The European Union a Force for Peace?

National Justice & Peace Network 37th Annual Conference

From 1945 till 1991, Europe existed under the Cold War regime of the Pax Americana and Pax Sovietica. The period from 1991 till today, we have seen a new Europe mainly under the political and economic leadership of Germany and under the pressure of a financial crisis and a globalised world economy. Since the 90s, Europe has been confronted with major wars: in the Balkan, the Caucasus and more recently in the Ukraine.

What is the identity of Europe? The European Union (EU)[1] comprises 28 member states. The Council of Europe[2] is founded in 1949 and covers 49 member states. The Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)[3], comprises 57 participating States and includes countries from three continents: Europe, Central Asia and North America. The OSCE is also called the "Helsinki-process"[4] that started in 1975.

The emphasis of this paper is on the role of the European Union in peace building. Can the EU function as a peace building entity? Is the EU a peace actor, a force for peace?

One of the dilemmas for the European Union is always the question: geographical enlargement of the Union or deepening the policies of further integration and collaboration. Who is interested in joining the EU, politicians or civilians? Clearly, membership should be the result of democracy and democratic elections within the given countries. The EU can serve as a mediator, such as in Northern Ireland, and as for the latest agreement between Serbia and Kosovo, although under pressure.[5] Meanwhile, the Russian annexation of the Crimean and the occupation of illegal troops and groups in Eastern Ukraine became the biggest challenge to peace and stability in Europe since the really cold days of the Cold War. Since 2014, Russia is playing back its role as a (regional) power.

Treaty of Versailles

World War II was inevitable, when taking into consideration how World War I ended with the Treaty of Versailles in 1919,[6] which was composed primarily by Allied powers. In this treaty, Germany was treated as the sole perpetrator of the war and they lost a significant amount of land, including Alsace-Lorraine which went to France; Eupen and Malmedy went to Belgium; land taken from Germany and given to Poland; the German African colonies such as Burundi and Rwanda were given to Belgium.

---

[1] http://europa.eu/index_en.htm
[2] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Council_of_Europe
[3] http://www.osce.org/states
[4] http://www.osce.org/who/43960
[5] http://www.dw.de/serbia-and-kosovo-sign-historic-agreement/a-16758946
[6] http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/treaty_of_versailles.htm

The Treaty of Versailles was incredibly unjust. Reconciliation among parties who are considered unequal is impossible. The Treaty subsequently left the German people feeling defeated and hopeless. Adolf Hitler noticed this vulnerability, and promised a return to the greatness that once was Germany. Many Germans were susceptible to Hitler's rhetoric and tactics, allowing him to gain an immense amount of power, thus leading into the Second World War, after which Germany was treated as an equal in order to encourage lasting reconciliation.

Founding Fathers and Vision

The founders of the European Union were united by the belief in reconciliation after witnessing the destructiveness of both World War I and World War II. They proclaimed that "never again shall there be war between us." Years of violence within the European continent made it obvious that a union of some kind was essential in order to rebuild economically, as well as to ensure peace across Europe. There were several values inspiring the founders which continue to inspire members of the European Union today. The ultimate goal was for a peaceful, united, and prosperous Europe, with the utmost respect for human dignity, liberty, democracy, equality, the rule of law, and respect for human rights, including the rights of minorities. The founders believed that economic interdependence make war history. That was their foundational vision.

Several key founders played significant roles in the process of developing a union. The cornerstone of Konrad Adenauer's foreign policy was reconciliation with France, which was significant seeing as he was the first chancellor of Germany after World War II. In 1962, in collaboration with President Charles de Gaulle, Germany and France were able to sign a treaty of friendship,[7] which was a major milestone towards European integration. Prime Minister Winston Churchill was the first to call for a "United States of Europe" and made it his aim to eliminate European ills of nationalism and war mongering. The Italian Alcide de Gasperi worked on both the Marshall Plan,[8] as well as other initiatives that were aimed at the fusion of Western Europe. He developed close economic ties with other European countries, notably France.

Jean Monnet[9] was the unifying force behind the birth of the European Union, and was the inspiration behind the Schuman plan[10] ultimately developed by French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman, the architect of the European Integration project. The Plan was to have joint control of coal and steel production, with the idea that a state that did not have full control over coal and steel production would be unable to fight a war. Finally, Belgian Foreign Minister Paul-Henri Spaak helped to formulate the Treaty of Rome[11] by acting as the president of the working committee for the preparation of the Treaty.

One of the earliest, most momentous steps towards creating a united Europe was on 18 April 1951 when the 6 founding countries of Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, and the Netherlands signed a treaty based on the Schuman Plan to run coal and steel under common management. This allowed no one country to fully develop weapons for a war. It is

---

[7] http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/the-elysee-treaty-has-been-a-cornerstone-of-european-stability-a-879002.html
[8] http://www.enotes.com/economic-cooperation-act-1948-marshall-plan-reference/economic-cooperation-act-1948-marshall-plan
[9] http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean_Monnet
[10] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schuman_Declaration
[11] http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/treaty_of_rome.htm

worthy to note that the common war materials of coal and steel were the first items to be converted into instruments of peace. On 25 March 1957, the Treaties of Rome created both the European Economic Community (EEC),[12] or the common market, and the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM).[13] The EEC allowed for the free movement of people, goods, and services across borders. On 4 January 1960, the European Free Trade Association (EFTA)[14] is signed and enters into force on 3 May 1960. 14 January 1962 saw the adoption of regulations on the Common Agricultural Policy that created the groundwork for the establishment of a single market for agricultural products and for financial solidarity. Then, on 15 July 1964, it was ruled that community law is to override national laws. Sicco Mansholt from the Netherlands was the first European Commissioner to be responsible for agriculture, and he laid the basis for the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).[15] He firmly believed that Europe needed to become self-sufficient and that everyone should be entitled to a stable supply of affordable food.

