



The European Union: Foreign and Security Policy

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Summary

The United States often looks to Europe as its partner of choice in addressing important global challenges. Given the extent of the transatlantic relationship, congressional foreign policy activities and interests frequently involve Europe. The relationship between the United States and the European Union (EU) has become increasingly significant in recent years, and it is likely to grow even more important. In this context, Members of Congress often have an interest in understanding the complexities of EU policy making, assessing the compatibility and effectiveness of U.S. and EU policy approaches, or exploring the long-term implications of changing transatlantic dynamics.

The EU As a Global Actor

Seeking to play a more active role in global affairs, the EU has developed a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and a Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP). On many foreign policy and security issues, the 27 EU member states exert a powerful collective influence. On the other hand, some critics assert that on the whole the EU remains an economic power only, and that its foreign and security policies have little global impact. Some of the shortcomings in the EU's external policies stem from the inherent difficulties of reaching a complete consensus among the member state governments. Moreover, past institutional arrangements have often failed to coordinate the EU's full range of resources.

Elements of EU External Policy

The Common Foreign and Security Policy is based on unanimous consensus among the member states. CFSP is a mechanism for adopting common principles and guidelines on political and security issues, committing to common diplomatic approaches, and undertaking joint actions. Many analysts argue that Europe's relevance in world affairs increasingly depends on its ability to speak and act as one.

The EU is currently conducting 16 operations under its Common Security and Defense Policy. To establish a more robust CSDP, EU member states have been exploring ways to increase their military capabilities and promote greater defense integration. These efforts have met with limited success thus far. Civilian missions and capabilities, however, are also central components of CSDP; the majority of CSDP missions have been civilian operations in areas such as police training and rule of law.

External policies in technical areas such as trade, humanitarian aid, development assistance, enlargement, and neighborhood policy are formulated and managed through a "community" process at the level of the EU institutions. (The European Neighborhood Policy seeks to deepen the EU's relations with its southern and eastern neighbors while encouraging them to pursue governance and economic reforms.) These are the EU's most deeply integrated external policies. Given events in North Africa, the Middle East, and some of the former Soviet states, EU policymakers have been rethinking how such external policy tools might be used to better effect.

The United States, the EU, and NATO

Although some observers remain concerned that a strong EU might act as a counterweight to U.S. power, others maintain that an assertive and capable EU is very much in the interest of the United

States. The focus of the transatlantic relationship has changed since the end of the Cold War: it is now largely about the United States and Europe working together to manage a range of global problems. According to some experts, U.S.-EU cooperation holds the greatest potential for successfully tackling many of today's emergent threats and concerns.

Nevertheless, NATO remains the dominant institutional foundation for transatlantic security affairs. U.S. policymakers have supported efforts to develop EU security policies on the condition that they do not weaken NATO, where the United States has a strong voice on European security issues. Despite their overlapping membership, the EU and NATO have struggled to work out an effective cooperative relationship. Analysts suggest that sorting out the dynamics of the U.S.-EU-NATO relationship to allow for a comprehensive and effective use of Euro-Atlantic resources and capabilities will be a key challenge for U.S. and European policymakers in the years ahead.

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Introduction

The United States looks to Europe for partnership on an extensive range of global issues. In terms of international politics, security, and economics, Americans and Europeans tend to share broadly similar values, and often tend to pursue common or compatible goals. Many observers assert that the collective weight and influence of Europe and the United States, when projected through common transatlantic positions and complementary actions, fundamentally increases the odds that both sides will be able to achieve mutually desirable outcomes in world affairs.

More than five decades after the Treaties of Rome (1957) launched a process of European integration, the European Union (EU) has come to play an increasingly important role in the life of its 27 member countries. Reflective of this evolution, significant aspects of policy making have been gradually shifting from national capitals to the EU institutions based in Brussels.

Although the United States continues to maintain strong and active bilateral relations with the individual countries of Europe, and the transatlantic defense relationship remains centered in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), some observers assert that much of the transatlantic partnership is increasingly set in the context of U.S. relations with the EU.

Issues for Congress

Members of Congress and other U.S. policymakers working on transatlantic and global issues have sought to better understand the nature and structure of EU foreign policy and the EU policy-making process. The work of the U.S. Congress encompasses a wide range of activities and issues that have a European dimension, including numerous security and economic concerns.

Thus, whether the topic is police training in Afghanistan or the Balkans; anti-piracy missions off the Horn of Africa; counterterrorism and terrorist financing; Iran sanctions; efforts to end the armed conflict in Syria; political approaches to Russia or China; free trade agreements with South Korea; assistance to developing countries; responses to change in North Africa; or any one of many more issues that could be listed, Members of the 113th Congress often have an interest in examining whether U.S. and EU legislation, initiatives, funding, operations, and political communication are complementary or contradictory. Members of Congress tend to examine such issues in the context of Congress's own legislative activities, oversight activities vis-à-vis policies of the U.S. Administration, or in the context of direct interaction with European legislators and officials.

Many Members of Congress also remain interested in assessing the ways in which developments in EU foreign and security policy might affect the United States and its interests over the longer term. Possible avenues for exploring such interest include examining the EU's global role in the context of evolving U.S. foreign policy priorities, the relationship between the EU and NATO, and the dynamics of the U.S.-EU-NATO relationship.

Consensus, Coherence, and Continuity

The institutional complexity of the EU often presents a challenge to understanding the context and significance of its external policies (policies governing relations with other regions and non-member countries).¹ Since the Treaty on European Union (also commonly known as the Maastricht Treaty) established the modern EU in 1992, EU external policies have been formulated and managed under one of two separate institutional processes:

- The Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), which includes a Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP), is intergovernmental in nature: the 27 member state governments, acting on the basis of unanimous agreement in the European Council (the heads of state or government) and the Council of the European Union (also called the Council of Ministers), are the key actors.
- External policies in areas such as trade, foreign aid, and EU enlargement are shaped and executed under a supranational or “community” decision-making process involving all three of the main EU institutions—the European Commission is arguably the most significant actor in these areas, although the member states (represented in the European Council and the Council of Ministers) and the European Parliament also have important decision-making roles.

The Lisbon Treaty, the EU reform treaty that took effect in December 2009, introduced changes designed to improve the coherence and effectiveness of EU external policies, primarily by enhancing the coordination between these two strands. The treaty set out to remedy three main weaknesses that analysts had identified with regard to EU external policies and the EU policy-making process.

First, while consensus does exist on many issues, achieving political agreement among 27 member countries can be inherently difficult. Differences between the member states can leave the EU with a thinly developed policy or with no common policy at all. A lack of consensus and direction can hinder the development of longer-term strategic approaches to an issue or region. The absence of a common policy can breed confusion if the EU “speaks with many voices” as national leaders express their own views and preferences.

Second, critics regularly asserted that EU foreign policy tended to suffer from insufficient institutional coordination and coherence. Too often, it is argued, the intergovernmental and supranational strands of external policy had not been linked in a meaningful or complementary way. According to this view, the EU has punched below its global weight because it did not fully leverage the considerable array of policy instruments at its disposal.

Third, prior institutional arrangements—namely, the former prominence of the rotating six-month national presidencies in external affairs—were susceptible to shifting priorities, with results sometimes detrimental to policy continuity.

One key Lisbon Treaty innovation designed to address these points was the creation of a new position: High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. The position

¹ For a background overview of the European Union, including an explanation of its main institutions, see CRS Report RS21372, *The European Union: Questions and Answers*, by Kristin Archick.

comes with the additional title of Vice President of the European Commission. (It is therefore represented in EU documents as the HR/VP.) This is the job that has been held since 2009 by former EU Trade Commissioner Catherine Ashton (her five-year term will end in late 2014). She performs the external policy duties previously divided between three officials: the High Representative for CFSP (formerly Javier Solana), the foreign minister of the rotating presidency country, and the Commissioner for External Relations. As such, the High Representative position seeks to be an institutional bridge linking together and coordinating the intergovernmental and “community” dimensions of EU external policy.

A new EU diplomatic corps, the European External Action Service (EEAS), was officially launched in December 2010 to support the work of the High Representative in coordinating and implementing EU foreign policy. The structure of the EEAS likewise reflects a concept of institutional merger between the European Commission and the Council of Ministers: one-third of the personnel of the EEAS is drawn from the Commission, one-third from the secretariat of the Council of the European Union, and one-third is seconded from the national diplomatic services of the member states.

The Lisbon Treaty also created a new “permanent” President of the European Council, an individual serving a once-renewable, two-and-a-half-year term, to manage the activities of the group, promote the formation of consensus, and speak on its behalf.² The president is appointed by agreement among the member states. This is the position held since 2009 (and until 2014) by former Belgian Prime Minister Herman Van Rompuy.

