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## The European Union Building Peace Near and Afar: Monitoring the Implementation of International Peace Agreements

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## Abstract

The European Union's (EU) support and contribution to international peace and security continues to develop with involvement in the Balkans, South Caucasus, Africa, Middle East and South Asia (Council of the European Union 2005). Within the broad range of civilian and military interventions under the Common Security and Defence policy (CSDP) there have been two monitoring missions that have emerged from peace agreements, in Aceh (2005-2006) and in Georgia (2008 to date). This article maps the evolution EU's role in international peace building by focusing on how this role is increasingly constructed by the scope of monitoring missions which it has embarked upon outside of its borders. A thematic analysis of literature is used to explore how the EU's monitoring role has evolved regarding the different degrees of intervention, time-frame and size of the monitoring mission which have resulted in a multi-level impact regarding societal transition. The article finds that political will, shadows of past and future missions and intergovernmental concerns dominates how the EU's monitoring missions unfurl, affecting the practice of monitors and other EU actors in local conflict settings and contemplates scenarios for future monitoring missions.

## Keywords

European Union Foreign Policy; Monitoring Mission; Peacebuilding; Conflict resolution

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Peace monitoring has increasingly featured on the EU's agenda and practical efforts to contribute to international peace. Monitoring agreements represent an opportunity for oversight and confidence-building measures. According to Richard Whitman and Stefan Wolff (2012) the EU has the capacity to act fund, coordinate and cooperate to contribute to peace and peace making internationally. Making peace suggests an element of bringing an end to violence, while building peace represents a longer-term shift in managing difference peacefully. In its role as a civilian peace monitor, it draws on each of these strengths which are born from a significant catalogue of successful and less successful activities internationally (Duke 2002; Faria 2004; Ortega 2001). As an example of 'active monitoring' the EU's engagement as a civilian actor in the aftermath of the signing of a peace accord illustrates how a confluence of key factors has contributed to the evolution and professionalization of civilian capacity to address security, peace mediation, conflict management and observation concerns. To manage a conflict is to manage disputes peacefully without recourse to violence (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall 2011: 40). The merit of having a European Security and Defence Policy operation capacity linked to diplomatic, structural and civilian measures facilitates the EU to become a more credible player (Whitman and Wolff 2012). Specifically, the EU's Instrument for Stability and Peace building Partnership have allowed the EU to build and acquire credibility and capacity to engage with a range of parties and actors, including those more marginalised, to the conflict leading to a transformation of the structures and relations of conflict within a peace process (Albin 2005).

This study adds to the underdeveloped scholarship which explores how the EU contributes to international peace making and building. While this article focuses on two case studies, it also raises key considerations for the wider consequences of the EU in international peace monitoring. Coordinating and funding local actors and agencies enables the EU to have a significant potential for impact on the local decisions that are made about how agreements are implemented. Making and building peace following international peace agreements is a challenge for local, national and international actors.

The politics and practice of building peace are often linked with the promise of reconciliation, peace, equality and prosperity. Here, adopting the language and terminology of Oliver Ramsbotham, Tom Woodhouse and Hugh Miall peacebuilding

'addresses structural issues and the long-term relationships among conflictants' (2011: 3). While traditionally, peacekeeping may have focused on lowering levels of destructive behaviour, the analysis here proposes that as monitors, the EU extends the remit of peace monitoring to include ambitions of peacebuilding. (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall 2011: 32). For John Paul Lederach, reconciliation is inherently paradoxical:

'In an overall sense, reconciliation promotes an encounter between the open expression of the painful past, on the one hand, and the search for the articulation of a long-term, interdependent future, on the other hand. Second, reconciliation provides a place for truth and mercy to meet, where concerns for exposing what has happened and for letting go in favour of renewed relationship are validated and embraced. Third, reconciliation recognises the need to give time and place to both justice and peace, where redressing the wrong is held together with the envisioning of a common, connected future.' (1997: 20).

The key purpose of this comparative analysis is to understand how the EU's role as peace monitor has moved from simply documenting, recording and reporting how the agreed points are being observed to a more absorbing presence engaging in mediation, socio-economic development and security considerations. In Aceh, the EU's collaborative mission, the AMM (Aceh Monitoring Mission), with Norway, Switzerland and seven of the ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations) to monitor the implementation of the Helsinki Memorandum of Understanding, represented a key departure in the EU's external relations activities. Firstly, the EU found itself operating in cooperation with another regional organization (ASEAN) in an area far from its neighbourhood. Secondly, the EU's intervention in Aceh represented an opportunity for the EU to redress criticisms of selectivity and widen its contribution to international peace-building. The mission commenced on 15 August 2005 and lasted until 15 December 2006, and oversaw the implementation of key aspects of the Memorandum of Understanding (2005), including decommissioning, demilitarisation, monitoring of human rights, supporting good relations between parties and observing legislative changes. This mission witnessed the EU engaging proactively at a central level in Aceh, but also through their mobile units, having a wider geographic remit. This geographic spread of the monitoring mission was similarly replicated in the EU's second monitoring mission in Georgia. The EU has been present under the EUMM (EU Monitoring Mission) since the 15 September 2008 following on from the Six Point Agreement (15 August 2008) which signalled a cessation of conflict between Georgia and Russia following a summer of war. On 1 October 2008, the EU deployed 200 monitors within Georgia to oversee the stabilisation, normalisation and confidence building in the aftermath of the agreement. Against the backdrop of the EU facilitated Geneva Discussions with Georgia and Russia, and the wider Neighbourhood policies and the EU Special Representative for the Caucasus, the EUMM represented a further deepening of EU engagement in the efforts to stabilise its neighbourhood. The mandate of this mission has focused on being a reporting mechanism to the EU member states and institutional actors, but also sought to normalise, stabilise and build confidence in the region by preventing a return to violent conflict. The mission's mandate has been extended beyond its original time-frame and continues to be operational today.

These two cases remind us that the EU's contribution to international peacebuilding is not simply confined to financial and technical assistance and peace mediation. The monitoring dimension of these missions offers an insight into the EU's behaviour in international peace mediation on the ground and at the front line of preventing the outbreak of violent conflict. The monitoring of international peace agreements, as in Aceh and Georgia, represent an important element within the ever-growing foreign policy toolkit. The article is structured in the following way. Firstly the article maps the role that monitoring plays within the advancing CSDP missions and considers what this means for the EU's contribution to peacebuilding. The second section charts the experiences of the EU as peace monitors in both Aceh and Georgia detailing the mandate and consequences of the missions utilising a range of policy statements and

documentary evidence. In the third and final section, the article closes by drawing upon literature and secondary analysis to examine theoretically how peace monitoring has changed and explores the implications arising.

### **ONE INSTRUMENT AMONG MANY**

In the past, openings for making a contribution to peacebuilding have been afforded by the considerable breadth and depth of financial assistance combined with a rolling out of EU personnel usually in the form of Special Representatives, Delegation Staff and even Policing Missions. As Whitman and Wolff argue, 'the EU for the most part, seemed to have sufficient control and self-confidence in managing conflicts in its immediate neighbourhood' (Whitman and Wolff 2012: 3). Hence, when the EU rolls into town, it can tend to do so in a pretty substantive way. The lessons drawn from the experiences in the Balkans throughout the 1990s indicate that the 'EU has come a long way towards achieving some credibility as a conflict manager' (Whitman and Wolff 2010: 9).

Reaching agreements between parties who have formerly been engaged in direct conflict, war and violence is imbued with intransigence, hazard and vulnerabilities thus when points of contention are agreed the responsibilities for all actors in the aftermath carry moral, historical and structural weight. According to the UN Secretary General (2005), the success of mediating and implementing peace has been blemished by failures which have saw 'roughly half of all countries that emerge from war lapse back into violence within five years.' This resonates also with Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall when they stated: 'Winning the peace makes even greater demands than winning the war' (2011: 225). Scholarship has focused on the narratives and analysis of agreements that have failed to engender peace fuelling a dominant discourse of miscarried agreements (DeRouen and Bercovitch 2008; Licklider 1995; Luttwak 1999). Hence, it becomes vital to understand the contribution that the EU as a monitor of international peace agreements is making to the building of peaceful relationships and avoidance of political violence. According to Whitman and Wolff analysis of how the EU engages with local actors or third parties provides a 'crucial link between an analysis focused on EU capabilities and one that examines context-specific factors in relation to a particular conflict when seeking explanations for success or failure of particular conflict interventions' (Whitman and Wolff 2012: 10). As a monitor of peace agreements each of these missions undertaken are an expression of the EU's commitment to international peace building which provide insights into the construction and lifespan of mandates but more importantly the operational coherence of the EU at an intergovernmental and community level as well as cooperation between the EU and other actors on the ground. Christophe Hillion defines coherence 'beyond the assurance that the different policies do not legally contradict each other, [as] a quest for synergy and added value in the different components of EU policies' (2008:17). In the field of external relations, therefore this definition becomes increasingly valuable as monitoring missions represent a fragmentation of activities and geographic spread; yet, the added value and synergy remains in evidence given the overlap of personnel involved in all CSDP missions.

At its very core, the challenge of building peace among deeply divided societies has driven the integration project. It also has propelled the EU into puzzling contexts where an experimental (whilst arguably well-intended) approach to spreading peace and prosperity has evolved. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the EU has fashioned an approach to crisis management, conflict prevention, conflict resolution and peace building based on lessons learned from the devastating dissolution of Yugoslavia to broaden the scope of their engagements to beyond their immediate borders. Significant interventions in terms of financial, diplomatic, operational and logistical support have been witnessed on the African continent, Asia, the Middle East and the Caucasus. The mandate and remit of such interventions varied according to need, historical ties and political will; with an increasingly vast range of civilian capacity to assist international peace building, the

'Blue and White' of the EU unarmed monitors and observers are progressively visible internationally. For instance, in the EU's intervention in the Great Lakes, Aceh, Kosovo and the Caucasus brought a shift in external engagement but also the creation of the External Action Service, after the AMM, has fundamentally changed the decision taking and policy making landscape by centralising power, budget and operational capacity including that over decisions where to launch a mission and whether to continue a mission (Blockmans and Wessels 2009). This is not to suggest that coherence and strategy challenges have been resolved since the creation of the European External Action Service. For Whitman and Wolff this presents the EU with 'a formidable challenge in coordinating a significant number of institutional actors and policy domains within the Union' (2012: 5). As they go on to point out, 'capturing the practices of the Union as an actor seeking to engage in a comprehensive approach to security also poses significant analytical difficulties, in relation to accounting for successes and failure' (2012: 5). Despite the efforts to streamline and enhance the coherency of the EU's external relations and activities, challenges remain, due to the sheer diversity of ambitions and actors involved.

Yet as the post-9/11 and recession world continued, it has become apparent that increasingly intensive approaches to monitoring were favoured as opposed to engaging in a wide range of cases especially regarding the use of peace mediation as a means of driving local performance on the agreed peace (Youngs 2003). However, rather than exploring the scope and range of instruments available, this article is primarily concerned with how the EU meets the task of monitoring an agreed peace and how this role has evolved in light of recent monitoring missions that the EU has been involved in.

In 2005 and 2008 respectively, the EU played a key financial and diplomatic role in securing momentous agreements bringing an end to ethnopolitical conflict and war in Aceh and between Georgia-Russia. The ensuing monitoring role in both of these cases are revealing about the EU's efforts to build peace both near and afar. Often armed with the best of intentions, the EU's impacts often reap unintended impacts (Tocci 2003). In particular, the monitoring of agreed issues by the EU (and partners in case of Aceh) reminds us that civilian capacity in peace building is experimental and evolving. It causes multi-level impacts affecting how the EU can perceive and develop its role in international peace monitoring. As an unarmed mission, EU monitoring missions challenge traditional preconceptions about peace "keeping", "making" and "monitoring" operations (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall 2011). At another level, the role that the EU plays in peace monitoring affects local civil society capacity building and, more broadly, impacts upon historical and ethical judgements on territorial, identity and security concerns. While these considerations can be circumscribed within this immediate transitional phase, the resultant narrative emerging from these different policies weighs heavily on opportunities for peace and reconciliation. The embryonic active monitoring approach favoured by the EU has reflected a paradigmatic shift from the EU that monitoring is more than observation and reporting; it is a hands on approach, which indicates a willingness to be more robust in engagements. However, as this article argues caution should lay in the long-term impacts of this active monitoring, however well-intended the initiative especially given that often policy learning has failed to be institutionalised and adopted.

Cognisant in civilian approaches building, managing and transforming conflictual relationships that have borne out tremendous suffering, injury and death in deeply divided societies such as the Balkans the EU developed a range of capacities. These of course tend to run in tandem with the financially dexterous policies such as the Stabilisation and Association Process and in the case of Northern Ireland Peace programmes. In light of its experiences in the Balkans, the 2004 new members and in Northern Ireland the EU has increasingly enhanced its capacity and profile in international peace monitoring through the deployment of monitoring missions internationally (Manners 2002; Bretherton and Vogler 2006; Bacarani and Dellara 2004;



Coppetiers et al 2004; Diez 2002; Tocci 2007). According to Miall, Ramsbotham and Woodhouse peace monitoring operations usually function to help manage the transition from war to peace, as a humanitarian intervention, to defend democracy, to decolonise a territory or to support regime change (2011: 2020-203). As an unarmed mission, the EU monitors are challenged with the traditional mandates of peacekeepers which include normalisation and stabilisation and the processes associated with demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration. Hence the traditional phases of intervention, stabilisation and normalisation prevail (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall 2011: 214). However, it is clear that with a valuable early warning system the EU can appreciate and therefore could respond more effectively to threats to peace and security both regionally and internationally (European Commission 2004). This is an evolving instrument: the EU's commitment to utilising diplomacy as a means of preventing and ending violent conflict was in evidence but certainly lacked coherency and strategy instead being pursued on an ad hoc and unreflective way lurching from one crisis to the next without a cohesive stratagem. Reflecting on the EU's historic approach in the Caucasus, Aćakoca, Vanhauwaert, Whitman and Wolff affirm:

'Too often, the Union remains a fundamentally reactive player, without the political will, clear strategic vision and adequate capacity to engage in proactive and effective conflict prevention, management and settlement in this region.'  
(2009: 37).

### **PEACE MONITORING: THE EU IN ACEH AND GEORGIA.**

Continued involvement in international peace making and building lies at the core of the EU's international outlook and their role in Aceh and Georgia manifested out of this impetus to contribute to international peace and stability. The EU's engagement in international monitoring of peace agreements in Aceh and Georgia marked a new stage in the development of the EU as a world player. Its foray beyond its immediate and close neighbourhood to the Aceh-Indonesia conflict denotes a capacity and willingness to become more actively involved in securing peace and normalising relations between conflicted parties.

While the EU's engagement as a monitor in Georgia is more understandable given both the proximity, geo-strategic and historical relationship between the EU and the wider Caucasus region, their involvement in the territory of Aceh in Indonesia is perhaps more extraordinary. Initially, the EU became involved in the Aceh case through their support of mediation, under the premiership of former Finnish foreign minister Maarti Ahtisaari, which resulted in the Memorandum of Understanding agreed in Helsinki in 2005 (Braud and Gunaryadi 2005). Engagement in a joint monitoring mission with (five of the 12) ASEAN member states in 2005 was a direct consequence of the earlier support for the peace mediation (Schulze 2008). The EU's mandate as part of AMM included building good relations between the parties, investigating and monitoring the implementation of the agreement and 'demilitarisation, demobilisation and reintegration' processes. It had headquarters in Banda Aceh and then had sub-divisions in 11 district offices. The EU emerged as a likely candidate to take the reins in Aceh as the UN were deemed unsuitable following the previous flawed engagement in Timor-Leste and following mismanagement of the monitoring of a previous ceasefire. In addition, the GAM was unwilling to accept an straight ASEAN mission (Schulze 2008).

In Georgia however, the case for EU involvement was much more straightforward (Tocci 2008). Under the leadership of the French Presidency of the European Council, President Nicolas Sarkozy and Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner, with the support of Finnish Foreign Minister Alexander Stubbs, saw the EU adopt a central role in mediating a the Six Point Plan which secured an end to hostilities in the Georgian-Russian 2008 war (Cordell and Wolff 2010: 45). Following the EU brokered Six Point Plan which brought an

end to the August 2008 war between Georgia and Russia, the EU has continued to have a significant role in the on-going peace negotiations at Geneva and the implementation of the Agreement on the ground. Since October 2008, the EU Monitoring Mission in Georgia (hereafter EUMM) has been in operation in territory adjacent to Abkhazia and South Ossetia with 200 unarmed EU personnel from all 27 EU member states deployed. The EUMM has a mandate of Stabilisation, Normalisation, Confidence Building and Objective Information. The original mandate was for 12 months, but this has been renewed three times and is currently operational with no exit strategy in sight. A key objective of the EUMM is to provide open and safe access across the Administrative Boundary Lines of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The form, nature and mandate of any follow up mission to a peace agreement will undoubtedly emerge during the negotiation of any peace. Treading a troubled track the challenges facing any monitoring mission are not only potentially dangerous for the monitors themselves but also threaten to undermine the often delicate peace.

As active monitors, the AMM played a role on the ground in negotiating with local actors any disputes through the Commission on Security Arrangements and in the field. This indicated an important shift away from passive monitoring. Clearly, there is nothing subversive here; this was something negotiated from the outset. The mandate of the AMM was not pure monitoring and the AMM had instruments at its disposal to become more actively engaged. The meetings of the Commission on Security Arrangements were held weekly at the Banda Aceh headquarters, chaired by the EU's Pieter Feith and attended by senior representatives of GAM and the Indonesian government, police and military. Arguably the impact on short-term peace building was significant: through the structured working relationship between the EU and ASEAN and the continued communication between the parties and local actors through the Committee on Security Arrangements and District Committees on Security Arrangements security tensions were resolved and offset. With an eye to a longer term impact of this approach, crucial issues such as amnesty, reintegration of former combatants and decommissioning were dealt with initially in the immediate period under the direction of the AMM. Yet, while it is important to recognise the fundamental accomplishments and progress made under the AMM, it should also be acknowledged that the actions at this time bear an impression on how the conflict transforms and evolves in the future. While crucial steps for disarming and securing a territory are important concerns in the short term, the processes associated with reintegration, demobilisation and amnesties could perhaps be afforded plentiful consideration with transparent and visible local participation. Unable to fulfil the potential to strengthen capacity building and local ownership the monitoring mission dominated the arduous decision making (which has taken place at speed) detaching a strong sense of local ownership.

As a joint mission, the Aceh monitoring mission enhanced the way that the EU can be viewed as making a contribution to international peace building as it can be judged on its collaborative relationship with the ASEAN members. In practical terms the chain of command and visibility of personnel was a key component of how the EU delivered its side of the mission. All teams were multinational and it was a united mission, not composed of two separate elements. The mission was chaired by an EU representative and a Thai representative acted as deputy. It was a principle of the Deputy Head of Mission that the mission would be totally integrated with ASEAN, there were 6 ASEAN district officers, and 5 EU district officers. The added value of ASEAN for this mission lay in their connections and solid relationships with the Indonesian government.

Nathalie Tocci (2008) identified conditionality, social learning and passive enforcement as the central means through which the EU channelled its relationship with Georgia; while, regarding Abkhazia and South Ossetia, the EU's has had minimal relations and impact. Furthermore, Tocci goes on to say that the EU has neglected the Russian regional dimension to this instability which has 'handicapped its potential impact' (2008).

According to the EU Special Envoy, the main tasks challenged at the EUMM were as follows:

'As EU Special Representative for the crisis in Georgia, I will firstly, help to prepare for the international talks to be held under point six of the settlement plan of 12 August 2008, which are in particular to cover: i) arrangements for security and stability in the region; ii) the issue of refugees and displaced persons, on the basis of internationally recognised principles; iii) any other subject, by mutual agreement between the parties. Secondly, I will help to establish the EU's position and represent it, at my level, in those talks.' (Morel 2008).

Part of the mediated agreement, provisions were made for the 'opening of international talks on the security and stability arrangements of Abkhazia and South Ossetia'. The nature of the agreed provision was significant as interpretation could satisfy Georgian territorial claims yet raised the possibility that Georgian territorial integrity could be questioned. The absence of a long term commitment to Georgian territorial integrity in the August mediated Six Point Plan Following the introduction of the EUMM, international mediation by the United Nations (UN), EU and Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) on security and stability arrangements within South Ossetia and Abkhazia were launched in Geneva on 15 October 2008. Georgia, Russia and the United States were participants in this initiative also. A significant added pressure was that Russia recognised the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia on 26 August 2008.

Reflecting on the accelerated mediation conducted in the first fortnight of August, the European Council, at an extraordinary sitting on 1 September 2008, was 'pleased that the six point agreement achieved on 12 August on the basis of the EU's mediation efforts has led to a ceasefire, improved the delivery of humanitarian aid to the victims, and a substantial withdrawal of Russian military forces' (European Council 2008). Embedded in this enhanced approach to the conflict resolution process in the region, the EU committed to provide a monitoring mission, organised a donor conference and also introduced a Special Representative to the conflict.

The EUMM was operational since 2008 and its mandate has been extended until 14 September 2011. The mandate of the EUMM comprises of stabilisation, normalisation and confidence building in the region. However, a key challenge of the EUMM is that its mandate extends over the whole territory of Georgia, but the de facto authorities of Abkhazia and South Ossetia have denied access to the territories under their control. Yet, some high level access was granted to High Representative Javier Solana in 2008, which of course was progressed cautiously with an eye to the Russian relationship (Whitman and Wolff 2010: 10). In addition to the Geneva process, the EUMM provides an added value to the EU's mediation presence in this context, and having visibility on the ground contributes to an appreciation of the EU's presence, particularly highlighted since the cessation of the mandate of the United Nations and Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe in 2008. For Nicu Popescu, the monitoring mission in Georgia 'visit the Georgian military outposts once or twice a day, but their only effect in stabilising the situation is to psychologically and politically dissuade the parties from any potential hostilities' (2009: 461).