The next significant achievement was in April 1972, when European member states decided to allow their currencies to fluctuate against each other within narrow limits, known as the Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM),[16] which ultimately developed into the Euro[17] that we know today.

In March 1985, the Schengen Agreement[18] takes effect in seven countries, allowing citizens to no longer require passports to travel between these states. On 9 November 1989, the Berlin Wall collapsed, opening borders between East and West Germany for the first time in over twenty-five years. In February 1992, the Treaty on the European Union[19] is signed in Maastricht, which set clear rules for the future of the single currency, as well as foreign and security policy. At this point, the European Community becomes known as the European Union. The following year, in January, the single market and four freedoms are established: the free movement of goods, services, people, and money.

Throughout the 1990s, civil war had erupted in the Balkan states, in which the EU took on peace-keeping operations in March of 2003. EU led forces replaced those of NATO in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Former Yugoslav Republic Macedonia. Finally, the Treaty of Lisbon[20] was signed in December 2007, with the goal of making the EU more democratic, efficient, and transparent and encouraging the tackling of challenges like climate change, security, and sustainable development.

The Christian Democratic Party played a noteworthy role in the creation of the European Union as well. Robert Schuman, "the Father of Europe," was a Christian Democrat, the first to put forth a plan for French and German coal and steel production to be placed under one High Authority. In 1953, the publication of the founding declaration of the Christian-Democratic Group was officially recognised. The first meeting of the Common Assembly of the three European Communities (European Parliament) was held in March 1958, with the Christian-Democrats holding the clear majority. The first step towards developing the European People's Party[21] occurred in November 1969 when Hans-August Lucker was

[12] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Economic_Community
[13] http://www.euratom.org/
[14] http://www.efta.int/about-efta/the-european-free-trade-association.aspx
[15] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Common_Agricultural_Policy
[16] http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/exchange-rate-mechanism-ERM.html
[17] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_the_euro
[18] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Schengen_Agreement
[19] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maastricht_Treaty
[20] http://europa.eu/lisbon_treaty/index_en.htm
[21] http://www.epp.eu/index.asp

elected Chairman of the group. He expanded institutional and organisational links with the national Christian-Democrat parties. The European People's Party was founded in April 1976 and was composed of parties from seven Community countries.

Goals and Aims Today

The goals and aims of the European Union today are similar to those goals established during the founding: to provide peace, prosperity, and stability for its citizens; to overcome divisions on the continent; to ensure that its people can live in safety; to promote balanced economic and social development; to meet the challenges of globalisation and preserve the diversity of the peoples of Europe; and to uphold the values that Europeans share, such as sustainable development and a sound environment, respect for human rights, and the social market economy.

The objectives of the European Union differ somewhat from the ultimate goals, and include: providing an area of freedom, security, and justice without internal frontiers; providing an internal market with free and undistorted competition; working towards sustainable development based on economic growth and price stability, a highly competitive social market economy, aiming at full employment and social progress, and a high level of protection in quality of the environment. The EU also promotes scientific and technological advances; combating social exclusion and discrimination; social justice and protection; equality between men and women; solidarity between generations and protection of the rights of the child; economic, social, and territorial cohesion; solidarity among member states; and respect of cultural and linguistic diversity.

EU Enlargement

Enlargement of the European Union has played a major role in encouraging the achievement of the goals and objectives of the Union. Through the invitation for ten additional countries to join the EU in 2004, the EU was putting an end to the split between the free world and the Communist bloc. Poland and seven other Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries[22] became member of the EU in May 2004. Many have viewed enlargement as an opportunity to promote political stability and economic prosperity within Europe. Enlargement, however, is not a simple process. In order to become a Member State, a country needs unanimous support from all twenty-seven Members – a conflict or poor relations with just one country could terminate their chances at becoming a Member State. This can be seen through EU-Turkey tensions over Cyprus and through Greece-Macedonia tensions over Macedonia's name. There are also fears by some EU Member States of over-enlargement to countries further east, such as Georgia and Ukraine, due to unwanted migrant labour and the fear that a sovereign debt crisis could slow enlargement.

There are currently six countries that are waiting to join the European Union: Turkey, Bosnia-Hercegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, Albania, and Macedonia. Croatia became a Member State in July 2013, while the other nations are having some difficulties with meeting the requirements of EU membership. Bosnia-Hercegovina continues to suffer from ethnic quarrels, corruption, organised crime, ethnic divisions, and an unstable political climate. Serbia continues to have issues with Kosovo and need to further cooperate with the police and

---

[22] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_and_Eastern_Europe

justice mission in Kosovo. Montenegro needs to consolidate rule of law, fight organised crime and corruption, and better protect freedom of expression. Albania also needs to strengthen rule of law and fight organised crime and corruption. Macedonia has made progress in police reform, in fighting corruption, and in human rights, yet their dispute with Greece over the country's name hampers their ability to join both the EU and NATO.

Iceland has been a candidate but decided not further to proceed. Iceland is suffering from a dispute over mackerel fishing since they object to Norway and the EU taking more than ninety-per cent of the total allowable catch recommended by scientists. Financial reform has also been difficult in the country. They do, however, already apply two-thirds of EU laws, and they are in the Schengen Zone and follow single market rules. Their primary concern is the impact that EU laws will have on fishing and whaling, while the EU would gain a more significant role in the Arctic which is rich in untapped energy and mineral resources. Meanwhile, early 2015, the government of Iceland decided not to further proceed for membership with the EU.

Euro scepticism

In the EU, the euro crisis[23] that began late in 2009 and the ensuing austerity programmes in many countries have upended political stability and opened the room for the rise of Eurosceptic and anti-enlargement parties. The outcome of the European Parliament elections in May 2014 epitomizes this trend, with Eurosceptic winning at the polls in France and Denmark and scoring particularly well in the United Kingdom. The anti-EU populist school claims that democracy can only be saved by returning all powers to the nation-state and abolishing the euro.

