
Introduction

What sort of international actor is the European Union? What values, interests and objectives does it promote internationally? In sum, what is its ‘international identity’? A sceptic would respond that the EU is an ineffective, incomplete actor, whose foreign policies have little influence on third countries or international relations in general. Any ‘foreign policy’ formulated at the EU level is inconsequential and weak, because it represents the lowest common denominator, or what the most reluctant member state could accept. The tools and objectives of EU foreign policy-making are necessarily limited to those which do not offend member state sensitivities or contradict their interests. There are no EU values or interests because there is no EU polity from which such values and interests can arise. The EU’s member states maintain control of foreign policy-making, and are ill-disposed to surrender that control in the name of a more effective common foreign policy.

Certainly the EU has managed to chalk up an impressive list of foreign policy failures. It discussed endlessly the crises in Albania, Bosnia, Kosovo, Rwanda – to name but a few post-Cold War hot spots – yet ultimately it could not agree to act at all, or it acted only in a supplementary role after other actors had tamed the situation.¹ In the crisis over policy towards Iraq in early 2003, the EU member states were deeply divided, and could only agree on declarations representing the lowest common denominator of their respective positions. But to concentrate only on the EU’s absence or ineffectiveness in these crises is to ignore areas where its influence is more profound. The EU may not exercise influence to the extent that, say, the United States does, but it has become an increasingly important international

actor, and can play an effective and influential role in non-crisis situations in particular. To see this, however, one has to look beyond the crises that occupy headlines, and consider 'foreign policy' more broadly and in a more long-term perspective than just responses to crises.

This book thus explores what the EU actually does in international relations. Because of the complex and evolving nature of the EU foreign policy-making system, much effort has gone into trying to explain the making of EU foreign policy, to theorize about the obstacles to and the factors favouring the formulation and implementation of common foreign policy. The emphasis in this book, however, is on what the system produces. Once the obstacles to common foreign policy-making have been overcome, what sort of foreign policy results? To answer this question, this book analyses why and how the EU pursues five foreign policy objectives:

- the encouragement of regional cooperation and integration;
- the promotion of human rights;
- the promotion of democracy and good governance;
- the prevention of violent conflicts; and
- the fight against international crime.

It analyses the various internal and external pressures that led to agreement to pursue these particular foreign policy objectives, which policy instruments the Union has used, and how it has used them.

'Foreign policy' is defined widely here, to mean the activity of developing and managing relationships between the state (or, in our case, the EU) and other international actors, which promotes the domestic values and interests of the state or actor in question.² Foreign policy can entail the use of economic instruments, but its aims are explicitly political or security-related, in contrast to foreign economic policy, whose objectives *and* means are economic.³

Defining foreign policy widely requires broadening the scope of investigation beyond the EU's specific mechanism for foreign policy cooperation, the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), to the EU's other constituent 'pillars', the European Community (EC) and Justice and Home Affairs (JHA), and their input into foreign policy-making. The EU is a 'foreign policy system', composed of the three pillars as well as the member states' foreign policies.⁴ The emphasis here, though, lies with the EU, not at the national, level; national foreign policies are considered to the extent that they contribute to, or obstruct, EU foreign policy-making.

The CFSP pillar most obviously concerns foreign policy, but foreign policy is *not* just the product of the CFSP pillar.⁵ The Euro-

pean Community has the competence to conduct external economic relations, and thus wields important foreign policy instruments, while foreign policy increasingly includes issues covered under the JHA pillar (the fight against international crime, for example). The EU produces foreign policy within all three pillars, as well as ‘across’ them – in that decisions involve policy instruments from one or more pillars.

Decision-making rules differ, however, in each pillar. In the EC pillar, decision-making is by and large supranational, meaning that states could be outvoted since qualified majority voting can often be used, and central institutions such as the European Commission and European Parliament influence legislation. The CFSP and JHA pillars are instead intergovernmental frameworks, in which the member states retain more control over decision-making primarily because they can veto decisions. These differences are explained further in chapters 2 and 3.

This chapter first outlines the debate on EU foreign policy-making, the oft-cited limits to a common foreign policy and the factors that could help overcome these limits. Once we have established that the EU can and does indeed produce foreign policy, we can consider in more detail the substance of the policy it produces.

1.1 Obstacles to a common EU foreign policy

Most analyses of the Union’s foreign policy failures point to the insistence of national governments on pursuing their foreign policy interests separately, or at least ensuring that any Union policy causes least damage to them. The Union does not come close to having exclusive jurisdiction over foreign policy, and its member states can still act autonomously in international affairs. They may agree to act collectively – but that agreement is not mandatory and is not always forthcoming. Even within the EC pillar, the member states will seek to protect their vital interests and block decisions that contravene them. The member states still control many important foreign policy instruments. And although some of the EU’s policy instruments fall under the EC pillar’s exclusive jurisdiction (and therefore may require approval by qualified majority voting), tacit or explicit agreement of all the member states is still needed for the Union to act internationally.⁶ For many critics, the Union’s lack of military instruments also blocks the development of a common foreign policy (although, since 2002, it is supposedly ready to deploy forces for peace-keeping, humanitarian, and crisis management tasks). This means the Union cannot exercise much influence – if it cannot back up its diplomacy

with the use of force, then it will never become a '*complete*, not merely a civilian power'.⁷ Thus the member states have not created collective capabilities to match the expectations of coherent, effective international behaviour.⁸