A further challenge faced by the EUMM is the lack of acceptance by Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Russia. Russia has sought to position itself as a unilateral partner in implementation and observation of the Six Point Plan, not a party to the conflict. Hence, they are on par with the EU. This manipulated presence has added to the difficulty of the EUMM establishing its role in the region. Crucially, the:

'current agendas of the immediate parties to the conflict at local and state level in both Abkhazia and South Ossetia created a situation in which the EU is of relatively marginal significance; their perceptions of what their own interests are

in relation to security, power and material gain have also meant that their willingness to move beyond the status quo and towards sustainable settlement is at best limited.' (Popescu 2009: 462).

The rigidity of the EUMM mandate has the potential to create long-term difficulties for success of the EUMM. Since the EUMM does not have the mandate to deliver aid projects when monitoring the conditions of refugees, there is a gap between passive monitoring and active monitoring which is to the detriment of the EUMM mediation capacity. Furthermore, the omnipresent threat of ending the mandate remains a key risk (Popescu 2009: 47).

### **CHANGING THE FACE OF PEACE MONITORING?**

In light of these two significant peace monitoring missions, is it credible to argue that a new phase of intensive and active EU monitoring has been ushered in? If so, the boundaries acceptable for traditional monitoring duties have been stretched, and the implementation of peace agreements conclusively and profoundly altered. In these two cases, it is clear the modus operandi of monitoring missions has been extended to include mediation, policy making and historical judgements which directly bear significance for the causes of peace and reconciliation in the afflicted societies. In each case active monitoring replaced a more passive form of monitoring, in the sense that EU personnel become involved in immediate action on policy, security and peace building initiatives (Bellamy 2005).

In Georgia, a degree of active monitoring is apparent but in a different way. The introduction of the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism and the Geneva Discussions provided opportunities for the regional organisations to work together. Hence, the primary impact for how we understand the EU in peacebuilding is at the level of how the EU engages with other regional organisations. For example, while the mandate of the OSCE and UN expired, staff remained present in the region and retained offices in Georgia hence only field offices in Abkhazia and South Ossetia closed; the organisational deficiencies of not having a field presence in South Ossetia and Abkhazia hinder the capacities of the organisations to have a collective impact. However, these three key organisations continue to operate from Georgia and in Geneva, and thus continue to collaborate in the Geneva Discussions and also through the Incident Prevention and Response Mechanism. The EU has assumed the lead role in this theatre and suggestions of miscommunication, both unintended and intended between the organisations in the Incident and Prevention and Response Mechanism have been raised. For example, the intention being to assert a more independent role for the particular organisation has created miscommunication and rivalry on the ground between the institutions. Due to the traditional division of labour and different levels of engagement between the UN in South Ossetia and the OSCE in Abkhazia, the EU's working relationship with the two actors has been complementary and cooperative. This has been possible to implement because of the long-standing financing role that the EU has played in supporting these two organisations throughout the 1990s (Tocci 2008).

Related to how the EU can be understood in international peacebuilding is the impact on the internal dynamics within monitoring missions and the wider European External Action Service. The variety of skill base and number of EU personnel deployed in both these cases was substantial which reflected an initial and admirable commitment by the EU to contribute to peace. The range of personnel suggests that in terms of policy making and taking, significant lessons could be learned by the EU to ensure that future missions are deployed in an appropriate, timely and effective fashion with primary concerns being: making any ethical, moral or historical judgement that can impact on how the societies deal with their violent past and the coordination of the plethora of EU voices. In Georgia, flanking the processes of engagement of the monitoring mission, the EU aimed to

contribute to a wider peacebuilding process through the Geneva Discussions. At the Geneva talks where the EU Special Representative to the conflict Pierre Morel acts as a co-chair for the discussions which cover arrangements for security and stability in the region, the issue of refugees and displaced persons and any other issue agreed by the parties.

The EU has a range of contactable offices and staff on the ground in the form of EU special representatives, commission delegations as well as member state embassies; therefore, it is possible to engage with parts of the EU. This diversity is also reflected in the enormous skill base of the monitors. However, despite this significant opportunity the political management of the EU actors on the ground can create significant challenges for monitoring missions. Diversity as an opportunity masks the embedded complexity of the EU decision making process. The challenge of engaging with a multiplicity of actors in the field mirrors the EU's institutionally divided EU approach to external relations. The assortment of personnel combined with a perceptibly convoluted decision making process embedded in the EU's approach to external relations must be overcome with the presentation of a unity in approach and presence. The policy implications from this study are clear: the EU must develop a contextualised and flexible approach to monitoring missions which deploy a range of transferable skills and practices across missions.

An important impact of the monitoring missions can be found at grassroots and civil society level. The wide-reaching aspect of the EU's capacity to inform and mould the processes of transition through their engagement in a conflict continues through the financial instruments that support initiatives beyond elite political processes. For example the European Commission funded a project which supports the socio-economic integration of internationally displaced persons and their host communities through engagement in active dialogue which features mediation as a main focus (Delegation of the European Commission to the European Union 2008). Yet, the organisational behaviour of the EU between its personnel and agencies on the ground embeds a significant multilevel influence on actors. Of course through the financial instruments the EU can seek to remedy any critique about local ownership: a degree of structured dialogue, feedback and engagement between the NGO community in the region and the EU agencies on the ground also will determine the validity and coherence of EU engagement with a view to considering the long term impacts of their behaviour and initiatives. Ultimately, in this case, the EU's engagement has been restricted and thus impact on the ethical and moral transition and methods of dealing with the past are heavily circumscribed by the isolationist stance of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

The multilevel impact of the EU's engagement in peacebuilding as a monitor of peace agreements can be found in the EU's affection towards socially inclusive peacebuilding. At an EU level this tends to be most readily achieved through the financial programmes which fund projects aimed at engendering societal reconciliation. Of course this is underscored by the nature of EU programme delivery which often means that a network of Europeanised peace builders emerges at the cost of involving a broader scope of people. In Aceh, peace building relates to the question of human rights and transitional justice. In a way of circumventing an enduring and deep impression on the peace process the mandate of the AMM was to deal with human rights abuses that happened while the AMM was operational, not before. Hence, the AMM worked on the premise that transitional justice should be left to the Acehnese and Indonesians. Therefore, on this crucial aspect of transition the EU removed itself from a sensitive and long term political and psychological issue. Yet on the other hand, the Law on Self-Governance was an issue which was not under the direct authority of the AMM, plagued the work of the AMM during its tenure. Ultimately the Indonesian government was responsible for the implementation of Law on Self-Governance. While the limits to this interaction can be explained by a risk averse EU to engage in mediation processes elsewhere in the region, it also reflects the greater challenge of how the EU is perceived by ASEAN – as a donor –

and ASEAN do not match the institutional development of the EU even in this field of mediation. This obstacle persists despite the joint ambitions of the EU-ASEAN Summit in 2007 which stated a determination to deepen and broaden cooperation to promote peace, stability, progress and prosperity in the region (EU-Asean 2007).

## CONCLUSION

Undoubtedly the face of peace monitoring has changed in light of the EU's recent endeavours both near and afar. The range of multilevel impacts emerging from a more hands on EU approach to peace monitoring in both these cases have suggested that the capacity for the EU to address the causes of peace and prevent a recourse to violence in the time that follows a peace agreement is immense. Despite different challenges in the immediate post-war situation in both cases, the reconstruction and normalisation mandate of the two operations required, as advocated by Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall, 'coordinated endeavours across national agencies, across civil-military operational divides, and across domestic-multinational/multilateral partnerships' (2011: 224-225). Ultimately, socially inclusive peace building remains a staple of the EU's attempts to address the causes of peace. In both cases the potential for further engagement, support and promotion of non-state actors prevails, and opportunities may have been missed given the EU's proclivity for international peacebuilding actors such as Swiss Peace and International Alert. It remains a central argument of this piece that, as a monitor, the EU ventures into the sensitive fields that are steeped in political import: transitional justice, dealing with the past, amnesties, territorial integrity and reconciliation.

According to Smith and Smock (2008: 59), the purpose of external parties is to 'provide assurance, expertise, and experience in support of the implementation of peace settlements'. It is clear that the EU has been able, in its role as monitor, to add weight to deadlines, incentivise political parties and monitor events independently. Furthermore, as a monitor of international peace agreements, the EU has engaged with neighbouring states, reconstruction agencies, regional organisations and philanthropic organisations who have assisted with financial donations as well as expertise which are critical to the implementation phase. It is clear that the EU's modus operandi has extended beyond simply documenting and reporting what they observe regarding agreed peace to acting in a more supportive function. A key supportive function played by external actor such as the EU is to help parties overcome 'distrust in their adversary's intentions to implement agreements by instituting third-party verification mechanisms to ensure compliance' (Barnes and Griffith 2008: 17).

In the case of Aceh-Indonesia, the AMM were able to iron out any tensions, address concerns and calm any disputes in a mediation forum, the Committee on Security Arrangements, convened and supported by the Aceh Monitoring Mission. The evidence from the Aceh Monitoring Mission has shown that implementation of the agreement was made possible by the material incentives provided directly to former combatant GAM members in the form of remittances as well as to the wider public with flanking developmental assistance; echoes of the Balkans resound. For the EU, by supporting wider reform, reconciliation and reconstruction processes an external actor can make the implementation process much more viable (Barnes and Griffith 2008: 59). Here the EU, as a monitor, has become much more heavily involved in circumscribing the politics of healing, identity and recovery in this transitional phase and therefore the urgency of maintaining the implementation of an agreement casts a long shadow over the future nature of peacebuilding. The balance between local and external ownership is a delicate one. Sustaining the implementation of the agreement requires local initiative which can be displaced by an overprescribed remit of external actors. Implementation of peace agreements is fragile and it is vulnerable from the context and actors which frame it, which is often why it can result in recourse to violence. Yet, frailty in a process can be

circumvented with an open and transparent measurement and acknowledgement of what has been accomplished and what is yet to be done, traditionally the role of monitoring missions. Where the EU has been crucial in addressing the causes of peace and avoiding a return to violent conflict relates to how it has propped up the implementation period, which is especially important when local actors wrestle with the local and destabilising issues.

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## Towards the European(-ised) Public Sphere: The Case of EP Elections in the Czech Republic and Slovakia

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## Abstract

European Parliament (EP) elections fall within the category of second-order elections: because these types of elections do not lead to the formation of government there is less at stake and, consequently, voters behave differently when casting ballot. However, since the behaviour of voters in elections cannot be perceived in isolation from the behaviours of political parties and media, the question then arises if media (and political parties) also perceive that there is less at stake and hence they behave differently. To this aim, this article analyses the news media coverage of the 2004 and 2009 EP elections in the Czech Republic and Slovakia (N = 5672) and, at the same time, integrates the second-order election theory with the behaviours of the media. Moreover, the article provides unique comparative evidence of news coverage of national parliamentary (N = 5435) and EP elections in both countries. The results indicate that media across the EU only marginally cover EP elections and particularly less than national first-order elections and that coverage of EP elections is dominated by domestic EU political actors. The findings are discussed in the light of existing literature on EP elections, the existence of Europeanised public spheres and EU's legitimacy as well as democratic deficit.

## Keywords

Europeanisation; EP elections; Media; Second-Order Elections; First-Order Elections

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The existence of a European public sphere, or a network of Europeanised, interrelated national public spheres, is often deemed a precondition for democratically legitimate governance in the European Union (EU) (Eriksen and Fossum 2002; Habermas 2004), not just because an informed public is commonly regarded as necessary for a well-functioning representative democracy (Althaus 2003) but also because a public sphere is a precondition for the realisation of popular sovereignty (Grundmann 1999), and its basic function is to democratise political institutions (Trenz and Eder 2004). Given that the majority of authors have abandoned the possibility of an encompassing, unified European public sphere, Europeanisation of national public spheres remains the more realistic approach (Schlesinger 1999; Gerhards 2000). Such an Europeanised public sphere would emerge as a result of the national public spheres of the EU member states being Europeanised largely through the Europeanisation of reporting in national media (Machill *et al.* 2006).

In this respect, media reporting of European Parliament (EP) elections offers the most likely scenario for the Europeanisation of national public spheres. EP elections are pivotal moments in the democratic process of the EU and national news media play a key role in communication between a polity's institutions and citizens or, in other words, between the electorate and the political arena, especially but not only during the campaign periods (de Vreese 2003). Nevertheless, in their immediate aftermath, Karlheinz Reif and Hermann Schmitt (1980) labelled the first direct EP elections "second-order national elections" (for an overview, see Marsh and Mikhaylov 2010). Compared to national first-order elections (FOEs), in SOEs there is less at stake since they do not determine the composition of government. The result is that EP elections, in particular due to their second-order character, have failed to engage the public through a Europe-wide electoral process and creation of public space (Marsh and Mikhaylov 2010).

More than three decades after Reif and Schmitt (1980) published their seminal work, the SOE model has, by and large, become one of the most widely tested and supported theories of voting behaviour in elections to the EP (e.g. Marsh 1998; Schmitt 2005; Hix and Marsh 2007). Moreover, it is not surprising that, given their aggregate nature (see below), the SOE model's predictions have mostly been tested using aggregate electoral and election-related survey data. Nonetheless, reliance on such data has led scholars to

focus primarily on sophisticated strategies of voters. However, by primarily focusing on the strategies of *voters*, the model is rendered blind to independent actions of the rest of the electoral circle, namely the *media* and *political parties* (see also Weber 2007).<sup>1</sup> Since perhaps the most important aspect of SOEs is that there is less at stake (Reif and Schmitt 1980: 9), it is viable to assume that all the three abovementioned actors perceive the less-at-stake dimension likewise.

At this point, the aim of this article is to contribute to the literature by explicitly integrating the SOE model with independent actions of other actors in the electoral circle than to voters, specifically the media. The study does this through the analysis of the whole range of news media coverage of the 2004 and 2009 EP elections in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, two small and new EU member states, and, at the same time, making use of the literature on the Europeanisation of national public spheres. The next section reviews the literature on Europeanisation of national public spheres, the coverage of European integration-related issues in the media, and SOE model. This section thus introduces the main concepts and presents the theoretical background. The third section unveils the expectations derived from the discussion in previous section, clarifies methodological issues, operationalises concepts, and presents the data. The fourth section presents the results of the analysis, and the last section concludes by summarising the findings and discussing their implications.

### **EXISTING LITERATURE. EUROPEAN(-ISED) PUBLIC SPHERE(S)**

Since the conditions for the existence of pan-European public sphere are absent, the standard approach is to focus on Europeanisation of national public spheres (Gerhards 2000; Trenz 2008). Europeanised national public spheres can be observed by measuring the different degrees of Europeanisation of existing national media spheres, as the media are taken as the best "proxy" and expression of the public sphere (de Vreese 2007: 6, Gripsrud 2007) and visibility of communication (through the media) is the necessary precondition for the existence of a public sphere (Trenz 2004).

Many different conceptualisations and indicators of the Europeanisation of national public spheres have been developed (e.g. Gerhards 2000; Koopmans and Erbe; 2004; Trenz, 2008). Generally, the key indicators for assessing the degree of Europeanisation of public spheres include the visibility of European topics<sup>2</sup> and inclusion of EU-actors and actors from other EU countries (de Vreese 2007: 10). For Jürgen Gerhards (2000: 293-294), for example, Europeanisation is primarily indicated by an increase in the reporting on European topics and actors in the national media and evaluations of them that extend beyond their country's interests. In addition, Ruud Koopmans and Jessica Erbe (2004) build their conceptualisation around three forms of Europeanisation: (1) *supranationally Europeanised communication*, where European-level institutions and collective actors interact around European themes; (2) *vertical Europeanisation*, where national actors address European actors, the national actors make claims regarding European issues or European actors who partake in national debates on European issues (see also Peters *et al.* 2005); and (3) *horizontal Europeanisation*, where national media covers issues regarding other EU member states and national actors address issues or actors in other EU member states.

Finally, Thomas Risse and Marianna van de Steeg (2003) have pointed out three conditions for establishing the degree to which a Europeanised public sphere exists. It exists (1) if and when the same (European) themes are discussed at the same time at similar levels of attention across national public spheres and media; (2) if and when similar frames of reference, meaning structures, and patterns of interpretation are used across national public spheres and media; and (3) if and when a transnational community of communication emerges in which speakers and listeners not only observe

each other across national spaces but also recognise that “Europe” is an issue of common concern for them.

The question then remains, if and to what extent does the Europeanised public sphere really exist? In his review article, Claes de Vreese concludes that ‘the contours of a European public sphere can be sketched’ (2007: 9). The meta-analysis of Marcel Machill (*et al.* 2006: 57) supports this conclusion, reporting ‘developmental tendencies (...) towards a Europeanisation of the national public spheres’. The degree of existence of Europeanised public spheres highly depends on the type of media outlet one considers. Studies relying on analyses of quality broadsheet newspapers tend to find some evidence of Europeanised news coverage, while studies focusing on television and tabloids teach us about the non-existence of Europeanisation of national public spheres (de Vreese 2007).

## THE EU IN THE MEDIA

In relation to the blossoming of the literature on the Europeanisation of national public spheres, an increasing amount of scholarly work has aimed at analysing whether, how, and when news media cover European integration-related issues (e.g. Machill *et al.* 2006; Boomgaarden *et al.* 2010). This strand of research concludes that EU topics account for an extremely small proportion of reporting in national media, EU-level actors tend to feature only in minor roles (cf. Kandyla and de Vreese 2011), and negative evaluations of the EU outnumber positive ones (Peter and de Vreese 2004).

A variety of studies thus focuses on media coverage before and during EP elections. It has been shown that, during the campaign preceding the first direct elections to the EP, EU affairs played no role in the news until the actual start of the election campaign (Blumler 1983; Siune *et al.* 1984). Overall, elections to the EP have consistently been found to be only minimally visible in national news media (de Vreese *et al.* 2007) and accompanied by limited personalisation through coverage of EU representatives and protagonists (Peter *et al.* 2004; de Vreese *et al.* 2006). Moreover, to the extent that national news media concentrate on EP elections, they tend to focus on the national aspects and concerns of the campaigns (Siune *et al.* 1984). Finally, previous empirical research also reports considerable cross-national variation in the degree to which the EU is covered in the news during the EP elections (Schuck *et al.* 2011b).

## THE SOE MODEL

The SOE model has become the dominant one in any academic discussion of elections to the EP. An operational definition of SOEs has been put forward by Pippa Norris and Reif, ‘All elections (except the one that fills the most important political office of the entire system and therefore is the first-order election) are “national second-order elections”, irrespective of whether they take place in the entire, or only in a part of, the country’ (1997: 117). It is important to note that in their ideal form, SOEs are contested within the same party system as the FOEs.<sup>3</sup> The SOE model suggests that there is a qualitative difference between different types of elections depending on the perception of what is at stake; compared to FOEs, in SOEs there is less at stake due to the fact that they do not determine the composition of government (Reif and Schmitt 1980: 9).

Owing to this fact, the SOE model is built around three broad propositions: (1) *lower level of voter’s participation*; (2) *brighter prospects for small parties*; and (3) *losses for government parties*. Furthermore, as a consequence of the less-at-stake dimension, ‘voters cast their votes (...) not only as a result of conditions obtaining within the specific context of the second-order arena but also on the basis of factors in the main political arena of the nation’ (Reif and Schmitt 1980: 9). Put differently, the campaigning for and

results of SOEs are influenced by the political constellation of the national political arena (Norris 1997). Hence, the last proposition is (4) *election campaigns comprise not only second-order-arena-specific issues but also (if not dominantly) first-order-arena-specific issues* (Reif 1984; Irwin 1995).

One important shortcoming inherent in the SOE model is its primary focus on strategies of voters. The model does not explicitly link to independent actions of the rest of the electoral circle, the *media* and *political parties*, despite the fact that scholarship has recently started to integrate the SOE model with behaviours of political parties and the media (see Adam and Maier 2011) and despite the conclusions of many studies showing that (1) parties allocate fewer resources for campaigns in SOEs than in first-order contests, which has consequences for the organisation and conduct of campaigns (Maier and Tenscher 2009; Hertner 2011); and (2) EP election campaigns are of low intensity (de Vreese 2009; Maier and Tenscher 2009) and are dominated by national issues (Irwin 1995). Moreover, EP elections have been consistently found to have limited visibility in national television news (Peter *et al.* 2004; Kovář 2010).

Since the most important aspect of SOEs is perhaps that there is less at stake, it is plausible to assume that all the three abovementioned electoral actors likewise perceive the less-at-stake character of SOEs, and thus, EP elections matter less not only to voters but also to political parties and the media. This means that the relationship among party strategies, media coverage, and voter motivation is likely to be reciprocal (see also Hobolt and Spoon 2010). In other words, the behaviour of voters in EP elections at large cannot be perceived in isolation from the behaviours of political parties or the media, and hence, it is necessary to integrate the SOE model with behaviours of political parties and the media (Strömbäck *et al.* 2011: 7).

