of the human rights agenda. Such issues as women's rights, access to contraception or the legality of the termination of a pregnancy often cause disputes between states who view such topics as integral to their cultural heritage. Clearly, parts of the UN, including UN Women, propagate and support the advancement of women's rights more generally, and support women's well-being across different cultural settings and traditions. However, in some ways, the very same diversity that makes international organizations unique and all-encompassing can also hinder their effectiveness and productivity by posing challenges based around the inherent cultural differences entailed in the composition of member states.

Perhaps an even more drastic challenge faced by international organizations, such as the EU and the UN, which draw their origins from these very same differences, is the need for consensus, which is sometimes pivotal in being able to advance any further 'legislative' progress within the organizations' agendas. This need for consensus and the struggle to achieve it can be observed on an international level when looking at the international community's response to human rights abuses, where China often holds a position that opposes much of the Western world (Richardson, 2018). Both in the EU and the UN, China's position as a pivotal trade partner of many member states makes it difficult for consensus to be reached, for example, on imposing any sort of sanctions on the actions of the Chinese regime (Richardson, 2018). Within the EU, Eastern European states that might rely on Chinese investments and trade for development projects often are sceptical about angering the Chinese government out of fear that it may

negatively affect their own state (Gunter, 2021). In an organization where consensus is key, this can lead to the EU basically being unable to take such bold actions as a collective and individual states being left to take such moves individually (King, 1999; Montesano, 2019).

The membership of a P-5 state on the UNSC helps prevent significant action against it. The need for consensus is a symptom that shows how power imbalances in international institutions sometimes make it hard for such agendas as that of human rights to efficiently and effectively be tackled by multiple actors. Syria is another example of where human rights abuses have not been tackled unanimously by the UNSC, as P-5 members like Russia actively choose to veto any form of legislation that would oppose the Assad regime (Charap, 2013). This same issue echoes back to the 'Western versus non-Western' debate. In the end, it is very difficult for organizations to bring forth charges or accusations against their own member states if there is a need for consensus to do so. At the UN, this criticism is even more present when discussing P-5 members or their close allies.

Apart from the defence of human rights in their various forms, the EU and the UN are forums that advocate for other important policy goals, among them, the reduction of poverty worldwide, the advancement of measures to combat climate change and to enhance sustainability, and, finally, the peaceful settlement of conflicts. Human rights in a broader sense are also protected when, for example, organizations such as the UNHCR or UNICEF are active in attempts to protect (illegal) migrants hosted in highly adverse circumstances in Libyan camps. Similarly, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) protects migrants directly and indirectly by aiming to achieve orderly and humane processes of migration. In doing so, it works closely together with governments, other intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) and a variety of NGOs.

The EU, notably, with the actions of its EEAS (see, for example, Chapters 2 and 6), plays a pivotal role in advancing such general foreign policy strategies. It undertakes its own missions and is an active negotiator in many crisis-ridden areas. Moreover, the EU is clearly supporting the various SDGs and has explicitly incorporated their advancement into its overall financial framework (see Chapter 3). Similarly, individual EU member states are strong supporters of the UN's activities and goals, including the SDGs. Both institutions uphold principles that strengthen the foundations for multilateral negotiations, for international diplomacy and for the prevention of (violent) conflict. They both strongly support the rule of law, including in the framework of the UN's numerous member states. Clearly, as institutions based on multilateralism, both the EU and the UN have been faced with pressures, criticism, populist trends and related decreases in popular trust. Both have been affected by the various pressures generated by the COVID-19 crisis, including financial hardship and (forced) shifts to digital patterns of

communication and negotiation. However, both institutions have proved to be innovative, adapting to current circumstances and strengthening efforts to 'build back better'. Based on long traditions of multilateral negotiation, diplomacy and problem solving, and despite challenges, both the EU and the UN seem to be 'resilient' and important in terms of supporting the foundations for enhancing peace and stability in a regional as well as global context. The shift to digital means of communication in the frameworks of both EU and UN negotiations and decision-making procedures may have created new patterns that also generate benefits to both institutions in the future.

5

COVID-19 and Challenges to the UN

The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated not only the vulnerability of the current global community to unexpected, severe health crises, but also how interconnected the global network of international, transnational and domestic actors is. The resort by many UN member states to national-level measures and the protection of their own citizens when the pandemic hit has shown how internally focused many states are in terms of protecting their own citizens first, while neglecting much collaboration across borders, even when they belong to existing regional integration schemes. In an almost intuitive reaction to the outbreak of the crisis, even highly interconnected EU member states started to close their borders and establish rigorous checks at their frontiers, fearing that the spread of the virus might be intensified by personal contacts and transitions of persons from one (EU) member state to another. What seemed almost impossible to imagine within, for example, the group of Benelux countries (Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands), namely, the re-initiation of controls at national borders, happened in the spring of 2020. Globally, many countries shut down borders, strongly limited travel and initiated various kinds of lockdowns internally.

Simultaneously, however, a crisis of the dimension of the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrates more than ever the need for transnational collaboration in terms of research, the production of tools and equipment to treat patients (like respirators), and the creation of effective vaccines. Even more general effects of the crisis, such as rising unemployment created by lockdowns, increasing poverty rates and the strongly enhanced occurrence of domestic violence, likely need to be tackled in a transnational, global approach to be truly effective. Accordingly, the crisis prevented collective action among countries in many areas, while the solution to such effects was often to be found in exactly such globally, or at least regionally, coordinated approaches.

With the outbreak of the crisis, many parts of the UN – like many global businesses and institutions within the UN's member states – had to switch to novel patterns of communication and work on a fairly short notice. UN personnel at headquarters, for example, in New York and Geneva, was asked to work from home. The UN as an institution made available digital programmes, remote access and documentation for UN employees to work from their home offices. For UN employees in the field, for example, on humanitarian or peace missions, the situation was often complex, as increased threats due to potential infection, combined with enhanced pressures on vulnerable persons to be protected, increased work intensity and related challenges. Many UN specialized agencies had to adapt their actions and work, aiming to find novel ways to address the (ever-increasing) challenges. This included protecting persons of concern – among them, refugees and migrants – and countering the various effects that the pandemic generated in terms of increasing poverty, malnutrition and the risk of conflict.

Clearly, the pandemic created setbacks to the SDG agenda in several ways. Such goals as the reduction of poverty and inequality, the strengthening of the foundations for education for everyone, and the promotion of human well-being, gender equality and access to clean water and sanitation, as well as other main aims, were negatively affected by the crisis. This also meant that UN agencies and their activities were needed even more; however, the crisis initiated further pressures that made funding for these various entities harder to obtain, forcing the institutions to look to novel ways to generate funds for their (much-needed) work.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also shown how global collaboration in the area of health policy can be core to combatting a severe pandemic. However, it has also demonstrated how rivalries and tensions, such as between the US and China as important global powers, have affected the work of international organizations, including that of the WHO. Clearly, power dynamics can overshadow what are crucial day-to-day activities of multilateral institutions and hamper the search for collaborative solutions based on multilateral negotiation and the definition of larger, more encompassing, collective policy goals. A pandemic generates pressures, but power rivalries among UN member states may hamper some of the efforts to create collective solutions needed to protect a large fraction of the global community from the very effects of such a crisis.

The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly struck the global community and the ways in which international negotiations are conducted, affecting how global governance institutions operate too. It is feared that on the domestic level in many UN member states, inequalities are rising, education may be hampered for a wide range of children and the digital divide is likely to become even more pronounced due to the effect of lockdowns. It is clear that differences in access to digital means of communication may

also affect global patterns of negotiation and diplomacy. While there can be gains in terms of the relative speed by which negotiations can be set up and conducted online, and related travel can be reduced (with an ensuing reduction in costs and emissions), various tactics of diplomacy, including person-to-person discussions in larger multilateral negotiation settings, are no longer possible in the ways that they were before the pandemic. It still remains to be seen whether the shift to digital means of communication and negotiation created by the COVID-19 pandemic will generate lasting effects on the modes by which international diplomacy works in a daily as well as a longer-term perspective.

The many ways in which negotiations are conducted at the UN itself have changed, with a large fraction of personnel and many diplomats working from home. Social-distancing rules prevent the patterns of close, frequent and informal exchanges between delegates that usually characterize negotiation dynamics in an international, multilateral setting.

Some examples show how strong the overall shift has actually been. Many large events, including the annual debate of the UNGA, had to largely be conducted virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, instead of being in the usual grand General Assembly Hall at the UN headquarters in New York, most representatives, including those of EU member states, attended online, for example, to discuss the theme 'The future we want, the UN we need: reaffirming our collective commitment to multilateralism'. In this same time frame, the UN also held the UN75 Youth Plenary, where 'an inclusive, forward-thinking youth driven global dialogue' was held, following the same theme (UN75, 2020b). For the first time in UNGA history, the usual chaotic halls in New York City were empty and quiet.

Along with this silence came some nervous fear and tension ('What will the fate of multilateral institutions be under such new arrangements?'), forcing many intergovernmental institutions to reconsider how to operate in practice. Intergovernmental institutions had much work to do, including before the crisis itself, and with the 75th annual UNGA session, massive changes were made to the globally distinctive occasion of the general debate.

The fear of a certain crumbling of multilateral institutions was at an all-time high as the pandemic swept its destructive path through much of the world. However, paradoxically, this fear may also have strengthened voices supporting international institutions again and, to a certain extent, may have decreased scepticism towards multilateralism. A clear, widely supported objective was to invest more in collective health policies and in the definition and creation of common answers and reactions to the crisis, as it seemed it could not be addressed by individual UN member states (while still helping to ensure an equitable future).

Gender mainstreaming, for example, under pressure due to the pandemic and to related effects of lockdowns, nonetheless remains high on the agenda of

the UN, as well as regional institutions like the EU, ensuring women's equity and equality not only in the EU context, but also in broader multilateral institutional settings like that of the UN. While there was, and is, progress in some ways, such as the fact that, 'since 2000, maternal mortality has fallen by 37 percent' (see UN75, 2020a), the COVID-19 pandemic has certainly set back some of the targets in terms of gender equality, access to education and employment opportunities, as well as protection from (domestic or conflict-related) violence against women and girls. However, inequalities certainly do persist. For example, 'the proportion of mothers that do not survive childbirth compared to those who do, in developing regions is still 14 times higher than in the developed regions' (UN75, 2020a). Moreover, war-related (sexual) violence tends to still haunt numerous women and girls, though it is also of concern for men and boys, including in settings in which victims are forced to migrate in efforts to escape the risk of severe violence due to conflict and war.

Without a doubt, the COVID-19 pandemic has seriously reduced progress on several of the SDGs, with SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being) constituting an important example. Michelle Bachelet, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, presented the latest report of the OHCHR in a speech at the 75th UNGA, addressing the Third Committee of the UNGA. In this context, she discussed 'the impact of COVID19, and the consequences it has had in terms of human suffering, weakened medical systems, economic damage, restrictions on civil and political rights, progress on sustainable development, and peace and security' (Universal Rights Group, 2020).

Many of the core targets and aims of the UN as an organization, such as progress in terms of the consistent relevance and application of the rule of law, sustainable development, civil and political rights, and access to medical facilities and education, have come under pressure. Bachelet further went on to discuss how systemwide action was crucial 'to place vulnerable people at the center of policy guidance and the global humanitarian response plan' (OHCHR, 2020). Rivalries between member state actors in terms of access to medical facilities and treatment, as well as to effective vaccines against COVID-19, complicate such steps. She also called for more coordination between UN pillars working in areas relevant to combat the effects of the crisis.

The presentation was followed by an interactive dialogue session that included representatives of almost 50 UN member states (and the EU). In this context, member states raised various concerns and suggestions, for example:

> Luxembourg, Ireland, Greece, Chile and the US all raised concerns that the pandemic had directly caused or responses to it had ushered in restrictions to human rights, particularly civil and political rights,

> echoing the concerns raised by the High Commissioner. Canada praised the OHCHR for its efforts to ensure human rights were integrated into COVID19 response plans and Indonesia called for 'vaccine multilateralism.' Mali said human rights should be strengthened in the international COVID-19 response, while the Netherlands called for a human-rights based approach to building back better. (Universal Rights Group, 2020)

In the framework of more globalized responses to the pandemic, an international initiative — the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT) – was jointly launched by the WHO, European Commission and France in April 2020 to provide the world with needed resources to fight the virus. This involves COVAX, the 'vaccines pillar' of the ACT facility – a global risk-sharing mechanism for the pooled procurement and equitable distribution of COVID-19 vaccines. COVAX was set in motion to 'ensure that people in all corners of the world will get access to COVID-19 vaccines once they are available, regardless of their wealth' (see Gavi: The Vaccine Alliance, 2021). Bilateral deals that some UN member states concluded with companies to ensure sufficient supply and production of vaccines for their own population stimulated such activity but also risked endangering more general access to these important tools able to protect citizens. Medecins Sans Frontières, for example, warned that 'bilateral deals will reduce the initial global vaccine stocks available for vulnerable groups in poorer countries and undermine global efforts to ensure fair allocation' (*The Lancet*, 2020).

President of the UNHRC Elisabeth Tichy-Fisslberger also presented statements in the framework of the 75th UNGA, addressing the UNGA's Third Committee. Presenting the latest report of the UNHRC, she discussed how COVID-19 constitutes a human rights issue. Tichy-Fisslberger took an interactive dialogue approach, having several UN member states (and the EU) engage in the talks. She emphasized how the pandemic constituted not only a health emergency, but also, in fact, a major human rights crisis.

In the discussion, several UN states, as well as the EU, raised issues and topics to be addressed, for example:

> Lithuania and Austria raised concerns about the COVID-19 crisis being used as a pretext for restrictions on human rights, Lithuania mentioning reprisals on NGOs and human rights defenders in particular. The EU said the pandemic had exposed the failures of existing systems to deliver for those more at risk of marginalisation. On a related note, Portugal argued that at a time when multilateralism is under attack and the UN system is more important than ever, the Council 'has proven to be a fundamental body that can respond to the aspirations of human rights defenders.' (Universal Rights Group, 2020)

Finally, the president of the UNHRC emphasized that there are several links between UN bodies in New York and Geneva working in this area: while each entity has a distinct role, they should be collaborating more closely, 'comparing notes, and exchanging information and analyses' (Universal Rights Group, 2020). Moreover, she reminded representatives present in this (virtual) event that: 'This is one UN system. We are living in the same world, watching the same developments … nobody cares out in the world if it's one body or the other, so it's important that we are on the same page' (Universal Rights Group, 2020). Clearly, this last claim is important, not least in more general efforts to streamline and coordinate the activities of UN organizations within the UN system.

These presentations to the UNGA's Third Committee, conducted as virtual events, also demonstrated how patterns of injustice and inequality – reinforced by the pandemic – plague the global community. For example, there is a 'disproportionate impact of COVID19 on racial minorities and race-based discrimination' (Universal Rights Group, 2020). In this context, Michelle Bachelet ensured that the UNHRC was not going to turn a blind eye to the racial injustices making global headlines. As she stressed, combating racism remains a core principle of the UN.

There have always been issues of gridlock within the UN, not least due to the prevalence of opposing visions among the institution's member states. Effectiveness of action can be hampered by such oppositions, as well as by internal processes within the organization that could be made more effective. Global public health has been a challenge several times in the past, but there has not been a pandemic with such broadscale and deadly effects internationally as COVID-19. A comparable situation to the COVID-19 pandemic may have been the Ebola crisis, mainly taking place in Africa in the year 2014. At the time, there were arguably better pathways and networks for crisis containment in place as compared to COVID-19, which struck the world with a much quicker spread and affected more than just one continent. What was likely an issue during the COVID-19 pandemic that was not faced in similar ways when the Ebola crisis erupted was 'the veto power wielded by the increasingly nationalist leadership among the permanent five members of the UNSC' (Özler, 2020, p 448). For the US under the Trump administration, for example, there was a clear refusal to accept the support for a global ceasefire – a suggestion brought forward by the UN Secretary-General – unless China was singled out as the source of the virus. In this sense, the domestic politics of the US did not support the global cooperation needed to actively mitigate the virus (Özler, 2020).

This is not to say that the UN was in a complete deadlock when the virus first arrived. The WHO, for example, was able to create a chain response system that reverberated throughout all UN organizations. This included supplying: 'protective equipment to workers; test kits; courses in

six languages; and over fifty guidance documents for healthcare workers, schools, and workplaces' (Özler, 2020). The joint efforts provided by the UN more generally, and the WHO as one of its specialized agencies more specifically, were able to mitigate some of the ongoing challenges, with quick and effective action. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, for example, recognizes 'the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health'.[1] Similarly, Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights[2] refers to various rights, including to adequate food, water, sanitation, clothing, housing and medical care, as well as social protection covering situations beyond one's control, such as disability, widowhood, unemployment and old age.[3]

It is easy for political rivalries to overtake progress made and to criticize multilateralism as a tool to derive collective solutions. Looking at country-based dynamics can help shift understanding and claims of mismanagement by international institutions to issues seen within domestic regimes and changes in selected UN member states. Clearly, underestimation of the severity of the new virus was present, for example, in the US under the Trump administration. It was also prevalent, however, in the large and upcoming South American state of Brazil (see, for example, Anderson, 2021). Both countries were affected by strongly increasing infection rates; however, underestimation and responses that came late or in ineffective ways were also prevalent elsewhere.