Principles and Philosophy

From the time it was founded in the 1950s, the EU has regarded itself as a civilian power. NATO was the forum where many of the original EU members could focus on questions of Cold War defense and security. Meanwhile, the early decades of the EU were preoccupied with the technical aspects of deep economic integration. This type of integration represented a new form of cooperation between sovereign states that was the very antithesis of the power politics that twice led to the devastation of Europe between 1914 and 1945. The end of the Cold War, however, sparked debates within the EU about the desirability of developing a stronger foreign policy identity. After some early steps in that direction, Europe’s inability to mount a strong political or military intervention in the Balkan Wars of the 1990s lent renewed urgency to such efforts while also stimulating initiatives to build an EU security and defense capability.³

The Treaty on European Union

The 1992 Treaty on European Union outlines the broad set of principles that guide the EU’s external policies and actions. Under the treaty, the EU aims to

- (a) safeguard its values, fundamental interests, security, independence, and integrity;

² Prior to the enactment of the Lisbon Treaty, the head of state or government of the rotating presidency country served as the “temporary” president of the European Council for a six-month period.

³ For an extensive history of EU foreign policy, see Federiga Bindi, “European Union Foreign Policy: A Historical Overview,” in *The Foreign Policy of the European Union*, ed. Federiga Bindi and Irina Angelescu, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 2012), pp. 11-39.

- (b) consolidate and support democracy, the rule of law, human rights and the principles of international law;
- (c) preserve peace, prevent conflicts and strengthen international security, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, with the principles of the Helsinki Final Act and with the aims of the Charter of Paris, including those relating to external borders;
- (d) foster the sustainable economic, social and environmental development of developing countries, with the primary aim of eradicating poverty;
- (e) encourage the integration of all countries into the world economy, including through the progressive abolition of restrictions on international trade;
- (f) help develop international measures to preserve and improve the quality of the environment and the sustainable management of global natural resources, in order to ensure sustainable development;
- (g) assist populations, countries and regions confronting natural or man-made disasters; and
- (h) promote an international system based on stronger multilateral cooperation and good global governance.⁴

The European Security Strategy

The European Security Strategy (ESS), released in 2003, is another important touchstone for understanding the basic philosophy of EU foreign policy.⁵ The ESS sets out three broad strategic objectives for EU policymakers:

- First, most immediately, the EU should take necessary actions to address a considerable list of global challenges and security threats, including regional conflicts, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, state failure, organized crime, disease, and destabilizing poverty. (The 2008 *Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy* adds piracy, cyber security, energy security, and climate change to the list.⁶)
- Second, the EU should focus particularly on building regional security in its neighborhood: the Balkans, the Caucasus, the Mediterranean region, and the Middle East.
- Third, over the longer term, the EU should seek the construction of a rules-based, multilateral world order in which international law, peace, and security are ensured by strong regional and global institutions.

⁴ *Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union*, Article 21.2, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2010:083:0013:0046:EN:PDF>.

⁵ "A Secure Europe in a Better World—European Security Strategy," Brussels, December 12, 2003, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/78367.pdf>.

⁶ "Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy—Providing Security in a Changing World," Brussels, December 11, 2008, http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/reports/104630.pdf.

In outlining broad approaches to pursuing these objectives, the ESS also captures a number of fundamental philosophical elements. The document asserts that the threats and challenges it describes cannot be adequately addressed by military means alone, but require a mixture of military, political, and economic tools. Conflict prevention and threat prevention lie at the root of the EU's preferred security strategy—the EU therefore ultimately seeks to address the root causes of conflict and instability by strengthening governance and human rights, and by assisting economic development through such means as trade and foreign assistance. Analysts assert that these approaches play to one of the EU's main strengths: a considerable repertoire of civilian, “soft power” tools.⁷

Its preference for an international system based on multilateralism also reflects the strengths of the EU. The EU's own internal development in the relations between its member states demonstrates a highly evolved system of multilateral, cooperative policy making. Many assert that this mindset has become ingrained in EU thinking. Although extensive multilateralism suggests a degree of pragmatism and compromise with partners, the EU at the same time seeks to maintain a foreign policy that is distinctly principles-based and normative in its emphasis on democracy and human rights.

The Common Foreign and Security Policy

Building on earlier efforts to coordinate member states' foreign policies, the 1992 Treaty on European Union formally established the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy. CFSP deals with international issues of a political or diplomatic nature, including issues with a security or military orientation—“high politics.” Under the EU treaties, these types of political and security issues remain the prerogative of the member state governments—conceptually, in the case of CFSP, “common” means 27 sovereign governments choosing to work together to the extent that they can reach a consensus on any given policy issue.

Institutions and Actors

The EU institutions representing the member state governments—the European Council (the heads of state or government) and the Council of the European Union (also called the Council of Ministers)—play the defining role in formulating CFSP.

The European Council is the EU's highest level of political authority. It meets twice every six months (an “EU Summit”), and more often if warranted by exceptional circumstances. It is the responsibility of the European Council to “identify the strategic interests and objectives of the Union” with regard to its external action—the European Council supplies political direction and defines the priorities that shape CFSP.⁸ Decisions are made on the basis of consensus.

The President of the European Council is tasked with managing its work, facilitating consensus, and helping to ensure policy continuity, while also serving as the group's spokesman. The High

⁷ Harvard University's Joseph Nye coined the phrase “soft power” to mean an ability to fulfill objectives based on attraction rather than coercion, on the strength of values, culture, institutions, and policies perceived by the international community as legitimate and credible. See Joseph S. Nye, Jr., *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004).

⁸ *Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union*, Article 22.1.

Representative also takes part in the work of the European Council and may submit CFSP proposals for consideration. Although the Lisbon Treaty is somewhat ambiguous in the way it assigns representation duties to both positions, the President of the European Council may be considered the voice of CFSP at the heads of state or government level, and the High Representative may be considered the “day-to-day” voice of CFSP at the ministerial level. The President of the European Commission is also a member of the European Council.

The Council of Ministers is the other primary forum for developing political consensus and direction, and it is where most of the formal mechanics of CFSP decision making are carried out. The foreign ministers of the 27 member states typically meet once a month (the Foreign Affairs Council configuration of the Council of Ministers). Here again, unanimous agreement among all member states is required to adopt a CFSP decision—any one foreign minister may veto a measure.⁹

The Foreign Affairs Council is chaired by the High Representative—as president of the Foreign Affairs Council, she seeks to facilitate consensus among the group. With the support of the European External Action Service, she is then responsible for managing, implementing, and representing CFSP decisions.¹⁰

The High Representative and the Foreign Affairs Council are also supported by the Political and Security Committee (PSC), a Council structure composed of ambassadors from the member states. The PSC monitors and assesses international affairs relevant to CFSP, provides input into CFSP decision making, and monitors the implementation of CFSP. The work of the PSC is closely associated with the High Representative and the EEAS.

Instruments

CFSP is composed of numerous elements. The terminology involved in describing these elements can quickly become confusing because phrases that have a specific meaning in EU parlance overlap with expressions that are also used—and that may have a different meaning—in everyday language.

The EU’s 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam first identified four main CFSP instruments: *Principles and Guidelines*, which provide general political direction; *Common Strategies*, which set out objectives and means; *Joint Actions*, which address specific situations; and *Common Positions*, which define an approach to a particular matter.¹¹ CFSP elements produced before December 2009 are officially referenced under the phrasing of the Treaty of Amsterdam.

The Lisbon Treaty reconceptualizes CFSP instruments into four types of *Decisions*: (1) on the strategic objectives and interests of the EU, (2) on common positions, (3) on joint actions, and (4)

⁹ Constructive abstention is a possibility (a country may abstain from voting and allow the others to move ahead on the basis of unanimity). Once a CFSP decision has been adopted, qualified majority voting (QMV) may be used with regard to implementing measures. The EU typically prefers to operate on the basis of consensus as much as possible.

¹⁰ Prior to the Lisbon Treaty, the foreign minister of the EU’s rotating presidency country chaired the Foreign Affairs Council, and the High Representative for CFSP (Javier Solana) had the lead responsibility for execution.