The studies reviewed in this section give us important insights into the indicators and existence of European(-ised) public sphere(s); into whether, how, and when news media cover European integration-related issues; and into the second-order character of EP elections. However, they often focus only on a limited range of media outlets or on bigger and older EU member states (de Vreese 2001; Machill *et al.* 2006), do not link the media, political parties and voters sufficiently when analysing SOEs (Marsh and Mikhaylov 2010), or do not generally integrate the literature on Europeanisation of the public sphere and the literature on media coverage of the EU with SOE model. Moreover, research on coverage of EP elections in the media does not explicitly address the question of how the coverage differs across FOEs and SOEs and does not provide hard cross-national comparative evidence in these terms (de Vreese *et al.* 2007). In this area of research, we have so far had to rely on indicative and anecdotal evidence. This is where this study tries to contribute some theoretical structure as well as empirical evidence.

## RESEARCH DESIGN

The study looks for signs of the development of an Europeanised national public sphere during the 2004 and the 2009 EP elections in the Czech Republic and Slovakia. The two countries have been selected as case studies for several reasons. First, research on media coverage of (EP) elections in the post-communist EU member states is much scarcer compared to analyses focusing on (EP) election coverage in the established EU democracies. Second, to the best knowledge of the authors no study offers comparative analysis of media coverage of different orders of elections (i.e. first-order vs. second-order). This statement is valid not only for the post-communist EU member states but also for the established EU democracies. In other words, there is need for lead-off comparative studies to be conducted that will focus on cross-order election media coverage.

The third set of reasons can be labelled technical or practical: due to practical as well as technical problems we were unable to carry out the analysis in more than the two countries mentioned. Carrying out the analysis in the other Central and Eastern European countries (CEEC) would presuppose not only knowledge of languages of these countries (while Czech and Slovak are mutually intelligible) but also resources for purchase of and access to audiovisual broadcasting and print outlets in these countries. This is typically conducted by a cross-national team of researchers with significant amount of financial resources (e.g. Boomgaarden et al. 2013).

Fourth, even though both states are quite similar as they were for a long time parts of one state, there is a discernible difference between them which increases their comparative value: ever since the Czech Republic and Slovakia joined the EU, it was evident that in general there is higher level of public and party based Euroscepticism in the former country while in the latter country, particularly after joining the EU, political parties and publics are in general much more supportive towards the EU (European Commission 2003-2010; Beichelt 2004; Kopecký 2004; Taggart and Szczerbiak 2004; Havlík and Kaniok 2006: 32-44, 63-80; Taggart and Szczerbiak 2008; Vachudova and Hooghe 2009; Boyd 2011). For these reasons this study conducts the analysis only on the Czech Republic and Slovakia.<sup>4</sup> The driving engine of this search is the premise that a European public sphere can develop via the Europeanisation of national public spheres, which are in turn essentially constituted via the national media (Machill *et al.* 2006). The logic for this stems from the idea that the media is taken as the best "proxy" for the public sphere (de Vreese 2007: 6).

The abovementioned research on media coverage of European integration-related issues stresses the importance of three main aspects of news media coverage of EP election campaigns: *visibility* of the coverage, degree of *domesticisation/Europeanisation* of the coverage, and *tone* of coverage. This study analyses all three aspects of news media coverage. Two of these three aspects of news media coverage closely relate to different indicators of Europeanisation of national public spheres (see above). Gerhards (2000) understands Europeanisation of the public sphere as an increase in reporting of European issues (*visibility*) and coverage of actors (*domesticisation/Europeanisation*). One of the indicators Koopmans and Erbe use is vertical Europeanisation, in which national actors address European actors and national actors make claims regarding European issues or European actors who partake in national debates on European issues (2004: 101). Vertical Europeanisation can be observed in terms of the extent to which EU politicians, issues, actors, and events (*visibility; domesticisation/Europeanisation*) are covered by national news media (Trenz 2008).

### **Expectations**

Two of the three aspects of media coverage of EU issues analysed here, namely the *visibility* and the degree of *domesticisation/Europeanisation* of the coverage, are also closely connected to the SOE model, which allows us to derive clear expectations from the theory. First, as far as the degree of *domesticisation/Europeanisation* is concerned, the characterisation of EP elections as SOEs, where the national arena provides the dominant frame of reference for all other elections (Norris 1997), suggests that a domestic frame will be strongly dominant (de Vreese *et al.* 2007). It signals domesticisation rather than Europeanisation of news media coverage. Therefore, this study expects the coverage of EP election campaigns in the media to be predominantly domestic (national) in nature with little reference to the European dimension. Furthermore, since prior research indicates that predominantly domestic appeals play a greater role in the subsequent EP elections (Leroy and Siune 1994; Peter *et al.* 2004), it is expected that the Europeanisation of news media coverage of the 2004 EP elections to be less pronounced, given their novelty, than that of the subsequent 2009 EP elections.

Second, with respect to *visibility*, it is viable to assume that the news media coverage will be greater in elections that are more salient and more competitive and when campaign spending is greater (Banducci and Semetko 2002). In other words, elections that are more important will receive greater media coverage. The less-at-stake character of SOEs suggests that visibility will be low, and is expected to be notably lower in the case of EP elections in comparison to FOEs. Moreover, previous research suggests the initial EP elections receive some amount of (obligatory) media coverage because of the novelty of the events, and with subsequent elections, they disappear from the coverage (Leroy and Siune 1994; de Vreese *et al.* 2007). Given that both countries held their first EP elections in June 2004, this analysis expects that the media coverage of the 2004 EP elections to be higher than that of the subsequent EP elections of 2009.

Given that both countries' media systems include both market-based and public service-oriented broadcasters as well as a variety of quality papers and tabloids, the analysis focuses on all types of media. Public service broadcasting (PSB) has, by definition, an obligation to provide a sufficient amount of news and public affairs coverage, which is pluralist in terms of both issue content and coverage of political actors (Toka and Popescu 2009; Act No. 231/2001; Act No. 308/2000). On the other hand, private television channels are usually assumed to focus mainly on soft news and infotainment instead of conveying everyday politics to the viewers (Pfetsch 1996; Blumler 1997). In fact, it has been pointed out that "quality" media outlets, such as public broadcasting news and broadsheet newspapers, tend to have more political and economic news than their private counterparts and provide more news about the European integration-related issues and EU-level actors than "commercial" news outlets, such as private television news and tabloids (Semetko and Valkenburg 2000; Peter and de Vreese 2004). Taken together, this gives rise to two expectations related to the analysis. First, we expect "quality" media outlets (public service broadcasting and broadsheet newspapers) to report more on EP election campaigns than private outlets (private broadcasting and tabloids). Second, "quality" media outlets will include more relevant EU actors in their coverage than private media outlets. Finally, in interaction with the SOE model, we are interested whether the difference between PSB and private outlets is lower or higher in European as compared to national elections.

As far as the *tone* of coverage is concerned, the SOE model does not offer any clear expectations or premises from which expectations might be derived. The coverage of EP elections may be both positive and negative in tone. Following previous research concluding that news about the EU is mostly neutral and, if evaluative, then negative (Peter *et al.* 2003; de Vreese *et al.* 2007), we expect the coverage of EP elections to be, for the most part, neutral or slightly negative. We have no *ex ante* expectations about differences in the tone of the news across years or the type of outlets.

### **Methods and data**

The study of news media coverage of the 2004 and the 2009 EP elections in the Czech Republic and Slovakia is carried out using media content analysis. Content analysis of the media coverage of EP elections can provide insights into how much importance and salience the media ascribe to the coverage of second-order EP elections (Peter *et al.* 2003), since content analysis (through the content-analysed materials) can provide, even without the cooperation of the media, insights about how high are the "stakes" the media ascribe to elections (Hermann 2008). For the purposes of this study, we consider the media as a whole, thus avoiding the existing bias towards broadsheet newspapers and public service broadcasting (Machill *et al.* 2006: 80). Moreover, as Steven Chaffee and Stacey Frank Kanihan (1997: 421) point out, different types of media serve different needs in the citizenry, and it is thus reasonable to focus on the whole range of media types.



The two weeks prior to Election Day became the subject of the analysis because prior research has demonstrated that election coverage tends to cluster around the period shortly before the election day (Leroy and Siune 1994), and thus it makes this study comparable to other research conducted in the field. Since election days vary across both countries, the coding periods also vary.<sup>5</sup> For the purposes of this study, we focus on all main national PSB and private TV stations and all main newspapers. This analysis includes three TV stations and five newspapers in the Czech Republic, and four TV stations and four newspapers in Slovakia (see Table 1).

*Table 1: Summary of analysed TV stations and newspapers according to the type of outlet*

	Czech Republic	Slovakia
Public Service	Česká televize (ČT 1/ČT 24)	Slovenská televízia (STV 1)
Private	TV Nova, Prima TV	Joj TV, TV Markíza, TA3
Broadsheet	Lidové Noviny, Mladá Fronta Dnes, Právo, Hospodářské Noviny	Pravda, SME, Hospodárske noviny
Tabloid	Blesk	Nový čas

We focus on national television and newspapers, since these media outlets are consistently cited as the most important sources of information among European citizens looking for information about the EU (European Commission 1999-2007) as well as about the EP elections (European Commission 2004). Moreover, television is generally seen as the most influential mass medium (Blumler 1970; Mazzoleni and Schulz 1999), while newspapers clearly remain a major source of political information and information about the EU, given that the EU receive more attention in newspapers than on television (Trenz 2004). In addition, these outlets were selected to provide a comprehensive idea of the news coverage in both countries. Specifically, we focus on main evening television newscasts of each outlet, because, of all the news programmes, these usually have the largest audiences (Table 2). Moreover, as pointed out by Jochen Peter (*et al.* 2004: 416) 'these "flagship" news programs provide an indicator of the importance that broadcasters attach to the EU and European parliamentary elections'. We also consider all main broadsheet newspapers and the most widely circulated tabloids from each country.

*Table 2: Summary of main evening TV newscasts*

	Newscasts analysed
Czech Republic	ČT1/ČT 24: <i>Události</i> ; TV Nova: <i>Televizní noviny</i> ; Prima TV: <i>Zpravodajský deník/Zprávy TV Prima</i> *
Slovakia	STV1: <i>Hlavné správy/Správy STV</i> *; Joj TV: <i>Noviny</i> ; TV Markíza: <i>Televízne noviny</i> ; TA3: <i>Hlavné správy</i>

\* During the analysed period, the channel has changed the name of its main evening news programme.

In the case of television, the entire newscast of each TV station is coded. In line with prior research (Schuck *et al.* 2011b), we base all analyses of television coverage on the

length of the individual news story in relation to the total length of each newscast (word count-based).<sup>6</sup> Length is a more appropriate measure of visibility of topics than the number of stories, because the length of the newscasts (from 15 to 35 minutes) and of individual news stories vary, as do the number of stories per newscast (de Vreese 2001: 290). The unit of analysis and coding is the individual news story, defined as a semantic entity with at least one topic delimited from another story by a discernible change of topic (Peter and de Vreese 2004). In total, 3504 TV news stories are analysed. For newspapers, we focus on and code the title page and one randomly selected inside page<sup>7</sup> as well as all stories pertaining to EP elections on any other page.<sup>8</sup> The analysis is based on the volume of the individual newspaper story in relation to the total volume of newspaper front-page and a randomly selected inside page (volume-based). The individual news story is again the unit of analysis. Overall, 2,168 newspaper stories are analysed. Content from all relevant news outlets are collected either digitally (TV and newspapers) or as hardcopies (newspapers).

*Visibility*: the first key measure used in this study is the *visibility* of the EP elections. As noted above, *visibility* in television newscasts is operationalised as the percentage of *EP election stories* of the total coverage (word-count based). *Visibility* in newspapers is operationalised as the percentage of *EP election stories* of the total coverage on newspaper front-pages and randomly selected inside pages (volume-based). *EP election stories* were operationalised as stories in which the EP election campaign (e.g. candidates, parties, polls, and policy areas) is mentioned in at least two complete, independent sentences or, in the case of a newspaper, once in the heading and once in the text (Peter and de Vreese 2004). EP election campaign coverage should be distinguished from EU-related coverage. EU-related coverage comprises both coverage of EU topics other than the European election and coverage with some reference to the EU but no direct reference to EP elections. This study focuses on EP election campaign coverage only, thus excluding other EU-related coverage. The inter-coder reliability test for this measure yielded a satisfactory result (Krippendorff's alpha = .90).<sup>9</sup>

To test the expectation, derived from the SOE model, that EP elections receive less coverage in main TV newscasts and national newspapers than FOEs, we conduct further content analysis, this time covering the two-week period preceding the election day for national parliamentary elections. In both countries, FOEs took place in 2006 and 2010, always within two weeks one to the other.<sup>10</sup> Since EP elections can be affected by the point of the national electoral cycle at which they take place (Marsh and Mikhaylov 2010), it should be noted that both countries held the 2006 as well as 2010 national first-order elections at almost same time. Hence, in both countries EP elections took place at almost same position of the national electoral cycle. Here, again, the key measure is the visibility of national parliamentary elections. *National election stories* are operationalised as stories in which a national election campaign (e.g. candidates, parties, polls, and policy areas) are mentioned in at least two complete, independent sentences or, in the case of a newspaper, once in the heading and once in the text. Again, all stories in television news programmes and all stories on newspaper front pages and randomly selected inside page<sup>11</sup> are analysed to identify stories about national parliamentary elections. Within this second content analysis, a total of 3,440 television news stories and 1,995 newspaper stories are analysed. Inter-coder reliability for this measure is Krippendorff's alpha = .89.

*Actors: Domesticisation/Europeanisation*: the second key measure used in this study is the *domesticisation/Europeanisation* of EP elections in the news, measured as the visibility of different actors. We decided to use this particular operationalisation of Europeanisation/domesticisation of the news story since, next to operationalisation based on topics/issues, it is the most widely used operationalisation for tapping the *domestic* versus *EU* nature of news stories (see e.g. de Vreese 2003; de Vreese *et al.* 2006; Boomgaarden *et al.* 2010; Schuck *et al.* 2011b). In addition, studies using the operationalisation of Europeanisation/domesticisation based on topics has already been

conducted for these countries (Kovář and Kovář 2012). Thus, we rely on the coding of actors in the news stories, since looking at actors can reveal whether the news media cover EP elections as either national or European contests (de Vreese *et al.* 2006: 482). For both television and newspapers, actors in all *EP election stories* are coded. In contrast to the analysis of visibility and tone, where the individual news story is the unit of analysis, individual actors are the units of analysis in the analysis of domesticisation/Europeanisation. An actor is defined as a person (e.g. an MEP candidate), a group of persons (e.g. a political party), an institution (e.g. a national parliament), or other organisation featured in the news story (Peter *et al.* 2004).<sup>12</sup> Up to 15 actors per news story are coded. Each actor is coded only once per story.

*EU actors* are operationalised as EP election candidates, the EU president and members and representatives of EU institutions, including the EU Commission, persons appointed by the EU, spokespersons, and other actors clearly connected with the EU (the head of state or government of the country holding the rotating presidency is coded as an EU-actor). *Domestic political actors* are members of the government, spokespersons for government agencies, or members of opposition parties. This includes all members of both chambers of national parliaments. The category of *other actors* includes journalists, celebrities, ordinary citizens, and other actors who do not fall into the EU or domestic political actor categories. In total, 509 actors in relevant television news stories and 635 actors in relevant newspaper stories are coded. For this measure, Krippendorff's alpha proves a satisfactory .92.

*Tone*: the last key measure used in this study is the *tone* of the EP elections' coverage. *Tone* is operationalised as the explicit evaluation of the EU, EP, other institutions, and/policies. It was ensured that the news stories did contain explicit evaluations clearly referring to the EU. In television and newspaper, the tones of all *EP election stories* are coded. The individual news story is the unit of analysis. EP election stories are coded for being neutral (i.e. without any evaluation<sup>13</sup>), negative or positive, rather negative or rather positive, or mixed. We use a mean score ranging from 1 (negative) to 5 (positive), where 3 signifies mixed evaluation (see de Vreese *et al.* 2006). In total, 156 television news stories and 278 newspaper stories are analysed. For this measure, Krippendorff's alpha is .84.

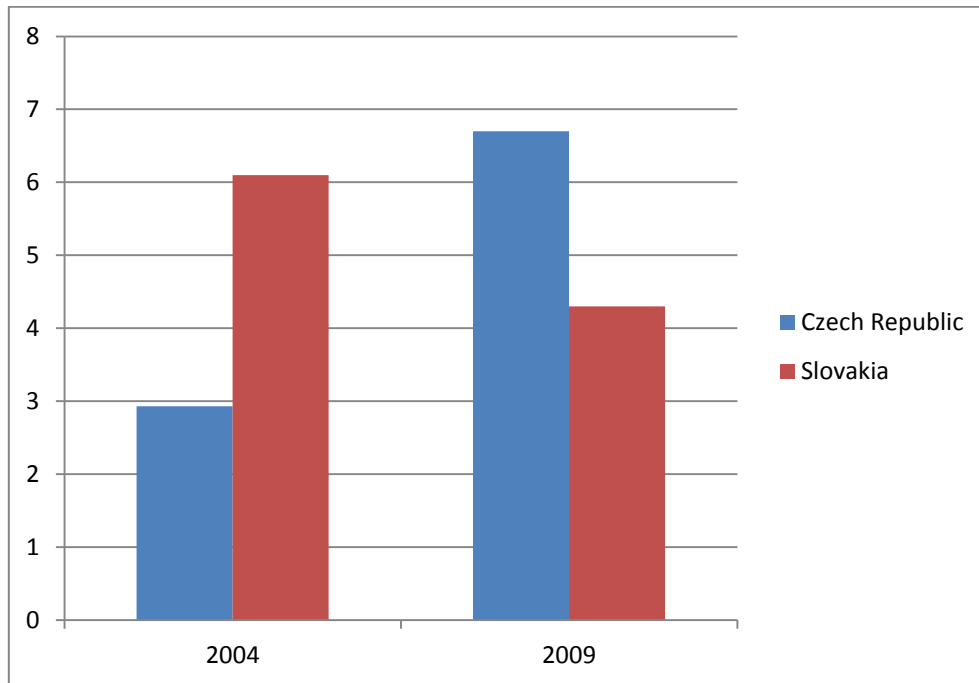
## RESULTS

*Visibility*: the 2004 and 2009 EP elections generally received marginal visibility in the TV news and newspapers in both countries (see Figure 1).<sup>14</sup> Looking at the TV newscasts from 2004, I find that EP election stories took up from 3 per cent (Czech Republic) to 6.1 per cent (Slovakia) of the news. In 2009, EP election stories also took up a small proportion of the news, ranging from 4.3 per cent (Slovakia) to 6.7 per cent (Czech Republic). Turning to national newspapers, Figure 2 shows the visibility of EP election stories on the newspaper front page and one randomly selected page. Visibility was higher in the Czech Republic in both election years: 9 per cent in 2004 and 11.3 per cent in 2009. In Slovakian newspapers, visibility was similar in both election years, dropping from 6.4 per cent in 2004 to 6.2 per cent in 2009.

Regarding the expectation that the first EP elections in a given country receives some amount of (obligatory) visibility because of the novelty of the event and that coverage diminishes in subsequent elections, this proved true only in Slovakia (Figures 1-2). In TV news, the visibility of the EP elections decreased by almost half from 2004 to 2009 (8.5 per cent to 4.3 per cent). In Slovak newspapers, the trend is almost negligible: a decrease from 6.4 per cent in 2004 to 6.2 per cent in 2009. In the Czech Republic, on the other hand, the visibility of EP elections increased in both newspapers and TV news. In TV news, the visibility of EP elections doubled from 2004 to 2009 (from 3 per cent to

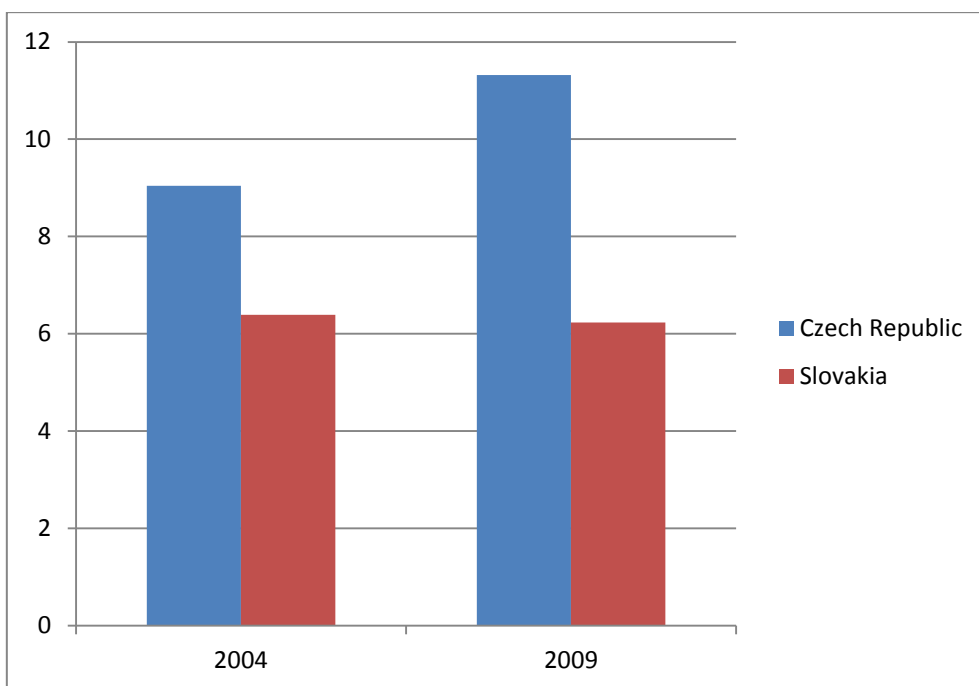
6.7 per cent) while it increased slightly in newspapers during the same period (from 9 per cent to 11.3 per cent).