Trust in EU institutions is declining. Populist parties are rising and turning against the EU. These institutions are experienced by ordinary citizens as distant, elitist, top-down and difficult to understand. Politicians in Europe are out of touch with the voters. So-called "enlargement fatigue" has apparently reached a peak in European politics. The consequence of this trend might be that no country can join the EU before 2019.

Euro scepticism is linked with identity which is still primary national. European identity exists but it is weak. Identification with the EU is strongest in countries with weak national identity or dysfunctional central institutions. Many UK citizens have the impression that anything gained at the EU level is a loss of autonomy for their country. MEP's work in a more diffuse system of power.

Lobbying has become a massive growth industry in Brussels, Luxembourg and Strasbourg.[24] While the industry is dominated by business interests, civil society organisations are also more actively involved in the decision-making process. This has enhanced transparency and public accountability. But many of these civil society actors are "associations of associations" or expert organizations that are distant from the grass roots, so lobbying has not yet led to significantly increased levels of popular participation.

---

[23] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_debt_crisis
[24] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/European_Parliament

Turkey. Where does that country belong to?

Turkey has, by far, had the most difficult time progressing towards EU membership.[25] In 1963, the six member states of the then European Economic Community (EEC) signed an agreement with Turkey, confirming and extending the existing ties between the EEC and Turkey. This "Ankara Agreement"[26] was at that time considered, within both the EEC and Turkey, as a first step towards discussions on a possible membership. However, it is remarkable that this agreement is to celebrate its 50th anniversary in 2013 and that the special relationship still exists, whereas Turkey is still not a member of the European Union. This indicates a complex relationship between Ankara and the EU.

Turkey sees itself as a bridge between West and East, between Europe and Asia and at the border with the Middle East. Turkey believes that it belongs to the West. They are part of NATO since 1952. Turkey feels not accepted by the West. But thanks to the European Union there are no taboos anymore in discussing issues such as the Kurdish and the Armenian issues, although still very sensitive. There is no unanimity among the EU member states about a possible membership (is Turkey ready for membership?) and both the successive governments and the public opinion in Turkey have been changing their mind on the matter. Turkey still has to normalise its relations with Cyprus, and there are serious concerns about the respect for freedom of speech and democracy, the treatment of religious minorities, women's and children's rights, and the civilian control of the military. It is vital that they strengthen democracy and human rights through judicial reform before they have a chance of becoming a Member State. Others worry that Turkey, as a mainly Muslim country, would change the dynamics of the EU; however, they would provide a younger labour force that could help an aging Europe. The first concern of Turkey goes to the civil war in Syria and its impact for the whole region of the Middle East. After the presidential elections in Turkey end of August 2014 and the establishment of a new government, Turkey and the EU started a renewed discussion about possible accession which is now part of Turkey's domestic agenda. The main issues are: trade and economic integration, the EU accession process including the visa liberalization, mobility and migration (irregular migration), foreign policy interactions and counterterrorism. The regional situation calls for increased consistency between Turkey's and the EU's foreign policy goals. Turmoil along Turkey's south-eastern border has become a threat to the EU's homeland security as well as to Turkey's. The outcome of Turkey's parliamentary election on 7 June 2015, will mark a pivotal moment for the country's future.

The rise of the Islamic State since June 2014 has largely changed the situation in Syria and Iraq with massive consequences for Turkey: more refugees, asylum requests, and resettlement concerns, attacks on Syrian Kurds, repercussions for the Turkish Kurds, transit of jihadists to and from Syria, and exports of oil from Islamic State controlled territories. More than 1.6 million Syrian refugees are living in Turkey[27] and many of them try to cross the border with Bulgaria which is at the same time the border with the EU. Turkey is now confronted with a heavy humanitarian burden and a direct impact on its own society. Hungary is building a fence at the border with Serbia[28] to keep migrants out. Here the EU should do more!

---

[25] http://www.debatingeurope.eu/focus/infobox-arguments-for-and-against-turkeys-eu-membership/#.VZpKjnlCSM8
[26] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ankara_Agreement
[27] http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/regional.php
[28] http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jun/22/migrants-hungary-border-fence-wall-serbia

Role of Regions in Europe

There are several regions within EU Member States that are vying to be independent members of the EU. The primary political party in the Flanders region[29] of Belgium believes that they are dealing with both globalisation and localisation – the EU should handle issues such as defence or the environment, while democracy needs to be closer to the people. They desire to be an independent state within the EU through the dissolution of Belgium and the development of a Flemish state that will be sovereign over the Dutch-speaking territory, and to include Brussels which may have a separate linguistic status. Flanders believes in cooperation with the EU, yet remains restrained and critical, firmly believing that EU territory should not exist beyond European boundaries. A similar such region is the Basque in Spain[30] who want to join the EU on separate but equal footing with Spain.

Also, in Spain is the semi-autonomous region of Catalonia.[31] They hope to hold a referendum after elections, which could be followed in the Basque country. Currently, Spain has no constitutional mechanism to allow for the independence of one of its regions, and the EU has no system for the breakup of a Member State. It is also important to remember that EU membership can be blocked by just one member country, meaning Spain could block Catalonia's entrance. Catalonia aims to follow Scotland's example and negotiated a referendum with the central government; however, the Spanish Prime Minister is threatening to block the referendum from occurring. Support for independence in Catalonia has recently risen to over fifty-per cent. The idea of holding a referendum has been suspended.

The final territory that craves independence is Scotland, UK. Scotland, however, would likely become a separate province, rather than a truly independent state. They wish to keep their currency, the pound sterling, but they will still have interest rates set by a foreign bank, the Bank of England. They would primarily depend on Brussels for policy decisions, and in EU majority voting, Scotland's votes would make little difference. On 18 September 2014, a referendum was held on the question if Scotland should become an independent country and the answer was "no." The debate tells us that nationalism is still alive in Europe. The campaign for Scottish independence is not over![32]

Disadvantages EU Membership

There are various points to be made about the European Union that could be considered disadvantages to being a member. Some claim that major policies have failed, and the EU is thus in a demographic, economic, and technological decline. Others claim that there is not enough money spent on defence, seeing as Britain and France have had armed forces cut, and in Libya, for instance, they were dependent on logistics and supplies of the US. Furthermore, people who live within the EU do not identify with it, nor do they have faith in it. People are more closely associated with their national identities, be it French, Polish, Belgian, Spanish, or any other. The EU is essentially undemocratic, seeing as most members are unelected, therefore are unaccountable, and are far removed from citizens. Voter turnout in parliamentary elections is extremely low, and still dropping, since people do not feel that they are being adequately represented. Citizenship and belonging to the EU is low.