It is argued that the member states do not share extensive common interests, and this 'logic of diversity'⁹ tends to block agreement on creating more supranational foreign policy-making machinery, as well as the making of common foreign policies within the current framework. Philip Gordon has suggested that EU member states 'will only take the difficult and self-denying decision to share their foreign policy sovereignty if the gains of common action are seen to be so great that sacrificing sovereignty is worth it, or if their interests converge to the point that little loss of sovereignty is entailed.' And he maintained that 'these conditions have not held in the past, do not currently hold, and are not likely to hold in the future.'¹⁰

These arguments are consistent with either realist or intergovernmentalist theories. Realists emphasize the limits to cooperation, and argue that international institutions cannot overcome these limits. States have to survive in an anarchic international system, so they must perforce be concerned with whether or not other states (potential enemies) will gain more than they do from any cooperative venture. The accumulation, maintenance and use of power – especially military – are critically important, not only to ensure survival but to protect and promote other national interests.

Intergovernmentalists, in contrast, argue that international institutions can help overcome the limits to cooperation. But they see those institutions as a means of pursuing state interests, through bargaining, and large states will not accept outcomes that contravene those interests. Bargaining involves making side payments to small states and threatening sanctions to overcome resistance to an agreement. Only when cooperation brings benefits will states cooperate, and they will not make fundamental compromises just for the sake of agreement.¹¹

Other theorists concentrate on identity, and the lack of a European identity, as the primary obstacle to a European foreign policy. Several observers deny that European interests can develop in the absence of a European state. They argue that foreign policy is the expression of the identity and interests of a particular community, and, until the Union becomes such a community, it will never be able to formulate and implement effective, legitimate foreign policy. David Allen maintains that foreign policy is intrinsically linked to the 'idea of a state with a set of interests identified by a government'.¹² Jean-Marie Guehenno goes beyond the problematique of a common

government and links the lack of European interests to the absence of a European polity:

If there is to be a European foreign policy, it is not enough to overcome the national interests of the Member States. Common European interests are as much political constructs as the national interests they are expected to supersede: national interests were produced by national polities therefore a European foreign policy requires a European polity, which will produce European interests.¹³

This is echoed in the assertion by Christopher Hill and William Wallace that ‘effective foreign policy rests upon a shared sense of national identity, of a nation-state’s “place in the world”, its friends and enemies, its interests and aspirations. . . . The European Community rests upon a relatively weak sense of shared history and identity.’¹⁴

Yet these obstacles have not stopped the member states from developing the mechanisms for foreign policy cooperation, or declaring that they do share some common interests and objectives and desire to pursue them collectively. This does not always translate into a common European foreign policy – even where there are shared interests, the member states may be unable to reach agreement on policy. But there are pressures for collective action, which can result in common foreign policies.

1.2 The potential for a common EU foreign policy

The pressures for collective action, for the articulation and pursuit of common objectives, are both external and internal. External stimuli include concrete demands on the EU for action, as well as the more diffuse effects of international interdependence or globalization. Interdependence implies more than interconnectedness; it characterizes an international system in which states are not the only important actors (non-state actors such as multinational corporations and international organizations can have an impact) and military security is not the primary goal of governments (other goals such as economic wealth or environmental protection can top the foreign policy agenda). Interdependence is not necessarily symmetrical: there are variations in states’ sensitivity and vulnerability to changes in transaction flows.¹⁵ Globalization has myriad meanings; it is most often used to describe ‘the radical interpenetration of economies to the extent that states are no longer able to exercise meaningful author-

ity over their territories.¹⁶ Other definitions resemble the conception of interdependence: ‘the processes through which sovereign national states are criss-crossed and undermined by transnational actors with varying prospects of power, orientations, identities and networks.’¹⁷

Interdependence could, of course, impede collective action: the member states could react differently to international developments, because they are affected differently by them (the logic of diversity). The cross-national ties of non-state actors, and the transnational nature of key problems facing governments, can also make *state* action ineffective, injudicious or irrelevant. These ties and issues may extend well beyond the EU, making action at the EU level equally difficult, especially if only some of the member states are affected or involved.

But interdependence could also encourage collective action by the EU in at least three ways. Firstly, there is awareness that unilateral action is often either ineffective or impossible in an interdependent world. The EU member states would be much better off trying to act collectively. They recognize that there is a ‘politics of scale’: they will ‘carry more weight in certain areas when they act together as a bloc than when they act separately.’¹⁸

Secondly, interdependence creates opportunities for EU action. There is more room for the EU to act autonomously: its civilian instruments could have more influence in a world in which economics is just as or even more important than military prowess. In addition, asymmetric interdependence gives the EU leverage. The EU can potentially influence the domestic and external policies of third countries if they depend on the EU for trade, aid or other benefits. (Conversely, of course, the extent of EU dependence on third countries for, say, material resources will affect EU policy-making.)

Thirdly, interdependence has shaped the ‘policy agenda’ in ways that can make collective action sensible and desirable. The EU’s policy instruments (aid, trade, diplomacy) are suitable for dealing with new security threats, including (non-violent) ethnic disputes, violations of human rights, economic deprivation and international crime – all of which would be difficult for the member states to handle separately. Furthermore, EU action may be considered to be more legitimate than unilateral action on new issues such as the promotion of human rights and democratization, or humanitarian intervention.