¹¹ See *The Treaty of Amsterdam*, Articles J.2-J.5, <http://www.eurotreaties.com/amsterdamtreaty.pdf>.

on the implementing arrangements for common positions and actions. Elements of CFSP produced after December 2009 are therefore officially termed *Decisions*.¹²

Principles and Guidelines (or *Decisions* on the strategic objectives and interests of the EU), decided at the highest political level, shape the framework of EU policies and actions. The conclusions and results documents published after a meeting of the European Council or the Foreign Affairs Council are the main ways of promulgating strategic decisions agreed by EU leaders and governments in the area of CFSP.¹³ Between such meetings, the High Representative may also simply release a CFSP statement on behalf of the EU that expresses a consensus viewpoint about an international development.¹⁴

The key strategy documents adopted by the European Council in recent years—such as the European Security Strategy itself, the EU Strategy Against Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (2003), the EU Counterterrorism Strategy (2005), and the EU Internal Security Strategy (2010)—also fall into the category of *Principles and Guidelines* (or *Decisions* on the strategic objectives and interests of the EU).¹⁵

These types of high-level political direction may trigger subsequent activity that formalizes the status of agreed concepts or applies them more specifically and concretely. *Common Positions* and *Joint Actions* (or *Decisions* on common positions or joint actions) take political agreement a step further, committing member states to their provisions after formal adoption by the Council of Ministers.

Conceptually, these instruments occupy something of a gray zone between legislation and political cooperation. Some observers regard them as binding legal instruments effectively comparable to the rest of EU law. Others, citing the lack of legal enforcement mechanisms and the weakness of EU court jurisdiction in these areas, argue that they are a separate category of instrument apart from the majority of EU law.¹⁶ In any case, member states are bound by treaty to “support the Union’s external and security policy actively and unreservedly in a spirit of loyalty and mutual solidarity and shall comply with the Union’s action in this area.”¹⁷

Common Positions often reiterate the EU’s objectives and define a collectively agreed diplomatic approach to a particular region or country. For many observers in the United States, the EU’s position on Cuba may be the most widely known act of this type, but the EU has also adopted

¹² *Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union*, Article 22.1 and Article 25.

¹³ See European Council, *Conclusions*, <http://www.european-council.europa.eu/council-meetings/conclusions.aspx?lang=en>, and, for example, Council of the European Union, *Press Release – 3230th Council Meeting (Foreign Affairs)*, http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/136004.pdf.

¹⁴ See Council of the European Union, *CFSP Statements*, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/policies/foreign-policy/cfsp-statements.aspx?lang=en&BID=73>.

¹⁵ Formal *Common Strategies* as identified in the Treaty of Amsterdam have fallen into disuse. The EU adopted three such CFSP Common Strategies: on Russia (1999), Ukraine (1999), and the Mediterranean region (2000). These documents, adopted under the auspices of the European Council, combined objectives, positions, and actions under a comprehensive, long-term vision for the relationship—compared to the *Common Strategies*, the focus of a *Common Position* is relatively narrower and more immediate. All three *Common Strategies*, however, have long expired. They have not been replaced by updated or amended versions, and no new instruments of this type have been formulated.

¹⁶ See Paul James Cardwell, *EU External Relations and Systems of Governance* (Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2009), pp. 10-27.

¹⁷ *Consolidated Version of the Treaty on European Union*, Article 24.3.

Common Positions with regard to countries such as Zimbabwe, Belarus, and North Korea. As this abbreviated list suggests, the EU generally uses these types of CFSP *Decisions* to address a problematic situation, often involving a foreign government that fails to respect principles of human rights, democracy, rule of law, or international law. In addition, rather than dealing with a single country or region, a *Common Position* might address a cross-cutting topic such as conflict prevention and resolution, nonproliferation and arms control, or terrorism.

In relevant cases, sanctions are often included as part of a broader *Common Position*. As of February 2013, the EU had sanctions in place against governments, organizations, or individuals of 27 countries, plus al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups.¹⁸ Although the EU generally looks to a United Nations Security Council mandate to impart legitimacy for sanctions, in almost all cases the Council of Ministers must adopt a formal instrument for the EU to put sanctions in place. As is the case with EU sanctions on Syria, for example, there may now also be a stand-alone CFSP *Decision* on “restrictive measures” in some instances.

Joint Actions often consist of launching or extending an out-of-area civilian or military operation under the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP). (This process and CSDP missions are discussed in greater detail in “The Common Security and Defense Policy” section below.) Past *Joint Actions* have also included the appointment of EU Special Representatives (EUSRs), senior diplomats assigned to a sensitive country or region in order to give the EU extra political clout.¹⁹ A *Joint Action* might also provide financial or other support to the activities of an international organization engaged in efforts such as nonproliferation (the International Atomic Energy Agency, for example) or peace building (the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, for example).

Assessment

The EU has created institutional structures and instruments to develop and implement a Common Foreign and Security Policy, and the member states of the EU have integrated their foreign policies to a remarkable degree on many issues. When the EU speaks as one, it can speak with a strong voice. The development of CFSP over the past two decades has allowed the EU to evolve beyond being a merely economic actor, and its role in international politics and security issues has added an important new layer to its identity.

At the same time, the main challenge to CFSP continues to be forming and maintaining consensus positions among 27 sovereign countries. To some extent, this challenge may simply be an inherent and intractable condition of the EU. In CFSP, the 27 national capitals still matter greatly. Countries may have different perspectives, preferences, and priorities, or may simply disagree about the best policy course. The bitter divisions within Europe over the 2003 invasion of Iraq remain a striking illustration of this type of divergence, but others may be cited—five EU member countries do not recognize the independence of Kosovo, for example.

¹⁸ For more information and a list of EU sanctions currently in force, see European Union External Action Service, *Sanctions or restrictive measures*, http://eeas.europa.eu/cfsp/sanctions/index_en.htm.

¹⁹ The EU has eleven EUSRs, covering Afghanistan, the African Union, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Central Asia, The Horn of Africa, Kosovo, the Middle East Peace Process, the Sahel, the South Caucasus and the crisis in Georgia, the Southern Mediterranean Region, and Sudan. EUSRs have now been incorporated into the structure of the European External Action Service under High Representative Ashton. See <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/policies/foreign-policy/eu-special-representatives.aspx?lang=en>.

Consensus can also be a matter of degree, varying in depth from an agreement on general policy parameters and objectives down to specific policy details. Disagreement on one level of policy may not preclude a common approach at another level. With regard to the situation in Syria since 2011, for example, the EU has maintained a clear political approach backed by an extensive and steadily expanding array of sanctions, and by the provision of non-lethal assistance to opposition forces. In 2013, however, member states France and the UK have reportedly pushed for altering the EU arms embargo to allow for the arming of opposition troops but have been unable to achieve consensus in this area given the objections of other member states.

Some analysts assert that CFSP lacks comprehensive strategic approaches in key areas. This is also often a function of the need for consensus. The EU is often criticized, for example, for lacking a clearly defined strategic approach to Russia, or to China. Although EU members certainly share many perceptions and objectives with regard to these countries, the nature of such relations is complex, and there is a significant degree of variance. Some EU members weigh trade and commercial concerns differently against concerns such as democracy and human rights. Some view engagement as the best way to encourage desired reforms and behaviors, while others prefer different tactics. Viewpoints fall along a continuum from pragmatism to a stricter pursuit of ideals, and a consistent, comprehensive, and meaningful strategy can often be elusive. Some analysts observe that the absence of an EU strategy in such cases might discourage member states from forming a strong national position—member states may be reluctant to unilaterally get out ahead of the EU and instead wait for a wider consensus to gel.

The “EU” at-large—its institutions and its representatives—is generally criticized for these shortcomings, and institutional factors have certainly played some role. Despite the improvements of the Lisbon Treaty, however, the EU can still only provide mechanisms to facilitate consensus when it comes to CFSP. Ultimately, the High Representative works with the mandate provided by the member states: she can encourage consensus, but she cannot force it. CFSP remains a common policy, not a single policy—the EU is not a sovereign state, and its member countries will continue to have their own national foreign ministries and their own national foreign policies.

Integration is a process. Regular consultation is designed to achieve a broad foundation of convergence over time, even if there are short-term divergences. Some analysts argue that Europe must continue to strengthen CFSP if it is to remain a relevant player in the world. Although several of the bigger EU countries remain international heavyweights in their own right, analysts assert that, absent their membership in a strong and unified EU, these countries could someday find themselves to be global middleweights with increasingly diminishing influence. By the same token, although smaller member states occasionally fear that their voices are being drowned out within the EU, they are arguably even less likely to be heard from outside the EU. As the institutions introduced by the Lisbon Treaty mature, analysts assert that the EU must now concentrate more than ever on developing and fleshing out the substance of CFSP. One of the top immediate priorities for the High Representative and the EEAS is to work on the development of strategic partnerships with key countries such as the United States, Canada, Japan, China, Russia, India, Brazil, and Mexico.²⁰

²⁰ In her initial report to the European Parliament, the High Representative identified the consolidation of such strategic partnerships among the main priorities of her mandate. See http://eeas.europa.eu/cfsp/docs/2009_annualreport_en.pdf.