[29] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Politics_of_Flanders
[30] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basque_Country_(greater_region)
[31] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Catalonia
[32] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Scottish_independence_referendum,_2014

The United Kingdom has been a member since 1 January 1973. But the debate on how and how much being a member has been discussed permanently. The UK became part of the EU but at the same time kept a distance. The idea of creating a United States of Europe is certainly excluded. Political power will never be delegated from London to Brussels! The UK is pivoting away from Europe, becoming more inward looking. Will a British exit from the EU, a "Brexit", ever happen? A referendum will be held before 2017.

Former Belgian Prime Minister and EU founding father Paul-Henri Spaak once said "Europe consists only of small countries – some of which know it and some of which don't yet." The Brexit will make both the EU and the UK even smaller powers, whereas emerging powers will continue to rise.

Advantages EU Membership

More importantly, however, there are numerous advantages to being a Member State of the European Union, the first of which is the free movement of goods, services, people, and money. This has improved trade within the region, as well as migration for education and jobs. There is also the hope that wealth and stability will eventually return to the region. Additionally, the EU has its own foreign service, and it is in the process of trying to create its own intelligence and federal police services. The Erasmus education program[33] allows thousands of EU scholars to study abroad, to share their knowledge and gain from the knowledge of others. Meanwhile, EU's Erasmus study abroad programme is responsible for 1 million babies![34]

Finally, and most importantly, peace within the European Union is essentially guaranteed through interdependence. There have been no wars within the EU since World War II, justifying that the primary goal of fostering peaceful relationships between members has been quite successful. There is much negativity towards the EU since the Euro Crisis began, but the Union ultimately just needs more time to evolve. It is a relatively new institution, and it is constantly changing. In comparison, the United States took approximately ninety years to fully come together, so the EU simply needs to be given a chance to continue to progress. We are stronger united than the sum of individuals!

Still Conflicts within Europe

Despite the fact that a war has been avoided within the EU since the end of World War II, there have still been conflicts within the region that the EU has had to address appropriately; the most notable of which may be the conflict in Northern Ireland. There is a long history of discrimination against Catholics by Protestants in Northern Ireland, and the EU developed a peace programme[35] that contained two strands: (1) economic and social development, and (2) addressing the legacy of the conflict as part of the peace process. Under these strands, there were five economic and social priorities: (1) economic renewal through the harnessing of economic opportunities generated by the peace process; (2) social integration, inclusion, and reconciliation with priority being given to vulnerable groups in the worst-affected areas; (3) employing locally based regeneration and development strategies;

---

[33] http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus-for-all/
[34] http://www.independent.co.uk/student/news/eus-erasmus-study-abroad-programme-responsible-for-1m-babies-9751749.html
[35] http://www.slideshare.net/mattiaferrari/european-union-and-northern-ireland-conflict

(4) promoting an outward and forward looking region by encouraging dialogue with other EU regions on economic, social, and environmental issues; and (5) stimulating cross-border economic, social, and cultural cooperation. In the Northern Ireland conflict, the EU effectively promoted the peace process by realising the importance of communication and reconciliation in the process of reuniting Northern Ireland. The DDR (demobilisation, demilitarization and re-integration) of former armed people from both sides in Northern Ireland is still not yet finished. Peace does not come without pain. A "win-win" is the best solution. It is all about "identity" and an inclusive dialogue.

Another significant conflict within the European Union was the issue of the division of Cyprus between Turkish-Cyprus and Greek-Cyprus.[36] In this situation, EU accession was perceived to be an act aimed towards finding a resolution to the division of the island and was to act as a pressure to reach a solution. It has been determined that the most progress in resolving the conflict was done within the last three years before accession, with accession effectively acting as a major catalyst in discussions of reuniting. Although the country is reunited and a member of the EU today, the use of EU accession as a catalyst did not have a completely positive outcome on the situation between Turkey and Cyprus. At the Luxembourg summit of 1997, Cyprus was accepted as a candidate country despite the fact that it was still divided at the time. Meanwhile, at the same summit, Turkey was told that it had to work on finding a solution to the Turkey-Cyprus conflict before it would become a candidate country. This had utterly disastrous effects on EU-Turkey relations. A new round of UN talks on Cyprus began in May 2015 after a lengthy pause.

Since the breakup of the former Yugoslav Republic, there has been much conflict in the Western Balkans. The Union's policy towards the region is stabilisation through integration. In 2000, the Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP)[37] was launched, which offered Balkan countries the idea of eventual EU membership. It was later determined at the EU-Western Balkans summit in 2003 that the Balkans will have a future within the EU. In the Balkans, however, soft power has not been enough to encourage the same transformations as were seen in Central and Eastern Europe, thus the region was the site of the first EU security missions under the European Defence and Security Policy. Perhaps the EU should take on more of a peace building role in the Balkans, similarly to the actions taken in Northern Ireland, to encourage reconciliation and dialogue between fighting factions, rather than a stronger military role.

Conflicts between Peoples

The European Union also has a long history of issues and conflicts between peoples and populations. First and foremost, Germans and Poles have disliked each other for decades, due primarily to atrocities committed during World War II. Over time, however, they have grown into normalised neighbours. Many Poles feel badly about the process of resettlement of Germans following the Second World War, but they felt that it had to be done. Poland has grown to increasingly support Germany within the European Union; they would prefer to have a stronger Germany within the EU than risk Germany leaving the Eurozone, which would likely lead to the disintegration of the entire EU.