As a multilateral institution, regime changes, the rise of authoritarian leaders and isolationist policies have certainly cut into the work the UN attempts to complete. Similar challenges are faced internally by the EU as a regional, multilateral institution.

Clearly, the COVID-19 pandemic has had profound effects globally. As an international, multilateral, intergovernmental institution, the UN has witnessed many effects of the crisis on its daily work, its more general strategies and the modes by which international negotiations and diplomacy are conducted. Early on, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called for action, addressing many different aspects of the crisis and how they could best be tackled. Among the most famous calls in this context was the initiative for a global ceasefire[4] – the world had too much to tackle already due to the pandemic to be able to 'afford' the continuation of violent conflict. He framed the virus as a new 'enemy of everyone' that needed full attention to be combatted.

In general, it can be said that as a large, encompassing, global organization, the UN has been quick in adapting to the changed circumstances generated by the COVID-19 pandemic: to have employees work from home; to move several of the organization's activities to online events; and to step up efforts to combat the effects of the crisis. This applies to challenges in terms of

worsening poverty rates, inequalities and serious pressures on a variety of vulnerable groups and persons of concern, including migrants, refugees and (in a more general sense) women and girls. 'Resilience' has certainly been shown across the UN system. While, of course, there can be improvements in terms of enhanced coordination between different UN bodies and entities, and synergies could be further explored and utilized, in general, responses have been fast and effective.

The pressures on the aims incorporated into the SDGs and the timely implementation of these goals have certainly increased with the COVID-19 pandemic. It is to be hoped that economic recovery after the pandemic has largely been overcome will also enable UN member states to maintain or step up their financial contributions to the UN and its various bodies and entities, and that global businesses and NGOs – affected financially by the same crisis – will bounce back and, with this, create renewed conditions for a thorough rebuilding (or even 'building back better'; see, for example, Alhashimi et al, 2021). In ideal circumstances, crises also create new opportunities, where a stepped-up effort to adhere to goals – such as the SDGs – becomes possible. New efforts and approaches are needed to combat the serious challenges generated by the pandemic to human health, human rights, general human well-being, fair and transparent election processes, media freedom, and a range of civil liberties. Gender mainstreaming and efforts to assist vulnerable population segments, as well as persons of concern more generally, will remain core items on the global agenda after the COVID-19 pandemic.

Clearly, collaboration between the various entities within the UN system, between NGOs and IGOs, and between the private sector and both IGOs and NGOs, will be central to such a recovery. The world is highly networked and interconnected. A crisis such as the one generated by COVID-19 demonstrates again how interdependent UN member states are in terms of addressing the effects of the crisis, gaining access to medical supplies and vaccines, and conducting research in the framework of transnational alliances and cooperation patterns that cross national borders. Power rivalries on the highest global level have always been an impediment to effective action by the UN, but in the recent past, such tensions have again demonstrated how the work of the organization and some of its specialized agencies, programmes and funds can be hampered in their operation (instead of being supported to conduct their activities on behalf of the UN's member states at large). Such (nationally based) pressures are notorious in the work of international IGOs. Related pressures on funding can only complicate the situation, as many UN organizations have experienced, not least due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Nonetheless, the severity of the challenges generated and the necessity to address them collectively, ideally on a global level, demonstrates the need to support these organizations, including the

UN and its various bodies (among them, the WHO as a specialized agency), through enhanced support efforts and mechanisms.

As an organization, the UN has been shown to be 'resilient', but it does need the support and backing of its member states nonetheless. It can only be hoped that the COVID-19 pandemic has again demonstrated the transnational character of current challenges, the interlinkages between UN member states and, as a result of this, the need for answers and reactions to be based on multilateral dialogue, negotiation and collective decision-making. Not all preferences of national delegations can be respected, and there will always be opposing visions as to the preferred paths to be taken – certainly in an international organization with 193 member states like the UN – but it seems to be the only way to avoid decision-making based on power politics, national rivalries and competition that prevents effective (global) solutions to shared challenges.

International organizations cannot generate answers and remedies to all existing problems – the same applies to regional organizations – but they are often the most effective institutions to address cross-border challenges. In this sense, though decision-making may take longer in such settings, multilateralism is core to finding solutions and to accommodating the various preferences and priorities of an international organization's individual member states.

6

The EU in the UNGA and the UNSC

Written with Nicolas Verbeek[1]

The core of the UN system is formed by six organs: the UNSC, the UNGA, ECOSOC, the UN Secretariat (the administration), the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the Trusteeship Council (nowadays, largely inactive). The EU has observer status in both the UNGA and ECOSOC. The two UN decision-making bodies most publicly perceived and significant in their rulings are undoubtedly the UNGA and UNSC. The EU has a unique cooperative relationship with the UNGA and UNSC: as a flagship model of regional multilateralism, the EU is one of the largest donors through its member states to the UN, an organization that can be seen as the institutional heart of global multilateralism.

With an increase in EU competencies in the field of foreign policy and the rise in the functions and related expectations of the UN in the post-Cold War era, cooperation between these two organizations, which are expressions of the same rules-based global order created under US leadership after the Second World War, has intensified. A look at recent strategy documents on EU priorities in the UNGA reveals the status quo of EU–UN relations: in times of weakened international interest in multilateral institutions, it is in the EU's vital interest to actively maintain a rules-based global order, as expressed in the UN, and to support its reforms in the face of external and internal challenges (Gowan and Dworkin, 2019). Internal challenges can refer, for example, to the need to more closely coordinate the activities of different UN bodies and to reduce inefficiencies within the organization when they occur. External challenges are formed, for example, by the rise of new powers and the need to have them adequately represented in the UN's decision-making structures. Accordingly, close mutual support between

the EU and the UN is an expression of the commitment to preserve the rules-based global order.

However, such an agenda does not automatically translate into consistent action in the face of the complex translation of EU priorities via EU member states, raising questions of EU coordination and cohesion in the UNGA and UNSC (Meyer, 2013). As will be discussed in Chapter 7 of this book, however, UN bodies and entities are also faced with the challenge of coordination in ensuring that they 'speak with one voice' when addressing a regional institution such as the EU. Additionally, while there is a close value- and interest-based cooperative relationship between the EU and the UN, it is also true that the UN is largely an expression of a Westphalian world of sovereign states, while the EU has partially taken on a post-Westphalian, supranational dimension. Of course, the EU combines intergovernmental and supranational elements in its decision-making structures (see, for example, Chapter 2); however, nonetheless, this difference makes the partnership between the two organizations less natural than often portrayed and, occasionally, subject to tensions (Monteleone, 2019).

Naturally, the close EU–UN relationship has attracted scholarly attention over the years. Two broad strands of literature can be identified. First, following the growth of the EU's institutional competencies, the EU presence in key UN decision-making bodies has been intensively studied, that is, the role of the EU *in* the UN (see, for example, Ojanen, 2011). In this context, indications of recent EU actorness and the Europeanization of the foreign policy of EU member states have been analysed (Delreux, 2014). This has mainly involved conducting studies on the coordination and voting cohesion of EU member states within the UNGA and, to a lesser extent, the UNSC – in essence, the EU contribution to the main UN decision-making processes. For example, this also includes the systematic analysis of the extent to which EU priorities in the UN are carried out and implemented by EU member states, that is, the extent to which member states are able and willing to carry out EU priorities (Drieskens, 2012). In addition to studies of formal practices in voting procedures, this includes gaining an understanding of the development of informal practices and relationships to reveal how the EU can translate its positional power into influence (Cox and Jacobson, 1973; Monteleone, 2011).

The second strand of literature looks at EU support for a wide range of UN programmes and activities, and the corresponding challenges to inter-institutional cooperation. Rather than focusing on the EU's role in UN bodies, this literature highlights cooperation between the two organizations in overlapping areas of competency, that is, the EU *with* the UN. In particular, the EU's contribution to UN activities in the field of peacekeeping and security has been highlighted (Yamashita, 2010). Such inter-institutional cooperation is also described in selected parts of this book (for example,

Chapters 7 and 8), with synergies and complementarities in their work being addressed. In summary, the EU is likely to be the regional organization that has made its presence felt most at the UN over time – both *in* the UN and *with* the UN (though the ties between the AU and the UN, notably, in the more recent past, can also be considered to be close and strong – both *in* and *with* the UN).[2]

Important in the analysis of EU–UN cooperation is examining the role of the EU in the central UN decision-making bodies of the UNGA and UNSC, that is, the EU *in* the UN. First, the historical evolution of EU representation in the UNGA and UNSC will be described, with a special focus on the post-ToL phase after 2009 – the period in which the EU increasingly started to attempt to act as a unitary foreign policy actor through institutional innovations.

In terms of the EU in the UNGA, the latter can be seen as a parliamentary-style decision-making body, which brings together all 193 member states of the UN, debating and adopting resolutions on most issues of international relevance covered by the UN Charter. Although its resolutions are not legally binding (see, for example, Hurd, 2011), UNGA resolutions have a significant symbolic and political impact since they represent the collective will of the international community.

Accordingly, UNGA resolutions also have a significant influence on the development of customary international law (Joyner, 1981). As one of the six principal organs of the UN, the UNGA serves as the UN's main deliberative, policymaking and representative organ. The UNGA is responsible for the UN budget, appointing the non-permanent members to the UNSC, appointing the Secretary-General of the UN, receiving reports from other parts of the UN system and making recommendations through resolutions. It also establishes numerous subsidiary organs to advance or assist in its broad mandate. The UNGA is the only UN organ wherein all member states have equal representation (UN, 2021).

As early as 1974, the ECC had been granted observer status.[3] Represented by the European Commission, speaking on issues of exclusive competency and the rotating presidency, as well as intervening when a common position on foreign and security policy was debated, the EU's role developed mainly in issues related to development (Blavoukos and Bourantonis, 2017c: 48f). As the need to intervene in security issues with non-military instruments emerged, the EU started to become more relevant in itself and as a complement to its member states (Monteleone, 2019). Over time, the EU developed a more prominent role in the UNGA and other bodies, such as ECOSOC, but not so much in the UNSC.

The EU obtained enhanced observer status in the UNGA in 2011 as a culmination of the increased presence of the EU at the UN in several areas (humanitarian assistance, sustainable development, human rights,

security and so on) over time. In 2009, the ToL substantially modified the EU's representation by appointing the HR/VP (Article 221 of the TEU) to coordinate and represent the EU in international organizations and introducing the EEAS. In line with the EU's enhanced role in foreign policy, an enhanced observer status was envisaged in the UNGA setting (Laatikainen, 2015a). The first draft resolution for an enhanced observer status, which was presented in the UNGA in September 2010, was clearly voted down. According to Blavoukos and Bourantonis (2017c), this was because: (1) UN members were critical of the introduction of a non-Westphalian element; and (2) the draft resolution was framed in only EU-centric terms and did not take seriously the potential fears of smaller UN states that felt challenged. There was little time to gather support for the resolution, which was to be adopted in the autumn UNGA meetings, as the EEAS had only recently been set up (in essence, the EEAS became operational in the spring of 2010, while the proposal had to already be discussed in the autumn 2010 UN general debate). As the original draft resolution faced much objection, it ultimately failed to be accepted by the UNGA. However, after a revision process and various negotiations to secure the support of members that had been sceptical as to its purpose, the resolution was finally adopted (see, for example, Serrano de Haro, 2014; Blavoukos and Bourantonis, 2017c; Blavoukos et al, 2017; Smith, 2020). In a new attempt, in which the draft resolution explicitly emphasized the Westphalian nature of the UN and the EU presented itself more as a 'normal' (intergovernmental) regional organization, the application for enhanced observer status was accepted on 3 May 2011 (Document A/RES/65/276) (Serrano de Haro, 2014).

Accordingly, with UNGA Resolution 65/276 of May 2011, the EU has been granted enhanced observer status, whereby the EU obtained special rights, such as the right to intervene in general debates, the right to orally submit proposals and amendments, the right to respond to positions concerning the EU, and, finally, the right to have UNGA communications circulated as documents of the respective meetings (Serrano de Haro, 2014). In some ways, this change was needed by the EU to still speak on behalf of its member states before individual members would be able to present their priorities; before the ToL, the rotating presidency of the European Council had assumed this role.[4]

On the other hand, the observer role of the EU implies significant limitations compared to the full membership of UN member states: no right to vote; no right to co-sponsor draft resolutions and decisions; and no right to put forward candidates in the UNGA. At this stage, the EU is the only international organization with such extensive rights in the UNGA, but other international organizations that represent its members in the UN are also theoretically eligible to claim the right to enhanced observer status (Monteleone, 2019).

Although the EU's enhanced observer status in the UNGA was celebrated as a success of EU diplomacy, not all initial European ambitions were satisfied by Resolution 65/276. Despite recognition of the EU's foreign policy competency, the EU was provided with fewer participatory rights than would have been needed under the ToL for the EU to play a truly global role within the UN (Laatikainen, 2015b). In short, the EU is still dependent on EU member states to promote its political agenda in the UNGA. Furthermore, the resolution did not bring any progress in the EU's efforts to enhance its status in other UN bodies because the EU's enhanced observer status in the UNGA is difficult to replicate in other bodies in an existing non-conducive international political environment (Van Seters and Klavert, 2011).

With the EU's continued dependence on its member states for representation in the UN and the EU's clear ambition to speak with one voice, as expressed in the ToL, the EU's actorness in the UN has become an important area of academic study, meaning the study of the increased coordination and cohesion of member states in the UNGA and UNSC with the aim of performance enhancement (Strömvik, 1998; Luif, 2003; Laatikainen and Smith, 2006a; Kissack, 2007; Rasch, 2008; Jin and Hosli, 2013; Burmester and Jankowski, 2014a, 2018; Panke, 2014, 2017; Laatikainen, 2015a). Historically, the Luxembourg Report at the basis of the EPC in 1970 committed the EU member states to cooperation on foreign policy issues in international institutions, whereby common voting on resolutions in the UN was expected (Monteleone, 2019). With the adoption of the SEA in 1987, the EPC was integrated into the community framework, and especially since the 1990s, with the Maastricht Treaty and the launch of the CFSP, EU coordination of voting became a central European agenda item in the UN (Article J.5[4] of the Maastricht Treaty). Commitments to increased cohesiveness were included in subsequent EU treaties, so that common voting in UNGA resolutions became a measure of the political will to Europeanize foreign policy (Laatikainen and Smith, 2006b; Luif, 2003). The focus on the voting cohesion of EU member states in the UNGA, however, has generated some criticism. For example, it has been argued that EU members work so hard to reach a common position that once they have, they lack important room to manoeuvre in subsequent negotiations with other states and groups (Laatikainen and Smith, 2017).

Overall, studies confirm a progressive increase in the voting cohesion of EU member states in the UN – though no automatism can be assumed (Young and Rees, 2005). Systemic contexts, such as the US position, regularly play a significant role in the defection of EU member states (Valášek, 2019). Regarding Resolution 65/276 in 2011, it should also be noted that, despite its shortcomings, the resolution has had significant positive representational effects for the EU in the UN. Coordination of the EU member states' positions occurs via regular and frequent meetings at EU delegations (since

the ToL), with the EU delegation at UN headquarters in New York being particularly important for the coordination of EU positions within the UN (see, for example, Smith, 2020; Laatikainen and Smith, 2020).

In terms of voting cohesion, the overall level for the EU is high in comparison with other regional organizations. Generally, there are three main possibilities to assess voting cohesion among groups of actors in an organization (see, for example, Hosli et al, 2010). In essence, some measures account for 'yes' and 'no' votes exclusively, while others treat 'abstentions' as a separate category and do account for them. The 'elegance' of one of the most prominent cohesion measures, the Agreement Index (AI), is that it weights each vote category (yes, no and abstain) equally and, with this, assesses the cohesion of votes cast by members in a specific group in equal ways across these three vote possibilities. It is likely that abstentions, in terms of the 'signal' they send, are to be placed in between negative votes and positive ones on specific resolutions.

In an analysis based on the AI, covering the time span 2003–17, EU cohesion has been found to have oscillated between about 90 and 97 per cent (see Makubalo, Hosli and Lantmeeters, 2020), which is certainly high in international comparison. A spike in terms of the level of EU cohesion can notably be seen around the year 2006, with another one again in 2011. An explanation for the latter could be the Arab Spring and reactions to it globally, with a potentially unified level of reactions reflected in EU voting cohesion on related UNGA resolutions; however, it could also be the first testimony to EU cohesion after the enhanced observer status had just been implemented.