The Common Security and Defense Policy

The Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) is the operations arm of CFSP. The member countries formally agreed to begin work on an integrated EU security and defense policy in 1999.²¹ Despite its military and defense elements, it is important to note that the activities of CSDP are not exclusively military in nature—in fact, in practice, CSDP operations have most often consisted of civilian activities such as police and judicial training (“rule of law”) and security sector reform. Nearly 15 years after it was launched, CSDP has become largely oriented toward such activities, as well as peacekeeping, conflict prevention, crisis management, post-conflict stabilization, and humanitarian missions, rather than conventional military combat operations.

Nevertheless, European policymakers have sought to establish a more robust CSDP by enhancing and coordinating EU countries’ military capabilities. Under CSDP, the EU has set a series of targets for improving capabilities and increasing deployable assets, including plans for a rapid reaction force and multinational “EU Battlegroups.” Such forces are not a standing “EU army,” but rather a catalogue of troops and assets drawn from existing national forces that member states can make available for EU operations. Some analysts have suggested that pooling assets among several member states and developing national niche capabilities might help remedy European military shortfalls amid tight defense budgets. In 2004, the EU established the European Defense Agency (EDA) to help coordinate defense-industrial and procurement policy in order to stretch European defense spending.

An effective CSDP also calls for an autonomous EU capability to conduct external operations. Many European officials stress that CSDP is not intended to rival or compete with NATO, but rather is meant to be a complementary alternative. The Lisbon Treaty confirms the primary role of NATO in its members’ mutual defense and reiterates that CSDP does not seek to compromise members’ commitments to NATO. The existence of CSDP gives the EU an ability to act in cases where EU intervention may be more appropriate or effective, or in situations where NATO or the United Nations choose not to become involved.

Institutions and Actors

Many of the key actors and institutions involved in CSDP are the same as those responsible for the wider CFSP: the European Council and the Council of Ministers play the key roles in strategic guidance and decision making, and the High Representative is pivotal in consensus building and implementation. The PSC plays a major role in exercising political control and strategic direction of CSDP operations. In addition, EU defense ministers occasionally join meetings of the Foreign Affairs Council in order to round out discussions about security and defense issues, and an EU Military Committee (EUMC), composed of the member states’ Chiefs of Defense (CHOD) or their military representatives, provides input to the PSC on military matters.

A number of specialized support structures have been established to conduct the operational planning and implementation of CSDP: a Crisis Management Planning Directorate (CMPD) to integrate civilian and military strategic planning; a Civilian Planning Conduct Capability (CPCC)

²¹ CSDP was called ESDP, the European Security and Defense Policy, from 1999 to 2009.

office to run civilian missions; a Joint Situation Centre (SitCen) for intelligence analysis and threat assessment; and an EU Military Staff (EUMS) tasked by the EUMC to provide military expertise and advice to the High Representative. These structures were formerly part of the Secretariat of the Council of Ministers—following the enactment of the Lisbon Treaty, they are now part of the External Action Service under the direction of High Representative Ashton.

CSDP Missions²²

As of February 2013, there are 16 active CSDP missions: 4 military operations and 12 missions of a civilian nature. Four of these active missions, one military and three civilian, have been launched since the summer of 2012; all four new missions are in Africa (Mali, Niger/Sahel, South Sudan, and Horn of Africa). An additional 12 CSDP missions—4 military and 8 civilian—have been concluded in recent years. EU missions are generally undertaken on the basis of a U.N. mandate or with the agreement of the host country.²³

Europe and Eurasia

The countries of the former Yugoslavia and the former Soviet Union have been a focal point of EU external activities for several related reasons. First, geographical proximity: following Europe's much criticized failures with regard to the Balkan Wars of the 1990s, European policymakers now feel a responsibility for "taking care of their own backyard." Second, the legacies of history: the EU's efforts to engage with and assist these countries, many of which are current or potential EU membership candidates, are also driven by a sense of historical responsibility and the vision of a European continent that is entirely "whole, free, and at peace." Third, self-interest: instability in this region, including but not limited to concerns such as transnational crime, can threaten to spill over into the EU itself.

Active Missions in Europe and Eurasia

The European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) is a civilian rule-of-law mission that trains police, judges, customs officials, and civil administrators in *Kosovo*. EULEX was launched in 2008 and, with some 1,250 staff as of October 2012, is the largest EU civilian operation ever undertaken.²⁴

The military operation European Union Force (EUFOR) Althea is a peace-enforcement mission in *Bosnia-Herzegovina* that was launched in December 2004 with an initial troop strength of approximately 7,000. Althea took over responsibility for stabilization in Bosnia-Herzegovina when NATO concluded its Stabilization Force (SFOR) mission there. As of March 2013, Althea's troop strength stands at 600.²⁵

²² For a map of CSDP missions, see <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/eeas/security-defence/eu-operations?lang=en>.

²³ In addition to the map and official mission homepages, see *European Security and Defense Policy: The First Ten Years (1999-2009)*, ed. Giovanni Grevi, Damien Helly, and Daniel Keohane (Paris: EU Institute for Security Studies, 2009) for background information on CSDP missions launched prior to 2009.

²⁴ European External Action Service (EEAS), *EULEX Kosovo*, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/eeas/security-defence/eu-operations/eulex-kosovo.aspx?lang=fr>.

²⁵ EEAS, *ALTHEA/BiH*, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/eeas/security-defence/eu-operations/althea.aspx?lang=fr>.

With no U.S., NATO, or Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) observer missions operating in *Georgia* following its 2008 conflict with Russia, the EU Monitoring Mission (EUMM) represents the only official international monitoring presence in the country. EUMM was launched in September 2008, shortly following the conflict. With about 300 staff, EUMM is tasked with monitoring implementation of the ceasefire agreements, promoting stability and normalization, and facilitating communication between all parties on the ground.²⁶

The EU also conducts a border assistance mission to *Ukraine and Moldova* (EUBAM), which was launched in 2005. EUBAM's approximately 200 staff provide technical assistance and advice to improve security and customs operations along the Ukraine-Moldova border.²⁷

Concluded Missions in Europe and Eurasia

The first-ever CSDP mission undertaken by the EU was a civilian police training mission (EUPM) in Bosnia-Herzegovina that was launched in 2003. EUPM concluded at the end of June 2012, with approximately 35 personnel.²⁸

The EU has concluded three CSDP missions in *Macedonia*. The EU's first military mission, Concordia, was a military support and peacekeeping operation of approximately 350 staff, conducted in 2003 after the EU took over responsibility from NATO mission Allied Harmony (2001-2003).²⁹ After the conclusion of Concordia, the EU conducted a civilian police training mission (EUPOL Proxima) in Macedonia from 2003 to 2005, followed by a short police advisory team (EUPAT) operation in 2005-2006. These efforts consisted of about 200 personnel for Proxima and 30 for EUPAT.³⁰

In 2004-2005, the EU carried out a rule-of-law-mission in *Georgia*, EUJUST Themis. Initiated at the request of the Georgian government, Themis, which was the EU's first ever CSDP rule-of-law mission, helped Georgian authorities reform the country's criminal legislation and criminal justice process.³¹

Africa

The EU has been especially active in Africa, conducting 14 CSDP missions on that continent since 2003. Owing largely to humanitarian concerns, geographical proximity and the potential spillover effects of instability, and historical ties rooted in former colonial relationships, Europe

²⁶ EEAS, *EUMM Georgia*, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/eeas/security-defence/eu-operations/eumm-georgia.aspx?lang=fr>.

²⁷ EEAS, *EUBAM Moldova/Ukraine*, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/eeas/security-defence/eu-operations/moldova-and-ukraine-border-mission.aspx?lang=fr>.

²⁸ EEAS, *EUPM/BiH*, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/eeas/security-defence/eu-operations/completed-eu-operations/eupm?lang=en>.

²⁹ EEAS, *CONCORDIA/ FYROM*, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/eeas/security-defence/eu-operations/completed-eu-operations/concordia.aspx?lang=fr>.

³⁰ EEAS, *EUPOL PROXIMA/FYROM*, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/eeas/security-defence/eu-operations/completed-eu-operations/proxima.aspx?lang=fr> and *EUPAT*, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/eeas/security-defence/eu-operations/completed-eu-operations/eupat.aspx?lang=fr>.

³¹ EEAS, *EUJUST THEMIS*, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/eeas/security-defence/eu-operations/completed-eu-operations/eujust-themis.aspx?lang=fr>.

maintains a substantial political interest in Africa. This interest has often translated into a perceived responsibility to intervene or assist in problematic situations. These missions often go largely unnoticed in the United States, but some observers note that they have contributed to international security in a number of situations where the United States has not been involved.