There are also more concrete external factors encouraging common foreign policy-making. The EU comes under considerable pressure to respond to the many demands on it for political dialogue, aid, trade agreements, association, membership, and so on. External

demands grew particularly with the completion of the single European market between 1987 and 1993 (which sparked fears of a 'fortress Europe') and have not diminished. Several writers have termed this 'externalization': development of the EC's internal market generates outsiders' pressure for compensation, to which the member states must respond collectively.¹⁹ But external demands are not just related to the international effects of the internal market. The Union's economic strength can generate expectations that it will exercise political influence: for example, the Palestinian National Authority has persistently called on the Union to play a political role in the Middle East peace process that would be commensurate with the Union's status as the largest donor of aid to the Palestinians. Enlargement (the EU grew from six member states in 1957 to fifteen in 1993, and should have another ten in 2004) adds to the EU's 'global weight' and fuels higher expectations that the EU will act globally. As Christopher Hill notes, while disappointment in the EU may lower expectations, there are 'structural forces which keep expectations up'.²⁰ Many countries still look to the EU for political and economic ties, and there will still be a long queue for membership after the 2004 enlargement.²¹ Of course, the EU may respond only partially or not at all to such demands, but they nonetheless create pressures for collective action.

Internal stimuli for EU foreign policy include both intra-EU and intra-member state factors. As even the intergovernmentalists argue, the member states can 'use' the EU to pursue strictly national economic or security interests. One or more member states (acting together) may lead a concerted push for EU action because it will 'add value' to, or supplement, their own activities (and the EU may have more appropriate or even potentially more influential policy instruments). As the EU has enlarged, new member states have sought to influence the content and scope of its external relations. For example, the UK, Portugal and Spain wanted to incorporate relations with their former colonies; the Scandinavian member states have pressed for attention to be paid to the 'northern dimension', the Baltic states and Russia. Furthermore, collective action can conveniently provide a 'shield':²² member states can hide behind the EU, citing the exigencies of going along with their partners when faced with unpalatable demands from outside (or domestic actors).

Pressures for EU action on international issues can also come 'from below', from domestic public opinion and domestic actors (parliaments, NGOs, and so on), as well as from transnationally organized actors such as NGOs based in Brussels, or 'epistemic communities', transnational networks of professional experts, who agree on certain

beliefs and share common interests, and who supply knowledge to policy-makers.²³

Neo-functionalism, a theory developed in the context of European integration in the 1950s and 1960s, points to several other pressures that could lead to common foreign policy-making.²⁴ EU institutions – notably the Commission and, to a much more limited extent, the European Parliament – may push for EU foreign policy action, especially if it involves the use of instruments under the shared or exclusive jurisdiction of the Community. Neo-functionalists argue that the Commission can help to articulate common European interests, suggest policy options, and encourage agreement among the member states on policies that represent more than the lowest common denominator. Its role in Community pillar decision-making is much stronger, however, than in the other two pillars. The European Parliament can press for common foreign policies particularly by using its budgetary powers and its powers to approve external agreements.

Neo-functionalists posit that integration proceeds gradually, via a process of spillover: sector integration, as in the coal and steel sectors, will beget its own impetus and extend to the entire economy as a result of connections between sectors and the ‘creative talents’ of political elites who seize the opportunities to expand the tasks of the organization. Spillover from economic integration could affect positively the prospects for common foreign policy-making. The precursor of the CFSP, European Political Cooperation (EPC), was, after all, established in 1970 partly because the six member states felt the need to speak with a common political voice in international affairs, to match their growing economic voice. But spillover may be more diffuse, occurring through what Michael Smith has termed the politicization of the EC’s external activities, for example, by setting political conditions for EC assistance. He has even argued that ‘external economic relations and external economic policies are the core of EU “foreign policy”’ and that therefore the ‘flag follows trade’: ‘the development of the EC’s engagement with the world political economy is more likely to lead to an activist and substantial foreign policy than the arguments about CFSP.’²⁵

Incentives for common foreign policy-making can also result from the very process of cooperation. Constructivists argue that, through the process of cooperation, actors’ interests and identities change. Institutions (stable sets of identities and interests) are created through reciprocal interaction; institutionalization is a process of internalizing new identities and interests. Collective identities and

interests – feelings of solidarity, community and loyalty – could even be formed in this process.²⁶

Most of the EU member states have worked together for at least three decades; processes of socialization and of ‘engrenage’ are at work here. Over twenty years ago, Philippe de Schoutheete pointed to the development of a ‘coordination reflex’ among EPC participants: they consulted each other before taking a stance on international developments.²⁷ Through these sorts of processes, member states become more likely to perceive common interests.²⁸ It is therefore possible, *pace* the critics, for common interests to develop even in the absence of a polity. Roy Ginsberg has called this a ‘self-styled logic’, in which common policies arise from the shared perception of European interests. Examples of such policies, reflecting an ‘indigenous and unique European quality’, are support for regional integration, EU membership conditionality, and aid for civil society.²⁹ The growth of ‘we-feeling’ among the EU member states could also help explain why they would choose to act through the EU, rather than through other organizations or unilaterally. As Ben Tonra argues, the continual reform of common foreign policy-making procedures reflects a desire not only to improve the EU’s problem-solving capacity, but also to strengthen collective identification and consequent action.³⁰

Now, it is obvious that the stimuli listed above have not led to common foreign policies all of the time; the member states are not always eager for EU action. But they do often agree on common objectives and mobilize collective and national resources to try to achieve them. Of course, what they agree to do also reflects the internal dynamics of negotiation and compromise among the member states. Certain types of action may be off-limits because of the objections of one or more member states, and actions may be ‘watered down’ due to the need for compromise among the national positions. But the incentives for common foreign policy-making are there.