Although voting cohesion is also high for some other organizations in a global context (see, for example, Jin and Hosli, 2013), it has been pronounced for the EU over time and has is tending to increase. As a longitudinal analysis for the time span 1958 to 2012 revealed, for example, the voting cohesion of EU states (accounting for the changing size of EU membership over time) was almost 94 per cent for resolutions categorized into the cluster 'Middle East', 82 per cent for 'international security', almost 86 per cent for 'human rights', 76 per cent for 'decolonization', 82 per cent for 'development' and about 80 per cent for all other resolutions (Jin and Hosli, 2013). Given that voting cohesion has been even higher later on, the effects of the enhanced EU coordination efforts after the implementation of the ToL seem to have been positive in terms of the level of cohesion of EU member state voting on resolutions in the UNGA.

Since the ToL, the president of the European Council, the HR/VP, the European Commission and the EU delegation all have the right to present EU positions in the UN. They usually make their interventions in formal meetings ahead of representatives of individual UN states – thus ensuring effectiveness in the delivery of EU messages and positions. This is seen as

a major achievement of the resolution in terms of EU coherence. Before 2011, the EU state holding the EU rotating presidency spoke on behalf of the EU in the common time slot allocated to UN states. The changes made have enabled a systematic and exposed positioning of EU stances.

EU representatives now have the right to speak in the general debate of the UNGA, which is held at the beginning of each session. Since 2011, this has resulted in an annual speech by the president of the European Council in the UNGA general debate on behalf of the EU as a collectivity. Each year before the UNGA (held in September), the European Council identifies priority issues for the EU at the UNGA. Beyond this high-level representation, the EU delegation to the UN in New York represents the EU at the UNGA on a day-to-day basis. This involves: (1) coordinating the positions of the 27 EU member states in order to develop common positions and statements; and (2) facilitating the voting of EU member states in the UNGA.[5] In summary, the EU is active in all six main committees, with regular statements on the issues debated. Comparable to a parliamentary setting, the thematically organized main committees analyse matters referred to them by the UNGA and present reports and draft resolutions to the plenary.

While the expanded representational capacities under UNGA Resolution 65/276 have also increased coherence among EU member states in terms of positions and visibility since the ToL, the main obstacle to coherence on all issues – an EU that speaks with once voice in the UNGA – remains the deep-seated divergent national views, interests and domestic political set-ups of the EU member states. Even the introduction of the CFSP at the EU level has not been able to put aside clearly discernible divisions in national interests; rather, intra-European coalitions of interest on various UNGA issues constitute a generally stable pattern (Jin and Hosli, 2013). Therefore, EU member states remain in the driver's seat, though the overall visibility and coherence of the EU at the UNGA has increased. Accordingly, EU performance depends on homogeneous preferences, the attribution of competencies and the existence of a favourable negotiation context (Galariotis and Gianniou, 2017). Nevertheless, compared to other regional organizations, such as the AU, the Arab League or ASEAN, the coherence of European member states' positions is strikingly high (Burmester and Jankowski, 2014b).[6]

The UNHRC is an intergovernmental subsidiary body of the UNGA; it was established on 15 March 2006 and is responsible for strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights and addressing human rights violations worldwide (Ramcharan, 2011). In the area of human rights, the EU has been successful in leveraging its observer status (see Chapter 4). In close cooperation with like-minded countries on the global level, the EU has a track record of numerous successful resolutions on human rights issues presented in the UNGA. Although, in practice, consensus building

on specific human rights issues is not simple, even between EU member states, the EU has so far taken a very active position as a regular observer in the UNHCR, for example, sponsoring annual resolutions on freedom of religion and belief in both the UNGA and UNHCR (Smith, K.E., 2010).

Before the ToL, the observer status of the EU meant that EU representatives were not allowed to make statements on behalf of the EU in the speaking slots of UN member states, which, in practice, meant that the European Council rotating presidency spoke for the EU in the UNHRC (Gowan and Brantner, 2008). Overall, this led to complex internal coordination challenges in consensus building among EU member states, making the EU a rather slow and inflexible actor in the UNHRC. However, it has been argued that EU representation in the UNHCR is overall better streamlined today, for example, through the introduction of new actors like the EU Special Representative on Human Rights (Wahl, 2019), and the enhanced observer status, together with strong coordination efforts through EU delegations, have further facilitated this process.[7]

EU action within the UNGA is quite different from its representation and capacity to act within the UNSC, the primary UN body responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, and thus the highest authority on global security affairs. The UNSC consists of five permanent members (the US, Russia, France, China and the UK) and ten rotating, non-permanent members (elected for two-year terms by the UNGA). The UNSC responds in line with Chapter VIII of the UN Charter to threats to international security through legally binding measures, including: (1) calls for peaceful settlement; (2) the imposition of sanctions; and (3) mandates for the use of force with the aim of restoring international peace.[8]

In 2021, after the UK's withdrawal from the EU in the context of Brexit, France is the only EU member state with a permanent seat on the UNSC. This means that the EU has lost influence in the UNSC, as it is, above all, the permanent seats with veto power that allocate significant diplomatic power.

In 2021, besides France as a permanent member, only Ireland sat as a further EU member state in the UNSC; in 2019, there were five non-permanent members, and in 2020, there were still four non-permanent EU member states in the institution (UN, 2019). Generally, EU cohesion in decision-making processes in the UNSC is more difficult to achieve than in the UNGA, not only because of the composition of this institution, but also because of the relevance and high stakes attached to this forum (Monteleone, 2019). Accordingly, EU treaties recognize the special nature of the UNSC and require less coordination of EU member states in this forum, so that EU cohesion in the UNSC has often been identified as yet to come (Drieskens, 2009; Hill, 2006), though EU member states represented in the UNSC have been encouraged to inform and aim to collaborate with other EU states on issues discussed and decided upon in the UNSC.

According to Article 34 of the TEU (see, for example, EULEX, 2016), EU member states at the UNSC are required to coordinate their positions as best they can, that is, to defend the positions and interests of the EU and to inform other EU member states and the EU HR/VP about current developments. They are also instructed to invite the HR/VP to the European Council in appropriate situations to present EU positions. In practice, these requirements lead to: (1) statements on UNSC issues by the HR/VP on special occasions; and (2) more regular statements by the EU delegation to the UN and EEAS senior officials on behalf of the EU, EU member states and sometimes even neighbouring countries holding the same position (Monteleone, 2019). Moreover, there are weekly information-sharing meetings between EU member states in the UNSC and other EU member states (Mayr-Harting, 2020). Against the backdrop of EU directives, the practice of coordination between EU member states in the UNSC has also increased considerably over time, with the UK and France as permanent UNSC members often being used as transmission belts for EU positions in the past (Marchesi, 2010; Pirozzi, 2010; Monteleone, 2011).

This does not mean that EU members in the UNSC always agree. However, a considerable increase in cooperation is notably due to two aspects: (2) changes in working habits (Verbeke, 2006); and (2) the willingness of EU states to stress the European dimension in their UNSC mandates (Drieskens, 2009). This is symbolized in the recent habit of joint action and statements by current, former and future EU members of the UNSC, and the highlighting of the European dimension in the 'split term' (2017–18) between Italy and the Netherlands (Monteleone, 2019).

Further key initiatives to create a European dimension in the UNSC were, for example, the creation of a working document on best practices in EU coordination in the UNSC by the Netherlands, Poland and Sweden – then non-permanent UNSC members – in December 2018, and the twin presidency in the UNSC of France and Germany in March/April 2019 (see Wouters, 2020).

As part of a larger debate on UN reform, many scholars have assessed EU cohesiveness, or the lack thereof, for example, by examining EU member state positions on UNSC reform (Hill, 2006; Drieskens et al, 2014). Various proposals have been advanced since the 1990s to provide the EU with a (combined) seat on the UNSC (Blavoukos and Bourantonis, 2011b: 733; Pouliot, 2016: 173) but have met resistance, including within the EU. Further proposals to modify the current UNSC membership have been introduced by various state coalitions, but little consensus has emerged (see, for example, Hosli and Dörfler, 2020).

In general, many UN states have been unwilling to open membership to non-state entities, such as the EU (Winther, 2020) – this also led to opposition to the EU's initial proposal for an enhanced observer status in

the UNGA. After all, the UN is based on a system in which member states constitute the core units of the organization, based on the principle of 'one state, one vote'. Following a kind of 'path of least resistance', in a 2018 unofficial proposal, Germany suggested transforming the French permanent seat on the UNSC into a shared EU permanent seat; however, this proposal was not supported by France. Instead, France argued for an enlargement of the UNSC, with new permanent member states, such as Japan, Brazil, India, Germany and two African states (*DW*, 2018). In this context, in July 2018, the EP called for increased efforts to reform the UNSC – in particular, to limit the veto power of the UNSC's permanent members in cases such as war crimes or crimes against humanity – cases in which, in the past, the decision-making process has been actively undermined by the national interests of individual actors (European Parliament, 2018). Calls for a more limited use of vetoes have also characterized earlier discussions on UNSC reform and been attached to several proposals for potential enlargement of this institution by more members. Nonetheless, there are both global political forces arguing that EU states should hold one combined UNSC permanent seat and member states from within the EU claiming that just one large member state – France – holding a permanent seat no longer reflects global geopolitical or EU internal realities.

Opposition to (formal) reform of the UNSC and to specific member state constellations proposed for the institution have led to 'blame games' in the UNSC (Verbeek, 2021) and, with this, may have caused damage to the UNSC's reputation. Calls for the composition of UNSC membership to better reflect today's global order have been frequent and often encompassed the call for a permanent seat for the EU (see Pindjak, 2020). Overall, the debate on UNSC reform – whether in the form of an EU seat or the integration of EU members (with Germany being a likely candidate) into the circle of permanent UNSC member states – has revealed divergent positions between EU states. While the UNSC's working methods have been adapted, not least as a consequence of the seeming impossibility of formal UNSC reform, EU information-sharing and representation mechanisms in the UNSC have increased (see, for example, Marchesi, 2010).

Of course, European states do not necessarily represent the most visible actors in the broader debate on UNSC reform; more focus seems to be on other aspirants from the currently under-represented Global South, including Brazil (Mahbubani, 2021). With the UK's withdrawal from the EU in late January 2020, moreover, the EU has lost a representative and veto power in the UNSC to enforce its CFSP. While no broad debate has yet flared up at the European level in the post-Brexit context on possible UNSC reform initiatives with regard to changes in the EU's representation at the UNSC, recent developments suggest that Brexit may breathe some new life into the deadlocked debate: the idea of a permanent EU seat on the UNSC

was advocated at various points in 2019 by German politicians, including Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer (former Chair of the German Christian-Democrat Party) (see *DW*, 2018). At the same time, however, Brexit has not interrupted the German campaign for a separate UNSC seat, as suggested by the signing of the Franco-German Treaty of Aachen, in which France explicitly pledged support for the German campaign for a separate German UNSC seat in 2019. According to Wouters (2020), a possible synthesis could be that the search for a German permanent seat represents a short-term ambition, with the substitution of such a seat by an EU permanent seat serving as the ultimate long-term goal. A long-term permanent EU seat in the UNSC can only be meaningful, however, as long as there is majority voting under the CFSP – an issue intensively being negotiated in the EU in the post-Brexit phase (Latici, 2021).

Clearly, the EU's patterns of representation in the UNGA as compared to the UNSC differ, and it can be stated that 'coherence' (or cohesion) of the EU position in the UNGA is more prevalent in general. While there have been several attempts to streamline EU member state priorities in the UNSC, the decision-making structures of this institution, combined with the complexity of the representation of EU states within it, have rendered the goal of EU collective action in this institution more complex in practice. Nonetheless, a long-term ambition is that the EU will obtain a collective (permanent) seat in the UNSC.

7

Collaboration between the EU and the UN: Migration and Child Protection Mechanisms

UN and EU partnerships extend across many areas, institutions, programmes and funds. Examples include the UNDP, the ILO, UN Women, the UNHRC, UN Habitat, and UNICEF, among many others. Coordination between the two institutions at large is streamlined by the function of a representative of the UN Secretary-General towards the EU and the Belgian authorities, who coordinates activities in Brussels from the UN side, ensuring coordination between the different UN bodies and entities in their collaboration with the various parts of the EU.[1] Based on frequent and regular meetings, usually held in the 'UN House' in Brussels – where the offices of many UN entities are located – the various activities and positions of UN agencies, funds and programmes towards the EU are coordinated. The 'UN Office' in Brussels aims to strengthen the partnership between the UN and the various institutions and entities of the EU.

In their capacity as representative of the UN Secretary-General:

> the Director supports the Secretary-General, Deputy Secretary-General and the UN Secretariat in fostering their partnerships with the EU institutions. Additionally, the UN/UNDP office plays a proactive role in bringing together some 25 UN agencies, funds and programmes represented in Brussels to act as a coherent team and speak with one voice in European fora in relation to policy and advocacy with the EU, as well as in more operational matters as appropriate, thereby strengthening the unitary voice and image of the UN collective presence in Brussels.[2]

Moreover:

> the Director of the UN/UNDP office in Brussels promotes joint advocacy and outreach activities, as well as on operational matters, by: facilitating the response of the UN in Brussels to EU institutions and policies as well as to European Commission draft financial instruments, evaluations, or development strategies; helping strengthen the visibility of the UN's collective presence in Brussels through publications and outreach; providing support to different departments at UN Headquarters.[3]

In the case of contact with the EU as a regional organization, such coordination functions from the UN's side are crucial to avoiding fragmentation and to ensuring that the UN 'speaks with one voice' towards the EU – an aspect that is also important for the EU as a regional actor within the UN (see, for example, Chapter 6).

Accordingly, the UN representatives in Brussels also aim to influence the agenda of the EU and its institutions at an early stage in efforts to align EU and UN activities, priorities and positions. Such a proactive role is crucial from the side of the UN, both to streamline outreach and action with regional integration schemes more generally, and to ensure that there is, to the extent possible, coherence in the aims and activities of the two organizations.

In order to delve deeper into the UN's and EU's machinations, this chapter focuses on three specific institutions and their relations: the UNHCR and UNICEF as two UN bodies; and the European Commission's Directorate-General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA). Collaboration between these organizations is just an example of inter-institutional cooperation and streamlining, but it demonstrates some of the daily coordination patterns of the organizations' work. The chapter begins with an introduction to the history of their collaboration, followed by an overview of some crucial agreements and policy outcomes. It then addresses the partnerships in more detail, such as between the UNHCR, UNICEF and DG INTPA. Thereafter, the focus of the chapter shifts to a case study addressing the EU Global Promotion of Best Practices for Children in Migration. It demonstrates how the UNHCR, UNICEF and the EU have joined efforts with the aim to protecting children in migration, strengthening child protection systems and providing alternatives to immigration detention, in the post-pandemic era too. Finally, the chapter takes a wider view in terms of discussing some broader collaboration patterns between UNICEF and the UNHCR.

Collaboration between the UNHCR and the EU notably dates back to the 1990s, as responses to the increasing challenges of the time concerning immigration and requests for asylum were needed. Generally, the protection of fundamental human rights is embedded within Europe's actions and shared

identity (see, for example, Chapter 4), as well as European states' long-standing tradition of providing refuge to the persecuted. Consequentially, an effective response to the migrant crisis when it started intensifying was expected from the EU, instead of just necessary steps (UNHCR and the European Union, 2010). Collaboration with such entities of the UN as the UNHCR came as an almost natural solution to combatting the worst effects of the crisis for the EU, as it aimed to reach efficiency, effectiveness and a mutually beneficial partnership between the organizations for both internal and external, more internationally oriented, responses (UNHCR and the European Union, 2010).

The UNHCR engages and cooperates with EU institutions on a daily basis. This intensive pattern of collaboration is key to ensuring coherence between the activities and operations of the two institutions (the UNHCR as part of the UN and the EU as a regional governance organization). Such action is in accordance with important policy documents like the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol,[4] which describe the rights of refugees and the legal obligations of states to protect them.

Furthermore, EU institutions like the European Commission play an important role in core areas of UNHCR work, such as UN financial and operational action, as they support the organization's global efforts, especially regarding humanitarian assistance (Monteleone, 2019: 12). Cooperation between the UNHCR and the EU also plays an important role in terms of designing asylum legislation and policies common to all EU member states (UNHCR, 2021). Moreover, coordination among its member states is crucial to enabling the EU to reach agreements on statements or resolutions to be taken in the framework of the UNHCR (Smith, M.E., 2010: 236). Most EU member states are generally coherent and serious about promoting and respecting human rights; in general terms, the EU has succeeded in cooperating efficiently and effectively with the UN on a range of human rights issues (see also Chapter 4).