Active Missions in Africa

In February 2013, the EU launched a military training operation in *Mali* (EUTM Mali), with an initial mandate of 15 months. EUTM Mali was undertaken in the context of a French military operation that began in January 2013 to re-take territory in northern Mali from Islamist rebel groups linked to al-Qaeda. The objective of the EU mission is to train and advise Malian armed forces in order to restore nationwide law and order under constitutional, democratic authorities. Headquartered in the city of Bamako, and with training activities taking place 60 kilometers away in the city of Koulikoro, EUTM Mali is to consist of approximately 200 instructors plus an additional 300 support staff and force protection personnel. Mission personnel are not intended to take part in combat operations.³²

The EU launched a civilian training mission called EUCAP SAHEL Niger in July 2012. With about 50 staff, the mission aims to increase the capacity of the Nigerien police and security forces to combat terrorism and organized crime, with the broader objective of reinforcing political stability, governance, and security in *Niger and the Sahel region*.³³ The EU also began a civilian mission to strengthen airport security in *South Sudan* (EUAVSEC South Sudan) in September 2012. EUAVSEC will have up to 64 personnel.³⁴

European Union Naval Force (EUNAVFOR) *Somalia* (Operation Atalanta) is a maritime anti-piracy mission off the coast of Somalia that was launched in 2008 and has a force strength of approximately 1,400 as of October 2012. Atalanta is a naval task force typically consisting of 4 to 7 ships and 2 or 3 patrol aircraft at a time, with the operation headquarters located at Northwood, United Kingdom.³⁵ Operation Atalanta is complemented by two additional CSDP missions. In 2010, the EU launched EUTM Somalia, a military training mission for Somali security forces. The mission is based in Uganda and has approximately 125 personnel as of January 2013.³⁶ In July 2012, the EU launched a new civilian mission (EUCAP NESTOR) that aims to build the maritime capacity of five countries in the region (*Djibouti, Kenya, Seychelles, Somalia, and Tanzania*) and train a Somali coastal police force. Headquartered in Djibouti, the mission consists of about 175 personnel.³⁷

³² EEAS, *EUTM Mali*, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/eeas/security-defence/eu-operations/eutm-mali?lang=fr>.

³³ EEAS, *EUCAP SAHEL Niger*, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/eeas/security-defence/eu-operations/eucap-sahel-niger?lang=fr>.

³⁴ EEAS, *EUAVSEC South Sudan*, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/eeas/security-defence/eu-operations/euavsec-south-sudan?lang=fr>.

³⁵ EEAS, *EUNAVFOR Somalia*, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/eeas/security-defence/eu-operations/eunavfor-somalia.aspx?lang=fr>.

³⁶ EEAS, *EUTM Somalia*, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/eeas/security-defence/eu-operations/eu-somalia-training-mission.aspx?lang=fr>.

³⁷ EEAS, *EUCAP NESTOR*, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/eeas/security-defence/eu-operations/eucap-nestor?lang=fr>.

Two small civilian CSDP missions operate in the *Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)*. The EU launched a security sector reform mission (EUSEC RD Congo) in June 2005, which gives advice and assistance regarding army reforms and modernization. As of December 2012, EUSEC RD Congo and EUPOL RD had 48 staff.³⁸ The EU has also conducted a police training mission in DRC since 2005. The current operation (EUPOL RD Congo) was launched in July 2007 and had 47 staff as of October 2012.³⁹

Concluded Missions in Africa

The EU has concluded three missions in *DRC*. Operation Artemis, consisting of approximately 2,000 troops, took place June-September 2003 and sought to stabilize the security situation and improve humanitarian conditions in the Bunia region.⁴⁰ EUFOR RD Congo was a military mission conducted in the second half of 2006 to support the United Nations Organization Mission in the DRC (MONUC) in securing the country for elections. The mission consisted of several hundred EU military personnel deployed in Kinshasa, plus a battalion-sized unit on standby in neighboring Gabon, totaling approximately 2,400 troops.⁴¹ EUPOL Kinshasa was a police training mission in DRC from 2005 to 2007. It was concluded in 2007 and replaced by the ongoing EUPOL RD Congo.⁴²

EUFOR Tschad/RCA was a military mission launched in January 2008 to stabilize the security and humanitarian situation in eastern *Chad* and northeastern *Central African Republic*. EUFOR Tschad/RCA was a temporary bridging mission ahead of the deployment of the U.N. Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT), which assumed responsibility in early 2009. EUFOR Tschad/RCA was the largest CSDP military mission in Africa to date, with approximately 3,700 troops taking part.⁴³

From 2005 to 2007, the EU conducted a hybrid civilian-military mission in support of the African Union's mission in *Sudan/Darfur* (AMIS). The AMIS support mission, consisting of several dozen EU personnel, included military observers, equipment, and transportation, as well as military planning, training, and technical assistance. The mission also included civilian police training and assistance. It concluded at the end of 2007 when AMIS transferred responsibility to a new United Nations/African Union combined operation in Darfur (UNAMID).⁴⁴

³⁸ EEAS, *EUSEC RD CONGO*, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/eeas/security-defence/eu-operations/eusec-rd-congo.aspx?lang=fr>.

³⁹ EEAS, *EUPOL RD CONGO*, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/eeas/security-defence/eu-operations/eupol-rd-congo.aspx?lang=fr>.

⁴⁰ EEAS, *DRC/ARTEMIS*, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/eeas/security-defence/eu-operations/completed-eu-operations/artemis.aspx?lang=fr>.

⁴¹ EEAS, *EUFOR RD CONGO*, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/eeas/security-defence/eu-operations/completed-eu-operations/eufor-rd-congo.aspx?lang=fr>.

⁴² EEAS, *EUFOR KINSHASA (DRC)*, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/eeas/security-defence/eu-operations/completed-eu-operations/eupol-kinshasa.aspx?lang=fr>.

⁴³ EEAS, *EUFOR TSCHAD/RCA*, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/eeas/security-defence/eu-operations/completed-eu-operations/eufor-tchadrca.aspx?lang=en>.

⁴⁴ EEAS, *EU Support to AMIS (Darfur)*, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/eeas/security-defence/eu-operations/completed-eu-operations/eu-support-to-amis-%28darfur%29.aspx?lang=fr>.

From 2008 to 2010, the EU conducted a small security sector reform mission in *Guinea-Bissau* (EU SSR Guinea-Bissau). The mission, consisting of eight advisors, helped local authorities reform legal frameworks related to the country's military, police, and justice system. This mission ended unsuccessfully when political developments in Guinea-Bissau ran counter to the EU's reform goals.⁴⁵

Middle East and Asia

The EU has launched a number of missions to support its goals of fostering peace and stability in the greater Middle East region. Active CSDP missions in the region involve three cases that demonstrate three different levels of European consensus and involvement: one case (Afghanistan) where European countries are deeply engaged, but mostly through NATO; another case (Israel-Palestinian conflict) where the EU has a far-reaching political consensus that defines a common approach; and a third case (Iraq) where the EU was unable to form a political consensus, but in which it has chosen to engage at a smaller-scale technical level.

Active Missions in the Middle East and Asia

The EU has a police mission in *Afghanistan* (EUPOL) that mentors and trains Afghan police. The mission, launched in June 2007, has about 350 staff as of September 2012.⁴⁶ EUPOL seeks to coordinate European and international efforts in what is regarded as a key area for Afghanistan's development and self-sufficiency.

The EU Police Mission in the *Palestinian Territories* (EUPOL COPPS) was launched in 2006. This civilian mission, which had about 70 EU staff operating in the West Bank as of July 2012, seeks to improve the law enforcement capacity of the Palestinian civil police force while advising Palestinian authorities on criminal justice and rule-of-law issues.⁴⁷

In 2005, the EU launched a small border-assistance mission to monitor the Rafah crossing point between *Gaza* and Egypt (EUBAM Rafah). That mission has been suspended since the 2007 takeover of Gaza by Hamas and remains on standby pending a formal request by the regional stakeholders to reactivate and redeploy.⁴⁸

The EU Integrated Rule of Law Mission for *Iraq* (EUJUST LEX – Iraq) was launched in 2005. The mission, consisting of about 66 EU staff as of November 2012, trains Iraqi police, prison officials, and judges.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ EEAS, *EU SSR GUINEA-BISSAU*, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/eeas/security-defence/eu-operations/completed-eu-operations/eu-ssr-guinea-bissau.aspx?lang=fr>.

⁴⁶ EEAS, *EUPOL AFGHANISTAN*, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/eeas/security-defence/eu-operations/eupol-afghanistan.aspx?lang=fr>.

⁴⁷ EEAS, *EUPOL COPPS*, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/eeas/security-defence/eu-operations/eupol-copps.aspx?lang=fr>.