1.3 The EU’s foreign policy objectives

The fact that the Union has articulated common foreign policy objectives could be considered a step forward towards a more effective assertion of its international identity. For Gunnar Sjöstedt, a structural requirement for ‘international actor capability’ is the existence of commonly accepted goals, along with a system for mobilizing resources necessary to meet the goals. Goals are more precise than

interests; in fact, they operationalize interests, and are principles that would be valid for a relatively long time.³¹

Naturally, once objectives have been identified, attempts have to be made to fulfil them. As Arnold Wolfers noted, what differentiates foreign policy goals from mere aspirations is that sacrifices (in time, money, lives, and so on) must be made to realize goals.³² Choices must be made, priorities decided (for international actors are normally pursuing numerous internal and external goals) and means deployed. Of course, this does not mean that objectives will indeed be fulfilled: even if the means are appropriate and the objectives reasonable, external circumstances (such as the amenability of other actors) may simply not be conducive to their realization.

But how well the EU is capable of fulfilling its objectives does depend partly on the extent of its international actor capability: its decision-making mechanisms and its instruments. The member states have to agree to wield policy instruments that are expected to be effective, to devote the resources considered necessary to achieve the objective. Thus any exploration of the EU's foreign policy objectives must consider how the EU tries to fulfil them. As discussed in later chapters, the EU has devoted considerable, if not necessarily sufficient, resources towards meeting the objectives considered in this book, although it does not always pursue them consistently or coherently.

It took some time for the Community to articulate concrete foreign policy objectives, in keeping with the gradual evolution of a more overtly political side to European integration. Sjöstedt argued in 1977 that the Community had articulated vague and general interests (such as the maintenance of peace, or the desire to speak with one voice in international affairs), but that it had not yet specified goals. The Rome Treaty, which established the European Community, does not contain foreign relations objectives, reflecting its origins as a project of economic integration. The Community can engage in external economic relations, but the objectives of those relations are not laid down in the treaty. It was only with the creation of a separate framework for foreign policy cooperation (EPC) that the member states began to consider what they wanted to achieve collectively on the international stage.

The 'founding' documents of EPC – the 1970 Luxembourg Report, the 1973 Copenhagen Report and the 1981 London Report – do not actually state what the EPC is for, what the member states intend to do together in foreign policy. They are instead concerned with setting out the basic modalities of cooperation, coordination and (possible) collective action. But in the 1970s and 1980s there were attempts to

map out the common interests and objectives of the member states, in a highly general way. In December 1973 the foreign ministers of the nine EC member states published a document on the European identity. They declared that the 'Nine' intended 'to contribute to ensuring that international relations have a more just basis; that the independence and equality of States are better preserved; that prosperity is more equitably shared; and that the security of each country is more effectively guaranteed.'³³ The Nine would try to define common foreign policy positions to pursue these objectives.

The next grand attempt to set out international objectives came in the late 1980s. The provisions on EPC in the 1987 Single European Act (SEA) merely state that the member states 'shall ensure that common principles and objectives are gradually developed and defined' (article 30.2). But the SEA preamble contains a hint of their common interests:

Aware of the responsibility incumbent upon Europe to aim at speaking ever increasingly with one voice and to act with consistency and solidarity in order more effectively to protect its common interests and independence, in particular to display the principles of democracy and compliance with the law and with human rights to which they are attached, so that together that may make their own contribution to the preservation of international peace and security . . .

In December 1988, in the midst of international concern that the completion of the single European market (launched by the SEA) would result in a 'fortress Europe', the Rhodes European Council issued a statement on the international role of the European Community.³⁴ The heads of state or government pledged their commitment to greater liberalization of international trade, and to closer cooperation with third countries across the globe. The EC and its member states will:

- play an active role in the preservation of international peace and security, and in the solution of regional conflicts;
- demonstrate solidarity to the spreading movement for democracy and support for the Universal Declaration on Human Rights;
- strengthen the effectiveness of the United Nations and contribute to its peace-keeping role;
- improve social and economic conditions in less-developed countries; and
- work to overcome the division of Europe and to promote the Western values and principles that the member states have in common.

Another major attempt to specify foreign policy objectives was made during the Maastricht Treaty negotiations in 1991. The member states were setting up a 'new and improved' mechanism for foreign policy cooperation, the CFSP, and felt the need to indicate what it would do. They considered declaring specific objectives, but found it impossible to agree on a definite list.³⁵ So the objectives listed in the treaty are vague and general (see box 1.1).

After the signing of the Maastricht Treaty, more progress was made in setting out objectives. In June 1992 the foreign ministers submitted a report to the Lisbon European Council on potential areas for CFSP 'joint action' *vis-à-vis* particular countries or groups of countries, implicitly including developing countries.³⁶ This gives a

Box 1.1 The Maastricht Treaty on European Union: objectives

Objectives of the Common Foreign and Security Policy:

- to safeguard the common values, fundamental interests and independence of the Union;
- to strengthen the security of the Union in all ways;
- to preserve peace and strengthen international security;
- to promote international cooperation; and
- to develop and consolidate democracy and the rule of law, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms (article J.1).