Figure 1: Visibility of the 2004 and 2009 EP elections in television newscasts



Note: Percentage of EP election news of overall TV news (time-based).

Figure 2: Visibility of the 2004 and 2009 EP elections in newspapers

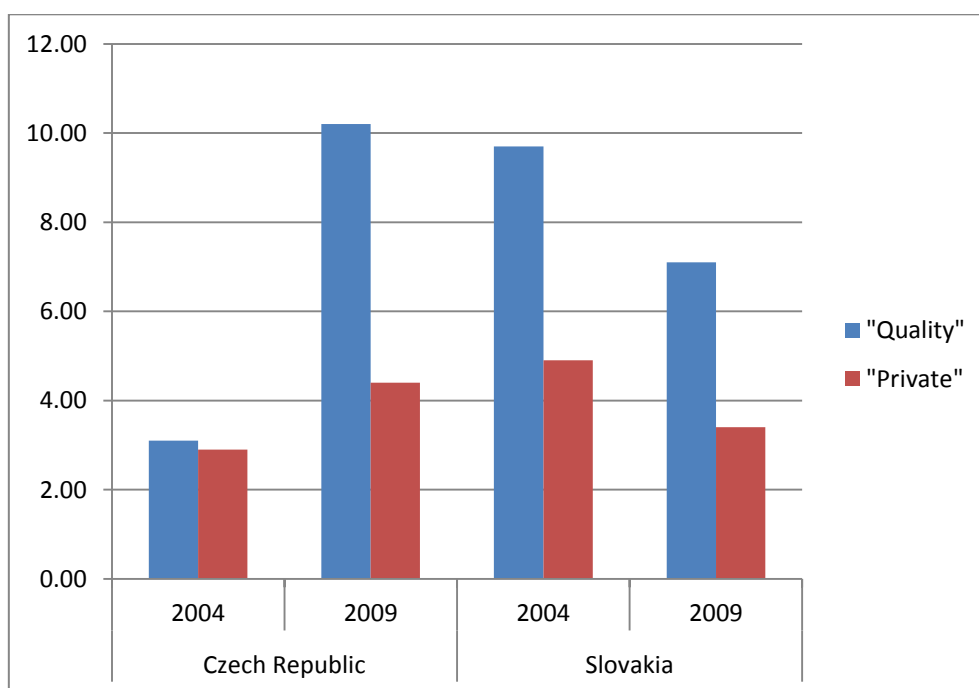


Note: Percentage of EP election news of overall news on newspaper front-pages and a randomly selected page (volume-based).

Comparing the visibility of EP elections in “quality” media outlets (PSB and broadsheet newspapers) and “private”<sup>15</sup> media outlets (private broadcasting and tabloids), we find support for the expectation that “quality” outlets devote more time and space to EP elections than “private” outlets (Figure 3-4); EP elections were consistently more visible in “quality” outlets than “private” outlets. This trend can be observed for the 2004 as well as 2009 EP elections in both countries. Also, in three out of four cases, we find that the difference in visibility between “quality” and “private” outlets is significantly larger for European elections than for national elections.<sup>16</sup> This suggests that the SOE model logic applies more to private media outlets than to PSB.

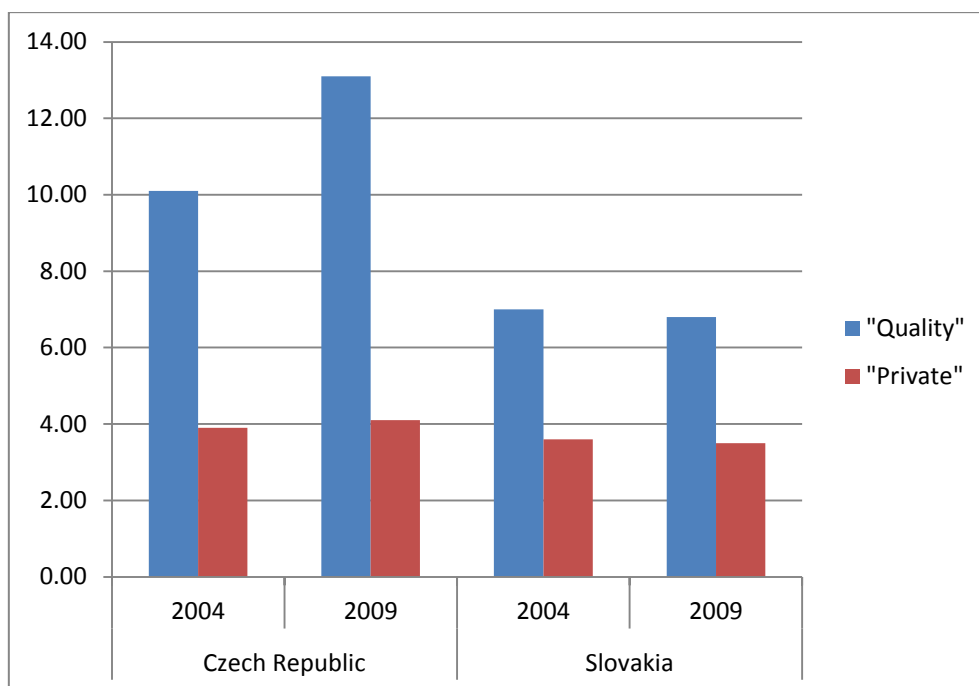
In TV news, the trend is more pronounced in Slovakia. In 2004, PSB devoted 9.7 per cent of newscasts to EP elections, while private broadcasters devoted only 4.9 per cent; in 2009, PBS devoted 7.1 per cent of news coverage to the EP elections, while private broadcasters devoted only 3.4 per cent. In the Czech Republic, the margin between PSB and private broadcasters is narrower for 2004 (3.1 per cent vs. 2.9 per cent). However, the data for 2009 confirm the expectation, with PBS devoting 10.2 per cent to EP election coverage and private broadcasters devoting only 4.4 per cent. The pattern is more pronounced in newspapers than in TV news in the Czech Republic. In 2004, Czech broadsheet newspapers devoted 10.1 per cent of front pages and randomly selected pages to EP election stories, while tabloid papers devoted only 3.9 per cent; in 2009, broadsheet papers devoted 13.1 per cent and tabloids only 4.1 per cent. Slovakian broadsheet papers devoted 7 per cent to EP elections while tabloid newspapers devoted 3.6 per cent in 2004 and the difference between broadsheet papers and tabloids was similar in 2009 (6.8 per cent vs. 3.5 cent).

Figure 3: Visibility of EP elections in public service and private television newscasts



Note: Percentage of EP election news of overall TV news (time-based).

Figure 4: Visibility of EP elections in broadsheet papers and tabloids



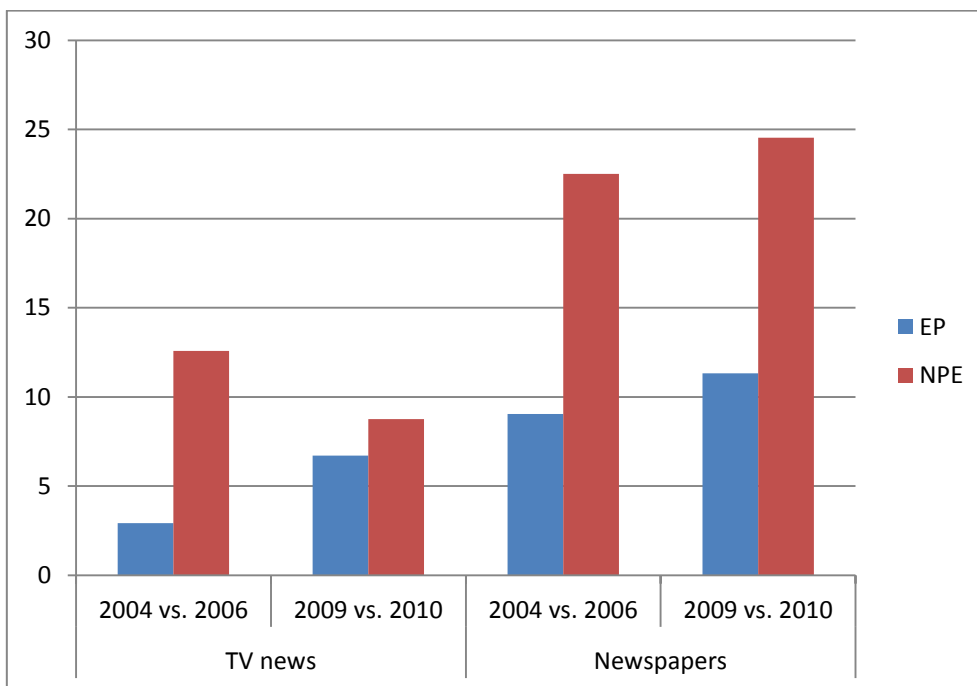
Note: Percentage of EP election news of overall news on newspaper front-pages and a randomly selected page (volume-based).

The expectation that visibility would be lower in the case of EP elections in comparison to FOEs is graphically addressed in Figures 5-6. The visibility of EP election stories proves consistently lower than the visibility of national FOEs, regardless of the type of media analysed. In both TV news and newspapers, the difference between the visibility of SOEs and FOEs proves higher in Slovakia. In Slovakian TV news, for both election pairs, the visibility of FOEs was at least twice as high as the visibility of SOEs: 6.1 per cent vs. 17 per cent, and 4.3 per cent vs. 11.5 per cent. In newspapers, the trend in visibility of SOEs compared to FOEs resembles the one found in TV news: 6.4 per cent vs. 17.2 per cent for one election pair and 6.2 per cent vs. 16.9 per cent for the other.

In Czech TV news, the situation changed rapidly across the two election dyads. While FOEs were more than four times more visible than SOEs in the first election pair (3 per cent vs. 12.6 per cent); the visibility of SOEs almost reached that of FOEs in the other election pair (6.7 per cent vs. 8.8 per cent). In Czech newspapers, the differences are more pronounced than in Czech TV news, and the visibility of FOEs was at least twice as high as the visibility of SOEs for both election pairs: 9 per cent vs. 22.5 per cent and 11.3 per cent vs. 24.5 per cent.

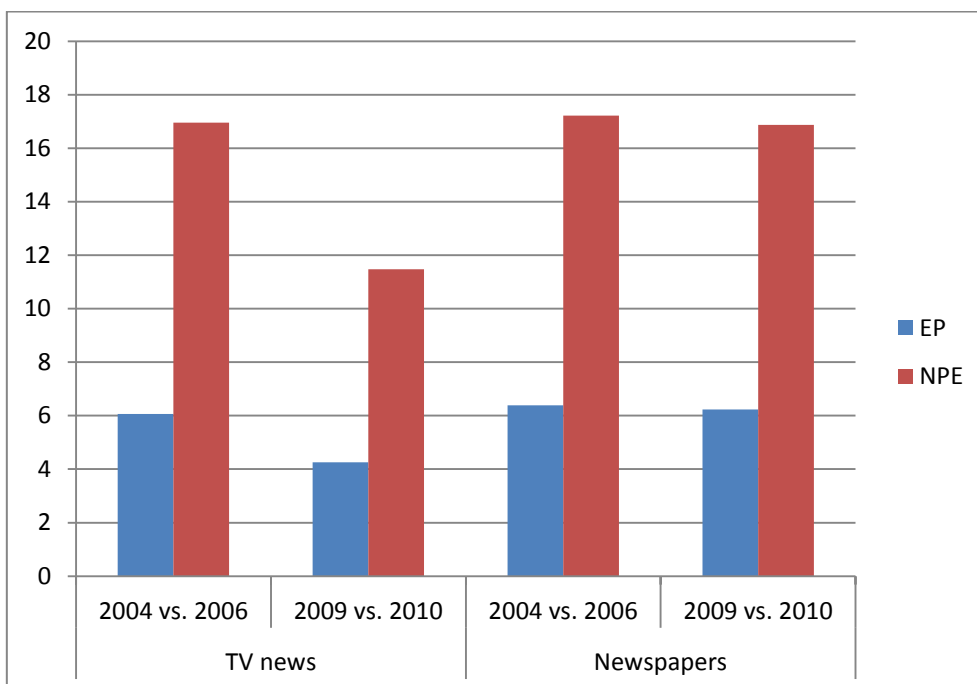
*Actors: Domesticisation/Europeanisation:* Turning to the visibility of actors in EP election stories, the expectation that EP election stories are dominated by national political actors is addressed graphically in Figures 7-8. Figure 7 summarises the proportion of actors who appeared in EP election stories in Czech and Slovak TV newscasts. Among the groups of actors, domestic political actors clearly dominated the coverage of EP election stories in both countries in both election years. The picture from newspapers resembles the one from the analysis of TV newscasts (see Figure 8). Again, domestic political actors occupied the biggest share of EP election stories on newspapers front pages and randomly selected pages. The presence of EU actors or, in other words, Europeanisation of newspaper reporting, was, nevertheless, higher than in the case of TV news.

Figure 5: Visibility of EP elections as compared to visibility of the subsequent national parliamentary elections in the Czech Republic



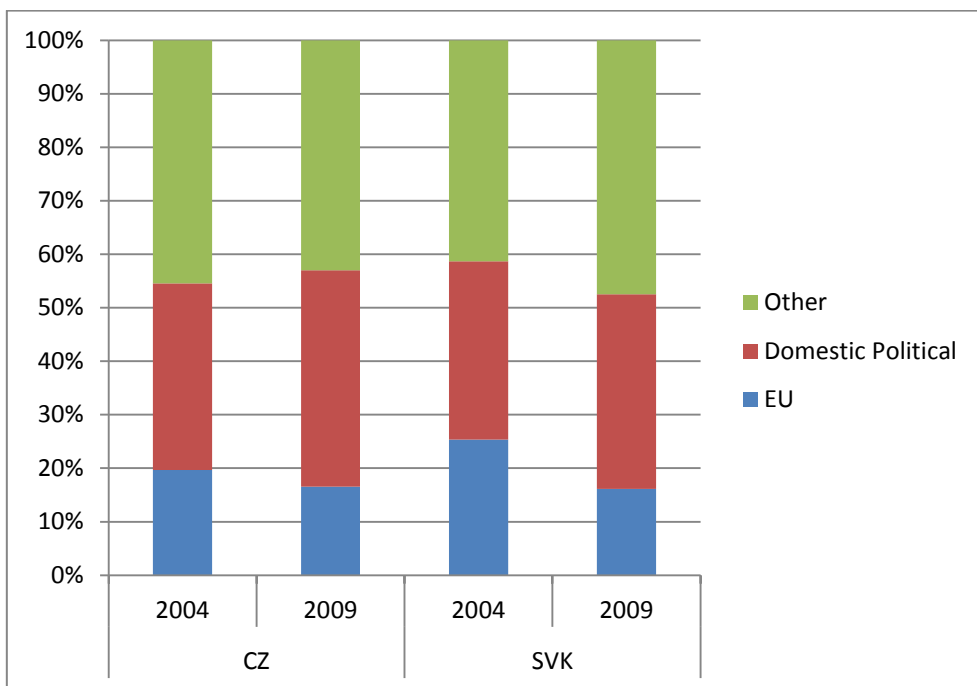
Note: Newspapers: percentage of election news of overall news on newspaper front-pages and a randomly selected page (volume-based); TV newscasts: percentage of election news of overall TV newscasts (time-based).

Figure 6: Visibility of EP elections as compared to visibility of the subsequent national parliamentary elections in Slovakia



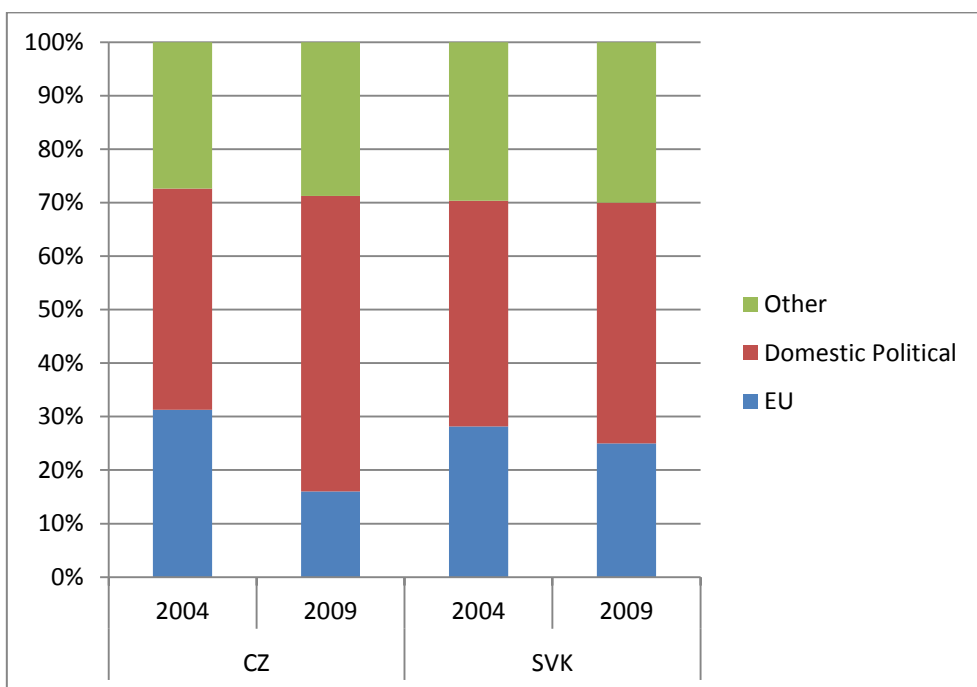
Note: Newspapers: percentage of election news of overall news on newspaper front-pages and a randomly selected page (volume-based); TV newscasts: percentage of election news of overall TV newscasts (time-based).

Figure 7: EU actors, domestic political actors and other actors in EP elections stories in TV newscast



Note: The figure compares all actors in the news in 1999 with all protagonists in 2004.

Figure 8: EU-level actors, domestic political actors and other actors in EP elections stories in newspapers

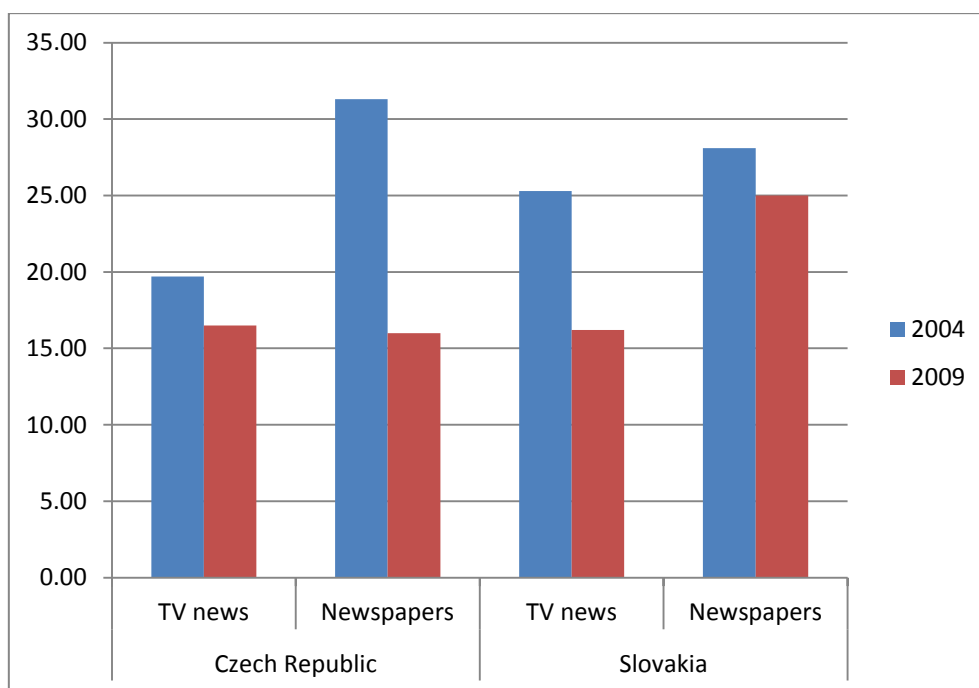


Note: The figure compares all actors in the news in 1999 with all protagonists in 2004.



The data also confirm the expectation that the first EP elections in a given country are dominated less by national political actors or, conversely, more Europeanised than subsequent EP elections (Figure 9). In both TV news and newspapers, an increase in the proportion of coverage occupied by domestic political actors from 2004 to 2009 is shown. In TV news in the Czech Republic, the proportion of EU actors decreased from 19.6 per cent to 16.6 per cent; the proportional decline was larger in Slovakia, with percentages falling from 25 per cent to 16 per cent. In newspapers, the proportion of EU actors covered dropped from 31.3 per cent to 16 per cent in the Czech Republic and less in Slovakia, falling from 28.1 per cent to 25 per cent.