Further conflict can be seen through the observation of Serbians, Croatians, and the Serbian minority in Kosovo. When Kosovo banned Serbian goods from entering the country, Croatia

---

[36] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cyprus_dispute
[37] http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/policy/glossary/terms/sap_en.htm

offered to fill the void through trading with Kosovo. This greatly upset Serbia and their negative reaction demonstrated how positive Serbian-Croatian relations are necessary for regional stability. Following the entrance of Croatia into the EU in July 2013, their relations will prove even more vital. Furthermore, in 2011, Serbia indicted Croatian nationals on counts of war crimes, which angered Croatian officials because they want to deal with the criminals themselves. Additionally, Kosovo has plans to reintegrate Northern Kosovo, which is primarily Serbian and would prefer to be united with Serbia rather than Kosovo. The issues in the North are hindering Kosovo from beginning negotiations to enter the EU, who says that Kosovo is nearly ready to begin negotiations for a Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA)[38] but needs to continue to work on the issues in the North and to protect minorities.

Economic and Financial Crisis

Although the EU works towards economic unity and interdependence, the recent and on-going crisis in Greece has proven that even further restrictions and monitoring are required in order to ensure that the entire Eurozone does not fall apart. The economic crisis destroyed Greece's economy, brought down its government, caused social unrest, and threatened the Euro's future. The country is suffering from a recession due to the austerity measures that have been demanded by France and Germany in return for massive bailouts. Although fellow EU Member States have agreed to the bailouts and a Greek debt restructuring, it has not been easy. Greece continues to have major deficits and the emergency funds that the country received have not been paying for public services, but are rather being used to pay some of the interest on the debt. It is important in the case of Greece, as well as with Cyprus, Spain, Italy, and Portugal, that the EU remembers that they are working together to save a landmark Union of vastly different countries; they must remember that the citizens of the EU come first. If Greece is unable to improve societal structures, then their debt will never truly be cleared.

Peace Building Efforts

The European Union acts as a peace-building entity through three primary areas of policy, the first of which is development and cooperation. While the EU continues to be the world's largest aid donor, it also uses trade in order to drive development by opening markets to exports in developing countries. The Union's primary objective in this policy area is to eradicate poverty using a sustainable approach; it wants to give people control over their own development by: (1) attacking sources of vulnerability, such as poor access to food or clean water, education, health, employment, land, social services, infrastructure, and healthy environment; (2) eradicating disease and providing access to cheap medicines for epidemics like HIV/AIDS; (3) reducing the debt burden which diverts resources from public investments; and (4) promoting self-help and poverty eradication strategies that allow developing countries to consolidate the democratic process, expand social programmes, strengthen their institutional framework, increase private and public sector capacity, and reinforce respect for human rights.

The second policy area is humanitarian aid and civil protection, which includes crisis relief, and runs relief operations in areas with long-running crises and post-conflict instability. The EU was present in Libya, Afghanistan, and Palestine, among other nations. The EU's European

---

[38] http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/kosovo/press_corner/all_news/news/2012/10102012_01_en.htm

Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO)[39] has the duty to save lives, reduce suffering, and protect the integrity and dignity of those affected through emergency assistance including the delivery of tents, blankets, food, medicines, medical equipment, water purification systems, and fuel. ECHO also funds medical teams, mine-clearance experts, and provides transport/logistical support.

The final policy area which promotes the EU as a peace-builder is in human rights. The EU supports efforts to combat racism, xenophobia, and other types of discrimination, specifically in the areas of asylum and migration. Furthermore, the EU's humanitarian assistance is not subject to restrictions based on human rights breaches; aid is provided with the aim of relieving human suffering regardless of the cause. In order to promote respect for human rights and democracy, the EU has chosen to focus on four areas: (1) strengthening democracy, good governance, and rule of law; (2) abolishing the death penalty; (3) combating torture through preventative action, such as police training, and punitive measures, such as employing the use of the International Criminal Court; and (4) fighting racism and discrimination by ensuring respect for political and civil rights. Despite the efforts of the EU, discrimination remains prevalent within the Union, especially in regards to the migration of the Roma, which most EU Member States view to be an ethnic disadvantage in society.

The European Union has long been involved in African affairs, and there are two specific instances in which the EU aimed to work as a peace-builder in the region; however, in reality they acted more as a non-strategic state-builder. Peace-builders focus primarily on supporting human rights, civil society, and local institutions, whereas state-builders focus on security and the maintenance of shared sovereignty through an emphasis on good governance programs. Non-strategic state-building differs from strategic state-building in that it seeks to regulate but does not result in a neo-colonial imposition of rule, rather in external rule that promotes self-help and self-improvement thus leading to shared sovereignty. The EU's three policy areas aimed towards peace-building as mentioned earlier seem to fit this description precisely.

The lack of common analysis and of shared assessments of international developments is one of the EU's greatest handicaps as an international actor. This fragmented view of the world then results in a lack of ambition and confidence. The EU has about 140 diplomatic missions active worldwide but needs to be upgraded and made more effective.

Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)

Rather than being surrounded by a ring of friends, the EU is faced with an arc of instability stretching from the Sahel to the Horn of Africa, through the Middle East and the Caucasus up to the new frontlines in Eastern Europe. Moreover, the evolution in the multipolar security environment had led to a diversification of security threats that spread across political, social and economic dimensions and are increasingly interconnected. These threats are not purely military in nature but range from the proliferation of weapons of mass destructions to cyber-attacks, piracy, the actions of ethno-nationalist groups with subversive intentions, and threats to energy and environmental security. State borders are no longer unique to certain geographical regions. Radicalisation in the EU and extremism in the neighbourhood act as a

---

[39] http://ec.europa.eu/echo/index_en.htm

"communicating vessels" and blur the difference between what is internal or external to the EU.