Moreover, to harmonize efforts in the area of asylum policies, the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) was created, aiming to clearly and effectively assign a state to be responsible for the examination of an asylum application, to establish common standards for an efficient and fair asylum application procedure, conditions of reception of asylum seekers common to all member states, and rules on the recognition of refugees. CEAS has undergone two main phases – and is in the process of a third one – to improve existing measures, other than remaining updated and prepared to face contemporary challenges. During the first phase (1990–2004), the core areas of CEAS concerned: the criteria and the mechanisms behind a definition of the responsibility of the state regarding asylum procedures; the minimum standards expected upon the reception of asylum seekers; the criteria to be met to officially become a European refugee; and the basic standards for

a legal procedure common to all member states (Giordano, 2019). These focal areas were gradually turned into legislation: the Dublin Regulations,[5] the Reception Conditions Directive,[6] the Qualification Directive[7] and the Asylum Procedures Directive.[8] With time, these legislative foundations, however, still proved to be insufficient to tackle the existing challenges. The problem seems to lie behind the agreements being a result of member states' compromises, as their priority was often individual, national interest as opposed to supranational patterns of decision-making, which would imply joint rules and laws common to all (Giordano, 2019). In order to reach full harmonization between states and institutions, it was necessary to include a second phase to CEAS (Giordano, 2019).

The second phase (2004–10) was characterized by several changes and innovations: all the aforementioned legislative measures and directives were amended, notably, due to the refugee crisis in Europe. The aim of the second phase was to set out stronger cooperation and a sense of unity among EU member states, so that southern states facing a critically higher influx of immigrants did not feel by themselves and abandoned (Giordano, 2019).

In 2005, the UNHCR and the EU also signed a strategic partnership agreement[9] to intensify collaboration with regards to policymaking and implementation in the domain of refugee and asylum issues and operations (both within the EU and globally).[10] This agreement commits the UNHCR and the European Commission to maintain an open dialogue on policies and to continue with the exchange of information and the development of strategic assessments and of partnerships. Moreover, the agreement commits both institutions to continue their work towards the promotion of respect for international refugee law and to find long-lasting solutions for refugees – especially towards refugees in countries that are not members of the EU (Colville, 2005). Furthermore, in the context of European Commission and European Council planning and efforts to develop an external dimension of EU asylum and migration policy, the UNHCR partnered with the institutions and monitored this process closely. The EU's aim was to improve cooperation in the joint management of migratory flows regarding EU cooperation in asylum and migration matters with third countries. The UNHCR provided expert advice and policy input, strengthening respective plans (UNHCR, 2001).

Finally, in addition to agreements and institutional developments in the area of asylum policies at the EU level and the EU's ambition to make justice and home affairs (JHA) matters a priority, the UNHCR's cooperation with the EU has increased again in the recent past. The European Commission and UNHCR also agreed on close cooperation concerning the 'assessment of new crisis situations and developments regarding existing crises' in the aftermath of the 2015 refugee influx crisis (Colville, 2005).

Similar to the UNHCR–EU collaboration, UNICEF's cooperation with the EU also testifies to the fundamentals linking the EU to the UN.

In accordance with Article 3 of the ToL,[11] UNICEF and the EU joined efforts to protect and promote children's rights around the world, with the aim of bringing these to the centre of European policy attention. Due to the numerous shared values concerning human rights between the EU and the UN (see, for example, Chapter 4), as well as efforts to support development and peace, partnership between UNICEF and the EU is particularly robust and significant; their relations are steered by the UNICEF Office for Relations with EU Institutions in Brussels (UNICEF and European Union, 2021).[12] In fact, as the office highlights: 'UNICEF recognises the EU as one of UNICEF's most influential partners and largest financial supporters worldwide. Together the EU and UNICEF have been achieving meaningful and sustainable results for children, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals' (UNICEF and European Union, 2021). The EU is an influential partner and strong financial supporter of UNICEF, investing a large number of resources in granting supplies for children and advocating for children's rights. With regards to education in emergency zones, for example, the EU is a considerable donor to UNICEF's work; it is likely to be the largest donor globally in this area.

As an institution of the EU, the EP, next to the European Commission, plays an important role in terms of collaboration in the area of human rights. Since the ToL, the EP has legislative power as a co-legislator in most areas of law-making and plays a key role in the approval of EU budgets. This also refers to investments in external aid and development programmes (see, for example, UNICEF and European Union, 2020).

For example, in accordance with its commitment to the protection of children's rights, the EP has established an EP coordinator on children's rights, which helped in making several members of the EP a 'Child Rights Champion and Advocate'. This initiative contributed to moving the EP's attention to prioritizing migrant children protection (see UNICEF and European Union, 2020).

Since 2000, moreover, UNICEF and the European Commission have jointly supported governments and civil society actors in implementing care systems based on families and communities, compared to more large-scale institutional care facilities. This partnership for reforms that prioritize child well-being often involved bringing national laws and policies in conformity with international standards, including UN guidelines and EU laws. Furthermore, it included assisting governments to leverage and effectively spend donor funds (UNICEF, 2020a).

Other than in Europe, the European Commission supports UNICEF's efforts in humanitarian aid for children all over the world, including in such countries as the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Madagascar, Sudan, Venezuela and Yemen. Both organizations have committed to improving maternal and child nutrition sustainably. For

example, in 2012, the EU committed to reducing stunting in children under five – that is, the impaired growth and development that children experience as an effect of poor nutrition, repeated infection and inadequate psychosocial stimulation – by at least 10 per cent of the World Health Assembly goal by 2025. In 2013, the EU allocated €3.5 billion between 2014 and 2020 on nutrition interventions to help reduce stunting.[13] In terms of nutrition, the EU–UNICEF partnership supports nutrition interventions in almost 20 countries, mobilising large amounts of funding (UNICEF, 2020a).

Priorities like these are in close agreement with UNICEF's Strategic Plan 2018–21 (see UNICEF, 2018). In general, UNICEF strives to ensure the survival and well-being of children, to support their chances to learn, to protect them from violence and exploitation, to assure they live in a safe and clean environment, and to support efforts to have children have an equitable chance in life.

In a similar vein, recently, European Commission President von der Leyen announced the creation of the European Child Guarantee, with the aim to ensure 'every child in Europe at risk of poverty or social exclusion has access to the most basic of rights like healthcare and education' (European Commission, 2021c: 1). The European Commission's decision to make children's rights a priority for the EU was taken on the basis that a happy childhood is essential for a 'sustainable, equal, inclusive and competitive knowledge economy and a fair society' in the future (European Commission, 2021c: 1). Considering the vast majority of European children already having access to basic services, the aforementioned proposal was extended globally. According to these aims, funds need to be directed towards providing equal opportunities to those who experience social exclusion based on social disadvantages, such as poverty and migration (European Commission, 2021c). This focus is also core to the EU's global efforts in terms of best practices for children in migration.

Arrangements and negotiations for the 2021 EU Global Promotion of Best Practices for Children in Migration programme began in 2019. The idea came as a follow-up to the 2010 UNHCR small-scale intervention in Malaysia, initiated to counteract the awful conditions under which asylum seekers and refugees were living due to the large scale of applicants – the largest number of applications ever received in any UNHCR headquarters (Supaat, 2014).

With the aim to create a long-lasting effective programme to handle 2019–20 migration influxes, as well as future similar phenomena, the EU, UNICEF and UNHCR launched the EU Global Promotion of Best Practices for Children in Migration initiative (Bertnard, 2021). Europe's efforts in this area are also in accordance with the EU's European Child Guarantee, which focuses on 'strengthening cross-border cooperation to ensure a successful approach to the protection of migrant children' (European Commission,

2020a: 3). It corresponds with the EU's general efforts to combat child sexual abuse – a highly important subject concerning children in migration, including unaccompanied minors (European Commission, 2020a).[14]

The EU body responsible for international partnership agreements and development policies is the European Commission's DG INTPA (European Commission, 2021a). It is crucial in the formulation of the EU's international partnership and development policies, and aims to support the reduction of poverty, the enhancement of sustainable development and the promotion of democracy, human rights and the rule of law globally. Consequently, the DG INTPA has played an important role in terms of efforts by UNICEF, the UNHCR and the EU to protect children in migration. In essence, the programme focuses on four countries in two regions: El Salvador and Mexico in Latin America; and South Africa and Zambia in Southern Africa. The project's goal is to start by targeting four specific countries with efforts to strengthen child protection systems and provide alternatives to immigration detention, with the aim of developing tangible outcomes and further exchanging best practices that can then be scaled up in the future (OCHA Services, 2021). The initiative is very much in accordance with the activities of the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA) more generally.[15]

Migrant children are often found without protection or possibilities of being defended, such as by a family or through the provision of safe housing. These conditions make them incredibly vulnerable to violence (including exploitation more generally, sexual assault or human trafficking). Results from small case studies around the world report high rates of migrant children experiencing these abuses; the data are even more worrying given that most cases go unreported (Bertnard, 2021). As the European Commission (2017: 2) has highlighted, the protection of these children is not only a sheer necessity, but also a core obligation of the EU and the UN, as it forms part of their basic values and priorities in terms of respect for human rights, dignity and solidarity. More specifically, the programme aims to ensure that there are alternative care options to immigration detention centres, to include gender-responsive services and to ensure that front-line actors can detect gender-based violence. Moreover, it aims to ensure that lessons learned from these missions will be documented and shared so as to contribute and strengthen global cooperation in this matter more generally (OCHA Services, 2021).

Protection of children in migration is just one of the areas where UN organizations and the EU are collaborating to advance and support the situation of vulnerable persons, including unaccompanied minors. In practice, many UN organizations collaborate closely on specific topics, aiming to align their activities and to use synergies in terms of their respective responsibilities and mandates. As two well-known UN organizations,

UNICEF and the UNHCR have had a strong partnership for decades. Some of their numerous shared engagements include the protection of children, international development efforts and the creation of long-term solutions to situations characterized by crisis and instability. While UNICEF is focused on children more specifically, the UNHCR supports vulnerable population groups and persons of concern more generally, including refugees, asylum seekers and stateless persons.[16]

Clearly, the UNHCR and UNICEF partnership is essential in the context of many field missions. While there can be some competition between the institutions, as is the case for many UN organizations, for example, in terms of the acquisition of funding and resources, coordination is facilitated by an interagency working group based in Geneva at the International Bureau of Education (IBE) (Pigozzi, 1999: 18) and, in the more recent past, in the framework of coordination among the organization's EU offices in Brussels. Moreover, these two institutions have been early in turning away from 'vertical, issue-focused programming reforms' and towards a 'systems approach' – that is, a more holistic view of children and child protection, engaging a large range of actors involved in protecting children's rights – which proved to be effective when dealing with the rights of migrant children (Wulczyn et al, 2010).

With the large increase in the number of refugees in the 21st century, the UNHCR and UNICEF have further deepened their relations in correspondence with the principles of burden sharing and global cooperation as two pillars of the overall international refugee and child protection regime. Of course, many other organizations also provide protection for children in crisis situations, including the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)[17] or – when focusing on girls – UN Women. Similarly, the ILO,[18] focusing on labour standards and policies to promote decent work for people, also includes protection schemes for migrant workers and contains activities to combat child labour. It is also engaged in fighting patterns of exploitation and of modern slavery.

Traditionally, while several international NGOs working in similar substantive areas of engagement tend to have close ties, the UNHCR and UNICEF, due to their mandates, often demonstrate close bonds and alignment in terms of their operations. This includes the protection of internally displaced persons (IDPs),[19] who (according to the 'Guiding principles on internal displacement'[20]) are:

> persons or groups of persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an internationally recognized border.[21]

In the case of IDPs, as well as refugee situations more generally, in the absence of clear principles regarding of how burdens and responsibilities are to be fairly distributed between states and international organizations, cooperation – such as between these two organizations – can be key to reaching tangible, effective outcomes (Nirmal, 2010: 197–9).

Clearly, the EU Global Promotion of Best Practices for Children in Migration programme promises to be a very effective example of UNICEF and UNHCR joint development, which will hopefully enhance responses to child protection challenges in mixed migration (that is, cross-border movements of people seeking either better lives or opportunities, as well as refugees fleeing persecution and conflict, or victims of human trafficking), as well as encourage states to develop effective alternatives to detention for refugees and asylum seekers (Nirmal, 2010: 234–5). In the past, a successful example of their cooperation can be seen in the case of the Georgian conflict, where UNICEF and the UNHCR assisted individuals with registration, documentation and essential aid given that birth registration systems prevent statelessness (Nirmal, 2010: 234–5); more recently, they displayed similar engagements in the case of the Rohingya crisis.[22] More recently, the UNHCR and UNICEF have also launched a joint plan to increase aid and support to migrant children in Libya, who are among the people with the most limited access to COVID-19 prevention services and treatments (see ReliefWeb, 2020a). More generally, the organizations collaborate closely in the protection of minors, whether in refugee situations, cases of statelessness or specific challenges, such as those deriving from violent conflict and respective pressures on children in this context, including various forms of exploitation.

The EU Global Promotion of Best Practices for Children in Migration is just one case of a recent initiative launched by the EU in collaboration with UN organizations and testifies to the potential of the EU and the UN to collaborate on the protection of a variety of human rights. In light of the recent COVID-19 pandemic, burden sharing, UN inter-agency collaboration and different patterns of international cooperation – including between IGOs and NGOs – are clearly needed to respond to contemporary crises.

In general, it can be said that collaboration between the EU and various UN organizations is strong and intensive. There are many overlapping areas of engagement and priorities. While only the larger initiatives may get clear public attention, there is much day-to-day work, including in applied settings, such as in the framework of field missions, which very much matter to practice but may be less 'visible'. It is clear that there are strong synergies and complementarities between the work of the EU and the UN in general, as well as in the specific case of children in migration contexts focused on here. Clearly, in the work conducted by the UN and the EU, synergies, complementarities and patterns of collaboration matter to addressing various

challenges 'on the ground' globally, including pressures on IDPs, on refugees more generally and on children in this context.

This chapter has highlighted just some examples of daily and more structured collaboration between the EU and the UN. Chapter 8 will continue to address this topic, with an emphasis on the protection of women and girls and the respective organizations involved in this on the side of both the UN and the EU.

8

Collaboration between the EU and the UN: Gender Equality, Female Empowerment and UN Women

As the previous chapters have demonstrated, EU and UN partnerships have extended across many areas, institutions and entities over time. One of the most important areas of collaboration currently is the work between UN Women and the EU towards gender equality. In fact, the EU and UN Women have been collaborating closely on women's rights, gender equality and empowerment since the establishment of UN Women as a UN entity in July 2010.[1]

According to the 'UN Women strategic plan 2018–2021',[2] summarizing the priorities and aims of the organization, there are the following five main strategic priorities:

> A comprehensive and dynamic set of global norms, policies, and standards on gender equality and the empowerment of women is strengthened and implemented; women lead, participate in, and benefit equally from governance systems; women have income security, decent work, and economic autonomy; all women and girls live a life free from all forms of violence; women and girls contribute to and have greater influence in building sustainable peace and resilience, and benefit equally from the prevention of natural disasters and conflicts and humanitarian action.[3]

Core to the work of UN Women is the Beijing Declaration.[4] In 1995, over 30,000 activists gathered in Beijing in September for the opening of the fourth World Conference on Women. After political debate and pressure from activists from all over the world, the conference resulted in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, a framework for advancing women's rights.[5] Since then, the Beijing Declaration has paved a path for many

women's rights and development organizations for gender equality, one of them being UN Women.

The partnership between the EU and UN Women was cemented by the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) in 2012. This agreement served as a catalyst to many other initiatives and programmes. The EU–UN Women partnership is broad and works towards various goals, which are divided into five main priorities: first, to increase women's leadership and participation; second, to end violence against women; third, to engage women in all aspects of peace and security processes; fourth, to enhance women's economic empowerment; and, fifth, to make gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting (UN Women and European Union, 2016).[6] The two organizations recommitted to the agreement in 2016. In this context, there have been several important initiatives, joint advocacy and awareness-raising activities, and action to promote gender equality, not only within the EU, but also across the world, with steps at the local, regional and global levels.

Without a doubt, the EU is an important partner for UN Women, both in substantive and in financial terms. In 2019, for example, the EU was the largest contributor to UN Women's other resources, with US$84.4 million; in 2020, the EU adopted a new gender equality strategy and prepared a new 2021–24 Gender Action Plan (GAP), 'vowing to systematically screen development funding to ensure that assistance helps transform the lives of girls and women worldwide, among other commitments'.[7]

Among other important programmes and actions within this partnership are: the 2017 Spotlight Initiative; the 2018 EU–UN Collaborative Platform on Women, Peace and Security; the 2020 EU, UN Women and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) programme EU 4 Gender Equality: Together Against Gender Stereotypes and Gender-Based Violence; the 2020–25 GAP III; and various other activities, strategies and platforms. They will now be focused on in more detail.