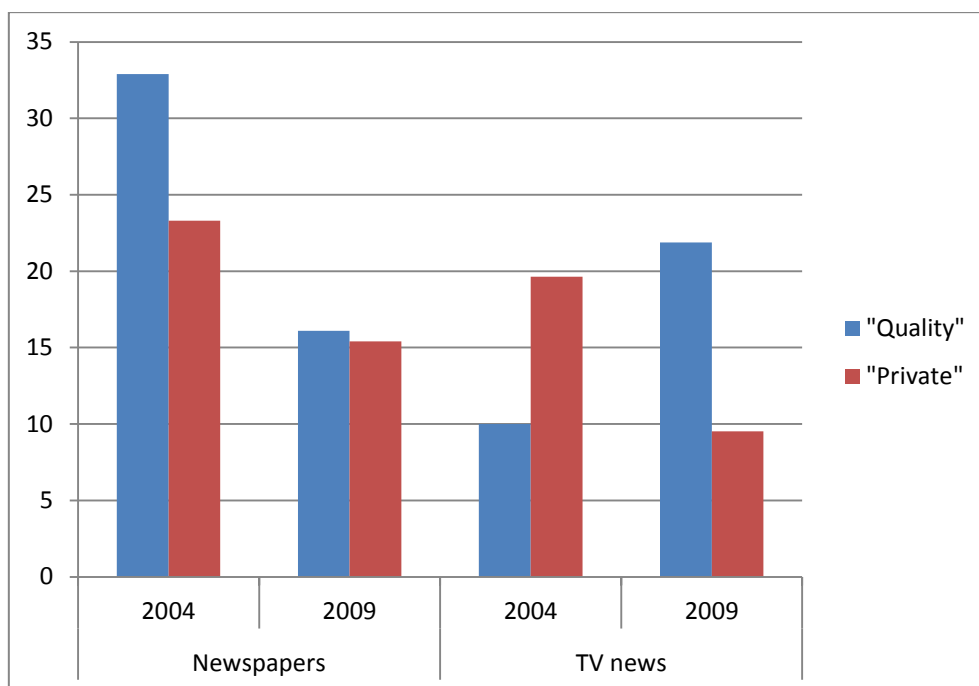
Figure 9: EU-level actors in the first and subsequent EP elections in newspapers and TV news



Note: Percentage of EU-level actors of overall number of actors. The figure compares EU-level actors in 2004 with EU-level actors in 2009.

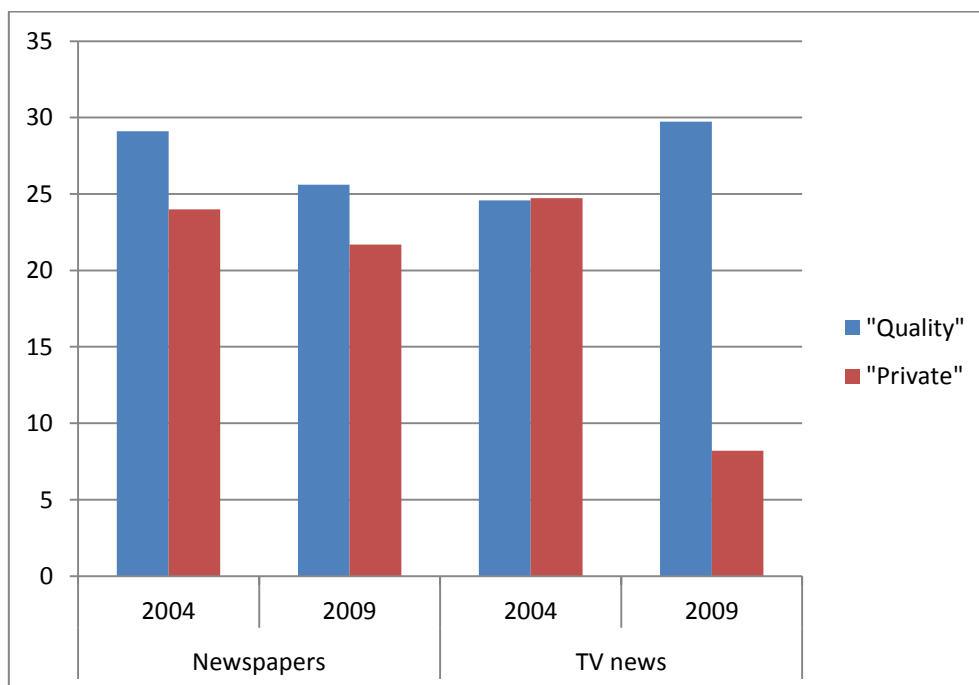
Finally, we also expected “quality” media outlets to include more relevant EU actors in their coverage than “private” media outlets (Figures 10-11). In the Czech Republic, broadsheet papers involved more EU actors than tabloids, but the margin was much smaller for the second EP elections (2004: 32.9 per cent vs. 23.3 per cent; 2009: 16.1 per cent vs. 15.4 per cent). In contrast, Czech PSB devoted less space to EU actors than private broadcasters in 2004 (10 per cent vs. 19.6 per cent) (for similar conclusions, see de Vreese *et al.* 2006), whereas they included more EU actors in 2009 (21.9 per cent vs. 9.52 per cent). The picture from Slovakia is similar: broadsheet papers included more EU actors during both EP elections (in 2004: 29.1 per cent vs. 24 per cent; in 2009: 25.6 per cent vs. 21.7 per cent). However, Slovakian PSB included almost the same portion of EU actors as private broadcasters in 2004 (24.6 per cent vs. 24.7 per cent) and significantly more EU actors in 2009 (29.7 per cent vs. 8.2 per cent).

Figure 10: EU-level actors in "quality" and "private" outlets in the Czech Republic



Note: Percentage of EU-level actors of overall number of actors.

Figure 11: EU-level actors in "quality" and "private" outlets in Slovakia



Note: Percentage of EU-level actors of overall number of actors.

*Tone:* Regarding the tone of EP election stories, this analysis finds that, for the most part, EP election stories appear in a neutral, non-evaluative manner (Tables 3-4). Overall, about 88 per cent of the stories related to EP elections were neutral without making explicitly positive or negative evaluation of the EU. Looking at the remaining 12

per cent of EP elections stories that contained explicit evaluation of the EU, we use a mean score ranging from 1 (negative evaluation) to 5 (positive evaluation), where 3 signifies mixed evaluation. In what follows, we consider the tone of EP election stories and type of media in each member state individually in order to assess the mean tone of the information available to citizens in each country according to the media type.

*Table 3: Evaluations of the EU in newspapers*

		Evaluative	No Evaluation
Czech Republic	2004	10	73
	2009	10	81
Slovakia	2004	7	46
	2009	7	44

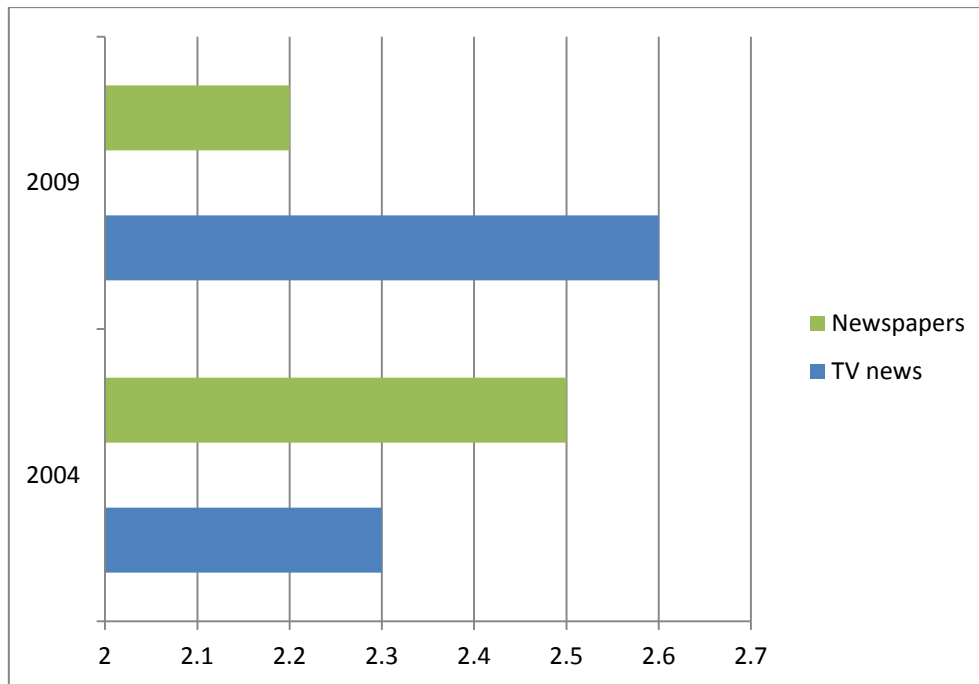
*Table 4: Evaluations of the EU in TV news*

		Evaluative	No Evaluation
Czech Republic	2004	3	21
	2009	7	40
Slovakia	2004	3	35
	2009	6	41

Figures 12 and 13 show the average tone in Czech and Slovak TV newscasts and newspapers. In all the cases, the tone of EP election stories is in line with our expectations, proving slightly neutral. In 2004, in the Czech Republic, EP elections stories were presented more negatively in TV newscasts (2.3) than newspapers (2.5), whereas in 2009, they were presented more negatively in newspapers (2.2) than TV news (2.6). In Slovakia, EP election stories were presented as negatively in TV newscasts (2) as in newspapers (2) in 2004 while, in 2009, they were presented more negatively in newspapers (2) than TV news (2.3). Moreover, these figures show that, when EP election stories contain explicit evaluation of the EU they tend to be presented more negatively in Slovakia than in the Czech Republic. The election environments were thus less negative in the Czech Republic than in Slovakia in both years.

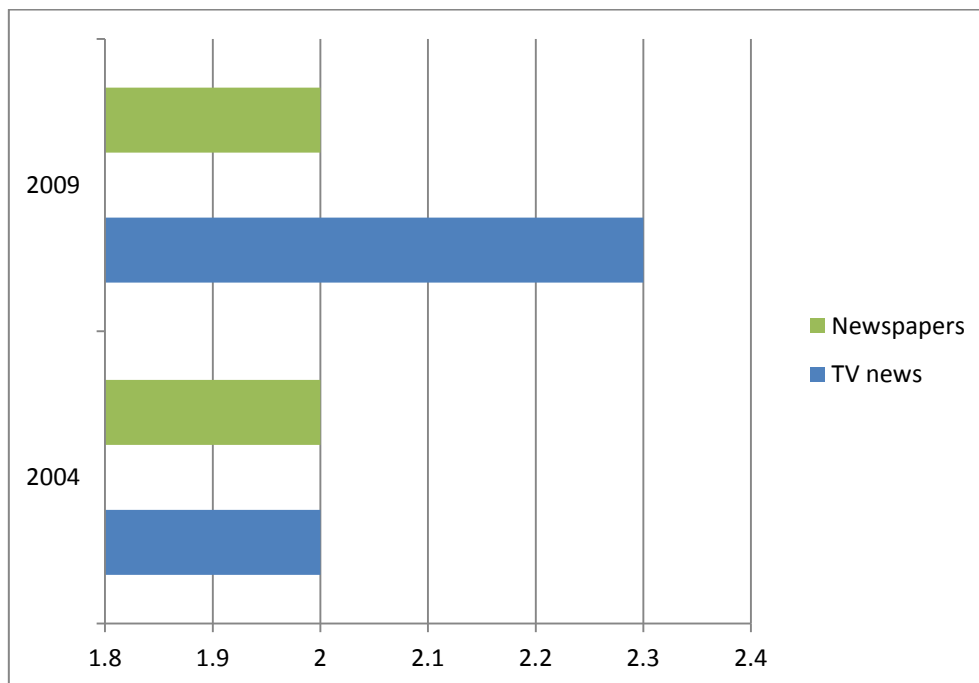
To summarise, the results support most of the initially held expectations and are in line with previous research suggesting that media across the EU only marginally cover EP elections<sup>17</sup> (de Vreese *et al.* 2006; Schuck *et al.* 2011b). The coverage of EP elections in television news and print media was indeed low, in no case exceeding 11.5 per cent of the news coverage. EP election stories were dominated by domestic rather than EU political actors, indicating domesticisation rather than Europeanisation of election campaigns. Moreover, when comparing SOEs with FOEs, the visibility of national (first-order) elections was, in all cases, higher than that of preceding EP elections. In addition, two expectations proved only partly confirmed, or not confirmed at all.

Figure 12: Tone of EU news (explicit evaluations of the EU) in the Czech Republic



Note: Values range from 1 (negative) to 5 (positive), where 3 signifies mixed evaluation.

Figure 13: Tone of EU news (explicit evaluations of the EU) in Slovakia



Note: Values range from 1 (negative) to 5 (positive), where 3 signifies mixed evaluation.

First, we expected that the visibility of EP election campaign stories would be higher in the first EP elections in a given country than in subsequent ones. This proved valid only

in Slovakia, while the opposite trend appeared in the Czech Republic. Second, we expected that “quality” media outlets would include more relevant EU actors in their coverage than “private” media outlets. Across television news, however, the differences between PSB and private broadcasters were very small and not always in the expected direction. In contrast, in newspapers the differences in the proportion of EU actor coverage between broadsheet and tabloid newspapers were wider and always in the expected direction.

These results may be taken as an indication that the media coverage reflects the nature of EP elections as second-order national elections. The results also indicate only a minimal degree of existence of Europeanised national public spheres during pivotal moments in the democratic process of the EU in both countries. Moreover, they are in line with conclusions of previous studies, finding evidence of Europeanisation of national public spheres when looking at newspapers and less Europeanisation when analysing TV news (Machill *et al.* 2006; de Vreese 2007). The results, generally speaking, additionally support the assumption that the SOE model may enhance our understanding of behaviours of political parties and media in SOEs.

## CONCLUSION

The results of this study can be discussed in relation to at least two different strands of literature: the SOE model and EP elections in general, and the existence of European(-ised) public sphere(s). In relation to the first, at the outset of the paper, we argue that, in theoretical terms, the analysis of political parties and the media during EP elections benefits from the application of SOE model and vice versa (Adam and Maier 2011; Strömbäck *et al.* 2011). In fact, Marsh and Mikhaylov (2010: 17-18) recently argued that, in order to better understand second-orderness of EP elections, more attention should be given to the mechanism(s) that give rise to the second-order effects. In particular, it might be the actions of political parties and the media that help giving rise to these second-order effects by intensifying the less-at-stake character of SOEs (see also Strömbäck *et al.* 2011). Consequently, in order to better understand EP elections, we would benefit from focusing on the links between voters, candidates, political parties, and the media (see also Hobolt and Franklin 2011).

Recent inspections into electoral democracy in the EU demonstrate that voters are most inclined to vote according to their EU-specific preferences (EU-issue voting): (1) if the media politicise EP elections by covering European issues extensively and provide high levels of EU-specific political information (Hobolt *et al.* 2009; de Vries *et al.* 2011), and (2) if political parties politicise EP elections and offer clear choices when it comes to EU issues (Hobolt and Spoon 2010: 23; Hobolt and Franklin 2011). One of the ways through which EP elections may become politicised is the increased attentiveness of and reporting by the media (de Wilde 2011), because politicisation of EU issues can indirectly be assessed by studying the extent to which it is publicly debated (e.g. in the media). Another study argues that, should citizens be fully informed at EP election time, this would result in roughly a 30 per cent increase in turnout, and even realistic changes in knowledge could affect turnout noticeably (Bhatti 2010). Moreover, Andreas Schuck (*et al.* 2011b) argues that the political parties’ articulation of their divergent positions determines the extent to which SOEs are salient to the media. Put differently, the behaviour of parties and the news media is crucial for shaping the nature of electoral choices and determining levels of turnout in EP elections. One cannot blame voters for their electoral behaviour without taking into account the behaviour of political parties and the media, and hence it is advisable to integrate the SOE model with their behaviours (Strömbäck *et al.* 2011).

Second, at the outset of this article, we argue that a European public sphere is deemed a precondition for democratic governance in the EU and that, since the possibility of an

encompassing European public sphere has been discarded, Europeanisation of national public spheres remains the more realistic option. The Europeanisation of national public spheres is particularly observed by measuring the different degrees of Europeanisation of reporting in national media. Therefore, the *visibility* of European *issues* amongst a set of EU *actors* in the media is crucial to the development of Europeanised national spheres (Risse and van De Steeg 2003). Without the visibility of EU *actors*, political accountability remains invisible and political representation weak (Meyer 1999: 633). Moreover, a functioning European(-ised) public sphere(s) has been seen as both a solution and an instrument for producing a European identity (Eder and Trenz 2007; Gripsrud 2007), and a reliable collective identity is often considered a precondition for legitimate democratic procedures in the EU (Wimmel 2009).

To conclude, the Europeanised public sphere emerging as a result of increased public debate of EU actors and issues would help legitimise the EU polity (de Vreese 2007: 5; Trenz 2008). A common hypothesis among scholars is thus that the EU's democratic deficit will not find redress as long as no European-wide public sphere is emerging (cf. Hoffmann and Monaghan 2011). More generally, as part of input legitimation, political communication contributes to the legitimacy of governance by increasing citizens' influence on decision-making and helping to hold political actors accountable (Meyer 1999: 622). The effects of increased media coverage of European integration-related *issues* and *actors* on politicisation of EP elections could contribute to alleviating the EU's democratic as well as legitimacy deficit (Føllesdal and Hix 2006; Lord, 2010).

Nonetheless, since this study's results indicate a rather marginal amount of coverage of EP elections, particularly when compared to FOEs, they do not support the existence of vivid Europeanised national public spheres during EP elections in either country. Thus, the positive effects of increased media coverage of EU affairs on public attitudes towards the EU, voting choices and turnout in EP elections and, indirectly, on the EU's legitimacy as well as the positive effects of European(-ised) public sphere(s) on the legitimacy of the EU polity hardly materialise. Moreover, given that the media is the key information source for Europeans, the results do not provide much optimism that they will help change the perception of European elections as "second-order national elections".

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<sup>1</sup> This apparent lack of interest can be also result of methodological issues, in particular of application of methodological individualism, common in economics. Then the parties (and media) are viewed in analogy to firms not as individual actors making their decisions, but as actors simply concentrating on optimisation process. In this view, the decisions of voters determine the behaviour of parties and media.

<sup>2</sup> According to Hermann Schmitt (2007: 21), European issues are the "raw material" of a Europeanised public sphere.

<sup>3</sup> In the countries under analysis (i.e. Czech Republic and Slovakia) this condition is satisfied, as both types of elections were fought within almost identical party system.

<sup>4</sup> The drawback is that choosing more dissimilar cases could have been more helpful for proving the general expectations forwarded in the paper. But since there are no previous studies, even this case

selection should be helpful. The two countries are usually researched together since they were for a long time in the same state and share many characteristics, and are thus suitable for application of the most similar system design (MSSD) (e.g. Kovář and Kovář 2013). Since this research does not address variance in results between the case studies, we do apply the MSSD.

<sup>5</sup> At the 2004 EP elections it varied from May 27<sup>th</sup> to June 11<sup>th</sup> in the Czech Republic and from May 29<sup>th</sup> to June 13<sup>th</sup> in Slovakia; and from May 21<sup>st</sup> to June 5<sup>th</sup> in the Czech Republic and from May 22<sup>nd</sup> to June 6<sup>th</sup> at the 2009 EP elections.

<sup>6</sup> The analysis was conducted as follows: initially all television newscasts were videotaped and analysed according to the methods indicated. Length was operationalised in terms of time. However, due to missing data for some TV outlets and election years, we turned to Newton Media and analysed their transcripts of the news. Here, length was operationalised in terms of word count. Because both analyses were yielding very similar results, we eventually decided to use Newton Media transcripts not only because of the missing data but also because of the increased ease of carrying out the analysis using transcripts.

<sup>7</sup> The random choice of newspaper page was ensured using statistical programme specifically written for these purposes.

<sup>8</sup> All newspaper were acquired as hardcopies and analysed according to the methods indicated. All stories mentioning EP elections are coded in the following sections: Political/News section, Editorial and Business/Economy section. Sections as Sport, Travel, Housing, Culture, Motor/Auto, Fashion or Entertainment are not analysed. Magazines that come together with a newspaper are not analysed either. Randomly selected page has to be part of one of the following sections: domestic news, foreign/international news, business/economy news.

<sup>9</sup> Two analysts repeatedly coded the data sample, consisting of randomly selected 50 analysed days, including both newspaper and TV. Reliability data were thus obtained under test-test conditions (Krippendorff 2004).

<sup>10</sup> In 2006, national parliamentary elections took place on June 2–3 in the Czech Republic and on June 17 in Slovakia. The parliamentary elections of 2010 took place on May 28–29 in the Czech Republic and on June 12 in Slovakia. Just for clarification, pre-term elections took place in March 2012 in Slovakia and these first-order elections are not included in the analysis.

<sup>11</sup> The random choice of newspaper page was ensured using a statistical programme specifically written for these purposes.

<sup>12</sup> We decided to use this operationalisation instead of developing our own as it is well-established in studies of media coverage of (EP) elections (de Vreese 2003; de Vreese *et al.* 2006; Boomgaarden *et al.* 2010; Schuck *et al.* 2011a). Moreover, in accordance with previous studies we included candidates for MEPs as "EU" actors rather than "domestic" actors since we want to see how they are presented by the media. In practice, if a candidate for MEP is presented by the media acting in his capacity of domestic politician, the actor is coded as "domestic" actor. On the other hand, if an actor is presented acting as a candidate for an EU office, the actor is coded as "EU" actor. The same approach was executed in any case of actors' potentially conflicting roles.

<sup>13</sup> This is a special category and is assigned a value of "0", to be distinguished from mixed evaluation with assigned value of "3".

<sup>14</sup> A tentative analysis (not reported) has shown that news related to, for example, culture/entertainment takes up around 15–20 per cent of newscasts. The term marginal here refers to the fact that EP elections have never taken up more than 10 per cent of the news.

<sup>15</sup> We acknowledge that broadsheet newspapers are based on private ownership; in this article, we use the category of "private" media outlets to include only private broadcasting and tabloids only for analytical reasons.

<sup>16</sup> Results are not reported in the table or figure.

<sup>17</sup> Note that these results are obtained even though one could expect upward bias in EP election coverage due to specific factors surrounding the EP elections in both countries. Specifically, the first elections in both countries were held immediately following accession; and the 2009 elections were held during the Czech Presidency of the EU, both of which should boost the coverage of EU elections in media. The fact that even with these factors we obtain results supporting our initial expectations makes them more robust, as the reported difference in visibility between both elections likely understates the actual difference.