⁴⁸ EEAS, *EUBAM Rafah*, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/eeas/security-defence/eu-operations/eubam-rafah.aspx?lang=fr>.

⁴⁹ EEAS, *EUJUST LEX/Iraq*, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/eeas/security-defence/eu-operations/eujust-lex.aspx?lang=fr>.

Concluded Mission in Asia

In 2005-2006, the EU deployed a civilian monitoring mission to *Aceh-Indonesia* (AMM). AMM helped monitor implementation of the 2005 peace agreement between the Indonesian government and the Free Aceh Movement, including weapons decommissioning, military and police force relocation, and the human rights situation. AMM began with 80 personnel and was reduced to 35 when the situation stabilized ahead of local elections, at which point the mission was concluded.⁵⁰

Assessment

Perceptions about the results of CSDP thus far are mixed. Many analysts assert that CSDP operations have made a positive, if modest, contribution to international security. There has been a long, slow learning curve in numerous instances, and many of the missions have been relatively small. Many CSDP missions do not receive much attention in Washington, DC, but some observers note that the EU's efforts have contributed to burden sharing and collective security by taking responsibility for matters that might otherwise have fallen to the United Nations, NATO, the United States, or regional institutions. The EU has comparative advantages as an actor in some cases, and it has developed the institutional support structures needed for launching and conducting a wide range of civilian and rule-of-law missions, as well as some types of military missions.

The fact that the majority of CSDP operations have been civilian missions reflects what many analysts consider to be the EU's strengths. EU member states' substantial civilian capacities in areas such as rule of law and police training are essential elements in situations where governance development is a key priority. Although the organization and deployment of civilian missions has not always been smooth and ideal, these types of civilian capabilities are very much in demand, and some observers are continually pushing the EU to do more with regard to such missions. As the EU seeks to implement its strategic security vision and take on a more active global role, some analysts view civilian operations involving governance building or crisis management as a logical fit and expect that such missions will be central in defining the future of CSDP.

Nearly 15 years after it was launched, however, CSDP has not dramatically increased European military capabilities. Most European militaries face flat or declining national defense budgets, and shortfalls continue to exist in terms of key capabilities such as strategic air- and sealift. Despite notable efforts at force transformation in many countries, a relatively low percentage of European forces are deployable for expeditionary operations. On a more positive note, CSDP military missions have generally achieved their modest goals, and some progress has been made in areas such as the development of the EU Battlegroups.

Members of Congress and other U.S. policymakers have long had concerns about European defense budgets and capabilities, on the one hand, and transatlantic cooperation and burden sharing, on the other. Such concerns have been further exacerbated by the impact of the Eurozone crisis, which has caused many countries to adopt austerity programs. A potential theme of continuing interest to the 113th Congress might be how the economic downturn in Europe, as illustrated in the Eurozone debt crisis and a general trend toward budgetary austerity, could affect the transatlantic partnership with regard to international security and military affairs.

⁵⁰ EEAS, *Aceh Monitoring Mission*, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/eeas/security-defence/eu-operations/completed-eu-operations/aceh-monitoring-mission.aspx?lang=fr>.

Some analysts assert that European countries should consider much bolder defense initiatives. Stretching defense budgets further with combined procurement programs or coordinated investment in research and development remain the consensus starting points, but some analysts have also advocated deeper European defense integration involving pooling and sharing assets or foregoing certain national capabilities in favor of “niche” capability specialization. The Lisbon Treaty establishes the possibility of “permanent structured cooperation,” in which subgroups of member states may choose to move ahead on their own in the development of particular defense capabilities.

At the same time, national defense is one of the core elements of state sovereignty. Although EU member states view pooling, coordination, and integration as important ways to maximize defense capabilities, national governments can be expected to insist on retaining the decisive role when it comes to controlling their military forces and assets.

CSDP also plays into wider assessments about changing European worldviews and threat perceptions. Many Europeans continue to believe that traditional military threats remain a concern that necessitate the maintenance of military power for territorial self-defense or, when necessary, in an out-of-area context. Increasingly, however, many others in Europe do not regard traditional military threats as a primary security concern. Instead, European threat perceptions tend to emphasize the broad threats posed to societies by challenges rooted in economics, demographics, climate, environment, migration, and terrorism. The utility of military force in addressing such threats is limited, and it is therefore accorded a relatively diminished role in the EU’s strategic thinking. Instead, the future roles of European militaries might center on stabilization, peacekeeping, and crisis management.

As a corollary to U.S. concerns about European defense budgets and capabilities, some U.S. officials and Members of Congress have been concerned that these trends in perception and strategy could be leading Europe to focus disproportionately on soft power, leaving the United States to do the heavy lifting and assume the costs of providing “hard” power. In a climate of budget austerity across much of Europe, arguments about the diminishing role of military power could tie in conveniently with efforts to cut military forces that are deemed too expensive.

In any case, like the United States, the EU is seeking to develop new tools and mechanisms, and to find a way to use all of its assets in a coherent and comprehensive manner to address the global challenges it faces. Bolstering CSDP and bringing it together with the rest of the EU’s policy tools in a more complementary fashion is a top objective for the EU; facilitating this process was one of the primary purposes of changes introduced by the Lisbon Treaty.

“Community” Policies

In contrast to the intergovernmental nature of CFSP and CSDP, many common external policies are formulated and managed under the EU’s supranational “community” process. In areas such as trade, aid, neighborhood policy, and enlargement negotiations—what some observers call the “technical” aspects of external relations—the member states have agreed to pool their sovereignty and decision making at the level of the EU institutions. Accordingly, EU external policies are most integrated and firmly established in these areas.

Institutions and Actors

In general, for issues in these areas the member states mandate the European Commission to act as the policy initiator or the lead negotiator with an outside country. External agreements and legislative or funding proposals must be approved by the member states in the Council of Ministers and by the European Parliament. Approved measures are then implemented and managed by the European Commission.

The Commission is divided into departments called directorates-general (DG). Each covers a portfolio of issues, and each is headed by a commissioner. The DGs are, in effect, the EU's executive departments and agencies, and the commissioners are comparable to U.S. department secretaries or agency heads. There are four Commission DGs with a distinctly external focus: trade, humanitarian aid, development, and enlargement. Although the work of many other DGs (e.g., energy or transportation) often involves significant external dimensions, these four core areas are considered the external relations family of directorates within the European Commission.

The High Representative is responsible for coordinating the external dimensions of the commission's activities—she absorbs the former job of Commissioner for External Relations, and the former DG for External Relations has been folded into the European External Action Service. The High Representative is also responsible for coordinating the Commission's external policies with CFSP and CSDP.

The President of the European Commission, José Manuel Barroso, is the highest authority in representing its policies. As with Van Rompuy in the intergovernmental sphere, Barroso may be considered the voice of the EU's "community" policies at the heads of state or government level. As is also the case with regard to CFSP, the High Representative is the key voice of Commission external policies at the ministerial level, although the other commissioners carry comparable weight within their areas of responsibility.

Trade

The European Commission's directorate-general for trade oversees the development and implementation of a common trade policy for what is the world's largest trade bloc.⁵¹ Even excluding internal trade between the member states, the EU accounted for about one-sixth of global merchandise trade (imports plus exports) in 2011, valued at approximately €3.22 trillion (approximately \$4.1 trillion).⁵²

Considered as a single entity, the EU is the largest trade partner (goods imports plus goods exports) for the United States, China, Russia, Brazil, and India. It is also the largest trade partner for a variety of regional groupings, including the 79 countries of the Africa, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) group; the 21 countries of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum; the 12 members of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS); the 10 "Mediterranean

⁵¹ The Commissioner for Trade is Karel de Gucht (Belgium).

⁵² See European Commission, DG Trade, *Statistics – EU Trade in the World*, February 28, 2012, <http://ec.europa.eu/trade/creating-opportunities/bilateral-relations/statistics/>.