The EU has to recognise itself as a geographical power that has its own interest to promote. Europe today is a major economic actor in the world. This status leads to important political responsibilities that cannot be ignored. When the EU is under constant pressure to intervene in high-intensity conflicts like those in Libya, Mali, and South Sudan, it is obvious that Europe's geopolitical environment and its role in the world are changing. An example of its role in conflict management in the international nuclear talks with Iran, which involve diplomats from six world powers as well as the EU high representative as head of the European External Action Service (EASS). On 14 July 2015, an agreement could be reached with Iran, thanks to diplomatic efforts.

Are we moving in the direction of a European army as an international force? What is the present state of the CSDP? The recent economic and financial strains, which have impacted all EU action since 2008, means that most of the Member States will struggle to keep their defence budgets at their present level in the future, and we may even see reductions. Many prefer to see Europe as a soft power.

What about NATO? Most of the EU Member States are also part of NATO. EU Member States seek assurance from NATO about their own national security. Some of them are responding to the existing NATO guidelines of spending 2% of GDP on defence within the next couple of years. Some Member States are accused of being "free-riders" both in NATO as well as in EU context. Others see the CSDP as the European pillar of NATO.

There is a difference between the EU and its member states, depending on whether one wants to actively use this distinction. The EU as a union does not have the same historical (postcolonial) or political (narrowly interest-focused) baggage as do member states. "What should the EU do?" The EU as such is likely not to do very much at all. It will listen to the answer of questions first such as "What should Britain/France/Germany do?"

Germany is the strongest force in Europe. There is no German foreign and defence policy separated from its European context and that is a strong contrast with the UK and partly also with France. Nevertheless, France is the most important partner for Germany in the EU. Germany has been considered a "Civilian Power" pursuing a pro-Western and pro-democratic course based on striving for international cooperation, integration and the transfer of sovereignty to supranational organisations. That explains why not a single CSDP mission or operation has been launched by Berlin. The British and Germans may want a softer CSDP but for very different reasons – for the UK a civilian approach asserts NATO's primacy; for Germany such an approach avoids difficult questions about the use of military force.

European Diplomacy Mostly National Affair

"Who do I call if I want to call Europe?" That basic question comes from the former US Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger. Meanwhile, the EU has a High Representative for the CFSP and a President for the European Council, next to the President of the European Commission. In a way, the question of Kissinger is still relevant. The challenge is how to link national policies within the EU structure?

The most important external relations dossiers have remained in the hands of the EU member states. The member states lack real commitment on military matters, the conflict situations are of varying degrees of complexity, and EU countries differ in their understanding of what the EU's strategic vision should be. The reality remains that European nations are still hesitant to allow the union to take over on foreign policy, as they don't share the same perception of their common interests in international affairs.

Germany has become a leader in the Ukraine crisis for several reasons. Germany has the biggest economy and the largest population since the country's reunification in 1990. Its Foreign Policy is able to combine economic power and diplomacy. Paris has weakened in recent years. London is increasingly disconnected from the EU. Washington has taken a step back from European affairs. And Brussels lacks the capability to lead the EU on foreign policy. Berlin has taken over the leadership of European foreign policies. The UK, France and Germany dominate the European Council's work on foreign and defence policies. There is an argument saying "foreign policy begins at home".

The main goals of the Berlin-led Western strategy on Ukraine have been to move the conflict from the military to the diplomatic and economic levels. The second goal or pillar is the use of sanctions.[40] The Kremlin, probably to its surprise, had to learn that the EU was united in its rejection of the annexation of Crimea and Russia's attack on Eastern Ukraine, and that it was ready to pay a price for that unity in the form of economic sanctions that would affect the EU as well as Russia. These sanctions have led to an economic crisis in Russia.

The so-called US strategic re-balancing to the Asia-Pacific means Europe will increasingly have to take care of its own security and defence. Only through an effective CFSP can Europeans play a distinctive part in world politics, defending their interests while promoting their values and the social model in which they take pride, independently of the great powers. Cooperation seems the best option of maintaining a broader range of capabilities. An example is the integration of the Dutch and Belgian navies. There is the possibility for groups of Member States to form coalitions of the willing for military tasks under an EU flag with much more autonomy.

The EU's 28 foreign ministers hold monthly discussions on ongoing issues. The borders between international and domestic politics have largely disappeared. Most of the burning issues, such as climate change, energy, migration, and terrorism, have both an internal and an external dimension.

In December 2013, the European Council met to agree the priorities for the EU CSDP.[41] These are: (1) development of armed drones, by the EU's own defence agency; (2) economic support for the arms trade; (3) air-to air refuelling to support aerial bombing; and (4) military responses to attacks on cyber and maritime infrastructure. On 25-26 June 2015, EU Member State heads of government reviewed the EU's progress on security and issues such as arms trade.

According to SIPRI, 30 of the top 100 arms manufacturers are from Europe.[42] The European defence industry is worth hundreds of billion annually and means very big business. Industry experts also estimate that in the European Union, more than 700.000 people work in

[40] http://europa.eu/newsroom/highlights/special-coverage/eu_sanctions/index_en.htm
[41] http://www.nouvelle-europe.eu/en/outcomes-december-defence-council
[42] http://www.sipri.org/media/pressreleases/2014/SIPRI-Top-100-December-2014

aerospace and defence. The EU's goals and the defence sector's goals are becoming increasingly aligned. The major arms companies have offices in Brussels, acting through a vast network of think-thanks, clubs and informal circles, and their industry associations are frequently consulted by EU officials. Drones will no doubt represent a significant portion of Europe's military aerospace industry in the decades to come.

Is the EU a Security provider?

The main strength of the EU as a security provider is (1) its ability to use and coordinate means from different policy fields like development cooperation, diplomacy, economy and civilian and military capabilities for crisis management. This ability is the prerequisite for designing comprehensive strategies and comprehensive action; (2) conflict prevention is an important facet in the external action of the EU. Two prominent means in this field are development cooperation and partnership programmes; (3) the CSDP is multilateral in nature. The main obstacle to have a better CSDP is national egoism.