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## EU Soft Power and the Capability-Expectations Gap

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## Abstract

The European Union has in the past ten years frequently emphasised its soft power as its primary currency in international affairs. Yet a systematic analysis of the EU's foreign policy performance, through the prism of the classic 'capability-expectations gap', suggests that soft power in itself does little to address the weakness of the EU as a foreign policy actor. This article elaborates on the soft power concept and on the interplay between hard and soft power as seen in the EU's foreign policy. It argues that in few of the roles the EU seeks to fulfil does soft power in itself bridge the gap between the expectations and the capabilities. Rather, soft power, when it is present, widens that gap even further by adding to expectations, thus leading to even greater eventual disillusionment when the EU's hard power capabilities do not match.

## Keywords

External Relations; Soft Power; EU international roles; Capability-Expectations Gap; foreign policy effectiveness

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...the EU has soft power with a hard edge – more than the power to set a good example and promote our values. But less than the power to impose its will.  
(Catherine Ashton, Budapest, 25 February 2011)

Although our range of "hard power" is limited, our "soft power" should not be underestimated. But the "hard truth about soft power" is that it is not easy and by no means automatic. Soft power is not about just being soft and handing out money. The effective use of soft power requires a consistent and comprehensive game plan addressing our objectives, our means, and the ways we apply them.  
(Herman van Rompuy, Zurich, 9 November 2011)

The EU's shortcomings as an effective foreign policy actor are a well-trodden subject, famously conceptualised by Christopher Hill (1993) as a "Capability-Expectations Gap" – a discrepancy between the expectations the EU engenders, and its limited ability to pursue the actual policies needed for fulfilling its envisaged roles in world politics. At the same time, comments such as those quoted above show the fondness of senior EU officials to speak of soft power – primarily derived from 'European' norms and values – as one of the European Union's preferred ways of influencing its external environment. Others again, like NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen, have lamented that EU soft power "... is no power at all" (Rettman 2013). It all begs the question whether and to what extent soft power compensates for shortcomings in other, more traditional means of foreign policy? And whether having soft power, and knowing how to make it count, enables the EU to meet the expectations held of it by both itself and its external interlocutors?

I approach these questions through the prism of the capability-expectations gap. The question is not entirely new; a previous treatment (Tulmets 2007) focused on the specific soft power discourse prevalent while Benita Ferrero-Waldner was DG RELEX Commissioner, and was guarded in its conclusions as to its potential. Attempts at treating soft power as an analytical concept, on the other hand, have generally been few and far between. Haaland Matlary (2006) considered the role of the EU's military policies in boosting its soft power and the connectedness of hard and soft power, while Hill (2010) showed how the EU has sought to tailor its foreign policies towards expanding its soft power. My approach is slightly different: Like Haaland Matlary and Hill I also hold to the original, basic definition of soft power – as the ability to make others want the same as you want, through attraction rather than coercion – but I examine the importance and

relevance of EU soft power across the several roles the EU seeks to perform. In doing so, I also intend to demonstrate the usefulness of the original soft power concept for understanding the EU's foreign policy - not least as a means for EU foreign policy research better to engage with mainstream IR scholarship - and, implicitly, suggest avenues for more detailed case-based research. My conclusion on the main question of this article, however, is emphatically negative. No amount of soft power, or discourses to that effect, make up for lacking capability and for the near-complete absence of effective hard power in the EU's foreign policy. Indeed, my argument in this article is, paradoxically, that rather than bridging the capability-expectations gap, the EU's soft power will, if anything, tend to widen it further.

In the article, in the first sections I elaborate the main concepts, the capabilities-expectations gap and soft power. I then discuss the Union's attempts to fulfil the various roles it has imagined for itself in international politics, and whether and how EU soft power contributes to this. Lastly, I discuss the way that soft power is not in fact a solution to the capabilities-expectations gap, but may actually exacerbate it.

### **THE CAPABILITIES-EXPECTATIONS GAP**

A classic adage holds that the EU is 'an economic giant, a political dwarf and a military midget', somewhat less than the sum of the parts ought to suggest. From its inception the European Community had a significant foreign policy dimension in several economics-related fields, while classic diplomatic functions were less prominent, and the military dimension virtually absent. This peculiarity gave rise, in the 1970s, to notions of the EC being a new form of 'civilian power', emphasising economic means over military power, 'domesticating' relations between states through legal norms and contractual politics (Duchêne 1973:19-20). While some dismissed civilian power out of hand as "a contradiction in terms" (Bull 1982), others have more recently sought to expand on the concept, emphasising the cooperative and multilateral aspect (e.g. Maull 2005). Others again argue that whatever merit the concept once had, it just cannot describe the EU's foreign policy as it has developed since the end of the Cold War (Smith 2005).

The general expectation in the 1990s was of a more active international role for the EU, talked up not least by proponents of closer political union. During this time, the union became a major focal point for the newly-free countries of central and eastern Europe and a conduit for transition assistance. At the same time, the civil war in the former Yugoslavia cruelly exposed the EU's and its member states' limited capacity for actual intervention in conflicts, underscoring the need for a more active and capable foreign policy. The Petersberg Tasks, formulated in 1992, listed potential missions the EU could/should undertake, ranging from peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance to crisis management and actual peace-making interventions by combat forces. Starting with the Maastricht Treaty in 1993 and through to the 2009 Lisbon Treaty, the continuous development has been towards giving the EU more of a traditional foreign policy presence under the headings of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and, since 1999, the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP, so named since Lisbon). The creation of a High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy and the establishment of the European External Action Service (EEAS) have also set the EU on course for greater horizontal coherence. The Petersberg tasks informed the development of the Battle Groups, while the establishment of the European Defence Agency was for the purpose of greater coordination between national military establishments. Several strategy documents, most importantly the 2003 European Security Strategy (ESS), have also sought to provide overarching frameworks for EU foreign policy.

When coining the concept of the capability-expectations gap, Christopher Hill sought to move beyond abstract debates over 'EU actorness'. This mirrored the growing trend of increasingly moving towards examining the EU's *effectiveness* in foreign policy, and thus

bridging some of the old theoretical debates (Ginsberg 1999: 430). Hill focused on the roles the EU already played on the international stage, and those it could somehow be expected – by others and/or itself - to play in the Post-Cold War era. The former he grouped around the following notions: 1) the stabilising of Western Europe; 2) managing world trade; 3) being the developed world's principal voice in relations with the south; 4) being a second western voice in international diplomacy. The expected future functions Hill listed as: 1) the EU as a superpower, replacing the USSR in the global balance of power; 2) a regional pacifier; 3) a global intervener; 4) a mediator of conflicts; 5) a bridge between the rich and the poor; 6) joint supervisor of the world economy (Hill 1993: 310-314). With only a few minor updates, such as explicitly incorporating global environmental policy, these envisaged roles by and large remain an adequate description of EU ambitions, as evidenced in numerous strategy papers.

The EU's difficulties when trying to actually step into these roles was what Hill ascribed to a gap between the expectations placed on the EU and its actual capability to meet these expectations. The gap was accounted for by the EU's limited ability to agree on policy, its sparse resources and the lack of instruments at its disposal. The danger of the gap was it leading to both "excessive risk-taking by supplicant states and/or unrealistic policies on behalf of the [EU]" (Hill 1993: 315), and to "debates over false possibilities both within the EU and between the Union and external supplicants. It would also be likely to produce a disproportionate degree of disillusion and resentment when hopes were inevitably dashed" (Hill 1997: 8).

Hill's concept from the 1990s has since been expanded and refined by others. The weak capacity for consistent action and the difficulties of incorporating all its different policies across institutions has been a major barrier for the EU (Delcour & Tulmets 2007: 5). The EEAS was meant to help improve the EU's capacity for action by enhancing horizontal cohesion, and, through stronger coordination, also the capacity for collective action. However, the continued salience of foreign policy to EU member states has set clear limits to both vertical and external cohesion, and the insistence on consensus has often meant a collective reluctance to using the resources actually available in a purposeful way, and hence meeting the expectations held of the EU (Toje 2008).

Despite the continuous development of the EU's foreign policy dimension over the past twenty years, the Union is still a long way from being like a state, or from having a truly 'common' policy. Significant shortcomings remain and the change of pace is slow. EU foreign policy-making is still diffuse, lacking many of the basic constitutional powers that states enjoy, and with limited scope for autonomous action. Against this background, the notion that soft power would be the remedy for the capability-expectations gap has seemed attractive.

## **WHAT IS SOFT POWER?**

The soft power concept has over time appeared in several contexts in Joseph Nye's work. He first coined the term in the late 1980s, disputing the then-dominant discourse of American decline. US soft power, he argued, accrued through its cultural appeal and leadership of the free world during the Cold War, would ensure the country's continued place at the apex of world politics. Nye returned to the topic of soft power in 2001 (just before the events of 9/11), this time warning against US triumphalism and feelings of omnipotence in its moment of uni-polarity. That warning was delivered even more starkly in 2004, at the height of the neo-conservative ascendancy, as the USA was conducting regime change in Iraq – illegitimately, in the eyes of many - and upsetting old alliances. The softer sides of diplomacy should never be underestimated, Nye cautioned, as they would, if nothing else, greatly reduce US costs "in carrots and sticks". More recently (2011), he has refined the topic further, once more in a context of pessimism.



The IR student could occasionally wish that Nye had called it something other than 'soft power'. The term itself leads to no end of conceptual confusion. When is power hard or soft? Economic power must surely be softer than military power, which is unambiguously hard; sanctions, after all, do not have quite the same sting as a cruise missile. What of positive conditionality and other financial inducements? Such confusions abound, in academic as well as policy orientated literature, and soft power has become a term more used than understood. For Nye, "power is the ability to influence the behaviour of others to get the outcomes one wants" (Nye 2004: 2). The means for achieving such influence are what Nye divides into hard and soft power. The former is tangible, either coercive or based on inducements; the latter is persuasive. Hard power certainly encompasses military might, but also refers to economic suasion in the form of sanctions, payments, bribes, aid, and preferential trade agreements, as well as both negative and positive conditionality (Nye 2004: 31). Such policies are the carrots and sticks that actors use to make their influence count.

Soft power is defined as "the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payments" (Nye 2004: x). Whereas hard power is about bringing others into line, soft power is about co-option; not because partners are forced to align, but because they *want* to share the same goals, values and visions, due to their perceived attractiveness (Nye 2004: 5). Sources of soft power are cultural appeal, insofar as popular culture conveys a positive image of a country and a society; political norms and values, when seen as desirable and applied without hypocrisy; and policies, if they are seen as embodying a society's values, and if the larger goals pursued are seen as legitimate and desirable (Nye 2004: 11). The means for making effective use of soft power in foreign policy are public diplomacy, agenda-setting and framing international issues.

The soft power concept does not assume novel ways of exerting influence – after all, even E.H. Carr, in *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, spoke of 'power over opinion' (Carr 1939: 132-146) – but is a way of theorising non-tangible power and its relation with more traditional forms, underlining the importance of image and credibility, and how these can become power assets. Soft power can help melt old antagonisms, and solidify existing relations, and may be particularly helpful when states pursue milieu shaping goals in their external environments (Nye 2004: 16-17; Wolfers 1962: 74-77). It offers little, though, for concrete action in pursuit of tangible objectives, possession goals.

The danger of soft power lies in the "... faulty inferences that careless or unwary observers draw from it" (Gray 2011: 29), such as treating it as a general panacea or replacement for hard power. In fact, the two must always work in a symbiotic relationship, reinforcing each other. The proper balancing of these two is what Nye calls 'smart power' (Nye 2011: 23). Strategic presence is thus the necessary quality for soft power to be effective. Without it, soft power will only be consequential to the extent others will allow it. States with much hard but little soft power may often exert great influence. But such strategies mostly rest on coercion and will in the long run prove prohibitively costly. Soft power on its own, however derived, may make an actor attractive, but also leave it without either power or influence if aligning with it carries prohibitive risks for its potential partners. Credibility of an actor's hard power policies is thus essential for its soft power to matter (Gray 2011: 38). Deterrent, supportive or reassuring hard power policies in pursuit of legitimate objectives, such as humanitarian interventions, or in defence of certain widely shared fundamental values can in fact be significant sources of soft power. The real key is having effective power conversion strategies, so as to make the most use of the power resources at a state's disposal (Nye 2011: 10).

Speaking of soft power therefore does not imply any grander claims about transformative effects on international politics; seeking to strengthen one's soft power is about increasing one's influence, not promoting universal goods. Moreover, it is recognised that soft power is not static, but in flux. It can ebb and flow, increase and

decrease. It is context-dependent, cannot easily be switched on and off and therefore "... does not lend itself to careful ... calibration" (Gray 2011: 30). What is a source of soft power in some contexts may be the opposite in others. But when present, and reinforced through consistent policies that express desirable values, it may significantly reduce an actor's costs in both carrots and sticks (Nye 2004: 11).

## EU SOFT POWER

As Portela (2007: 9) notes, soft power was not a concept "tailor-made" for the EU, unlike 'civilian power' and 'normative power', both of which are more prevalent among EU scholars, but have found little application beyond EU studies. Civilian power, as noted above, is primarily about the means of power, not the ends; nothing precludes purposeful pursuit of self-interest using civilian means (Smith 2005: 75). And while acting as a civilian power may both incorporate and be a source of soft power, the two concepts are not necessarily describing the same thing at all.

Normative power and soft power are more alike in several ways, in that both consider the impact of norms and values. But normative power connotes not only what power the EU *has*, but also the kind of power it *is*, in that it diffuses norms and values to those it comes into contact with, and changes perceptions of 'normal' in international politics (Manners 2002). The EU's source of such power is its inherent traits as a supranational entity, "different to pre-existing political forms, and ... [pre-disposed] to act in a normative way" (Manners 2002: 242), as evidenced by the several international human rights conventions that have become part of the treaty base. Although Manners considers the use of conditionality - essentially a coercive measure - a diffusion mechanism for the EU's normative power, he explicitly rejects "... the assumption that normative power requires a willingness to use force in an instrumental way" (Manners 2002: 242). It has been argued (Diez 2005) that Normative Power Europe is an attempt at identity construction with both a descriptive and prescriptive element to it (something which could also be said of EU officials' frequent mention of EU soft power during the Ferrero-Waldner era, see below). But Manners's claim goes further than that. In his view, the EU's very difference is the key to understanding it: A normative power goes beyond Westphalian conventions, exercising influence not by "what it says or does, but what it is" (Manners 2002: 252). The claims behind soft power are not quite that bold and ambitious.

Although both soft and normative power are about oozing and diffusing, the ways actors come to their powers are markedly different. Soft power is neither derived from intrinsic features, nor through the mere act of being; it is something you have, not something you are. Or, to turn the Manners's argument on its head; what that actor *is*, is very much a function of what they *say* and *do*, and on the two being congruent. A benevolent disposition is the result of willed action, as are policies that further benevolent norms and values. Likewise, norms of acceptable behaviour in international politics, or in a subset of the international community, are primarily created through willed action, although soft power can be a contributing factor to strengthening such shared norms and making them more attractive (Nye 2004: 20). Moreover, soft power is a descriptive concept (Nye 2011: 23), not an ideational one. It does not imply the same kind of value judgment that the normative power concept does, i.e. that some norms are more 'right' than others (even if Manners dresses this bias up in cosmopolitanism). What constitutes attractive values is context-dependent, a subjective matter in the eye of the beholder, and not dependent on supposed inherent traits or predispositions.

Compared to civilian and normative power, soft power is, Haaland Matlary's and Hill's contributions notwithstanding, sadly neglected as an analytical lens. Scholars of a constructivist bent did, however, notice that the term held favour with former DG RELEX Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner (2004-2009), who frequently referred to it as a

special trait of the EU, arguing that the EU's "... principal source of power ... is 'soft' rather than 'hard' ... but ... no less potent" (Ferrero-Waldner 2006a). Ferrero-Waldner's understanding of soft power was shown to stray frequently from Joseph Nye's (Portela 2007; Tulmets 2007). The emphasis seemed to be more on the 'soft' rather than 'power', reflecting more on the persuasive means used, and on the gentleness of the EU's approach to international affairs, than on soft power itself. In this, Ferrero-Waldner's conceptualisation seemed more in line with Duchêne's and Maull's ideas of civilian power (Portela 2007: 10). Less charitably, one might say that to Ferrero-Waldner soft power seemed to be whatever the EU was successful at, since, implicitly, that would mean without resorting to military coercion. Yet valuable as they were, these analyses of Ferrero-Waldner's usage and understanding of the term did not fully cover the topic, nor did they fully bring out the ways the original soft power concept could help our understanding of EU foreign policy. Moreover, there are numerous other examples, such as those at the beginning of this article, of EU officials using the term in ways that show a more refined and classic understanding.

To understand EU soft power, it is necessary first to cast a glance at its hard power. As already noted, the military dimension remains the least developed aspect of EU foreign policy, and is primarily geared towards humanitarian intervention and not towards power projection in the classic, coercive sense. The economic means have been more prevalent, in the form of trade agreements and development assistance, both typically accompanied by conditionality clauses. By these means, the EU has sought to pursue normative milieu goals (Hyde-Price 2006: 222). In this, the EU has often relied on its stronger economic position vis-à-vis partners, or indeed on the regional hegemony it enjoys over most of the European continent. The financial inducements and positive conditionality that Ferrero-Waldner regarded as the EU's soft power (Delcour & Tulmets 2007: 509) are fully in keeping with the notions of civilian power, in that negotiation, contractual relationships and economic incentives are central elements. But conditionality, whether positive or negative, and the sanctions implied, are, on a more rigorous understanding of power, clearly at the lower end of what can be termed hard power (Nye 2004: 8). At the same time, the EU's extensive trade ties with many parts of the world and its relatively generous development policies provide it with some important building blocks for developing soft power.

The EU's soft power appeal is not, despite Europe's immense contribution to science and 'high culture', primarily cultural. The EU has little cultural identity of its own – only member states have that, and these tend to be intensely national in character. There is no European equivalent to Hollywood and European popular culture (save perhaps that of the UK) does not travel as easily as that of the USA, nor offer the same kind of easily comprehensible 'window' on to its societies as America's does. Member states' individual cultural diplomacy – whether through language programmes, promotion of high culture, or educational exchange programmes – remains very important, but as sources of soft power for the EU the effect is indirect at best. But soft power can still be derived without a strong cultural identity.

The EU's historical narrative of peaceful integration between previously warring states is a significant source of soft power – and one for which it received the Nobel Peace Prize in 2012. The reordering of relations between nations based on the rule of law, and the elaborate balancing of interests between larger and smaller members, makes the EU attractive in the eyes of outsiders; similarly, the prosperity that has sprung from that recasting of relations and some of the concrete achievements of European integration, such as the Single Market and the Schengen zone. Also, the EU's enlargement policy has helped promote democratisation and political reform in candidate states, and stable, peaceful relations between them, thereby showing the potential effects when properly balancing hard and soft power to the particular context. The 2004 enlargement in particular is often cited as a triumph for EU diplomacy and its soft power. Eneko Landaburu, formerly Director-General of DG RELEX, has described the EU as a "pole of

attraction" to its external milieu, leading neighbours to want to align with it (Landaburu 2006: 32). Similar arguments based on EU soft power have been made for both the European Neighborhood Policy (Ferrero-Waldner 2006b) and the Eastern Partnership (Runner 2008).

Another potential source of soft power is the EU's stated commitment to certain normative principles, particularly democracy and human rights, including a strong emphasis on women's rights, which shows in the incorporation of several international human rights conventions into the *acquis*, and in the monitoring of potential members' performance under the Copenhagen Criteria. The rhetorical premium placed on values can be gleaned from the word appearing three times in the 2003 European Security Strategy, similarly in the 2008 update, and no fewer than 22 times in the 2004 European Neighbourhood Policy Strategy Paper. Soft power rests on the attraction of shared values and on others wanting to share them effectively (Nye 2004: 7; EU Commission 2004: 3). The challenge for the EU has been turning this rhetoric into concrete and consistent foreign policies; something made all the more important by the EU's limited cultural identity. For soft power is dependent on espousing its stated values through actively doing.

Landaburu (2006) argues that the EU has done this by assuming global leadership in a number of policy areas, thus both utilising and enhancing its soft power. As evidence he cited the EU's leadership, in both rhetoric and deeds, on global climate change. Being the world's leading force, and largest donor, in the field of Third World development gives similar status, especially when coupled with the EU's advocacy for human rights improvement. Moreover, argues Landaburu, the EU has been a firm and consistent advocate for multilateralism and respect for international law. It has thus carved out for itself a distinct profile in international politics.

Worthy as such policies are, they do also lend themselves to a more realist argument that the EU is a vehicle for collective action by the member states, acting as the repository for their shared second-order concerns (Hyde-Price 2006: 222-223). In this analysis, the EU takes positions on a number of 'values' issues, but not if it interferes with more earthly concerns of first-order importance. Persuasive as this argument is – and the EU's commitment to its values can indeed be questioned, as also shown below – it does miss one point: namely that acting *effectively* as a civilian power can in itself be a source of soft power. In terms of identity building, talking of soft power also serves a purpose by playing up those aspects of foreign policy that obscure the EU's weakness in traditional resources, thereby becoming an argument for the EU's international legitimacy and for Europe still having something to offer. Additionally, the latter appeals to those EU members still sensitive to charges of imperialism and feeling a need to live down their colonial pasts. For all these reasons, the EU's soft power emphasis has sought to cast the Union as an attractive and different kind of actor. At the same time, Landaburu concedes that trees do not grow into the heavens: only by "paying the extra cost ... in institutional and political reforms" can the EU ever hope to be a fully independent and effective actor able to punch its weight properly (Landaburu 2006: 33).