The treaty does not lay out objectives for the external relations of the European Community pillar, but it does set out objectives for *development cooperation*. The Community will foster:

- the sustainable economic and social development of the developing countries, and more particularly the most disadvantaged among them;
- the smooth and gradual integration of the developing countries into the world economy;
- the campaign against poverty in the developing countries; and
- the development and consolidation of democracy and the rule of law, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms (article 130u).

more detailed list of foreign policy objectives, although they are still quite general and are not prioritized. It would also be difficult to oppose any of them, worthy as they are. Six objectives for joint actions are:

- strengthening democratic principles and institutions and respect for human and minority rights;
- promoting regional political stability and contributing to the creation of political and/or economic frameworks that encourage regional cooperation or moves towards regional or sub-regional integration;
- contributing to the prevention and settlement of conflicts;
- contributing to a more effective international coordination in dealing with emergency situations;
- strengthening international cooperation in issues of international interest such as the fight against arms proliferation, terrorism and traffic in illicit drugs; and
- promoting and supporting good government.

These objectives continue to appear in declarations and official documents, flanked by other objectives such as the promotion of sustainable development, reduction of poverty, disarmament, non-proliferation, and so on.³⁷ For example, the EU's priorities for the 2001 UN General Assembly included, in addition to revitalizing the UN itself: promoting human rights and democratic principles; preventing and resolving conflict; improving coordination of humanitarian action; furthering disarmament and non-proliferation; strengthening international environmental governance; and promoting sustainable development.³⁸

What is striking about most of the objectives is that they are what Arnold Wolfers called 'milieu goals' rather than 'possession goals'. Possession goals further national interests. Milieu goals aim to shape the environment in which the state – or the EU, in our case – operates. Milieu goals may only be means of achieving possession goals, but they may also be goals that transcend the national interest and are shared widely.³⁹ Although the EU does seek to protect its external interests (especially in the field of international trade), judging from the objectives it has articulated, it is constructing a broader identity, more intent on shaping its surrounding environment.

The five objectives examined in this book have been chosen because they are primarily political and security-related (as opposed, for example, to international environmental protection or the promotion of sustainable development), and are more concrete than most of the CFSP objectives listed in the Maastricht Treaty. They

are cross-pillar objectives and are frequently combined in comprehensive policies, such as ‘CFSP common strategies’, which list the Union’s goals *vis-à-vis* particular third countries and envisage the use of a wide variety of different instruments (from across the pillars) to achieve them. In some cases, the EU’s adoption of the objectives pre-dates the attempts outlined above to list general foreign policy aims.

The Union does not generally set priorities among its objectives, yet they can easily conflict with each other. For example, the fight against international crime may be incompatible with the promotion of human rights if it entails tolerating authoritarian leaders who suppress international criminal networks. The EU has implicitly established broad geographical priorities, in that the periphery seems to be of greater importance (see chapter 3), but again there are difficulties: will the EU pursue these objectives *everywhere*? It clearly lacks the resources to do so. The choices among objectives that the EU makes will indicate which are actually most important (at least in a given context) – even if they are not explicitly declared as such.

There are growing pressures for setting priorities. In January 2001, Javier Solana, the High Representative for the EU, criticized the common strategies because, among other things, they did not set priorities. External Relations Commissioner Chris Patten has also been pushing for a clarification of external action priorities. At the General Affairs Council on 22–3 January 2001, the foreign ministers considered Solana’s criticisms, and launched a first debate on the priorities for the EU’s external action budget and for improving the coherence of EU external action.⁴⁰ The extent to which the EU does indeed set priorities is analysed throughout this book. In the promotion of democracy and human rights, for example, the EU is concentrating on some countries (see chapters 5 and 6), but this is a very recent development.

1.4 The EU’s international identity

The EU’s foreign policy objectives, and the way in which they are pursued, are key elements of its international identity. They indicate, to EU citizens and outsiders, what the EU considers important, to what it will dedicate resources. Identity here is conceived as ‘the images of individuality and distinctiveness (“self-hood”) held and projected by an actor and formed (and modified over time), through relations with significant “others”.’⁴¹ Although this definition comes

from social psychology and applies to individuals, states – and organizations composed of states – also seek to project distinctive identities in the international arena. A growing literature seeks to conceptualize the formation and modification of the EU's international identity.⁴²

The EU's international identity has often been characterized as unique, or *sui generis*. The Union has been described as a 'gentle power', 'normative power', 'post-modern power' and 'civilian power'.⁴³ All of these terms broadly refer to the EU's pursuit of distinct foreign policy principles: the acceptance of the necessity of cooperation with others in the pursuit of international objectives (thus a preference for multilateralism and respect for international law) and a concentration on non-military means to secure goals. This is a 'structural foreign policy', in Mario Telò's definition:

[It] affects particularly the economic and social structures of partners (states, regions, economic actors, international organizations, etc.), it is implemented through pacific and original means (diplomatic relations, agreements, sanctions and so on), and its scope is not conjunctural but rather in the middle and long range.⁴⁴

For example, the EU has developed a wide network of political and economic cooperation with non-member countries, and has supported, among other initiatives, the International Criminal Court and the nuclear non-proliferation regime. Furthermore, as Christopher Hill and William Wallace have noted, 'European diplomacy has steadily become associated in the public mind with a distinctive set of principles', which include a preference for diplomacy over coercion, the use of mediation to resolve conflicts, a preference for long-term economic solutions to political problems, and the promotion of human rights.⁴⁵ The influence of law on the EU's international relations is also unique: the EU very often establishes and develops relations based on law, through the conclusion of agreements with third countries and regional groupings.⁴⁶