Models of decision-making based on multilateralism and their importance in working towards a fairer world may matter even more in the light of the effects generated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Clearly, the crisis has both highlighted and exacerbated existing inequalities, where women and girls are likely to be disproportionately affected by the various repercussions generated by the pandemic. The 2017 Spotlight Initiative will now be discussed first, followed by the 2020 EU 4 Gender Equality programme. Thereafter, the importance of these agreements in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic will be addressed, as well as the gendered impact of the pandemic, also known as the 'Shadow Pandemic', more specifically.

The Spotlight Initiative is a large-scale anti-violence programme for women[8] and is prioritized at the highest level on the political agendas of both the EU and the UN (see, for example, the 2019 'Global annual

narrative progress report' [Spotlight Initiative, 2019]). This encompassing programme exemplifies the EU and UN commitment to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, notably, by contributing to the targets of SDG5: Gender Equality.

The EU is an important funder of several UN specialized agencies, programmes, funds and entities. This is also the case for the 2017 Spotlight Initiative as a programme, launched in the framework of the September 2017 UNGA, for which seed funding by the EU of €500 million has been made available.[9] The initiative aims to respond 'to all forms of violence against women and girls, with a particular focus on domestic and family violence, sexual and gender-based violence and harmful practices, femicide, trafficking and economic (labour) exploitation'.[10] The initiative is essentially a collaborative project between the EU, UN Women, the UNDP and the UNFPA.[11] As a contribution to the attainment of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the programme serves as a crucial signal to ensure that commitment to the SDGs, such as SDG5, are solidified by guided and targeted action.

Moreover, the initiative highlights a new model for collaboration between the EU and UN, as it is a multi-stakeholder partnership, with the inclusion of EU teams and UN agencies, as well as governments and women's rights organizations (see Spotlight Initiative, 2019). It serves as an example of how collaborative action based on multilateralism and diplomacy can result in respective changes on the ground. Additionally, the initiative has proven to be even more important and relevant in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic, as there has been an upsurge of violence against women and girls since the first lockdowns were initiated.[12]

Another large-scale initiative, the EU 4 Gender Equality: Together Against Gender Stereotypes and Gender-Based Violence, is the first regional programme covering gender equality in several countries in the EU's Eastern Partnership region.[13] It has been designed to engage government bodies, civil society organizations and individuals.[14] The programme is focused on the strengthening of equal rights and opportunities for women and men by tackling gender stereotypes, shifting these and challenging the patriarchal systems and norms in place. The project's duration is from 2020 to 2023. It is funded by the EU and implemented by both UN Women and UNFPA in the following six EU Eastern Partnership countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Similar to the Spotlight Initiative, the EU 4 Gender Equality programme is a part of the SDG framework; again, among other aims, the EU's gender equality activities notably contribute to SDG5.[15]

It will be interesting to follow the development of the EU 4 Gender Equality project, particularly as the gendered impact of the global pandemic has gained increasing attention globally. Women and girls are known to

already experience inequality across different areas and levels, including access to education in many countries, but inequalities are likely to have been further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. These include how women are paid lower salaries compared to their male counterparts[16] and how females disproportionally work in insecure and/or informal employment without insurance or protection.[17]

Women are thus likely to have experienced strong repercussions from the pandemic, ranging from their economic statuses, to human security challenges and even to serious pressures in their domestic situations, and therefore clearly felt the gendered impact of the pandemic. Moreover, according to the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE), out of the 49 million care workers in the EU, for example, around 76 per cent are women.[18] Accordingly, women have, on average, been more exposed to the crisis – a phenomenon likely to be present globally. Moreover, according to recent estimates provided by the ILO (2021), new annual figures have confirmed the disruption of global labour markets on a historically unprecedented scale; however, there have also been uneven effects across different parts of the workforce, with young persons and women having been among those most strongly affected.

In addition, the 'Shadow Pandemic' is of concern: the upsurge of violence against women has been widespread across the world since the outbreak of COVID-19, where particularly domestic violence increased due to stay-at-home orders and confinement, resulting in UN Women giving it the label 'Shadow Pandemic'.[19] For instance, for Europe as a region, Dr Kluge, Regional Director for Europe for the WHO, had already reported in May 2020 that although data were scarce, states in the region have 'reported up to a 60 percent increase in emergency calls by women subjected to violence by their intimate partners in April this year, compared to last. [Similarly,] online enquiries to violence prevent support hotlines have increased up to five times.'[20] Clearly, such developments have also taken place in other parts of the world, as lockdowns have led to pressures on many citizens in terms of unemployment, the inability to leave their homes to go to work, increased alcohol and drug consumption, and other serious challenges in terms of psychological and socio-economic pressures related to the pandemic.

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic broke out, approximately one in four women and one in three children in Europe had experienced (sexual) violence in their lifetime. COVID-19 has made the situation even more difficult to monitor and to end the phenomenon.[21] In 2020, data collected by UN WOMEN revealed that over 243 million girls and women between the ages of 15 and 49 had been subjected to sexual or physical violence by an intimate partner over the course of the year (UN Women, 2020a). Similarly alarming figures are presented in the Spotlight Initiative impact report for 2019–20 (Spotlight Initiative, 2020: 6): before the COVID-19

crisis, it 'was estimated that 1 in 3 women globally experience physical or sexual abuse in their lifetime – a pervasive human rights violation. Since the pandemic, violence against women and girls has skyrocketed, a terrifying trend that greatly affects individuals, families and communities, as well as international peace, security and development.'[22] These numbers and developments demonstrate that the road to reach SDG5 (Gender Equality) and the empowerment of women and girls is still an ambition that needs a lot of (international) effort to implement in practice.

Agreements and partnerships, such as the Spotlight Initiative, have certainly generated promising results and had a positive impact on ending violence against women, as seen in the impact report 'Universal rights, global action' (Spotlight Initiative, 2020) – a shortened and more 'visual' representation of the 2019 'Global annual narrative progress report' (Spotlight Initiative, 2019). The impact report reveals progress achieved, as well as the challenges ahead. The importance of the topic has been highlighted, for example, in a foreword to the report by Amina J. Mohammed, United Nations Deputy Secretary-General:

> Violence is a concrete barrier to every right a woman or girl has – to education, to work, to learn, to political life, to dignity, to equality, to life. Without an end to all forms of violence against women, we will never realize the capacities of half our planet to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Nor will we be able to secure every individual's human rights or achieve sustainable peace and security. Ending the fear and insecurity too many women live with daily requires not simply addressing the symptoms, but uprooting the pervasive, systemic cultures of patriarchy and inequality. (Spotlight Initiative, 2020: 3)

Deputy Secretary-General Mohammed also highlighted progress achieved:

> But there is some good news on the horizon. A diverse, growing, global movement of young people and allies are leading public protests for social justice, climate action, inclusion and gender equality. They are demanding national action to prevent femicides, sexual violence, child marriages and impunity. This year, more than 140 Member States expressed their support for the UN Secretary-General's call for 'peace at home' – a complement to his call for global ceasefire on the battlefield during the pandemic – signalling a new opportunity for strong multilateral engagement on ending gender-based violence. (Spotlight Initiative, 2020: 3)

Similarly, from the side of the EU, Jutta Urpilainen, EU Commissioner for International Partnerships, stated in a foreword to the report:

> Every human being has the right to live a life free from any form of violence and discrimination. Yet, violence against women and girls is pervasive; no country is exempt. The Spotlight Initiative is now more relevant than ever with the COVID-19 crisis affecting our lives globally and triggering a widely documented upsurge in domestic violence against women and children. Through this partnership, we were able during these last months to swiftly adapt and refocus the Spotlight Initiative to the COVID-19 context, to boost prevention and increase support to victims and help women's organizations. (Spotlight Initiative, 2020: 4)

Urpilainen also emphasized the role of the EU:

> 'A life free from violence' for women and girls/children is, and will remain, a priority for the European Union. With the EU Gender Equality Strategy and the new Gender Action Plan, which will encompass all external actions, the European Union is firmly committed to maintain its global leadership in gender equality. (Spotlight Initiative, 2020: 4)

In addition to continued funding and the development of such initiatives, there is a need to include and address the 'Shadow Pandemic' in both COVID-19 global and national response plans. As Katerina Mantouvalou (2020) has argued in a London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) British Politics and Policy (BPP) blog entry, 'there is an urgent need to incorporate a gender analysis into both the development and implementation of Covid-19 policy responses'. In fact, the WHO has encouraged analysis of and responses to the pandemic that take the differential impact on women and men into account. For example, in terms of potentially different health impacts, the report states:

> Member States and their partners are encouraged to collect, report and analyse data on confirmed COVID-19 cases and deaths that are disaggregated by sex and age, at a minimum, in accordance with WHO's global surveillance and national surveillance guidance. ... Member States are also urged to conduct a gender analysis of data and to invest in quality gender-responsive research on the potentially differential adverse health, social and economic impacts of COVID-19 on women and men. The findings of such analysis should be used to fine-tune response policies. (WHO, 2020b: 1)

Similarly, in terms of policy responses, the following recommendation is given: 'Member States and their partners are encouraged to include responses

to violence against women, and particularly intimate partner violence, as an essential service within the COVID-19 response, to resource this adequately and to identify ways of making services accessible in the context of lockdown measures' (WHO, 2020b: 1). This recommendation was also given, for example, in an April 2020 WHO policy brief on COVID-19 and violence against women (WHO, 2020a).

Many other (international) organizations have advocated accounting for gender effects with respect to the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, UNICEF (2020b), in *Five Actions for Gender Equality in the COVID-19 Response*, prioritizes five core programmatic and advocacy actions, taking the following public health, social and economic consequences of the pandemic into account: care for caregivers; preparation for increases in gender-based violence in the COVID-19 outbreak; maintenance of core health and education services and systems; engagement of existing women's and youth rights networks to support connectivity and vital information flow; and ensuring gender data are available, analysed and actionable (UNICEF, 2020b: 2).

Moreover, some UN organizations, including the UNDP and UNICEF, have spelled out a specific GAP for their own organization. UNICEF's GAP, for example, is based on such premises as:

> Gender equality is essential to realizing the mandate of UNICEF to uphold the rights of all children. The UNICEF GAP, 2022–2025, operationalizes the UNICEF Gender Policy, 2021–2030, by specifying how UNICEF will promote gender equality across its programmes and workplaces. It affirms that promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls is the responsibility of everyone, regardless of organizational role. The GAP elaborates the steps required to accelerate progress on gender equality across the five Goal Areas of the UNICEF Strategic Plan, 2022–2025, as well as within institutional systems and processes, with clear indicators and monitoring mechanisms to track change. (UNICEF, 2021)

Similarly, the UNDP's (2021) annual report on its 2018–21 gender equality strategy discusses key achievements the organization made in 'closing gender gaps in 2020. The report explores emerging trends and challenges that lie ahead for gender equality, including in the COVID-19 response and recovery. Learning from these lessons will be vital to accelerate progress towards gender equality and to achieve the 2030 Agenda.' On a regional level, the Council of Europe (2018) has similarly defined a gender equality strategy for 2018–23.

Similarly, in June 2020, UN Women issued the document 'Gender-responsive humanitarian life-saving response to the COVID-19

pandemic: saving lives, reducing impact & building resilience' (UN Women, 2020b), with an overview of support to 'most affected and at-risk women and girls in 14 priority countries to respond to and recover from the Covid-19 pandemic'. The initiative was set up as a complement to the Global Humanitarian Response Plan (GHRP) for COVID-19 that had been launched in March 2020, which had already accounted for:

> gender equality, particularly to account for women's and girls' specific needs, risks and roles in the response as care providers, increased exposure to GBV [gender-based violence] with confinement measures, large numbers of front-line female health workers in the response, and key role as agents at the community level for communication on risks and community engagement. (UN Women, 2020b)

The UN document aimed to 'respond to the gendered needs of most crisis-affected and at-risk women and girls in humanitarian contexts' (UN Women, 2020b).

An important goal of international and regional institutions, moreover, is 'gender mainstreaming' – a concept widely discussed and a strategy used globally. There are different definitions underlying the term but the one by a group of specialists of the Council of Europe (see Stratigaki, 2005: 167) seems to be widely used. It has defined gender mainstreaming as 'the (re)organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels at all stages, by the actors involved in policy-making' (Council of Europe, 2016: 3).[23] More generally, gender mainstreaming has the ultimate goal of 'transforming gender relations in the direction of equality' (Council of Europe, 1998). While this initiative came from the Council of Europe – a leading intergovernmental human rights organization encompassing 47 member states in total, including the 27 EU member states[24] – the EU has similarly played an important role with respect to gender mainstreaming efforts.

In March 2020, the European Commission presented its ambitious gender equality strategy (European Commission, 2020d). Among several points and initiatives, it held:

> This Gender Equality Strategy frames the European Commission's work on gender equality and sets out the policy objectives and key actions for the 2020–2025 period. It aims at achieving a gender equal Europe where gender-based violence, sex discrimination and structural inequality between women and men are a thing of the past. A Europe where women and men, girls and boys, in all their diversity, are equal. Where they are free to pursue their chosen path in life, where they have

> equal opportunities to thrive, and where they can equally participate in and lead our European society. (European Commission, 2020d)

Without a doubt, the EU has played a leading role in advancing the gender mainstreaming agenda, including in terms of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, with the Beijing Conference having been an important moment. The EU has been an important actor in terms of the development of the Gender and Development (GAD) paradigm and the gender mainstreaming strategy (Debusscher, 2011). In 1997, gender mainstreaming was implemented with the Treaty of Amsterdam, which committed the EU institutions to include a gender dimension in all policy areas, including external relations (Guerrina and Wright, 2016).

On the level of the UN, in 2000, the UNSC adopted the crucial Resolution 1325, giving a strong boost to the WPS agenda. The resolution aimed to involve women much more explicitly in peace-building processes and to take advantage of the transformative potential the inclusion generates (thereby creating the potential to escape cycles of conflict, to create more inclusive patterns of peacemaking and, finally, to change gender inequality into gender justice).

This core initiative has had far-reaching consequences in terms of the additional projects, agendas and initiatives generated. In spite of the resolution's ambitious aims, however, according to the UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA), 'the number of women involved in formal peacemaking processes remains low; and many peace agreements do not include gender provisions that sufficiently address women's security and peacebuilding needs'.[25]

The WPS agenda is very much in agreement with EU aims and initiatives. As Haastrup (2018) has stated, gender equality is an integral component of the 'EU's identity as a political actor'; moreover, it is enshrined in EU law (Booth and Bennett, 2002). In spite of this, there has been some discussion on whether gender mainstreaming has been a fully effective political strategy in the EU, with the main issue being a potential gap between theory and practice (Minto and Mergaert, 2018: 204). Recent findings partially support this claim, for instance, the EIGE has found that the trend in terms of performance of EU member states in the area of gender mainstreaming has been a decreasing one (European Commission, 2021e). Priorities among EU institutions or individual member states may not always be fully aligned, as there can be differences as to how gender norms and the WPS agenda are understood and interpreted, somewhat complicating coherent action (Guerrina and Wright, 2016). This is likely to have resulted in differences in terms of forms and levels of the practical implementation of gender mainstreaming and WPS among EU member states, as well as among policy sectors (Booth and Bennett, 2002), at least around the time UNSC

Resolution 1325 was adopted. However, clearly, within an encompassing global governance institution, such as the UN, different priorities may exist among the various main bodies, specialized agencies, programmes and funds as to how best to advance the gender mainstreaming and WPS agendas in practice. Such differences in vision are also likely to exist between member states. It seems natural, though, that organizations consisting of several member states have to deal with a variety of priorities internally. Accordingly, it is even more of a diplomatic achievement if such visions, usually prepared by entities within the organization and fleshed out based on multilateral negotiations, get aligned to formulate encompassing collective strategies, such as the gender equality strategy in the case of the EU.

Without a doubt, the EU has been strongly advancing such agendas. For instance, in 2008, the Council of the EU/European Council presented its *Comprehensive Approach to the EU Implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 on Women, Peace and Security* (Council of the European Union, 2008). In subsequent years, the council developed – and revised – indicators created to monitor the implementation of the comprehensive approach (Council of the European Union, 2016).