Chris Patten has described EU soft power as a "weapon of mass attraction" (cited in Tulmets 2007: 206). But just like WMD, it does not lend itself to careful calibration. What makes the EU immensely attractive to some may also make it attractive to others it is not necessarily trying to woo. Soft power, which cannot easily be switched on and off, can have unintended effects, and be something of a mixed blessing. The EU's rhetoric and touting of its own history of successful integration may therefore also engender expectations in others, and implicitly impose obligations on EU policies.

Most importantly, soft power is a resource which in order to be useful needs to be reinforced through consistent action in keeping with those values and policies that brought it about in the first place. Concretely, in the case of the EU, this means utilising the building blocks for developing its soft power, by consistently placing central

emphasis on its distinctive international economic policy agenda; being a provider of security in keeping with its liberal political values; promoting peaceful, rule of law-based relations; and insisting on the protection of human rights. Failing to do so may well invite suspicions of weakness or charges of hypocrisy, either of which would prove very damaging for soft power were they to stick. Developing soft power therefore requires proactive policies of conflict management, of integration towards countries that want to share the EU's norms and values, and firm policies towards those who do not. Not only would such stances be in the EU's interest if it wants to maintain soft power; they will actually be expected by those outsiders seeking closer ties with it.

## **SOFT POWER AND THE EU'S ROLES**

The various roles Hill considered the EU as either expecting itself and/or being expected by others to fulfil remain as good a guide as any for gauging the impact of soft power, as these roles are also largely expressed in the EU's own strategy papers. Hill (2010) has further argued that in its foreign policies the EU has sought to incorporate soft power maximisation to the fullest extent possible. The following necessarily cursory overview discusses whether and how soft power has an observable impact on the success (or lack of) with which the EU performs in these roles, and whether its performance enhances or diminishes its soft power.

### **Stabilising Western Europe/Regional pacifier**

Of all the sources of EU soft power, its prominent role in stabilising and pacifying the European continent, highlighted in the very first paragraph of the ESS, ranks highest. The processes that led to the 2004/7 enlargement are rightly hailed as a success in norm diffusion and integration. To many, both inside and outside the Union, the EU became virtually synonymous with 'Europe', fostering discourses in Central and Eastern European countries of a "return to Europe" (Sjursen 2002). In short, the EU's attractiveness was such that many non-members wished not just to get closer to the EU, but to become part of it. The EU's openness to enlargement in the 1990s furthered its soft power, and lent substance to the rhetoric of erasing the continent's old dividing lines.

Looking beyond the 2004/7 intake, the record is patchier. The EU failed dismally in first preventing and subsequently ending the wars in the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s, eventually needing the USA and NATO to do the heavy lifting. Such failures did little at the time to bolster the EU's soft power or credibility as a regional pacifier. Its image has only gradually recovered through long and patient efforts at post-conflict stabilisation, through peacekeeping and support for nation building processes, backed by the promise of eventual membership for all Balkan countries. Even then, the record so far is ambiguous. One major criticism of EU efforts in Bosnia has been the disempowerment of local political elites in favour of EU external governance (e.g. Chandler 2006). Moreover, whatever the attraction of EU membership, Bosnian politicians still find it difficult to overcome their differences sufficiently to work together. Most of all, such influence as the EU has through its soft power could only be made felt after no small amount of (non-EU) hard power had been expended bringing Slobodan Milosevic's Serbia to heel.

Looking beyond the EU's eastern borders, the picture becomes murkier still. The continual failure to offer a clear membership perspective to the western CIS (Commonwealth of Independent States) countries, offering only very limited integration on the EU's own terms, goes somewhat against the idea of the EU being an open and inclusive force for good. Instead, the ENP has primarily aimed at papering over the EU's internal disagreements, and served more towards addressing EU needs than the aspirations of the partners. Although Ukrainian efforts at pursuing a westward

orientation following the Orange Revolution were always troubled, the EU's unwillingness to be more forthcoming, thus denying itself the full use of its soft power, was hardly helpful. That the ENP tends to be a bureaucratic and slow-moving process, not always offering the sort of 'carrots' that the partner countries most want, such as visa-free travel, has been an additional source of frustration (Popescu & Wilson 2009). The Eastern Partnership (EaP), which Commission President Barroso claimed would show "... the power of soft power, the ability of the EU to attract others and bring about changes in societies" (Runner 2008), also failed to provide a real step-change for most partner countries. As the 2004/7 enlargements fade into memory, instead giving way to entrenched discourses of 'enlargement fatigue', the EU's failure to extend membership prospects may come to diminish its soft power in the region. In fact, in the run up to the November 2013 EaP summit in Vilnius, the policy received several blows, as first Armenia and then Ukraine, both under heavy Russian pressure, backed off from signing Association Agreements with the EU. That development would seem to underscore the limitations of soft power when that is the core component of policy, and not backed with something more tangible (Nielsen & Wilson, forthcoming 2014).

### **Mediator of conflicts**

When originally outlining the EU's potential in the role of a mediator, Hill (1993: 313) mentioned its ambition to solve the Israel-Palestine conflict, which the ESS (European Council 2003: 8) called a "strategic priority". The EU has indeed attempted to engage in a humanitarian role, with the Arab side in particular, but with little to show for it. Against a backdrop of continuing violence and repeated US failures at mediation, the overall lack of success can hardly be ascribed to a particular EU failing, but does show the limits of its capability. The EU sought to mediate in the conflict over Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons, the trio of France, Germany, and the UK taking the lead on behalf of the Union. The attempt at a softer approach of negotiation and economic incentives yielded precious few definite results, and eventually gave way to punitive sanctions (Patterson 2013). Soft power did not make carrots without sticks a winning formula.

When considering the EU's success as a conflict mediator closer to home, it is striking that of the world's ten disputed states, a full six are either within the EU's borders or within the Eastern Partnership group of countries. When allowing a still-divided Cyprus to accede in 2004, the EU essentially became a party to the conflict instead of a mediator. While EU soft power may play a role in keeping Northern Cyprus at the negotiating table, finding a solution has not become easier by the EU having lost its main leverage on the Greek side. In fact, a solution may have come to hinge even more on the EU credibly keeping accession negotiations with Turkey going - by no means a sure thing at the time of writing. EU soft power seems more capable of influencing and de-escalating the conflict over Kosovo. The attraction of deeper integration and eventual membership is what underpins the EU's continuing push to normalise relations between Serbia and Kosovo, which saw some success during 2013. If it remains a credible prospect, the membership perspective will hopefully in time induce Serbian recognition of Kosovo and the final settlement of the Yugoslavian conflicts. In both the Cyprus and the Serbia/Kosovo cases, though, the potential efficacy of EU soft power seems to depend on a number of other, tangible variables, not least the prospect of further integration.

The frozen conflicts in the western CIS and South Caucasus (Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Nagorno-Karabakh, and Transnistria) have all festered for more than twenty years. This is not the place for a complete overview of EU activity (or lack thereof) in these conflicts. However a few observations on the South Ossetia conflict are instructive, showing the EU failing at precisely the kind of "preventive engagement" the ESS (European Council 2003: 7) calls for. In the years prior to the 2008 war, the EU rejected entreaties by the Georgian government to place either unarmed monitors or peacekeeping forces in the conflict zone. That the EU was looked to for this can be viewed as indicative of its soft

power; its involvement was sought due to its perceived attractiveness as a possible mediator and as an actor espousing different values than those of Russia. It also serves as a prime example of the dangers of the capability-expectations gap; of expectations towards the EU rising to the point where the EU was not *willing* to meet them. As it turned out, EU soft power was no foil for Russian power politics, and the EU-brokered ceasefire in the Russian-Georgian war ultimately amounted to little more than refreezing the conflict, but with Russia now more firmly entrenched in the separatist regions (Asmus 2010). The EU's role was hardly flattering, nor was the outcome or aftermath much in keeping with its professed norms and values. To some extent, in the former USSR the EU enjoys its soft power in spite of itself.

### **Global intervener**

Obviously, as already discussed, soft power is not in itself a tool for direct intervention; it is influence over opinion. However, the interplay between hard and soft power is an intricate one in the context of intervention. How an actor uses hard power, and where and how intervention takes place can determine the image the actor enjoys, and hence influence perceptions of credibility. Instrumental usage of military force is entirely consistent with the soft power concept, if in pursuit of legitimate ends, such as humanitarian interventions, peacemaking and peace support operations. In the right circumstances, expending "hard power for soft purposes" might bolster the EU's soft power with outsiders (Matlary 2006).

However, if the EU's record in conflict mediation is patchy, as a global intervener it is all but non-existent, although not for absence of rhetoric. The EU has consistently framed itself as a liberal power, with a value-based foreign policy, able to pursue "... a policy of resolving other people's conflicts by military means if necessary, but without violating international law" (Rynning 2003: 486), and, theoretically, with the development of the CSDP Battle Groups, the EU today possesses the means for doing so.

In reality the question is whether the EU has come very close at all to achieving the unity of purpose, or strategic culture, necessary actually to conduct the kind of policies required of a global intervener (e.g. Howorth 2007; Matlary 2006; Rynning 2003). Apart from speaking of the need to "... develop a strategic culture that fosters early, rapid, and when necessary, robust intervention" (European Council 2003:12), the ESS is rather quiet on the exact circumstances in which the EU might intervene with force. Even more telling, the much vaunted EU Battle Groups have not been activated even a single time in their existence. As actual first interveners, the EU can only claim the Chad operation of 2008-2009; in all other instances, others have gone before, or, as with France in Mali in 2013, a member state went in alone. Most missions under the CSDP banner have either been cases of the EU assuming responsibility from NATO for long-term UN-authorized peacekeeping and nation building missions (e.g. Bosnia, Kosovo, Macedonia), or they have been short-term, small-scale, and, Operation Artemis in the DRC apart, civilian in nature, directly supporting existing UN missions. Moreover, no missions of significant scale have been launched since the anti-piracy Operation Atalanta in 2008.

The cases of intervention to stop the genocide in Darfur, discussed internally between 2003 and 2008, or the 2011 Libya War, both conflicts which seemed ideally suited to the EU's self-perception, showed two not very flattering traits. In the former case, a constant lowering of internal expectations, to the point where military action was off the table due to lack of consensus (Toje 2008:135-138). The latter conflict, although spearheaded by several EU members and encompassing several of the key threats described in the ESS, had to be managed through NATO, with a sizeable US contribution, due to internal EU disagreements on what action to take. The EU thus fumbled the initial intervention, but it also failed to build soft power and influence in the war's aftermath by addressing its own normative concerns rather than the new Libya's urgent security

problems. As Libyan PM Mahmoud Jibril lamented in March 2012, the EU was now "... looking at what it wants to do and is ignoring needful priorities ... Engaging women is a good thing, but doesn't touch the real problems [of getting weapons off the streets]" (Marquand 2012). At the very least, the value-based soft power's long-term efficacy rests on other short-term difficulties being overcome. Most problematic, of course, is what these instances say about the credibility of the EU as an actor. For lack of credibility undermines soft power.

### **The principal voice in relations with the South/ Bridge between rich and poor**

In as much as anyone can really be a bridge between the world's rich and poor, the EU is filling this function by default, since the USA offers no competition for it. The EU is a leading proponent of the UN Millennium Development Goals, and remains the world's largest donor of development funds. The Cotonou Agreement between the EU and the ACP countries provides a highly developed framework for cooperation, mixing positive inducement with conditionality clauses. The agreement targets both economic development and trade, and progress on the EU's normative agenda (gender equality, human rights, children's rights, health and education, sustainable development, civil society etc.) as well as political developments in the field of democracy and good governance (Cameron 2007: 164).

One would expect such policies to boost EU soft power, in turn increasing the policies' chances of success. But a number of problems complicate this, and have done so for many years. The insistence on conditionality links between development aid and the imparting of liberal norms and values has not only been inconsistent over the years, it has often also been perceived as overbearing. It has left the door open to other powers less preoccupied with normative concerns: "the Chinese build bridges for us, the EU supervises our elections", is an African commonplace, suggesting that the EU's priorities are not universally appreciated, and its soft power not always in evidence. While this may partly be an issue of style, other policies contribute to an image of a selfish and hostile EU. The Common Agricultural Policy's harmful effects on developing countries' economies likely chips away at EU soft power faster than any development policies can enhance it. Not least since the latter are as much tailored to meet EU security needs as the real needs of the recipients (Faust & Messner 2005). Nor has the increasingly hostile rhetoric adopted in most European countries towards immigrants from the developing world gone unnoticed; neither has the development of 'Fortress Europe'.

In the global climate change talks to replace the Kyoto Protocol, EU soft power proved insufficient to convince the G77 countries of the EU's good intentions, the legitimacy of its position, or that they should follow its lead. At the 2009 UN Climate Summit in Copenhagen, even as the USA and the BRICS countries were busy ruining the prospects of a meaningful agreement, it was the Europeans finding themselves accused of seeking "the destruction of Africa" (Philips 2009). Such an image hardly came out of nowhere.

### **Managing world trade/Joint supervisor of the world economy**

Given the sheer size of its economy, the EU remains a major player in the world economy and in all multilateral bodies managing it (WTO, IMF etc.). But the G20's emergence in the wake of the financial crisis suggests that the EU, along with other major Western economies are, relatively speaking, declining forces, as other powers increasingly assert themselves. The moves towards an EU-US free trade agreement would, however, tie the two largest economic players together, and thus enhance their ability to jointly shape trade and regulatory standards in the world economy.



But what of soft power? For the EU to influence opinion in the world economy through its example, its own economic success would have to be conspicuous, and a few starry-eyed observers (e.g. Rifkin 2004) do indeed extol the virtues and desirability of the 'European economic model'. To many others, it must look increasingly past its sell-by date. In the current climate of crunching recession or tepid growth rates, high unemployment, sovereign-debt crises and on-going bail-outs, it is hard for Europe to claim leadership. Instead, it is now the BRICS who help Europe weather the global economic crisis, while Europe is losing voting power at the IMF. The failure to undertake the necessary reforms envisaged in the much-vaunted *Lisbon Strategy* (2001), which should have turned the EU into the "most dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world", or those of the successor document *Europe 2020* (2009), calls into question the European model's sustainability. The knock-on effects of the Eurozone's financial meltdown on the credibility of the EU's foreign policy ambitions can hardly be underestimated and will not be easily contained. Even the 'green economy', Europe's strongest claim to leadership, does not seem to catch on. The EU exerted no small effort getting countries to sign on to the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, led on cutting carbon-dioxide emissions, and unilaterally set the most ambitious targets for reductions. Yet at the 2009 Copenhagen Summit that soft power could not translate into actual influence, with the EU ending up watching from the sidelines as Brazil, China, India and the USA scuppered the prospects of a binding agreement. In any case, the EU's collective will to continue taking the lead in this field seems increasingly in question.

Europe's relative decline in the world economy is partly happening due to material factors and partly due to inadequate economic policies. Soft power is not offsetting this relative slipping of influence, but is suffering under the EU's economic underperformance. The EU's example does not look sufficiently like the way of the future, and too much energy is spent defending out-dated policies like the CAP. For soft power to become a useful tool in this EU role, fundamental policy changes need to take place to make the European model once more seem attractive and sustainable. Soft power is yet again dependent on the success of substantive, tangible policies.

### **Global superpower/A second western voice in international diplomacy**

Of all the scenarios sketched in Christopher Hill's original article, the EU graduating from being a second western voice to being a new pole in the international system, replacing the USSR, has proved the least accurate. As the above overview has shown, the EU is far from capable of fully performing in the various roles expected of it. Its relationship with the United States is not one of genuine partnership, but will remain deeply asymmetric for a long time to come (Witney & Shapiro 2009). This is determined by material factors; Europe still depends on the USA for its security and relies on it for support in military interventions. Soft power cannot be used to 'balance' against hard power, and given the USA's greater capacity for political leadership and action, as well as its greater worldwide cultural appeal, American soft power is anyway likely to outshine the EU's.

In the more plausible scenario, of the EU remaining a second western voice in international politics, the Union does have a number of things going for it in terms of soft power. As already mentioned, the EU has carved out distinct positions on a number of second-order issues: international law, multilateralism through the United Nations, the International Criminal Court, the Kyoto Protocol, support for the Millennium Development Goals, democracy promotion, championing of human rights etc. By emphasising these themes the EU can stand somewhat distinct from the United States, and can plausibly claim to be pursuing a policy in keeping with the norms and values it expects of itself, while remaining within the capabilities available to it. But such stands and the soft power potentially derived from them will not truly empower the EU to the extent that it can take and maintain similarly separate positions on anything of first-order importance.

## SOFT POWER AND THE WIDENING GAP

The EU's record of building and making soft power count towards a more effective foreign policy thus seems mixed when considered through its various roles. The above overview has mainly dealt with the capability side of the EU's actorness. Not surprisingly, it shows that where the EU is strong, enjoys an uncontested hegemony, and has good policies in place, such as in the Balkans, it is met with positive responses, clearly indicating that its soft power has an effect. All the same, the overview also suggests that EU leaders seem sometimes to expect too much from it, and have not necessarily thought much about how it is accumulated. Soft power is a tool of policy, an asset supporting policy; but the means of policy cannot be separated from the overall strategy of which it is part. In fact, acquiring soft power and using it is often one and the same, and it therefore has not necessarily added much in those fields where the EU's policies and capabilities are weak. As Gray notes, "the contexts wherein [soft power] would be most useful are precisely those where it is least likely to work its magic successfully" (Gray 2011: 53). Where the EU's capabilities are weaker its soft power generally is too, and its policies correspondingly ineffective.

The real problem with soft power is in its interplay with expectations. As noted at the outset, the danger of the capability-expectations gap is that it may lead to excessive risk-taking and debates over false possibilities. Soft power, when it is present, will most likely exacerbate this risk by driving up expectations towards the EU. The enlargement process, one of the most effective sources of soft power, created false hopes in countries like Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, not least aided by an EU rhetoric that proudly touted its past record and spoke of bringing these countries closer to the EU. Thus some former Soviet states looked to the EU as a source of stability and help in solving their frozen conflicts and as an alternative to Russian domination. This speaks to the EU's soft power, but also shows that soft power cannot be easily controlled, and may indeed backfire. Russia saw the EU's activities in the Eastern Neighbourhood as encroachment and took action to balance against it. It is far from clear that the EU ever intended to live up (or down) to either side's expectations, but soft power (and adverse reactions to it) cannot be turned on and off at will. Expectations did get out of hand and could not be met; the outcome for both Georgia and Ukraine has been failure and disillusion.

The expectations, both internally and externally, that the EU, as one of the richest and most stable parts of the world, will take responsibility beyond its own borders remains in spite of the many failures in the past, and that in itself is indicative of the EU's residual soft power. But the higher the initial expectations, the bigger the eventual disappointment when the EU fails to act - whether in Darfur, the South Caucasus, Libya, and currently Syria. Thus to the extent that EU soft power engenders hopes in others, it has mostly had the effect of exposing just how wide the gap between expectations and capabilities remains. It might of course be argued that not being a military power, instead emphasising civilian/persuasive means, is a source of soft power. Yet such arguments tacitly acknowledge Hedley Bull's (1982: 151) seminal critique of Civilian Power Europe, but equally relevant in the present context, that "... the power and influence exerted by the European [Union] and other such civilian actors was conditional upon a strategic environment provided by the military power of states, which they did not control". It is not possible to build a successful foreign policy identity solely around second-order issues, which is the inherent premise of such arguments, even if one can build a successful record on them. Soft power created by success leads to higher expectations, not lower ones, and will soon enough spill over into the sort of first-order issues the EU has traditionally shown little capacity for handling. Moreover, it is not clear that the EU can marshal even its civilian capabilities sufficiently to make them count optimally. In fact, EU weakness has led to inconsistency on even those normative issues that it professes to hold dear. The seeming double standards on display when the EU picks on smaller powers over human rights issues, but soft-pedals in the face of far more flagrant abuses in China and Russia, are all the more striking since the EU has made so

much of its identity as a promoter of such norms. The soft power once accumulated led to higher expectations and then greater disappointment.

This matters profoundly. As Europe's hard power capabilities have withered, it has become increasingly reliant on its soft power – although, as noted, without having given adequate thought to what constitutes it. But image, reputation and credibility are built up over time, and will invariably be seen in the light of past deeds (or lack thereof). Tomorrow's perceptions of the EU will be based on others' experiences of its doings today. The frequently empty rhetoric and the failures to act with purpose in times of crisis shape perceptions. It is therefore not only true that the EU's existing soft power may drive up expectations beyond the capability for meeting them. It is equally the case that whenever it is exposed the capability-expectations gap itself damages EU soft power. As Nye notes, soft power is "... hard to use, easy to lose, and costly to re-establish" (Nye 2011: 83).

## CONCLUSION

In this article I have argued that soft power, in its original definition, is a potentially valuable asset in EU foreign policy, but not always in the way and to the extent that EU leaders had hoped for. When it is present it is positive, and there are instances where the EU has benefited from it, such as when dealing with countries entertaining a hope of eventual membership. But more often, the EU's ability to benefit from its soft power falls victim to its limited capability in traditional terms, and therefore does not in fact contribute greatly to the success of EU foreign policy in such instances. It has also been shown not to be a replacement for the hard power the EU lacks. Lastly, it was argued that the main effect of EU soft power on its external interlocutors is to raise their expectations towards the EU, as seen in several instances, thus widening the capability-expectations gap rather than bridging it.