To highlight the EU's uniqueness, comparisons are often made between it and the US:

Europeans prefer to rely on economic, cultural and political tools to meet their global or regional aims, while Americans often employ their enormous military leverage in pursuing their ambitions. Also, Europeans always prefer multilateralism, while Americans are ready to turn to unilateral solutions if the latter seem to suit their needs better. Europeans prefer to engage in a long-term diplomatic process,

often with an unclear price and outcome, while Americans have a more instrumental or strategic approach to diplomacy.⁴⁷

In contrast to the EU's focus on milieu goals, the US foreign policy agenda is focused on threats to its own security. These are primarily traditional military threats or 'new threats resulting from the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the growing power of terrorist groups and other non-state actors, and the increasing vulnerability of US society to direct attack.'⁴⁸

Another obvious distinction between the US and the EU is the treatment of the so-called rogue states or countries of concern, Cuba, Libya and Iran.⁴⁹ While the US has sought to isolate those states and has imposed sanctions on them, the EU has not, although it has not fully embraced them either. It offered a cooperation agreement to Cuba (in 1996) provided certain political conditions are met, offered to include Libya as an observer in the Euro-Mediterranean partnership (in 2000), and agreed to negotiate a cooperation agreement with Iran (in 2002).

The contrast between the EU and US is particularly stark with the current US administration, under George W. Bush.⁵⁰ The Bush administration has rejected numerous international treaties, including the International Criminal Court and 1997 Kyoto Protocol, and scuppered strengthening the 1972 Biological Weapons Convention and imposing limits on illegal trafficking of small arms. The US continues to impose sanctions on a large number of targets (almost sixty times since 1994), showing a preference for coercion.⁵¹ In the immediate wake of the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks on the US, transatlantic solidarity was impressive, but the differences in approaches remain, and shortly resurfaced.

The comparison is, however, a bit simplistic. First of all, the EU may not be the 'gentle giant' that it might appear to be when set against the US: it too imposes sanctions (though not as often as the US does), and it can negotiate fiercely to protect its own interests. Secondly, the US could rightly claim to pursue many of the same foreign policy objectives as the EU (promotion of democracy and human rights, for example). Therefore, to explore if, and the extent to which, EU foreign policy activity is indeed unique, we need to ask additional questions: 1) Why has the EU agreed on these particular foreign policy objectives? Are they the product of internal dynamics – and hence, arguably, unique? Or are they influenced more by external processes of normative globalization, such that the EU's distinctive identity is less obvious? 2) How does the EU pursue these objectives? Are the instruments and the methods used by the EU to

pursue these objectives those of a civilian power, or of a more assertive, almost state-like, power bloc?

Whence the objectives: internal or global dynamics?

Two possible ‘sources’ of the EU’s objectives – and more broadly, its international identity – are explored here. On the one hand, there could be a link between the way EU policy is made and the content of the policy thus produced. On the other, the objectives and values of EU policy may reflect processes of what we can call ‘normative globalization’, meaning the ever-widening acceptance of norms, or standards of domestic and international conduct.⁵² Thus the EU’s foreign policy activity simply mirrors and reproduces international norms. These two possibilities can be roughly categorized as the differing approaches of foreign policy analysts concerned with internal decision-making processes and outcomes, and of those constructivists concerned with the influence of socially constructed international norms on states (the EU, in our case).⁵³

The output of the EU foreign policy-making process obviously reflects the values and interests of the main participants, the member states. It is primarily they that push for the EU to pursue particular objectives. But if the primary source of the EU’s objectives is the member states, then the member states could also be pursuing those objectives in other international fora. What may make the EU unique is the way in which national preferences can become EU policy, and the effects that EU membership may have had on the preferences themselves.

It can be argued that the EU’s unique foreign policy output derives from the very nature of the EU foreign policy system. Richard Whitman has defined the EU’s international identity as ‘EU operations explicitly directed outwards’, conceived in terms of the instruments available to the Union as well as how ‘elements of the Union that define its *sui generis* nature also contribute distinctive facets to its international identity.’⁵⁴ Such elements include its institutional structure and decision-making norms and procedures. In sum, the way that the Union makes and implements foreign policy is reflected in the content of the policy thus produced. To put it another way, the objectives and values that the EU promotes internationally – its international identity – are inherently linked to the internal dynamics of the Union itself.

Thus, we could interpret the emphasis on establishing contractual relations as a reflection of the Community’s origins as an attempt to instil the rule of law in relations between its member states. As

François Duchêne argued: ‘The European Community’s interest as a civilian group of countries long on economic power and relatively short on armed force is as far as possible to *domesticate* relations between states, including those of its own members and those with states outside its frontiers.’⁵⁵ Lily Gardner Feldman has asserted that the legacy of reconciliation between former enemies (France and Germany in particular) ‘provides European foreign policy with a distinctive content – a focus on peace and development, on the one hand, and the creation of cooperative institutional structures, on the other.’⁵⁶

Now, we could posit that the EU’s international identity is unique because it lacks the capabilities to be anything else. It will never match the military power of the sole remaining superpower, not only because member states are unwilling to cede national sovereignty in defence, but because they do not want to spend the necessary money or reform the way military budgets are spent. The EU thus has no choice but to use civilian instruments, and to try to change its milieu so that military force is less necessary. But this view ignores the reasons behind the reluctance to match US military might in the first place: law should replace power politics in relations between EU member states, *and* in their foreign relations. As Francis Fukuyama pointed out,