Dialogue” countries; the 7 countries of the Western Balkans; and the 6 Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.⁵³

Humanitarian Aid and Development Assistance

The member states and institutions of the EU have agreed to detailed frameworks and sets of principles that affirm humanitarian aid and development assistance as key elements of external policy.⁵⁴ The EU is the world’s largest aid donor (Commission funds plus bilateral member state contributions), accounting for more than 40% of official global humanitarian assistance and over half of official global development assistance.⁵⁵

The European Commission’s Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection directorate-general (DG ECHO) manages the delivery of emergency EU assistance in crisis situations created by armed conflict or natural disaster.⁵⁶ The European Commission spends an average of €1 billion (about \$1.28 billion) per year through DG ECHO. The initial DG ECHO budget for 2013 is €856 million (approximately \$1.1 billion), with more than half programmed for sub-Saharan Africa.⁵⁷

The EuropeAid Development and Cooperation directorate-general designs EU development policies and delivers assistance geared toward longer-term issues such as poverty, hunger, health, education, and governance.⁵⁸ In 2011, the Commission disbursed about €9.2 billion (approximately \$11.8 billion) in official development assistance, with more than 40% of the total going to Africa. The EU and its member states spent a combined €53.5 billion (approximately \$68.7 billion) on ODA in 2011.⁵⁹

Enlargement and Neighborhood Policy

In 2004 and 2007, two historic rounds of enlargement into Central and Eastern Europe increased the size of the EU from 15 to 27 member states. The Commission’s directorate-general for enlargement conducts accession negotiations with countries that have applied for EU membership and that meet basic conditions for democracy, human rights, and rule of law.⁶⁰ Fulfilling the EU’s accession criteria and adopting the massive body of EU law involve a lengthy and demanding reform process with political, legal, and technical requirements covering 35 “chapters” (subjects).⁶¹ Croatia has recently completed the process and is expected to join the EU as its 28th

⁵³ See the individual factsheets at DG Trade, *Statistics – European Union and its main trading partners*, <http://ec.europa.eu/trade/creating-opportunities/bilateral-relations/statistics/>.

⁵⁴ See *The European Consensus on Development*, (2006/C 46/01), http://ec.europa.eu/development/icenter/repository/european_consensus_2005_en.pdf and *The European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid*, (2008/C25/01), <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2008:025:0001:0012:EN:PDF>.

⁵⁵ European Commission DG ECHO, http://ec.europa.eu/echo/funding/finances_en.htm, and European Commission, EuropeAid, http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/infopoint/publications/europeaid/documents/259a_en.pdf.

⁵⁶ The Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid, and Crisis Response is Kristalina Georgieva (Bulgaria).

⁵⁷ See European Commission DG ECHO, http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/policies/strategy/strategy_2013_en.pdf.

⁵⁸ The Commissioner for Development is Andris Piebalgs (Latvia).

⁵⁹ See the EuropeAid annual report 2012, http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/multimedia/publications/index_en.htm.

⁶⁰ The Commissioner for Enlargement is Štefan Füle (Czech Republic).

⁶¹ Once this process has been completed, all member countries and the European Parliament must still approve the accession of the applicant country.

member country on July 1, 2013. There are currently five official membership candidates: Iceland, Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey. Three countries—Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Kosovo—are currently considered potential candidates.⁶²

In 2004, the EU launched the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) to develop deeper political and economic ties with neighboring countries not (or not yet) considered potential members. Under ENP, 12 countries of North Africa, the Caucasus, and the Middle East have agreed to bilateral action plans containing targets for political and economic reforms.⁶³ The program allows the EU to advocate for the adoption of common political and economic values. In return, ENP participants may receive enhanced trade and economic ties with the EU, as well as aid and technical assistance. ENP also encompasses three regional initiatives—the Eastern Partnership, the Union for the Mediterranean, and the Black Sea Synergy—designed to complement the bilateral action plans.

Assessment

Trade, aid and development assistance, the enlargement process, and neighborhood policy are important instruments in the EU's external policy approach. These tools allow the EU to exert influence and promote its values beyond the territory of its member states in the ways many observers say it is most comfortable and adept—by fostering interdependence through deepening economic ties; by seeking to bolster economic conditions and good governance, and linking each to the other; and by encouraging (or, with membership applicants, requiring) the adoption of EU norms and practices with regard to democratic government, laws, and economic policies.

Having common policies in these areas allows the EU to exert a collective weight far greater than what any individual member state could muster on its own. Beyond the direct impact of trade and assistance relationships themselves, the EU is a major voice in global trade negotiations and the World Trade Organization (WTO), and a leading player in international aid forums. The enlargement process has demonstrated a substantial transformative power capable of driving far-reaching reforms in countries that aspire to EU membership, and ENP has made modest beginnings in establishing enhanced relations with neighborhood countries.

Difficult questions loom over the future of enlargement and the role and effectiveness of neighborhood policy, however. Following the expansion of the EU from 15 to 27 members in 2004 and 2007, many Europeans have described a feeling of “enlargement fatigue” that has sapped enthusiasm for accepting additional members. Nevertheless, the working premise of most observers is that room would probably be made for Iceland if it wants to join, and for the countries of the Western Balkans, as soon as they meet the criteria. Some of those countries could take a decade or more to achieve membership, but this scenario could result in an EU with as many as 35 member countries. Some analysts suggest that this picture could represent an end point for EU enlargement: Turkey's bid faces highly problematic obstacles; countries such as Ukraine, Moldova, and Belarus appear to be remote prospects at this time; and countries such as

⁶² See European Commission, DG Enlargement, http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/countries/check-current-status/index_en.htm.

⁶³ See European Commission, *European Neighborhood Policy*, http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/policy_en.htm. Bilateral ENP action plans have been signed with Armenia, Azerbaijan, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Moldova, Morocco, Palestinian territories, Tunisia, and Ukraine. The ENP framework was also proposed to Algeria, Belarus, Libya, and Syria, but no action plans have been concluded.

Norway and Switzerland seem to remain uninterested in joining. Should the enlargement process reach a stopping point, or at least enter a prolonged pause, the EU would likely lose the ability to use the incentive of membership as a key tool for influencing its neighborhood.

Some observers view the European Neighborhood Policy as a potential way to exert influence in the EU's "Near Abroad" short of offering the prospect of membership. Although one potential objective of ENP could be to start paving the way for eventual EU membership, another interpretation is that ENP could form the kernel of enhanced relationships—"privileged partnerships"—with neighboring countries that are unlikely to become members anytime soon, if ever. ENP was launched in 2004, making for a short time frame on which to judge it, but results have been modest at best.

In view of developments in North Africa and some former Soviet countries over the past several years, some critics have lamented the lack of influence the EU (particularly the Union for the Mediterranean and the Eastern Partnership) has had in these situations. In a reassessment of the ENP instruments, the EU has been seeking to develop a more values-oriented, conditionality-based ENP, with the terms linked more tightly to democratic reforms. Under the theme "money, mobility, markets," the EU has added funds for support to the countries of the so-called "Arab Spring," created new partnerships and initiatives to improve access to the EU for partner countries' citizens, and sought to improve partner countries' access to the EU market, including through the negotiation of Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements.⁶⁴

The Enhanced Role of the European Parliament

Although it has no formal role in CFSP decision making, the European Parliament has a degree of influence on EU foreign policy. This influence has increased following the enactment of the Lisbon Treaty.⁶⁵

Even before adoption of the Lisbon Treaty, representatives of the Council of Ministers consulted the EP on CFSP issues, paying regular visits to the institution to keep Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) informed of CFSP and CSDP decisions. This exchange continues under the Lisbon Treaty, including by the President of the European Council and the High Representative. The EP also indirectly influences member state debates on CFSP through its own discussions and activities: observers assert that the EP has become an increasingly prominent forum for debate on international issues. The EP may issue resolutions that express its view or urge a course of action on an international issue. In September 2012, the EP issued a resolution containing an extensive overview and assessment of CFSP under the Lisbon Treaty.⁶⁶

The EP has a foreign affairs committee that monitors the conduct of EU foreign policy, with two subcommittees (human rights and security and defense). The EP may also set up special

⁶⁴ See *European Neighborhood Policy – Reference Documents*, http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/documents_en.htm.

⁶⁵ For an overview of the European Parliament, see CRS Report RS21998, *The European Parliament*, by Kristin Archick.

⁶⁶ *European Parliament Resolution of 12 September 2012 on the Annual Report from the Council to the European Parliament on the Common Foreign and Security Policy*, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P7-TA-2012-0334&language=EN&ring=A7-2012-0252>.

committees to investigate specific issues for a limited period of time, such as the 2006 special committee to examine the alleged role of EU member states in hosting reported secret CIA detention facilities and aiding CIA flights related to the rendition of terrorism suspects.

The EP has 41 delegations (ranging in size between 20 and 50 MEPs) that maintain parliament-to-parliament contacts and relations with representatives of many countries and regions around the world. For example, the EP has interparliamentary delegations for relations with the United States and the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, as well as with Russia, Iran, Israel, the Palestinian Legislative Council, China, India, and the Korean Peninsula.

The EP won significant concessions during the debates over setting up the External Action Service. Due to the EP's role in the oversight and approval of the EU budget, the EP's assent was required regarding the structure, staffing, and budget of the EEAS. The EP won the right to scrutinize the non-military parts of the CFSP/CSDP budget (previously, the particulars of these expenses were exempt from EP oversight). The EP also won the right to hold U.S. Senate-style confirmation hearings for some of the EU ambassadors designated to prominent postings.