In 2018, in its 10 December conclusions, the European Council stipulated:

> Gender equality and Human Rights are at the core of European values and constitute stand-alone priorities mainstreamed across all European Union policies. The Council recalls the commitments of the European Union and its Member States to the full implementation of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda, which consists of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 and its follow-up resolutions, ensuring that it is fully integrated into all EU efforts in support of sustainable peace, security, human rights, justice and development, in the context of EU cooperation with other regional and international organizations as envisaged by the EU Global Strategy. This shall be done by integrating gender perspectives into all EU policies, including security, conflict prevention and resolution, as well as long-term peace building. In this respect, the EU and its Member States support the implementation of the WPS agenda in the UN. (Council of the European Union, 2018: 2)

The EEAS, very much supporting these agendas, has also worked out an ambitious action plan on the WPS agenda for 2019–24 (see, for example, Council of the European Union, 2019). Since UNSC Resolution 1325, there have been many follow-up resolutions issued by the UNSC on WPS, but similarly, several policy documents, reports and initiatives have been created in the EU framework, including the action plan on the WPS agenda mentioned earlier. The several initiatives and follow-up documents

addressing various aspects of the WPS agenda are available, for example, on the webpages of the EEAS.[26]

The development angle has also been core to the EU's work, including activities conducted by the EEAS. For the EU, this has a longer history. For example, after the 1985 World Conference on Women in Nairobi, the European Commission took action to integrate gender equality by establishing a 'Women in Development' policy (Debusscher, 2011: 39). Ten years later, at the 1995 World Conference on Women, gender mainstreaming emerged as the 'central element of an EU hegemonic rhetoric', as Stratigaki (2005: 166) put it. Without a doubt, the European Commission has played an essential role in promoting equality on the political policy agenda (Booth and Bennett, 2002) and in shaping how equality strategies play out in practice, including in the area of development.

In March 2020, the European Commission adopted its gender equality strategy for 2020–25 and the GAP III for 2021–25, aiming to strengthen gender equality both inside and outside the EU (see, for example, European Commission, 2021e). Clearly, although progress has been made towards achieving gender equality and advancing women's rights, the 2030 SDG goals on gender equality will be difficult to attain, not least due to setbacks generated by the COVID-19 pandemic, making initiatives such as GAP III potentially even more important. Moreover, the European Commission, in collaboration with the EEAS, has worked on the implementation of the 2019–24 EU strategic approach and action plan on WPS, which is now incorporated into the GAP III. In addition to EU institutions, such as the European Commission and the EEAS, the Council of Europe, played a decisive role in developing gender mainstreaming on a European regional level in the 1990s, where the efforts have been continued to the present day, as seen, for instance, in the Council of Europe's 2018–23 gender equality strategy and the various annual reports assessing the extent to which the objectives of the strategy had been reached that followed (for an overview, see Council of Europe, 2018).

Clearly, the advancement of women's rights, the approach of gender mainstreaming and the protection of women and girls at risk of experiencing gender-based violence have been high on the agenda of the EU over the years. These are aspects of human rights in which the EU is a highly engaged actor, addressing challenges both internally (within the EU) and globally. The advancement of gender equality and the inclusion of women in core political processes, including peace negotiations, are central in the work of the UN. Naturally, as this chapter has demonstrated, collaboration between the UN and the EU in aspects related to women's empowerment and gender equality strategies is strong and based on shared core values. In this sense, the EU as a regional actor is a strong ally of the UN, and the UN's mandates and activities are central to EU (external) action in this area.

9

Developments and Prospects

Clearly, with changing global power constellations and tensions, such as between the US and China, multilateralism as a principle has faced challenges in recent years. Both powers have also been somewhat inward-looking, putting some stress on the potential for collective decision-making at the global level. Partially contrasting priorities and preferences have further aggravated such pressures, as tensions within international organizations – such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) or the WHO – have demonstrated.

Some alternative schemes have been set up in the more recent past, partially circumventing the global governance structures established earlier, notably, after the Second World War (see, for example, Chapter 4). Over the course of recent decades, the membership of many international organizations has been expanding strongly, for example, due to processes of decolonization, not only making global governance institutions more encompassing, but also creating some additional challenges when consensus among member states needs to be found. Not surprisingly, some more informal schemes have been set up, partially to circumvent the more formal schemes, for example, the adaptation of working methods in the UNSC, an institution for which formal reform proved to be largely impossible, and the creation of informal groups encompassing a smaller number of (UN) member states. In this sense, 'minilateralism', that is, group action within existing international institutions, has been proposed as a potential element on which more practicable and viable patterns of multilateralism could be based.

As Chapter 5 demonstrated, the COVID-19 pandemic has clearly affected the work of (international) organizations, such as the UN. This includes the ways that international diplomacy is conducted, which is now partially based on online formats instead of face-to-face negotiations. While some of this has complicated bargaining and problem-solving processes, the novel patterns have also created advantages, not least in terms of the reduction of

costs associated with the conduct of virtual meeting formats and sessions instead of the organization of in-person events.

Clearly, the virtual formats, however, may risk creating new 'digital divides' – this time on the level of global diplomacy and the respective support structures available on the domestic level within the individual UN member states. However, alternatively, as traveling long distances for (international) meetings may be much less required due to virtual negotiations and meetings being conducted, including at the level of the UN, this might lead to more delegations of UN member states being able to afford representation in such meetings. The costs of participation for all attending delegations and their domestic administrations will simply be equal, irrespective of the geographical distance to, for example, UN headquarters in New York or in Geneva. Simultaneously, emissions due to (airline) travel can be reduced, potentially having, at least indirectly, a positive effect on SDG13 and its respective targets.[1]

The UN on the global level and the EU on a regional one have evolved and developed over the course of recent decades, with clearly 'deepening' trends in the EU (that is, more integration by the expansion of supranational institutions to more domains and more resort to – qualified – majority voting schemes within its intergovernmental institutions). The UN has notably seen an expansion in the number of its own organizations (including new entities that have been created, such as UN Women). In this sense, both organizations have expanded their scope of action, while there have been considerable increases in terms of their membership constellation. However, while the EU has been able to move to more decision-making based on adapted inter-institutional processes (notably, by a more explicit accounting for the role of the EP as the 'democratic angle' of the EU) and more resort to patterns of majority voting, the UN's institutional structures, at least as far as its main bodies of the UNGA and UNSC are concerned, have undergone rather less of a change. As the UNGA uses predominantly (simple) majority voting for the adoption of regular resolutions, membership expansion may not have complicated such decision processes too much. However, when higher decision thresholds are required, such as in the case of support for (formal) UNSC reform, expanded UN membership has without a doubt made reaching the required quota more difficult in practice. In the case of a formal reform of the UNSC, for example, a two-thirds majority of UNGA member states, including the P5, would be needed.[2]

In parallel to processes of EU integration, there have been increasing efforts at the UN level to collaborate with – and rely on – regional organizations in the implementation of UN aims and policies. With the expanding UN membership, such collaboration has become even more important and required to more effectively implement UN action, including in the area of peace and security. Given the large size of UN membership, it cannot be

excluded that regional integration schemes may play an even more important role in the future as 'building blocks' in the structures and networks of global multilateralism.

Apart from evolving institutional and member-based circumstances, the policy priorities amplified on the global level are likely to have changed over the course of the most recent decades due to more 'voice' for entities that have become decolonized, new coalitions having formed globally and changes in terms of the relative strength (for example, in economic terms) of UN member states. Some of these changes have been relatively fast, such as the steep rise of China; similarly, due to economic developments, such as expected growth rates, often combined with a young population in demographic terms, some global regions are expected to gain in strength in the medium-term future, including large parts of Africa.

In this sense, regional and global institutions move within changes occurring on the international level, while they may constitute important entities shaping the overall development and direction of action of their member states. Hence, as governance institutions, neither the EU nor the UN move within a 'global vacuum' or a system that is stable and constant over time; rather, they are embedded into the general trends and dynamics of global politics and the altered patterns of international interactions. The organizations move and further develop themselves along with changes and adaptations on the regional and the global levels.

As a regional organization, the EU clearly faces dynamics on the international level that do affect its relations with the UN.[3] Simultaneously, with many countries having moved towards more populist or autocratic forms of government in the more recent past, some of the values advocated by the EU as an entity – such as the commitment to uphold and protect human rights, including those concerning gender equality and support for the rule of law – have certainly made it a valuable player on the global level in countering such trends, while facing challenges by these changing circumstances.

The UN has moved within the changing global power relations too and, naturally, as it is composed of 193 member states, is affected internally as an organization by how these dynamics have evolved. Among the major trends witnessed are a rise of Africa after decolonization, power increases in the Asian context (for example, China and India) and, more generally, a potential sharpening of the North–South division that has already existed for several decades. Conflicts and tensions on the international level abound – as they have always done – but the UN as an organization is one of the instances that can help mitigate the effects of exactly such rivalries. International institutions cannot always succeed in countering global power dynamics,[4] but they can often play a mitigating role and aim to derive solutions that encompass the priorities of (global) rivals into their decision outcomes, based on patterns of multilateral diplomacy.

In the recent past, populist trends in many countries – including the US administration under President Trump and, in the European context, a certain democratic backsliding in, for example, Hungary and Poland – have complicated patterns of multilateralism and rules-based governance on the regional and global levels. Simultaneously, the increases in the membership of international organizations, in combination with more nationalistic and inward-looking (or even isolationist) trends, have added complexities to collective decision-making, notably, in cases where consensus among member states is required. Majority voting rules, as they are possible in the EU context for many policy areas, may be applicable but always risk leading to situations where some members feel outvoted or overruled. In this sense, regional (and global) institutions are continuously facing a difficult balance, where collective action, based on the institution's decision rules, needs to be possible but member states should still feel sufficiently satisfied with the outcomes the organization generates to remain within them. Cases in point are: the (threat of) withdrawal of the US administration under President Trump from the WHO, for example, as he perceived the organization's activities to be biased against US interests; a more general reluctancy of the US in recent decades to support the WTO's dispute settlement mechanism (DSM); or – in the European context – the somewhat unexpected event of Brexit. The latter was a clear sign of a member state's government (the UK), backed by large segments of its population, feeling that the rewards of membership in the regional organization (here, the EU) no longer outweighed the costs of staying. The assessment of how such costs and benefits can be weighed and evaluated is a complicated one, as they are intertwined with emotional, historically driven convictions – encompassing both political and economic elements. However, clearly, withdrawal from a regional or international organization is generally possible (albeit often at large cost), as Brexit has demonstrated.

Similarly, changing global power constellations have affected patterns of multilateralism. Some rising powers, such as Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (the BRICS) have become gradually more prominent players in international affairs. China's strongly increased economic power, in combination with the characteristics of the ways in which politics are conducted on its domestic level, have clearly affected how international affairs have developed. Projects like the 'Belt and Road Initiative' (BRI), which amount to large-scale economic investments and financial support by China to many countries, ranging from its neighbourhood to Eastern Europe and the Balkans, expanding China's economic and political leverage in these areas, demonstrate how growing economic power often translates into strength in terms of foreign affairs (in spite of criticism being made of some of the power's policies).

Many of the UN member states that developed increasingly stronger economies are now also influential within settings such as the G22, an

informal group comprising finance ministers and central bank governors of the G7 industrial countries[5] (G8 with Russia), as well as another 14 UN member states,[6] together forming a strong force in terms of the formulation of economic and financial guidelines and patterns of governance on the international level, notably, since the outbreak of the 2007–08 global financial crisis and the ensuing need for swift action among countries economically strong enough to exert influence and create stability. Simultaneously, many African countries, for example, are aspiring to play a more active role globally (such as having formal representation within the UNSC as permanent members), and relations between the AU and the UN, for example, are strong and extensive (see, for example, Makubalo et al, 2020).

In the context of such changes and developments on the international level, different ideas have been presented in terms of potential new forms for international negotiations and forums, including schemes not composed by an organization's full membership. 'Minilateralism', for example, has been presented as a potentially more flexible form of collaboration and governance within international organizations in attempts to overcome the deadlocks and stalemates created by great power rivalries, and the difficulty of finding agreement among all member states within large (international) institutions.

Reflecting on the potential future of rules-based governance and the foundations for multilateralism on the global level, the EU has certainly been at the forefront as a champion to support related actions. For example, it has consistently been advocating 'effective multilateralism' (and, more recently, in the framework of the 2016 EUGS, adapted this to 'principled pragmatism' [see Chapter 2]). While these terms demonstrate how the EU had to find compromises internally that would get all of its member states on board to back the collective orientation, it also reveals how the EU as a collectivity of its member states aims to consistently uphold principles of multilateralism, both internally – being an organization based on sovereign member states and multilateralism itself – and externally in the global context.

Obviously, the fact that the EU has had to deal with conservative, populist governments among its member states recently, while the UN has been faced with member states – including very powerful ones – becoming more 'inward-looking', has not helped maintain the general trust needed to have the organizations operate effectively and to further advance structures of rules-based governance and decision-making. Similarly, the rise of authoritarian political regimes among several UN states has been a challenge for both organizations to deal with, as was the (partial) withdrawal of funds from UN organizations by powerful members led by governments sceptical of international institutions.[7] According to figures provided by Freedom House, there has been a global decline in freedoms and democratic foundations from 2020 to 2021, for example, with 'fewer than a fifth of the world's people now living in fully free countries' (Freedom House, 2021).

Clearly, the EU has faced some internal challenges, such as Hungary's democratic backsliding and recent (constitutional) challenges in the case of Poland. While the EU fights internally to uphold core principles of democracy and the rule of law across all of its member states, it simultaneously aims to reinforce and strengthen such principles externally.

Accordingly, both the EU and the UN are confronted with 'internal challenges', while they also face considerable changes taking place on the global level. The 'crisis of multilateralism', or 'stress on multilateralism', has affected institutions that have rules-based governance at the core of their ways of action. However, given the sheer magnitude of challenges ahead, in many instances, collective action seems the only way forward nonetheless.

Looking ahead given recent trends, it does not seem that 'the end of multilateralism' is in sight, but it is likely to get adapted in some ways to better match general global trends. Preserving the rule of law and the protection of human rights – often basing steps to be taken on multilateral diplomacy – are certainly crucial aspects to both the EU and UN at large.

While the EU is presented with bloc-specific problems, the general overall global trend shows that populist, authoritarian and – to a lesser extent – isolationist trends, policies and leadership styles have threatened to further affect multilateralism's foundations. This problem extends beyond the EU and has, at times, given the UN a harsh reality to face. In order to maintain and safeguard the principles that the EU and UN hold close – notably, preserving the rule of law, human rights protection and democracy – a new approach may need to be distilled.

This has led some academics to focus their attention on a new form of multilateralism known as 'minilateralism'. The concept focuses on a smaller scale of governance, looking at issues broken down into smaller, almost more 'local-like', scales. Specifically, it 'describes the diplomatic process of a small group of interested parties working together to supplement or complement the activities of international organisations in tackling subjects deemed too complicated to be addressed appropriately at the multilateral level' (Moret, 2016).

Minilateralism has been debated and critically evaluated, however, as scholars attempt to flesh out what exactly makes a decision-making process 'mini' versus the regular multilateralism seen within international institutions. Moreover, its very purpose is being contested. According to McGee (2011), it was US foreign policy commentator Moisés Naím (2009) who coined the expression 'minilateralism', explaining this approach as seeking a 'magic number' of key states with influence upon an issue to craft smaller, more responsive international institutions. Naím has argued, for example, that in the area of climate change, the 'magic number' of states to meet to develop a global deal was about 20.

While the approach of minilateralism has had some success, other commentators have been sceptical. For example, Stephen Walt (2009) first summarized Naím's approach as follows:

> Moises Naim offers a characteristically outside-the-box solution to the gridlock that is currently stifling global problem-solving. Instead of pursuing the Holy Grail of multilateralism and giving all states an equal voice in global deliberations, he suggests we 'forget about trying to get the planet's nearly 200 countries to agree.' Instead, he writes, 'we should bring to the table the smallest possible number of countries needed to have the largest possible impact on solving a particular problem.' He dubs this new approach 'minilateralism.'

However, Walt counters the essential tenets of the approach. He sees merit in what is a realist approach in the author's vision but does not think the concept has that much value overall: ' "minilateralism" will work in some contexts but not in others' (Walt 2009). Moreover, he states that in some issue-areas, agreement among the major powers will be able to lead to cooperative arrangements that weak states have to accept if they wish to obtain the benefits of participation. However:

> 'minilateralism' won't do much for us when the most important powers disagree, and that list includes some pretty significant issues. The main obstacle to a global agreement on climate change isn't getting Palau, Thailand, Luxembourg or Ecuador on board; the real problem is that the interests of some of the world's largest economies (and biggest emitters of greenhouse gases) are sharply at odds. To take the most obvious example, China and India both want some sort of exclusion that will enable them to continue to develop economically, but the U.S. Senate isn't going to approve a climate deal that imposes stiff limits on the developed world but not on them. On this issue (and others), going 'minilateral' won't solve the problem. (Walt, 2009)

Of course, meanwhile, new schemes in this area have been developed, with the Paris Agreement being a notable case. It constitutes a legally binding international treaty on climate change and was adopted by the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP 21) in Paris in December 2015. The agreement entered into force in November 2016.[8] Despite more recent attempts to find global solutions related to the challenge of climate change, the COP 26 meeting, conducted at the end of 2021 in Glasgow, led to less tangible results.