Talking about a European Army is still taboo, at least in some political circles. There seems no consensus on the "use of force." It looks as this can only be realised on the long term. Critics say that the EU makes its defence policies based on the assumption that the USA is always there. The Obama administration is known as a less interventionist government. The President wants to end the wars abroad and have their soldiers back home. Also the cost of interventions is too high! The USA should do less and focus mainly on risks of immediate threat to their country.

Some member states believe defence is a national responsibility based on national sovereignty. The key countries for a possible EU defence are the UK, France and Germany. Smaller countries do believe in collaboration in defence matters. Although some of these smaller countries do on free-riding or cheap-riding when it comes to the costs. Eastern European members do emphasize the need for a strong EU bloc to persuade the Russian Federation. There are different perceptions and divisions within the EU on Russia. Most of the Central European countries are requesting a stronger EU military dimension as well as a strong NATO presence at their borders with Russia.

Today, the EU has about 1.5 million soldiers. The EU has developed military missions already in Africa such as in Mali, Somalia, and Central African Republic. Sending soldiers or police officers abroad represents one of the most serious and expensive types of EU engagement, even though the majority of operations are relatively small in scale. Since 2002, the EU has undertaken roughly 30 civilian and military missions. Two-thirds of missions were civilian in character. Particular focus is on the neighbourhood and on Africa.

The EU is a security provider in many ways. Extending its membership has certainly contributed to spreading stability and security across the European continent. Internal security has become a major field of action. The CSDP is focusing on crisis management and defence. Internal security can no longer be regarded or realised irrespective of external security. The main challenges are civil protection, health security, food security, cybercrime, terrorism, organised crime, migration, state failure in third countries and disaster relief. As a consequence, the EU positions itself as a protector of its citizens against a vast array of insecurities and risks, both of an external and internal nature.

For responding to natural and man-made disasters the Union has an array of instruments, notably those managed by the European Commission: the European Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil protection (DG ECHO)[43] and the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC)[44]. In order to have these instruments well-functioning it might be that the EU needs its own airlift capability and a European civilian protection force. Having an EU civil-military operation unit especially in the framework of humanitarian aid and disaster response makes sense.

EU Foreign Policy: Case Israel & Palestine

The conflict between Israel and Palestine is currently a hot topic globally, and especially in the European Union, with a central aim being a lasting peace in the Middle East. It has been easy to see through time that Israel has the upper-hand in its conflict with Palestine: they have the support of the United States and other powerful members of the international community and they are stronger militarily; however, in order to reach a peace agreement, the power balance needs to be more equal. Israel should be treated just like any other country – their occupation of Palestinian territory and abuses of human rights are illegal according to international law. Palestine receives sympathy from many states in the Muslim world, and the EU would make great improvements in its Middle East cooperation if they were to break away from the shadow of the US and show more support for Palestine. Additionally, the EU may receive more political goodwill if they were seen to be working towards a solution to the conflict. Recognition of the State of Palestine,[45] as done by Sweden and the Holy See, might be a helpful step.

The EU is Israel's biggest trading partner, which gives significant leverage to the European Union. Theoretically, the EU could suspend trade with Israel since "The European Union-Israel Association Agreement,"[46] which regulates trade between the two entities, is based upon a respect for human rights, which Israel has violated. Furthermore, when Hamas won the democratic election, the EU demanded that Hamas denounce violence, acknowledge previous agreements Israel had made with the Palestinian Authority, and to accept Israel's right to exist, none of which were asked of Israel, thus clearly demonstrating the bias. If the EU had not put as much pressure on Hamas, their strategy could have been more successful.

In order to encourage a peaceful solution to the excessively violent conflict, the European Union must fully employ its role as a peace-builder. They must be independent of the influence of the United States in their treatment of Hamas and Israel. It is possible to be impartial, and this is vital in order to foster a true power balance that may one day result in a peace accord. The EU has the ability to play a major role in the conflict between Israel and Palestine, but only if they are willing to break away from the US, put more pressure on Israel, and take a bit more of a relaxed position towards Hamas. Reconciliation will not be realistic until Palestine and Israel are regarded as equals – the European Union has the opportunity to be the leader on the path towards this.

---

[43] http://ec.europa.eu/echo/
[44] http://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/civil-protection/emergency-response-coordination-centre-ercc_en
[45] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_recognition_of_the_State_of_Palestine
[46] http://eeas.europa.eu/israel/index_en.htm

Migration: Security and Peace Issue

Migration is a security issue that of its very nature consists of internal and external aspects. A very telling example is the case of the massive flows of migrants across the Mediterranean Sea. In 2014 over 160.000 migrants managed to cross the Mediterranean from North Africa and the Middle Eastern region to the southern member states of the EU: 80 % of these migrants entered the EU through southern Italy.

Policies on border security, the harmonisation of asylum procedures, tackling illegal migration, trafficking, organized crime, but also foreign policy, development cooperation, and defence are all relevant in their interrelated application to the issue of migrants.

So far this year, the United Nations refugee agency (UNHCR) estimates[47] that as of the end of June 2015, almost 137,000 refugees and migrants had crossed the Mediterranean. One third of them are from Syria. Their hope is of reaching European shores as they flee from violent conflict, terrorism, poverty and persecution. Hundreds of thousands more are expected to do the same – looking for a new life to come! Unfortunately, many do not make it! Hundreds of refugees died in the Mediterranean Sea. The refugees' dramas continue in the Mediterranean until today!

Syria had the largest refugee population, more than 4 million left the country and about 7.2 million are displaced inside. The neighbouring countries Lebanon, Turkey and Jordan are hosting most of the Syrian refugees. Other areas of significant refugee populations include Afghanistan, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Myanmar, Iraq, Colombia, and the Central African Republic.

Is Europe a Continent of Hope?