The EP has a central, formal role in EU "community" decision making. Under the Lisbon Treaty, the number of issue areas in which the EP acts as a co-legislator along with the Council of Ministers has expanded considerably. As a result, the EP must give its consent on all external agreements negotiated by the European Commission. This power includes trade deals (such as the EU-South Korea Free Trade Agreement passed by the EP in February 2011) and agreements such as the U.S.-EU SWIFT agreement on tracking terrorist financing and the U.S.-EU airline security agreement on sharing Passenger Name Record (PNR) information. The EP has openly sought to assert itself as a more powerful actor within the EU's "institutional triangle." In cases such as the EU-Korea FTA, SWIFT, and PNR, observers discern a trend in which MEPs seek to convey that the EP's positions must now be taken into account during (and not after) the negotiation of international agreements or the drafting of new legislative proposals.

Conclusion: Issues for the United States

The evolution of EU external policies and capabilities ties into a related discussion about the changing structure and dynamics of transatlantic relations. In Europe, "unfinished business" remains in the Balkans, Caucasus, and former Soviet states, and the United States will continue to cooperate closely with Europe on these issues. Overall, however, many analysts have observed that the focus of U.S. foreign policy has been gravitating increasingly to the Middle East and Asia over the past decade. Indications of a "Pacific pivot" and strategic re-balancing toward East Asia by the Obama Administration have recently attracted attention to this theme. Such trends, some argue, have made Europe in and of itself less of a U.S. foreign policy priority. Instead, the political and security aspects of the transatlantic relationship are now mostly about what Europe and the United States can do together to address global challenges of joint interest and concern.⁶⁷ Many of these challenges pertain to new types of threats that have emerged since the end of the Cold War, threats that require new capabilities to address. At the same time, some analysts

⁶⁷ As then-Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said after meeting with High Representative Ashton in May 2011, "The United States and the European Union are partners working together on, I think, every global issue and regional challenge that you can imagine." See <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2011/05/163569.htm>.

perceive an increasingly multipolar world order in which countries such as China, India, Brazil, and Russia are moving alongside the United States and Europe as centers of power.

U.S.-EU Relations

Given these trends, U.S. policymakers might ask what kind of an EU they would like to see, and what role they might like to see the EU play in the world. The EU is occasionally viewed as a potential counterweight, but many U.S. policymakers tend to view it more as a counterpart, a partner with whom cooperation might help achieve common ends. Many observers argue that a more united EU capable of acting decisively in world affairs is a better U.S. partner that can help achieve common goals. On the other side of the coin, they assert, a disunited Europe tends to be an ineffective and less relevant actor in dealing with major world issues. Some analysts have suggested that an overdependence on the United States prevents Europe from acting as an equal partner—both sides might be better off with a Europe, speaking and acting as one, that takes a more robust, assertive, and independent approach to international security issues.

On the other hand, skeptics question what happens when a united Europe disagrees with the United States. Some such observers prefer to keep U.S. engagement with Europe oriented toward a bilateral, country-by-country basis, arguing that such an approach is a better way to pursue U.S. interests on a range of issues. Such observers also assert that each bilateral relationship remains indispensable, countering suggestions that some national capitals could become increasingly less relevant to the United States if EU policy making continues to shift to Brussels.

EU-NATO Relations

Discussions about CSDP inevitably raise the issue of EU-NATO relations. Despite the fact that they have 21 member countries in common, NATO and the EU continue to have difficulty establishing a more cooperative and coordinated working relationship. In the past, U.S. officials expressed concern that the development of CSDP and EU defense structures would result in a wasteful duplication of scarce defense resources and lead to the separation of the United States from the European security architecture. While some remain skeptical, CSDP has become increasingly viewed as a helpful means to build European capabilities and permit expanded EU engagement in global challenges. In 2003, the EU and NATO agreed to the “Berlin Plus” arrangement, allowing EU-led military missions access to NATO assets and planning capabilities, and thereby preventing the duplication of resources and structures. The struggle with generating more European defense capabilities has also been playing out in NATO—despite the adoption of an updated Strategic Concept in November 2010, this struggle is a significant part of still ongoing debates about the future role and purpose of the institution.

Some analysts assert that NATO and the EU need to work in a more complementary fashion to permit a more efficient and effective overall use of Euro-Atlantic civil and military resources. The NATO Strategic Concept states that “NATO and the EU can and should play complementary and mutually reinforcing roles in supporting international peace and security.” The document directs NATO to “fully strengthen the strategic partnership with the EU, in the spirit of full mutual openness, transparency, complementarity and respect for the autonomy and institutional integrity

of both organizations” and to “broaden our political consultations to include all issues of common concern, in order to share assessments and perspectives.”⁶⁸

Disagreements between Turkey (a member of NATO but not the EU) and Cyprus (a member of the EU but not NATO) are often cited as a primary obstacle to deeper cooperation and information sharing. Some observers also point to bureaucratic rivalry and competition between the two institutions, and conflicting views regarding their roles. These blockages have been known for some time, although solutions at the political level continue to remain elusive. Some observers have suggested establishing a division of labor between the “hard” military tasks that lie at the core of NATO and the “soft” peacekeeping and civilian-oriented missions that play to the strengths of the EU, but others decisively reject the idea of such rigid mandates.

On the other hand, some observers note that cooperation between the two institutions is already relatively functional at the working level. Setting aside efforts for a grand institutional fix, and assuming the continuation of political circumstances more or less as they stand, many observers have urged the two institutions to identify and leverage mutually beneficial synergies. This push is reflected in the most recent Strategic Concept, which calls on NATO and the EU to “enhance our practical cooperation in operations throughout the crisis spectrum, from coordinated planning to mutual support in the field” and to “cooperate more fully in capability development, to minimise duplication and maximise cost-effectiveness.”⁶⁹

Together, the EU and NATO represent the institutional toolbox that the Euro-Atlantic nations may draw on to address global challenges. Institutional structures and arrangements are imperfect, but having this toolbox presents the Euro-Atlantic community with options to choose from. The most suitable flag to fly—EU, NATO, or other—depends on an interplay between the capabilities offered by each institution and the political circumstances of a given situation or mission.

According to analysts, the security strategy documents released in recent years by the United States, the EU, and NATO, as well as by France, Germany, and the United Kingdom, demonstrate a convergence of perceptions about the international security environment. This trend in the direction of a shared security strategy may present opportunities to recast the dynamics of the U.S.-EU-NATO relationship in ways that enable the Euro-Atlantic partners to better meet the challenges they face. In other words, by bridging the remaining gaps between the institutions’ respective worldviews, a shared security strategy might help accelerate the development of complementary military and civilian capabilities that address the evolving set of interrelated external and domestic security threats faced by all EU and NATO member countries.⁷⁰

For the time being, NATO remains the center of Euro-Atlantic defense cooperation, especially from the viewpoint of U.S. policymakers. Some analysts argue that the EU must still move ahead and develop its own military headquarters and planning capabilities in order for CSDP to become a more credible and relevant option. (In July 2011, however, the UK definitively blocked a proposal to consolidate the command structure for EU military missions under a single permanent operational headquarters.) Although unlikely in the near term, the development of CSDP into a

⁶⁸ Active Engagement, Modern Defence: Strategic Concept for the Defence and Security of the Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Adopted by the Heads of State and Government at the NATO Summit in Lisbon, November 19-20, 2010, <http://www.nato.int/lisbon2010/strategic-concept-2010-eng.pdf>.

⁶⁹ *ibid.*

⁷⁰ See Simon Serfaty and Sven Biscop, *A Shared Security Strategy for a Euro-Atlantic Partnership of Equals*, Center for Strategic & International Studies, July 2009.

robust military actor able to conduct high-end combat operations would affect the future of NATO in many ways. Conversely, a stagnant or ineffective CSDP would also have important long-term implications for the transatlantic security relationship. As Members of Congress and the U.S. Administration examine the U.S. role in NATO and U.S. basing arrangements in Europe in the years ahead, broad developments in CSDP might be an area of related interest.

For all of the criticisms that may be directed at European foreign and security policy, Europe is likely to remain the United States' closest global partner into the foreseeable future. None of the world's other powers, established or rising, can claim to share Europe's multi-faceted compatibility with the United States, and for many Americans "going it alone" is not an attractive option. In the emerging geopolitical and security environment suggested by current trends, the transatlantic partnership is unlikely to be well served by "muddling through" each problem on a case-by-case basis. Both Americans and Europeans have an interest in establishing a stable and enhanced U.S.-EU-NATO dynamic that is as efficient and effective as possible. U.S. policymakers may not be able to determine the choices made by Europeans, but they can express U.S. preferences in support of solutions for overcoming resource constraints so that strategy and capabilities adequately match threats and challenges.

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