The European view is that Europe seeks to create a genuine rule-based international order suitable to the circumstances of the post-cold war world. That world, free of sharp ideological conflicts and large scale military competition, is one that gives substantially more room for consensus, dialogue and negotiation as ways of settling disputes.⁵⁷

If the EU’s distinctive international identity derives from its unusual institutions and decision-making procedures, then presumably this distinctiveness will decrease the more that those institutions are comparable to national institutions. We could – with some imagination – identify a gradual process of the EU acquiring similar accoutrements to those that we traditionally associate with national foreign policies. In 1999, an EU Policy Unit was created, a High Representative for the CFSP appointed, and an intervention force agreed. These new institutions carry out similar functions to national institutions (policy planning units of foreign ministries; foreign ministry spokespersons; or national armed forces).⁵⁸

Some observers have long feared that the Union would lose its distinctiveness and develop into a state. Decades ago, Johann Galtung expressed the fear that the European Community would develop into

a superpower, re-creating the ills of sovereignty and power politics on a larger scale; David Mitrany opposed regional integration schemes for similar reasons.⁵⁹ Such fears reflect the tensions between two different visions of integration, pointed out by Joseph Weiler. The first, the ‘unity vision’, is about state-building, about re-creating the state on a grander scale with the EU; the second, the ‘community vision’, is about transforming notions of sovereignty and international relations.⁶⁰

The path to ‘unity’ could be less likely in the light of enlargement. It will simply be impossible to deepen integration along state-like lines, given the increased heterogeneity that will result from further enlargement. Jan Zielonka argues that the EU will resemble a ‘neo-medieval empire’, with ‘overlapping authorities, divided sovereignty, diversified institutional arrangements and multiple identities’, not a Westphalian model, with its ‘concentration of power, hierarchy, sovereignty and clear-cut identity’.⁶¹ But one solution to the increased heterogeneity of an enlarged EU is to create a core within the EU: like-minded states would deepen integration among themselves. The Amsterdam (1999) and Nice (2003) Treaty provisions on flexibility pave the way for this. Thus the tension between the unity and community visions will continue.

What is important about the possible trajectories of Union development here is that they imply different international identities of the Union. If we are witnessing a transformation to ‘unity’, then there are implications for the Union’s international relations. What may result is an entity more inclined to protect and promote its own interests. A ‘neo-medieval empire’, on the other hand, may continue to have difficulty in formulating and implementing common foreign policies, but, when it does so, these could continue to be distinctive along the lines already mentioned.

The way foreign policy is made within the EU may not, however, be the most important determinant of the content of that policy. The ‘distinctive set of principles’ associated with EU foreign policy may be less distinctive if we posit that the principles themselves are fairly universal. Once the overwhelming exigency of survival in a nuclear-armed bipolar confrontation passed, states – and non-state actors, including international organizations – have been freer to pursue milieu goals of the sort liberal internationalists would recognize: the export of democracy, promotion of human rights, promotion of free trade, and so on. The Union’s foreign policy output may thus reflect the *zeitgeist* of post-Cold War normative globalization.⁶²

Certainly the EU’s objectives are shared within wider frameworks, from the UN to European organizations. In the 1995 New Transat-

lantic Agenda, for example, the EU and US declared that they would work together to pursue shared objectives, including promoting international peace, stability and development; responding to global challenges such as international crime and drug-trafficking; and strengthening the world trading system.⁶³

Likewise, within Europe, a far-reaching normative framework has developed. As Gregory Flynn and Henry Farrell argue,

[a] new hierarchy of norms, centred around an altered sense of sovereignty, nonintervention, and self-determination, has emerged. The quality of interstate order has been linked to the quality of states – to their ability to organize sovereignty along liberal democratic lines.⁶⁴

But, significantly, Flynn and Farrell maintain that the ‘most important steps in reconstituting Europe’s normative framework were taken between 1989 and 1992 within the CSCE [the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe].’⁶⁵ The EU is not the only framework in which liberal internationalist norms are developed and given expression. It exists in a dense institutional environment in Europe, and its member states are members of other organizations that have contributed to the spread of norms. These also include the Council of Europe, an organization older than the European Community, specifically dedicated to fostering democracy and the protection of human rights, and even NATO, which shifted in the 1990s from an emphasis on collective defence to one on conflict resolution and prevention.⁶⁶

The EU’s member states may thus be converging on a set of goals that reflect international norms, and they may view the Union as an (or the most) appropriate forum in which they can pursue those goals. The values they share may be widespread, not EU-specific, and the EU may be seen as the framework within which such values can be articulated. In this case, the process of cooperation within the Union reproduces broader values more than it generates unique ‘European interests.’⁶⁷ Paradoxically, as Mario Telò points out, structural foreign policies, such as those the EU conducts, ‘are efficient only if they interact with deep structural trends.’⁶⁸ Thus the EU may not be unique, but it could be more effective in international relations.

More than likely, however, there is a structuration process at work. The Union itself influences the development and spread of international norms, just as it is affected by them. What is important for our purposes – clarifying the international identity of the Union – is the balance between ‘structure’ and ‘agency’. How autonomous, how

unique, is the EU? How successfully has it asserted a distinct, as well as distinctive, international identity?