Nonetheless, the concept of minilateralism has been of interest as a potential solution in either the regional or the global institutional context, based on

recent deadlocks and delays encountered in multilateral negotiations. Based on practice and focusing on smaller, informal dialogues may give a better picture of the potential for possible governance options to be adopted. Of course, in multilateral discussions too, coalitions and groups of like-minded states often prepare negotiations and agenda items, which are only then discussed by the membership at large. In fact, breaking up a larger group into smaller negotiation units is a technique often applied by chairs of bargaining processes, including in the UN context.

One of the questions that minilateral proponents need to grapple with is the 'magic number' issue, namely, just how many actors would be necessary to substantiate actual change, without falling prey to simply becoming a multilateral scheme or losing efficiency? As Anuar and Hussain (2021) have stated: 'With fewer members, agendas are difficult to advance if and when participating countries cannot be present or cannot commit as a consequence of competing diplomatic priorities, changes in government, and the like'. According to the authors, an example is the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) – an informal forum using semi-regular summits – where strategic security dialogues were seen to take place between the US, Japan, India and Australia. However, the sensitivity of such arrangements to changes on the domestic level of their members has become obvious: once 'Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe stepped down from his first term in office, and the new Rudd government in Australia decided against the economic risks of antagonizing China', the QUAD became stagnant until Julia Gillard was elected into office in 2010 in Australia (Anuar and Hussain, 2021), when military cooperation between the US and Australia, for example, largely resumed as a result.

Clearly, minilateral dynamics can be affected by changes in domestic politics, such as elections leading to a new government composition and, with this, different priorities being advocated on the international level and within global organizations. Minilateral groups can also be constituted by 'first movers' in a given area, such as those advocating more emissions reductions in global climate negotiations, or states presenting suggestions to develop strategies for international vaccine distribution schemes to protect against COVID-19. Many actions within international organizations are based on the activities of coalitions, and 'minilateralism', as an informal way of bringing together a part of the membership, can be core to moving ahead.

In the EU context, when it was difficult to take further steps with all member states involved, for example in terms of advancing fiscal, monetary or security cooperation within the organization, different concepts were used to foster action nonetheless. For instance, '*géométrie variable*' ('variable geometry'), or 'multi-speed Europe', was a concept widely used alongside that of 'differentiated integration', implying that only part of the EU would move forward in a given area. This applied, for example, to the creation of

a monetary union in the 1990s, as well as to other initiatives in the realm of foreign and security policy, where some member states (including the UK) were notoriously known to be more reluctant to engage in steps towards further integration and changing the EU into more of a political or security union.

With the COVID-19 pandemic having occurred, the age of 'virtual diplomacy' is likely to have largely become the 'new norm'. With global multilateralism, as practised, for example, in the framework of international institutions, such as the UN, one of the most critical challenges generally faced was deadlock in decision-making. As argued by those defending minilateralism, the global community is likely already too globalized to solely rely on true multilateralism as a type of global governance, though there might notably be possibilities for it to be applied, as Anuar and Hussain (2021) have stated, in 'less controversial spheres of practical economic and non-traditional security cooperation'. It remains to be seen, however, how 'virtual diplomacy' may assist negotiations in which larger membership groups participate, as compared to bargaining between smaller units.

The Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS, 2020), for example, has argued for a 'new, fair and inclusive multilateralism'. This is in line with efforts to think about ways to move ahead in terms of a 'new future of multilateralism'. A related idea has been to think about a 'Third UN' (see Carayannis and Weiss, 2021). According to the Carayannis and Weiss (2021: 6), the 'Third UN' refers to the:

> ecology of supportive non-state actors – intellectuals, scholars, consultants, think tanks, NGOs, the for-profit private sector, and the media – that interacts with the intergovernmental machinery of the First UN (member states) and the Second UN (staff members of international secretariats) … [in order to] formulate and refine ideas and decision-making at key junctures in policy processes.

In this sense, many actors help the UN 'think'. Of course, the many partnerships between, for example, UN specialized agencies and programmes with private institutions and actors, not least in terms of funding, are other ways in which larger groups in society contribute to the operation of international organizations (while, at all times, it will be important that the organizations operate in neutral and independent ways, acting in the interests of the global community rather than of specific groups).

Expert advice to UN organizations (such as in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and crisis) is also highly valuable for international institutions. In fact, there are already several linkages between private actors and international institutions. As Abbott and Snidal (2010) have made clear, international organizations:

> have been widely criticized as ineffective. Yet scholars and commentators assessing IO [international organization] performance frequently look at the actions of those organizations in isolation and focus on traditional modes of governance such as treaties and inter-state dispute-resolution mechanisms. When commentators observe poor performance, moreover, they often call for strengthening those same activities. We call this reliance on traditional state-based mechanisms 'International Old Governance' (IOG).

However, as the authors state, a better 'way to understand and improve IO performance is to consider the full range of ways in which IOs can and do operate – including, increasingly, by reaching out to private actors and institutions, collaborating with them, and supporting and shaping their activities' (Abbott and Snidal, 2010). In fact, such actions:

> are helping to develop an intricate global network of public, private and mixed institutions and norms, orchestrated by IOs (and states), that we call 'Transnational New Governance' (TNG). With proper orchestration by 'the state' (including IOs), TNG can ameliorate both 'state failure' – the inadequacies of IOG – and 'market failure' – the problems that result when the creation and evolution of norm-setting institutions is highly decentralized. Orchestration thus provides a significant way for IOs to improve their regulatory performance.

Of course, it needs to be further fleshed out how private institutions can best insert themselves into existing, multilateral, rules-based governance without changing the goals and independence of international organizations. However, the ideas advanced by Abbott and Snidal (2010) are certainly of interest, including to practice.

Another way for multilateralism to evolve is to be as inclusive as possible (without, however, risking a loss of efficiency). Specific ideas as to how to renew multilateralism have also been put forward by the EU (see European Commission, 2021b). Multilateralism can generate 'processual benefits' that are often overlooked when actors are exclusively focused on outcomes (Pouliot, 2011). Political dialogue encompassing many actors can complement and enhance such processes, including at the level of the UN itself.

Clearly, recent years have brought much difficulty to multilateral institutions. There have been doubts of the UN's effectiveness and capability, with similar criticism having been aimed at the EU. Some global headlines seem to be implying that the current age of multilateralism will soon be 'extinct'.

International organizations have been met with criticism, as have regional organizations, such as the EU. Changes in membership constellations and in

power dynamics, alongside the rise of populism and inward-looking member state behaviour, have affected their existence and activities. However, in some ways, both the EU and the UN have been remarkably 'resilient', not least in the recent past in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. While there can always be quicker solutions – as is the case for national governments – both the EU as a regional integration scheme and the UN as an international organization largely depend on the willingness and flexibility of their member states to act and support international activity. Both are quite large organizations, meaning that the breaking up into smaller segments is useful at times, while still aiming to get the full membership on board.

There have been many ideas on how to reform the UN (some deriving from the organization itself), as there have been ideas on how to reform the EU. At times, such suggestions can be very helpful in moving ahead, while at other times, it is clear that the suggestions made can contradict each other, as they are based on the different interests and priorities of those advocating them.

Multilateralism may, at times, be stretched to its limits when it is used to find agreement between all member states of a global organization, based on international diplomacy. However, on the other hand, consensus on the regional or international level does imply that there need to be negotiations among the member states; although many other entities (NGOs, businesses, various transnational actors and interest groups) matter in global affairs and are often involved in multilateral negotiations in one way or another, states still constitute the foundation of international institutions. Hence, collaboration is needed between the state-based structure of international organizations and various other actors that matter in the current interdependent, interwoven, entangled global environment in which international and regional institutions operate.

Accordingly, the global environment in which both the EU and the UN operate is a dynamic one. As this chapter has demonstrated, the EU has gradually evolved as a global actor (within the UN too), affecting the ways in which EU–UN interactions take place and the modes based on which these institutions operate more generally. Simultaneously, the UN system as a whole is changing and has been affected by such trends as minilateralism and tendencies to strengthen regional organizations as partners of the UN. Finally, the UN itself is gradually relying on more support by non-state entities, including private actors, businesses and NGOs. Prospects for the further development of EU–UN relations are hence affected by such more general dynamics and trends.

10

Conclusions

As a regional integration scheme, the EU is not a unitary actor; it consists of several different institutions and, currently, 27 member states. Neither is the UN a unitary actor, being instead a global, intergovernmental organization consisting of a variety of sub-units. Both of these schemes develop and move within the global structure of international relations, characterized by raising powers, realignments in terms of global economic relations and structures, and, finally, shifts in priorities and preferences by global actors.

It can be said that the EU and the UN are both entities strongly upholding principles related to the rule of law, rules-based global governance and multilateralism. Both tend to be characterized by similar norms and principles, including the defence of human security, human rights and general human well-being. Obviously, the EU deals with the internal situation of its 27 members (28 before Brexit), while the UN addresses the priorities and concerns of its, currently, 193 member states. Both organizations are built upon coalitions of like-minded states, though changes in (democratic) governments will often lead to changes in the priorities addressed by these member states on the regional and global levels.

Interactions between the EU and the UN are just one example of relations existing between regional integration schemes and the UN as a global governance organization. Similar patterns exist, for example, in exchanges between the UN and the AU, as well as several integration schemes in Latin America. While the UN is based on states as members, regional integration schemes, sometimes encompassing supranational tendencies, seem to be increasingly important to the UN to implement some of its actions. Peace initiatives and missions on the African continent are an example of such interlinkages between regional and global actors.

The EU has changed over time. From a small group of members – six at its foundation – to the current large entity it constitutes, consisting of a total of 27 member states, it has deepened and widened in the sense of having grown in membership by more than four times between its origins

and the present, while also having started to address a wider range of issues in substantive terms. Similarly, the UN has broadened and deepened over time: from 51 member states back at its origins to almost four times this size (193 members) currently. With the enlargement and expansion of the organizations came institutional adaptation, notably, in the EU context; while the UN did not see all that much in terms of institutional change and adaptation over time, the UN system has expanded and new organizations and substantive areas have been added to its work over the course of recent decades. This reflects changes in the ways the organizations work, as well as the adapted priorities of their member states and a desire, in general, to widen the substantive areas of action of the organizations.

As this book has demonstrated, the EU has gradually evolved from an entity focused on the integration of core sectors of their industries just after the Second World War – coal and steel – to an internal market and an entity increasingly displaying features of a collective actor in world politics, speaking 'with one voice'. Similarly, the UN has evolved, notably, due to changing global power constellations over time, including a certain reduction of importance of the East–West divide, processes of decolonization and a strengthening of the North–South divide.

The UN is of crucial importance in terms of addressing a multitude of issues that constitute challenges to human well-being globally. Its activities – carried out by several specialized agencies, programmes, funds and other entities – are far-ranging and include advancing human well-being, promoting the rule of law, protecting vulnerable groups (such as refugees) and combating hunger, conflict and violence. While the UNGA and the UNSC operate based on the issuing of resolutions – legally binding ones in the case of the UNSC and 'visible' statements on topics of interest in the case of the UNGA – many of the UN's organizations address specific challenges in their activities. While there can clearly be overlaps in the activities of, for example, some of the UN's specialized agencies, programmes and funds – think, for example, about the UNHCR, UNICEF, UN Women or the UNDP – there are also strong synergies and complementarities in their actions. It would be hard to imagine a world without the UN; in fact, it would probably be a world much worse than it currently is in various aspects (such as the extent of violence, poverty and challenges to human health and security).

The EU, in essence, is and was a 'peace project' aimed at integrating the economies of former enemies in war in ways that would make the eruption of violent conflict impossible in the future. It has evolved over time into a strong economic union – developing from a customs union back in the 1960s, to an internal market largely completed in the 1990s, to (for several member states) a monetary union that took effect at the very end of the last millennium. While the EU has developed and, in certain respects, truly strengthened over the course of recent decades, it has also faced challenges,

while increasingly following a trend towards development as an external, 'global' actor. In many ways, the EU is a promising project, upholding some of the core principles of protecting humans globally, as it is itself based on clear patterns of multilateralism, rules-based governance, negotiations, diplomacy and decision-making between sovereign member states. Once it has found a compromise between the delegates of its member states, it also carries it into various settings at the UN, most recently, via its EU delegations that coordinate and streamline the activities and priorities of EU member states.

Clearly, the UN is also composed of regional groupings and units that are characterized by patterns of negotiation and diplomacy among their own member states. However, in an international comparison, the EU is probably among the most densely integrated schemes, having pooled many competencies – including in most areas of trade – to a common, supranational system of decision-making. Where it often has difficulties to act (such as in the area of migration governance, health, taxation and some aspects of security and foreign affairs), it is often the principle of unanimity among member states that prevents it from moving ahead more quickly.

Similarly, the UNSC is often hampered in its actions by resolutions that need the support of the P5, all holding veto power. Such institutional constraints and decision rules agreed upon several decades ago risk slowing down the speed with which the organization can take action and move ahead to ensure peace and security in the collective interest. The veto power of an individual EU member state in a core area of substantive relevance to the EU and the very veto power of P5 members in the UNSC constitute hurdles that are difficult to overcome for the collectivity of the organizations' members, while there is often a clear demand – in public opinion too – for the organizations to move ahead quicker and to uphold collective principles and goals in their actions.

Chapter 1 of this book described the focus and sequence of topics discussed in this book and demonstrated how various aspects of the roles of the EU and of the UN in global governance are related. Chapter 2 provided information on how the EU has developed from a small group of member states that started aligning their positions in trade policy to a gradually expanding regional integration scheme that also intensified efforts to coordinate the positions of its member states on major themes in foreign policy. This included alignment within various parts of the UN – notably, coordination within the UNGA and the UNSC. The path taken was definitely not always a smooth one, and EU member state priorities have often differed in the past when foreign policy challenges had to be addressed. However, over time, in institutional as well as substantive terms, alignment in foreign policy and the external action of EU member states as a collectivity has nonetheless intensified.

Chapter 3 of the book addressed the ways in which the EU has dealt with two recent crises: the 'Euro crisis' and, more recently, the economic and fiscal challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic. It discussed the ways in which the EU and the UN have moved forward in terms of financial collaboration, an important aspect being the explicit incorporation of the SDGs into EU action, including in the framework of the 'European Semester', which aims to streamline EU member states' fiscal and macroeconomic plans. Most notably, the latest steps in terms of economic and financial responses to combat the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are likely to have strengthened the supranational character of the EU. With the EU's most recent steps taken and, notably, the adoption of the NGEU Recovery Fund, more competencies have been shifted to the European Commission and the EU level more generally. This implies that the EU is likely not only to constitute more of a unitary actor in the realm of external action in the years to come, but might well – as a response to the COVID-19 health crisis – also move towards more unity in terms of its fiscal foundations.

Chapter 4 addressed challenges that both the EU and the UN are currently facing in view of pressures on multilateralism. Clearly, populist and nationalist trends have affected the ways in which regional and global organizations are perceived, as well as whether their activities and ways of functioning are seen as 'legitimate' and 'effective' by a larger public. The pressures that emanated from the US under President Trump's administration on the ways in which international organizations, such as the UN, function have been considerable. The shift to the Biden administration has reduced some of these very pressures, but both the EU and the UN still face challenges nonetheless, not least in financial terms. Both entities, however, are based on clear patterns of multilateral negotiations and mechanisms aiming to generate consensus among their member states. The EU, being a regional entity that needs to find a common voice and agreement on ways to proceed among – now – 27 member states, may constitute a smaller example of what is similar practice within the 193-member UN. Both organizations strongly reinforce the principle of rules-based governance and use multilateralism and diplomacy as decision-making principles at their core.

Chapter 5 addressed how the UN as an organization has been affected by, and has dealt with, the various challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. It discussed how the ways of operation of the institution and its various units had to be adapted at fairly short notice. The pandemic affected the very ways in which multilateral negotiations and international diplomacy are conducted through a radical shift from in-person contacts and meetings to virtual contact and events. The shift affected the ways in which, for example, the yearly UNGA general debate has been conducted, as well as the multitude of meetings underpinning the work of the organization – whether at headquarters or within the UN's various specialized agencies, programmes

or funds. It still remains to be seen how such shifts will affect international negotiations and diplomacy in the future. Clearly, some elements of the new ways of conducting diplomacy will be here to stay. In general, it can be said that the adaptation of the UN to the new situation has been swift and the organization has initiated some major initiatives to combat the crisis and its effects, including the UN Secretary-General's call for a global ceasefire to enable a full focus on the global 'common enemy' – the new virus.