Many refugees see Europe as a safe haven and a continent of hope. Refugees take a variety of routes and come from a number of different countries, including Afghanistan, Eritrea, Niger, Syria, Iraq and Somalia. Most of them landed in Italy and in Greece. Smaller arrival numbers have been recorded in Spain and Malta. At the same time, 1,850 refugees or migrants have died or are missing at sea.

It is shocking to see the many boats capsizing in the Mediterranean Sea. Death at sea has become a grimly common occurrence. Human traffickers who smuggle migrants, mainly due to the political anarchy in Libya, should be detected and arrested. They are called "the slave drivers of the 21st century!" Pope Francis has called repeatedly for the international community to take action decisively and quickly in order to stop these tragedies from recurring. The Pope calls the Mediterranean Sea "a vast migrant cemetery."

Migration is no longer a national issue; it has become a European one. Indeed, the Schengen philosophy consisted of two parts: eliminating internal borders and reinforcing the external border. The fact is, we don't really apply the second element. We have left this mission to frontline Member States. But it is impossible to continue in this way, because today migration is clearly a European issue and should be managed at EU level. The Schengen area requires

---

[47] http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/search?page=&comid=4a3201f76&cid=49aea93a7d&keywords=migration

an efficient management of the EU's common external borders to ensure strong protection. It is clear that no EU country can or should be left alone to address huge migratory pressures.

The UNHCR is advocating for a comprehensive and urgent response from the European Union. Refugees awaiting registration, including families with children, have no choice but to sleep in the open. Hundreds of women, children and men are sleeping in cramped and unsanitary conditions. People in need should be supported with full respect for their human dignity.

At the same time, we see the need for an inclusive European and international approach to address the root causes such as poverty, social insecurity and violent conflicts in the countries from where the migrants are coming. Global action is needed to stabilize Libya from where the most boats are coming. Especially in Syria, a comprehensive peace process should be developed as soon as possible.

The European Commission invited EU Member States to resettle those people in need of international protection from North Africa, the Middle East and the Horn of Africa. The principle and value of "burden sharing" should be done equally by all 28 Member States and be an expression of solidarity within the European Union.

The current refugee situation requires a collective and far-reaching response based on the principles of humanity, access to protection, and genuine solidarity and responsibility sharing, both within the EU but also with countries outside the EU. Europe should lift up to its traditions in this regard.

Soul of Europe

The European Union likes to see itself not just as an economic community but also as a community with common and shared values. Europe should be a continent of hope! Nevertheless, so far an alert civil society is missing. Instead, populism and extremism are on the rise in many EU member states.

Former President of the European Commission, Jacques Delors, believe that Europe needed to have a soul; that there needed to be a spiritual and ethical dimension to the European Union – legal and economic expertise were not enough for the EU to succeed. Thus, A Soul for Europe[48] was developed in 1994. It was an incredibly forward-thinking initiative whose goal was to involve religious communities in dialogue with the European institutions. Religious communities were encouraged to present projects with the potential to receive grants. We at Pax Christi International believe that Jacques' belief in providing the EU with spirituality and meaning is quite significant today. The EU is suffering from a lack of connection; EU citizens do not feel like EU citizens. There is not such as a European public opinion. A uniting force is missing, and should be more seriously pursued by the European Union bodies. The EU should also be a space for dialogue and faith. Encouraging and stimulating a sense of spirituality among such a multitude of religions and individuals would further motivate work towards peace.

---

[48] http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/policy_advisers/archives/activities/dialogue_religions_humanisms/sfe_en.htm

Nobel Prize 2012: The EU

The Nobel Peace Prize of 2012 was awarded to the European Union for contributing "to the advancement of peace and reconciliation, democracy and human rights in Europe" for over six decades.[49] Although the EU undoubtedly aims to work for peace within the Union and around the world, as can be witnessed through their peace building efforts in the DR Congo and Israel-Palestine, as well as peace-oriented policies, the EU still has a long way to go to truly earn the title of a peace building entity. Upon receipt of the Nobel Prize, there was much criticism voiced in the media, especially since the European Union is a bloc that is strongly based on military power. Past winners including Desmond Tutu, Mairead Maguire and Adolfo Perez Esquivel shared their opposition to the EU receiving the award seeing as it is strongly based on military force to ensure security. Alfred Nobel intended for the prize to be given to those who work towards disarmament, but the EU remains one of the biggest weapons producers in the world.[50]

Pax Christi International

Similarly to the European Union, Pax Christi International was created based on reconciliation and was originally formed as a Crusade of Prayer for Germany. By the end of World War II, people were longing for peace. The first powerful symbol of the rebuilding Europe was a peace pilgrimage in France. Bishops in both France and Germany gave their support to the growth of Pax Christi, and soon the organisation expanded into a Crusade of Prayer for all Nations. From then, Pax Christi grew quickly, and in 1952 began to be identified by Pope Pius XII as the International Catholic Peace Movement.

Pax Christi International believes that the root causes of conflict must be addressed in order to promote long-term solutions. The movement believes that the EU recognises this, yet often has taken on more of a state-building role, rather than a peace-building one. The European Union has discouraged war within the Union for over sixty years, and needs to be given the continued opportunity to grow and manage its internal problems. Meanwhile, the EU Member States must work towards developing a consensus on how to deal with external conflicts, since historically, actions in regions such as Africa and the Middle East have been highly contended.

It is worth remembering that the peace and reconciliation project called Europe was initiated and taken forward mainly (not only) by Christians. In this context, Europe should be envisaged not only in economic or political terms but also as a web of culture, tradition, faith and history. Many Christians feel particularly responsible for Europe today. A united Europe is the precondition for shaping our common future in the light of human rights, social justice and ecological sustainability. Our aim should be the creation of a European civil society, in a spirit of respect and openness towards others and living together in reconciled diversity.

Swanwick, Derbyshire 18 July 2015

Fr. Paul Lansu
Senior Policy Advisor - Pax Christi International

---

[49] http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2012/press.html
[50] http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/12/10/us-nobel-eu-idUSBRE8B906M20121210