Henrik Larsen has argued that the EU tries to present itself 'as a political unit with a role to play in world politics with its own interests. Europe is constructed as an international unit or identity, not just the same as the West, in the same way as the US also presents itself as a unit and not just the same as the West.'⁶⁹ Even back in 1973, this was a concern: the document on European identity made it clear that the US and the nine member states 'share values and aspirations based on a common heritage', but that the Nine were still determined 'to establish themselves as a distinct and original entity.'⁷⁰ Much more recently, Javier Solana, the High Representative for the CFSP, has declared that the common foreign policy 'is about improving the coherence of our shared objectives and interests in the world. And it is about promoting the values which lie at the foundation of the European Union.'⁷¹

To try to establish the extent to which the EU's objectives reflect distinctively EU principles, or more universal principles, the history of the objective as an EU foreign policy objective will be traced in each chapter. Why and when did the EU adopt it, and who was pushing for its adoption? Did the EU adopt the objective before other actors did, or did it follow them? Each chapter considers how the Union legitimizes its pursuit of the objectives. Does the Union – in its official declarations, policy statements, and so on – refer to specifically EU values as the justification for its actions? Or does it refer to more universal principles that could be accepted as valid by other international actors? Some objectives may be more clearly delineated and unique EU objectives; others may reflect the influence of universal principles to a greater extent.

Civilian model or power bloc?

The second aspect of the EU's international identity explored in this book is the specific content of the policies aimed at achieving the foreign policy objectives. If the EU's objectives largely reflect normative globalization rather than EU-specific values, then the way that the EU pursues those objectives may still be considered a unique aspect of the EU's international identity. What foreign policy instruments does the EU use and how does it wield them? In other words, how does the Union 'behave' internationally?

The instruments that the EU can use are primarily economic and diplomatic; chapter 3 elaborates on its 'arsenal' of policy instruments. The instruments that the EU uses are key (for example, contractual

agreements), but so are the ways in which it uses them. K. J. Holsti has put forward six ways in which an international actor can influence other international actors. It can:

- use persuasion (elicit a favourable response without explicitly holding out the possibility of punishments);
- offer rewards;
- grant rewards;
- threaten punishment;
- inflict non-violent punishment; or
- use force.⁷²

Coercion involves threatening or inflicting ‘punishment’, as in the use of sanctions; persuasion entails cooperating with third countries to try to induce desired internal or external policy changes. The difference can be characterized as that between a ‘civilian model’ and a ‘power bloc’, in Christopher Hill’s terms.⁷³ In the civilian power model, the EU relies primarily on persuasion and negotiation in dealing with third countries and international issues. Power bloc behaviour involves the EU using its economic and diplomatic strength in pursuit of its own, self-interested objectives.

The civilian power model is not unique in international relations: small states tend to rely on persuasion rather than coercion. It is more unusual for states with considerable resources to choose to behave like civilian powers – Germany and Japan stood out because of this. It could be countered that rich states – or collectivities of them (the EU) – emanate power and could never truly engage in persuasion, which implies a recognition of equality between the actors involved. But there is nonetheless a continuum from persuasion to coercion, and what matters is where the EU places itself on it.⁷⁴

How much is the EU willing to use coercion to achieve its objectives? When the Single European Act relaunched the integration process in the late 1980s, various observers noted a growing assertiveness by the Community/Union.⁷⁵ Of course, the notion of an assertive Union may seem an exaggeration, particularly in the light of the EU weaknesses exposed during the Balkan conflicts, but, in many respects, the EU does seem increasingly willing to wield power in pursuit of its objectives. It may be developing power bloc tendencies: to promote certain objectives, it uses both carrots (offering or granting rewards) and sticks (threatening or inflicting non-violent punishment). Examples include the EU’s increasing use of conditionality (albeit inconsistently) and the requirement that trading partners approximate their legislation to Community legislation.⁷⁶ Any proclivity towards power bloc behaviour is still checked, however, by

a continuing reluctance to use negative measures (as in sanctions) – this reluctance reflects not just a general scepticism about the effectiveness of negative measures, but also an unwillingness to put at risk important commercial or strategic relationships.

The chapters on the foreign policy objectives thus analyse which policy instruments the EU uses to pursue the objectives. They examine the resources that EU member states are willing to expend to try to achieve the objectives and any constraints on the use of the instruments. Then the chapters consider how these instruments are wielded: does the EU prefer positive to negative measures? Does it apply conditionality, and how consistently?

1.5 Outline of the book

Chapters 2 and 3 provide the background for understanding the EU's foreign policy system. Chapter 2 explains the evolution of that system – the expansion of the Union's foreign policy role and the development of the pillars. Chapter 3 discusses the policy instruments of each pillar. The five foreign policy objectives are then analysed in chapters 4 to 8. How the EU came to adopt each objective and how it seeks to achieve it are the two guiding questions for each chapter. For the first question, the balance of external and internal stimuli behind the adoption and development of each objective will be considered, in particular to uncover the extent to which it can be considered to be 'European', in the sense that it reflects internal dynamics of cooperation more than adaptation of international norms. Who was pushing for its adoption? What were the reasons given for its adoption? Do the EU's documents refer to universal values or international developments? Does the EU encourage third states to adapt to universal standards or to EU ones? Addressing the second question, how the EU pursues the objectives, each chapter analyses the policy instruments that are used and the tendency or not to use coercion, the threat or use of sanctions, with respect to third states. This analysis should hopefully give us a better understanding of the EU's international identity: is it a self-interested and assertive power bloc? Is it a civilian model? Is it an agent of normative globalization or structured by it?