Chapter 6 examined the EU's role in the central UN decision-making bodies of the UNGA and UNSC. Next to demonstrating developments over time, the chapter showed how there has been a historically progressive increase in the voting cohesion of the EU's member states, which has been accompanied by targeted EU policies to increase voting cohesion in international organizations. Nevertheless, no automatism can be assumed; permissive contexts continue to be decisive. Finally, the activities of the EU in the UNHCR – a subsidiary organ of the UNGA – were presented as an area where the EU has been particularly successful in translating its position into influence. The second part of the chapter gave an overview of the EU in the UNSC, where the EU's role has traditionally been smaller. However, practices of information sharing and informal cooperation between the EU's permanent and non-permanent UNSC members have emerged over the years. Since the UK's exit from the EU in 2020, the EU has lost a permanent UNSC member, which previously served with France as a key transmission belt of EU positions to the UNSC. With regard to the broader debate on UNSC reforms, the EU member states have so far not been able to generate a unified position; rather, competing proposals prevail. It is likely that the EU in the UNGA will continue to function as an enhanced observer and facilitate the voting cohesion and cooperation of EU member states; the EU will most likely continue to have no direct representation in the UNSC, but rather be of importance to the UNSC where the EU is operationally involved as a significant foreign policy actor in the maintenance of peace and security. In order to make significant progress towards a permanent seat for the EU in the UNSC, the creation of majority voting in the CFSP is necessary – an issue currently under discussion.

Chapters 7 and 8 provided case studies on EU–UN collaboration. Chapter 7 discussed how cooperation between the EU and the UN is conducted in daily patterns of interaction in Brussels. It demonstrated how various UN entities try to find alignment in their positions towards the (different parts of) the EU. The chapter further addressed some of the coordination activities between, notably, the UNHCR, UNICEF and entities of the EU dealing with challenges to migration, which have put a special emphasis on the mechanisms available to protect children in migration. Clearly, there are many overlapping areas of activity of various parts of the UN and different entities of the EU. Synergies are being explored, and both organizations

strive to be influential in the planning and preparatory activities of the other organization.

Chapter 8 had as a focal point cooperation between UN Women and the EU. It began with a brief introduction to their relations and previous and current agreements. Following this, it provided a deeper analysis of the respective programmes and agreements, focusing notably on the Spotlight Initiative and EU 4 Gender Equality: Together Against Gender Stereotypes and Gender-Based Violence. It discussed challenges to the respective programmes in relation to the gendered impact of COVID-19. Then, it examined the topics of gender mainstreaming and the WPS agenda, as well as the role of EU institutions in facilitating this agenda. Overall, the chapter demonstrated how the EU and the UN have been advancing gender equality and supported the role of women and of girls in various contexts, including those characterized by conflict and war.

Chapter 9 provided thoughts about developments and prospects for the EU and the UN in global governance. Given current challenges to multilateralism and the role the EU and the UN play within global governance, it looks ahead at what changing global power relations, pressures on multilateralism and new modes of negotiation and multilateral diplomacy could imply for the two entities, on the one hand, and their interconnections, on the other. Clearly, given the ways in which the EU operates, based on multilateral negotiations between its member states – alongside its supranational institutions – it is a core example of 'rules-based governance'. It upholds such principles as the rule of law and strongly supports human rights (in the sense of both individual human rights and economic and social rights). However, being constituted of 27 member states, each with different preferences and priorities, means that finding agreement within the collectivity of members is not always easy. Nonetheless, in most cases, the scheme seems to manage to agree on a common path and remains a driver for these important core principles on the global level. The chapter also discussed the concept of minilateralism as a potential alternative mode and constituent part of multilateralism (on the regional, but potentially also on the global, level). Clearly, the UN is of quintessential importance for global governance and the maintenance of peace and stability in a broader, encompassing context. The work conducted by its various units and entities on a daily basis is of central importance to human well-being in a general sense. A world without the UN is probably beyond imagination today and would be a much worse place to be in. The UN increasingly relies on regional organizations as partners for its activities; in this sense, regional multilateralism and international cooperation often go hand in hand.

The EU as a regional integration scheme and the UN as a global governance institution have several overlapping core aims and principles. While the EU is focused on the internal, regional developments of its member states, next

to external, global action, the UN, by definition, is an actor operating on the global level. The synergies between the two organizations are evident and important. Complementarities and patterns of mutual reinforcement also apply to collaboration between the UN and other regional organization schemes, such as the AU.

Global power politics, at times, tends to undermine and endanger multilateralism on the international level and collective decision-making patterns among member states. In the ideal case, however, global-level organizations are 'resilient' and able to continue their activities despite such trends. Overcoming the 'all-against-all' dynamics of power politics is of quintessential importance to the maintenance of global stability. It is multilateral negotiations and decisions derived based on patterns of rules-based governance that allow collective steps to be taken in the interest of an organization's collectivity of member state actors. Finally, complementarity and synergies between regional and global governance actors are, without a doubt, of core importance to the maintenance of peace and stability, both in a regional and in an international context.

Notes

Chapter 1

[1] The following are the UNGA's main committees: First Committee (Disarmament and International Security); Second Committee (Economic and Financial); Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural); Fourth Committee (Special Political and Decolonization); Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary); and Sixth Committee (Legal).

[2] On this, see, for example, Hosli and Kantorowicz (2021).

[3] The first direct election to the EP were conducted in 1979.

Chapter 2

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[2] On the EU's role in this new setting, see also Chapter 6.

Chapter 3

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[3] The phrase reflects an analogy to the 1790 historic agreement between Alexander Hamilton and Thomas Jefferson on debt federalization (Greer et al, 2021: 759).

[4] D'Ambrosio (2021: 135) even states that 'the great power of crises lies in their capacity to bring to the surface neglected issues, and to be a force for change'.

Chapter 4

[1] Abdenur demonstrates how current rising powers, including Brazil, India and, in fact, China, were only able to influence core global narratives during the foundation of the UN to a limited extent.

Chapter 5

[1] The full text is available at: www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cescr.aspx

[2] The full text is available at: www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights

[3] Article 25 reads:

> 1. Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control. 2. Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

[4] See: www.un.org/en/academic-impact/un-secretary-general-calls-global-ceasefire-focus-ending-covid-19-pandemic

Chapter 6

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[2] On this, see, for example, Makubalo, Hosli and Lantmeeters (2020).

[3] A more detailed analysis of the development over time of the external representation of the EU in the international community and vis-a-vis the UN is undertaken in Chapter 2.

[4] On the effects of this change in terms of the representation of collective EU interests and priorities in the yearly UNGA general debates, see, for example, Hosli and Kantorowicz (2021).

[5] On the role of the EU delegation(s) in terms of coordination functions, see, for example, K.E. Smith (2020).

[6] Nonetheless, according to Makubalo, Hosli and Lantmeeters (2020), who applied the AI to AU voting behaviour in the UNGA, cohesion among the AU's member states is also rather high.

[7] For a thorough overview of the history and development of EU external action and related theoretical approaches, see Gstöhl and Schunz (2021).

[8] On the UNSC sanctions regime, see Dörfler (2019).

Chapter 7

[1] The person holding this function also serves as the director of UNDP's representation office in Brussels.

[2] See: www.unbrussels.org/united-nations-office-in-brussels/

[3] See: www.unbrussels.org/united-nations-office-in-brussels/

[4] The 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol are the funding legal documents of the UNHCR: they define the term 'refugee' and outline refugees' rights and states' legal

obligations to protect them (the full text of the 1951 Refugee Convention is available, at: www.unhcr.org/1951-refugee-convention.html).

[5] The first convention was signed in Dublin, Ireland, on 15 June 1990. It first came into force for 12 signatories (EU member states) on 1 September 1997. It allocated responsibility for asylum seekers between EU member states. It was replaced by the Dublin II Regulation in 2003. In 2013, the Dublin II Regulation was replaced by the Dublin III Regulation. In 2016, the European Commission proposed an encompassing new Pact on Migration and Asylum, which covered various elements necessary for a comprehensive European approach to migration.

[6] The directive aimed to ensure common standards of reception conditions throughout the EU. It included provisions that asylum applicants would have access to housing, food, clothing, healthcare, education for minors and employment (within a maximum period of nine months), and gave particular attention to vulnerable persons (especially unaccompanied minors and victims of torture). It held that EU countries had to conduct an individual assessment to identify the special reception needs of vulnerable persons. They had to ensure that vulnerable asylum seekers could access medical and psychological support. The directives also included rules regarding the detention of asylum seekers and the provision that alternatives to detention had to be considered in full respect of the fundamental rights. On the directive, see: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/asylum/reception-conditions_en

[7] 'Directive 2011/95/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection, for a uniform status for refugees or for persons eligible for subsidiary protection, and for the content of the protection granted (recast)' (see: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32011L0095).

[8] The Asylum Procedures Directive aimed to create a coherent system ensuring that decisions on applications for international protection were taken efficiently and fairly. It contained the following aims:

- setting clear rules for registering and lodging applications, making sure that everyone who wishes to request international protection can do so quickly and effectively
- setting a time-limit for the examination of applications (in principle six months at the administrative stage), while providing for the possibility to accelerate for applications that are likely to be unfounded or were made in bad faith
- allowing for border procedures and safe country concepts
- training decision makers and ensuring access to legal assistance
- providing adequate support to those in need of special guarantees – for example because of their age, disability, illness – including by ensuring that they are granted sufficient time to participate effectively in the procedure
- providing rules on the right to stay and appeals in front of courts or tribunals. (See: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/asylum/common-procedures_en)

[9] See: https://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2005/2/4212384f4/unhcr-signs-cooperation-agreements-european-commission.html

[10] It should be noted that strategic partnership agreements have also been signed with other UN entities. For example, in 2004, the European Commission and the UNDP signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU). In 2003, the Financial and Administrative

Framework Agreement (FAFA) was signed, providing the overarching framework governing the contribution-specific agreements signed between the EU and UNDP. It was adapted several times thereafter, with the latest version dating from 2018 (see: www1.undp.org/content/brussels/en/home/undp-eu-partnership/framework-of-cooperation.html). The FAFA:

> facilitates the administrative cooperation by standardizing contractual modalities and commitment to rely on UN standard auditing, control, accounting and procurement procedures. This agreement is applicable to all European Commission Directorates-General and all the UN organizations that are party to it. Since then, the FAFA has been adapted twice, in 2014 and 2018, to embrace changes in each of the organisations' regulatory frameworks.

Moreover:

> Communications and visibility are key for the EU to mobilize its citizens and governments to remain engaged in development aid and cooperation as well as for the EU–UNDP strategic partnership. The 'Joint Action Plan on Visibility' between the EU and the UN (2006) builds on the FAFA, emphasizing the shared commitment to communicate the results of the EU–UNDP partnership, with the aim to ensure transparency of the European taxpayers' money and to foster global solidarity. The 'Joint Visibility Guidelines for EC–UN actions in the field' (2008) provides practical advice to EU and UN staff in the field on how to best organize the communications activities. (See: www1.undp.org/content/brussels/en/home/undp-eu-partnership/framework-of-cooperation.html)

[11] Article 3 reads as follows:

> The Union shall establish an internal market. It shall work for the sustainable development of Europe based on balanced economic growth and price stability, a highly competitive social market economy, aiming at full employment and social progress, and a high level of protection and improvement of the quality of the environment. It shall promote scientific and technological advance. It shall combat social exclusion and discrimination, and shall promote social justice and protection, equality between women and men, solidarity between generations and protection of the rights of the child. It shall promote economic, social and territorial cohesion, and solidarity among Member States. It shall respect its rich cultural and linguistic diversity, and shall ensure that Europe's cultural heritage is safeguarded and enhanced. (See: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:2bf140bf-a3f8-4ab2-b506-fd71826e6da6.0023.02/DOC_1&format=PDF)

[12] The office presents its core tasks as follows:

> The collaboration between UNICEF and the EU focuses on two inter-related areas: mobilising and leveraging resources for children, and advocating for the protection of their fundamental rights. This partnership is steered by the UNICEF Office for Relations with EU Institutions located in Brussels, in close collaboration with UNICEF Headquarters, Regional and Country offices. The UNICEF Office in Brussels supports the mobilisation

> of EU funding for the delivery of UNICEF's humanitarian response and development programmes, providing guidance to UNICEF offices around the world. It also leverages its strong relationship with EU Institutions to push children's rights to the forefront of EU's internal and external agenda through a continuous dialogue to develop initiatives that improve children's wellbeing. (UNICEF and European Union, 2021)

13 See: https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/publication/action-plan-nutrition-reducing-number-stunted-children-under-five-7-million-2025_en
14 The strategy – COM(2020) 607 final – is available at: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/default/files/what-we-do/policies/european-agenda-security/20200724_com-2020-607-commission-communication_en.pdf
15 For more insights into the aims and activities of UN OCHA, see: www.unocha.org/
16 For more information on the UNHCR, see: www.unhcr.org/
17 The ICRC aims to ensure humanitarian protection and assistance for victims of war and other situations of violence. On the activities and goals of the ICRC, see: www.icrc.org/
18 On the ILO, see: www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/lang--en/index.htm
19 On IDPs, see: www.unhcr.org/internally-displaced-people.html
20 See: www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/IDPersons/Pages/Standards.aspx
21 See: www.ohchr.org/en/issues/idpersons/pages/issues.aspx
22 On the Rohingya crisis, see: www.unhcr.org/rohingya-emergency.html

Chapter 8

1 See: www.unwomen.org/en
2 The 'UN Women strategic plan 2018–2021' is available at: www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2017/8/un-women-strategic-plan-2018-2021
3 See: www.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2017/8/un-women-strategic-plan-2018-2021
4 On the background to this declaration, see, for example: www.undp.org/blogs/commemorating-beijing-declaration?utm_source=EN&utm_medium=GSR&utm_content=US_UNDP_PaidSearch_Brand_English&utm_campaign=CENTRAL&c_src=CENTRAL&c_src2=GSR&gclid=Cj0KCQjwvO2IBhCzARIsALw3ASrHhN5axSEOiVYLVH44-kmFgpf_4RJBNyYA2O-qFdBFLdgVHH90cQMaAm3VEALw_wcB
5 See, for example: https://beijing20.unwomen.org/en/about
6 On the partnership between the EU and UN Women, see also: www.unwomen.org/en/partnerships/donor-countries/top-donors/european-union
7 See: www.unwomen.org/en/partnerships/donor-countries/top-donors/european-union
8 For details on the programme, activities and results, see: www.spotlightinitiative.org/
9 See, for example: www.unfpa.org/data/donor-contributions/european-union
10 See: www.unfpa.org/data/donor-contributions/european-union
11 For more information on UNFPA, see: www.unfpa.org/
12 On this, see also Protopsalti (2021).
13 See: https://eca.unwomen.org/en/digital-library/publications/2020/09/eu-4-gender-equality-together-against-gender-stereotypes-and-gender-based-violence
14 On this, see, for example, the webpages of the UN OCHA, available at: www.unocha.org/about-ocha
15 For information on the EU's gender equality strategies and programmes, see, for example: https://ec.europa.eu/info/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy_en

[16] See, for example: www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/csw61/equal-pay
[17] See: www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/csw61/women-in-informal-economy
[18] For various figures related to COVID-19 and gender equality in the EU provided by the EIGE, see: https://eige.europa.eu/
[19] See: www.unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/in-focus-gender-equality-in-covid-19-response/violence-against-women-during-covid-19
[20] See: https://unric.org/en/who-warns-of-surge-of-domestic-violence-as-covid-19-cases-decrease-in-europe/
[21] See: https://unric.org/en/who-warns-of-surge-of-domestic-violence-as-covid-19-cases-decrease-in-europe/
[22] See: www.spotlightinitiative.org/sites/default/files/publication/Universal_rights_-_global_action_Impact_Report_2019-2020.pdf
[23] See also, for example, Debusscher (2011: 40).
[24] For more information on the Council of Europe, see: www.coe.int/en/web/portal
[25] See: https://dppa.un.org/en/women-peace-and-security
[26] Notably, see: https://eeas.europa.eu/archives/features/features-working-women/working-with-women/article21_en.html

Chapter 9

[1] The targets of this SDG are: (13.1) to strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries; and (13.2) to integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning.
[2] Moreover, the national parliaments of these member states would need to ratify the agreement. On the difficulty of formal UNSC reform, see, for example, Hosli et al (2011) or Hosli and Dörfler (2017).
[3] On EU 'presence' in international organizations more generally, see Blavoukos and Bourantonis (2011a).
[4] On different notions as to the role and capacity of international institutions, see the prominent debate between (neo-)realists and liberal institutionalists in political science theorizing. Among the prominent authors in this debate are Mearsheimer (1995), who defended a realist framework (assuming international institutions are largely driven by the power of their member states), and Keohane and Martin (1995), who advocated a liberal-institutionalist approach (attributing much more independent action to international institutions).
[5] The other members are Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the UK and the US.
[6] The respective states are Argentina, Australia, Brazil, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Mexico, Poland, Singapore, South Africa and Thailand.
[7] The US administration under President Trump is an obvious example of this phenomenon.
[8] The US withdrew from the agreement in 2020 but re-entered in 2021.

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