The irony of soft power is that it so often requires hard power policies to become effective. The capability-expectations gap is therefore not being bridged by soft power, but is in itself very damaging to the EU's soft power, as the EU too frequently fails to live up to expectations and loses credibility as a result. In the end, having discarded the notion that soft power can be the solution, we therefore end up right back with Hill's old conclusion that there are only two ways of bridging the capability-expectations gap. One would be to become more capable as an actor, through political reforms and greater investment in the instruments and resources of foreign policy. However as long as dealing with the financial crisis consumes all of Europe's political energy, and military and development budgets face steep cuts, it is difficult to imagine the EU having the capacity to take any serious steps to raise its level of capability in order to meet expectations. The only alternative way out of the predicament, as Hill pointed out, is to lower expectations; to make others understand that Europe is not a "... panacea, a cross between Father Christmas and the 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry" (Hill 1993: 322). But that route, of lowering both internal ambitions and external expectations, is the continuation of Europe's relative decline in international affairs, quite likely leading to further disillusionment and loss of credibility – and surely at a cost to EU soft power.

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## Multiple Arenas and Diverse Techniques of Securitisation: The Case of the EU's Visa Regime towards Turkey

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## Abstract

Between 2009 and 2010, five Western Balkan countries were granted Schengen visa exemptions by the EU for the short travel of their citizens to the Schengen area in return for signing readmission agreements. Turkey, in contrast, was only offered a vague promise for the initiation of a visa liberalisation “dialogue” in return for initialising the readmission agreement. Taking this development as a genuine research puzzle the present article asks: What are the domestic dynamics that have driven this differential outcome? This article argues that the EU’s ongoing restrictive visa regime towards Turkey stems from the issue’s securitisation in certain member states (Germany, Austria and the Netherlands). Security-framing practices thereby occurred in both the political (elite-level discourse) and bureaucratic arena (visa-issuing process) as part of the same security *dispositif*. Two crucial implications follow from the findings: on the one hand, European visa authorities seem to follow their own visa-issuing policies despite regulations put in force at the EU level (Visa Codex). On the other hand, the purported theoretical divide between the Copenhagen and Paris School’s approaches to securitisation seems empirically rather disadvantageous. Treating these theoretical lenses as distinct may lead researchers to miss out on interrelated securitisation practices.

## Keywords

EU External Affairs; Securitisation Theory; Schengen Visa Policy; Turkey-EU relations

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*Schengen is a bunch of countries which share a common visa sticker, but which follow their own national visa policies* (National Visa Official, cited in Woon 2007: 29).

Five Western Balkan countries (Serbia, Montenegro and Macedonia in 2009 followed by Bosnia-Herzegovina and Albania in 2010) have achieved abolishing short-term travel Schengen visa requirements in return for signing readmission agreements with the European Union (EU) in a swift and uncomplicated manner.<sup>1</sup> Today, their citizens are free to travel (short-term up to 90 days) to the Schengen area comprising 26 European countries harbouring a population of over 400 million people. The negotiations of the EU-Turkey readmission agreement, by contrast, were cumbersome and lengthy. Talks with Turkey, formally opened on 27 May 2005 in Brussels, were put on ice only after two years due to individual member state government resentments. With the negotiations having restarted in 2008, three years later in February 2011, the Commission and Turkey achieved to agree on a draft text which also found endorsement by the Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) Council. With the European Council’s authorisation, on 21 June 2012, the European Commission lastly moved to initial the readmission agreement with Turkey. While these efforts have culminated in a tentative agreement, the Turkey-EU deal bears a crucial difference to the Balkan cases: there is no guarantee of lifting visas, for the text merely states that the EU will ‘take steps towards visa liberalisation as a gradual and long term perspective’ (European Council 2012). This means that visa-free travel for Turkey’s citizens is unlikely to be a safe bet as the successful conclusion of the process will not only be contingent upon Turkey’s meeting of all requirements, but also the European Council’s approval which is known to be the outlet where member state governments traditionally defend their “national interests”.

The empirical puzzle lies in the EU’s markedly different treatment of Turkey (i.e. no visa liberalisation guarantee) on the visa topic compared to its dealings with other states in the Western Balkans. This conundrum, in turn, points at what are the domestic dynamics that have driven this differential outcome?

The present article, employing a lens grounded in securitisation theory, puts forward that Turkey’s visa bid has become securitised in certain member states, most important,

Germany, Austria, and the Netherlands. Securitisation practices are thereby located in both the bureaucratic (visa-issuing practices in Schengen consulates) and the political arena (discursive threat construction), underpinned by the social construction of a migratory threat posed by Turkey. The paper's findings bear, *inter alia*, one crucial theoretical implication: the purported theoretical divide between the Copenhagen and Paris School's approaches to securitisation - to grasp political and bureaucratic processes distinctively - seems empirically rather disadvantageous. The evidence amassed in this article suggests that a treatment of these two strands of theory as separate may lead authors to miss out on security-framing practices in their capacity to occur as part of the same security *dispositif* (see Balzacq 2010).

The article is organised as follows: first, the paper's theoretical framework with securitisation theory is mapped out in detail. Subsequently, an empirical analysis of the securitisation of the Turkish visa issue in the EU within the bureaucratic realm (visa-issuing practices of Schengen states) and in the political arena (elite level discourse) is undertaken. The article concludes with a discussion of the main findings, as well as policy and theory implications following from the analysis.

### **MAKING SENSE OF EUROPEAN OPPOSITION TO SCHENGEN VISA LIBERALISATION FOR TURKEY**

Common sociological and rational institutionalist approaches cannot satisfactorily account for the puzzle at hand. Scholars employing a sociological institutionalist lens have put forward that the 'collective norms and understandings [which] constitute the social identities [and interactions] of [European] actors' (Risse 2000: 5) are democracy, human rights, and relatedly, the promotion of the idea of freedom of movement (see Diez 2005: 630; Manners 2002).<sup>2</sup> These principles are written into the Copenhagen Criteria and reiterated in the Treaty on the European Union (TEU). The latter states that 'the Union is founded on the values of freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights and dignity' (see Macmillan 2010: 452). The very fact that the EU has decided to open accession negotiations with Turkey in 2005 denotes that the EU has approved of Turkey's fulfilling of the Copenhagen Criteria - by doing so the EU, by the same token, also acknowledged that Turkey shares the values of the EU. If these norms and values then constitute the basis of the European "way of doing things", however, the "appropriate" move (March and Olsen 1984) would have been to lift visa restrictions for Turkish citizens. Yet, this scenario has obviously not materialised and is particularly striking in view of Turkey's longstanding association history with the EU/EC as well as its devotion to the project of westernisation since the late Ottoman times (Camyar and Tagma 2010). A sociological perspective thus cannot adequately account for the present puzzle.

From a rationalist perspective, on the other hand, one would expect states to be in favour of dropping visa-restrictions for Turkey if expected benefits outweighed the potential costs of visa liberalisation (Taylor et al. 1996; Schimmelfennig and Sedelmeier 2002). On the side of the benefits, there is no doubt that Turkey constitutes an important trade and investment partner for EU countries. With regard to trade, in 2010, 46 per cent of Turkey's exports alone went to the EU with 39 per cent of imports coming to Turkey from the EU (European Commission 2012). EU countries with the most significant exports (in terms of value) to Turkey, according to data from 2008, are reported to be Germany, Italy and France with 27.61, 13.67, and 9.82 million USD, respectively (Eurostat 2013).<sup>3</sup> In terms of investment, for the period 2007-2010, the average amount of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflow to Turkey amounted to 14.761 billion USD (UNCTAD 2012). In 2008, the greatest influx of capital to Turkey thereby came from the Netherlands (1.343 billion USD) and Germany (1.237), followed by Spain (838 million USD) France (679) and Austria (586). These being the share of individual countries, on the most general level, the existing Customs Union between the



EU and Turkey can be said to embody the overall institutional face of these close economic ties (Ülgen and Zahariadis 2004; Lejour and Mooij 2005: 91). Against this background, visa exemption for Turkish nationals would not only have been beneficial (particularly so for countries such as Germany, France, Netherlands or Austria), but also equal to the natural extension of a well-established socio-political cooperation between the two parties.

On the side of the costs, some authors have put forward that a visa-waiver might spark massive Turkish immigration waves to Europe (mainly through individuals' overstaying short-term visas). Although not a concern shared by all member states, reluctance to drop visa restrictions for Turkey has been said to emanate from such migratory threat perceptions (Knaus and Stiglmeier 2012). Scholars who have attempted to assess the objective reality of such a migratory threat have generally argued that an unstable Turkish economy is likely to pose a migratory impetus – i.e. a push factor – for Turks to migrate to Europe (see Erzan and Kirisci 2004; Teitelbaum and Martin 2003). It should be noted, though, that these assessments are (i) largely grounded in historical experiences of Turkish guest-worker immigration to Europe, and (ii) were voiced at a time when the Turkish economy's trajectory was fairly uncertain, the financial crisis of 2001 still vibrant before people's eyes, and the GDP per capita with an average of 3,553 USD (2002) quite low in comparison to an EU average of 19,282 USD in 2002 (World Bank 2012).

*Table 1: Turkish Economic Development 2002-2010*

	<b>2002</b>	<b>2004</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2008</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2002-2010</b>
<i>GDP (billion USD)</i>	232	392	530	730	731	+215%
<i>GDP growth (%)</i>	6.16	9.36	6.89	0.66	9.16	-
<i>GDP per capita (USD)</i>	3,553	5,832	7,687	10,297	10,049	+182%

Source: Worldbank Development Indicators

Since the 2001 economic crisis Turkey has managed to strengthen its economy and progressively raise the individual income level to 10,094 USD per capita in 2010 (see Table 1).<sup>4</sup> The country's economic growth rates for the years 2010 and 2011, likewise, were as high as 9.2 per cent and 8.5 per cent, respectively. Furthermore, the Turkish Republic's overall GDP was as high as 774 billion USD in 2012, marking an increase of approximately 215 per cent as compared to 2002 (232 billion USD) (World Bank 2012). This surge effectively placed Turkey on the upper ranks of countries with the highest growth rates and made it the 17<sup>th</sup> biggest economy in the world. To put things into perspective, in 2012, the GDP of all five Western Balkan countries combined (Serbia, Macedonia, Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina and Montenegro) merely amounted to 81 billion USD (Eurostat 2013).<sup>5</sup> This is about a tenth of the Turkish GDP of 2012.

These being seminal economic indicators, survey findings on individual-level migratory intentions do not lend support to a massive migratory threat potential either. A Turkey-wide survey conducted in 2006 to assess concrete emigration intentions reports that 'only 0.3 [per cent] of the population of Turkey has a specific intention to migrate (Icduygu and Karacay 2012: 31-32). Similarly, Frank Düvell, on the basis of an empirical assessment, confirms the data and draws the conclusion that net migration between Turkey and the EU is negative (2011).<sup>6</sup>

Similarly, if one were to take Turkish asylum application figures as another indicator of

immigration potential no imminent threat is observable either. For instance, in the first quarter of 2012, the main countries of origin of asylum applicants to the EU27 were Afghanistan (6,015), Russia (4,730), Pakistan (3,850) Serbia (3,390) and Iraq (2,700).<sup>7</sup> For the same time period, the share of Turkish asylum applications to the EU27 of the total number of asylum seekers was 1210, or 2.3 per cent (see Table 2). The highest numbers of Turkish asylum applications were reported in France and Germany with 670 and 455, respectively, followed by Belgium (90) and Austria (85). Lastly, from 2004 to 2007, Turkish asylum applications to the Netherlands, Germany, France or Austria have decreased by 57 per cent (average value).<sup>8</sup>

Table 2: Turkish asylum applications to selected EU member states 1998-2012

	1998	2000	2002	2004	2006	2007	2012 <sup>1</sup>	2004-07
<i>Belgium</i>	-	-	970	450	315	260	-	-42%
<i>Spain</i>	10	20	55	25	15	25	-	-
<i>France</i>	1,620	-	-	4,740	2,760	2,225	670	-53%
<i>Netherlands*</i>	1,220	2,245	-	340	340	105	-	-69%
<i>Austria*</i>	210	590	3,560	1,115	670	660	85	-40%
<i>Germany*</i>	11,755	8,970	9,575	4,150	1,950	1,435	455	-65%
<i>Finland</i>	100	75	-	140	40	75	-	-46%

Own calculations based on EUROSTAT (2013) data; Notes: \*EU member states opposing Schengen Visa liberalisation for Turkey; <sup>1</sup>data for 2012 first quarter only; empty cells due to data unavailability

By and large, the preceding analysis is not suggestive of an objective migratory threat posed by Turkey as upheld by some influential political elites in the EU. Granted that this is a correct assessment, how else to make sense of ongoing Schengen visa restrictions for Turkey? A European Commission official offers a viable hint in this respect:

'The picture that millions of Turks would migrate and move to Berlin, I think this is just not valid anymore. Visa does not protect against immigration, nor against crime [...] it is more a political issue and I think it is high time to do something about it.' (European Commission Enlargement Official 2012, personal communication).

If, as the EU Commission official argues, opposition to Turkish visa-liberalisation is a primarily politically motivated issue, then securitisation theory may offer a better-suited analytical lens to understanding the puzzle at hand. Let us consider the theory's main tenets in turn.

## SECURITISATION: DISCOURSE AND PRACTICE

The initial formulation of securitisation theory goes back to the so-called Copenhagen School (CS) and scholars such as Barry Buzan, Ole Waever and Jaap de Wilde. Breaking with hitherto orthodox conceptualisations of the concept of security, the CS suggested understanding security and related threat perceptions in terms of a process that is

socially constructed. Drawing heavily upon linguistic theory, Buzan, Waever and de Wilde put forward what has come to be known as securitisation theory. *Securitisation* thereby describes the process of an elitist speech-act wherein something (object, subject) is casted as a threat to society and/or state (Waever 1995: 54). Securitisation is considered successful if the respective audience accepts the presented threat as such. If that is the case, elites find themselves entitled to pull an issue out of the realm of normal politics (the democratic, open and transparent way of doing things) into the domain of "high politics" where extraordinary measures become legitimised (Buzan, Waever and De Wilde 1998: 21).<sup>9</sup>

Since its initial formulation, the Copenhagen school's speech-act approach to securitisation has experienced various attempts to reformulation. The so-called Paris School (PS) has presented the most prominent alternative account. The PS has criticised the CS' exclusive focus on elitist speeches as dismissive of other potential agents, such as security professionals, bureaucrats, as well as other potential modes of securitisation, e.g. administrative or bureaucratic security-framing practices. As Didier Bigo, one of the main proponents of the Paris school approach, puts it: 'to focus only on the role of political discourse in the securitisation process is to underestimate the role of the bureaucratic professionalisation of the management of unease' (2002: 74). Following this advice, PS scholars have generally attended the study of securitisation by focusing 'on the creation of networks of professionals of (in)security, the systems of meaning they generate and the productive power of their practices' (C.A.S.E 2006: 457). Notwithstanding the PS' over-attention to the analysis of bureaucratic security-framing activities, authors such as Bigo and Guild have remembered to stress that a richer understanding of securitisation processes will require an analysis of 'the structure of political and bureaucratic interplay' (Bigo 2002: 84; see also Bigo and Guild 2005: 259) in the unfolding of security-framing activities. Broadening the perspective as suggested by Bigo and Guild is the only right step if we are to understand complex securitisation phenomena in a satisfactory manner. The present article, for the empirical reasons stated above, thus opts for putting a scholarly eye on the politico-bureaucratic interplay when analysing securitisation processes.

Further critique to the Copenhagen School's speech-act approach has come from authors such as Thierry Balzacq or Holger Stritzel. Voicing discontent with the CS' narrow focus on 'dramatic moments of intervention' (McDonald 2008: 563) Balzacq and Stritzel have inter alia argued that a proper analysis of securitisation processes will require the examination of the contextual setting within which security-framing activities take place. More specifically, they argued that securitizing an issue usually requires more than a set of speech-acts (*internalist* approach). Discourse as a form of social activity, so the reasoning, inevitably entails 'extra-linguistic' variables as well (Balzacq 2005: 179). This is where for scholars such as Balzacq and Stritzel the context becomes relevant: a critical factor for the success of securitisation is the 'actor's choice of determining the appropriate times within which the recognition [of a threat] by the masses is facilitated' (Balzacq 2005: 182). From this standpoint, which the authors label an *externalist* approach to securitisation (Stritzel 2007: 374; Balzacq 2005: 180), exogenous events and developments are understood as potential windows of opportunity for agents to speak "security language" (see also Salter 2008: 322; Salter and Piche 2011).

Research combining both the Copenhagen and Paris school lenses to securitisation has thus far remained scarce (for an exception see Salter 2011). If the goal is to spur further theoretical development, however, it is necessary to engage the empirical "playing field" by deploying broader theoretical lenses. In this sense, the present study is keen on taking stock of recent refinements in securitisation theory (Balzacq 2010: 3). Taking seriously theoretical developments in the last years translates into a research strategy where political-discursive as well as bureaucratic-practical security-framing activities will be put under scrutiny. As Didier Bigo (2002) has argued, issues can become institutionalised as security issues or threats without dramatic moments of intervention.

The subsequent empirical analysis, correspondingly, examines two different dimensions of the securitisation of the Turkish visa issue in the EU: bureaucratic and political securitisation. The principal method of inquiry is thereby process tracing with a focus on analytically decisive pieces of evidence (George and Bennett 2005: 205).<sup>10</sup>

## **MULTIPLE ARENAS, DIVERSE TECHNIQUES: THE SECURITISATION OF THE TURKISH SCHENGEN VISA ISSUE IN THE EU**

Border control has attained a profoundly new quality in the last couple of decades. As Mark Salter states, 'control over entrants to a country [is now exercised way] before they arrive at the border' (2004: 73). In this setting, consular and embassy officials, private and external security agents have begun taking up essential border policing roles. Control is thus no longer only a matter domestic security forces deal with, but has become 'delegated to the consulates located in the traveller's country of origin, [as] this mode of control is much less visible than police working on the front lines of border control' (Bigo 2006: 21).

These new modalities of border control have effectively put visa officials in the position of 'protecting' their country from individuals 'who come from [...] problem countries' (Whyte 2008: 143). Turkey, by virtue of being placed on the Schengen visa blacklist (Council Regulation 539/2001), constitutes such a risk country for the EU and its member states. Accordingly, Turkish citizens are held to obtain visas before traveling to the Schengen area – a process that has been known to be plagued by various difficulties. In what follows I shall probe into the bureaucratic and political dimensions of the securitisation of the Turkish visa issue in the EU.

### ***Bureaucratic Securitisation***

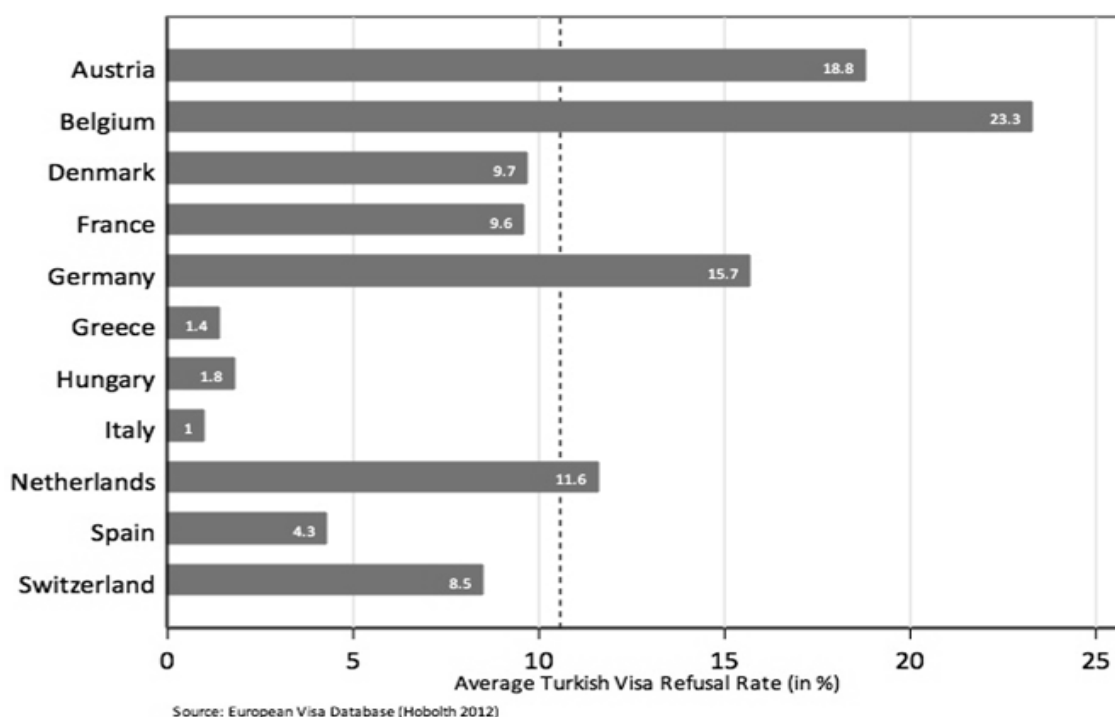
Because the institution of visa has become a virtual 'first line of defence against [...] invaders' (Bigo and Guild 2005: 235; Bigo 2006), the visa issuing process has suffered a great deal from discretionary practices (Bigo 2006). In an attempt to counter-act these tendencies the EU has put into force a set of regulations among which are the Common Consular Instructions, the Schengen Border Handbook, and more recently, the Visa Code. While these regulations were enforced to render the rules of the "bureaucratic game", scholars have argued that they have not succeeded in bringing about a genuine harmonisation of visa-issuing practices among Schengen countries. In their study on Eastern European countries, Jakub Boratyński et al. (2006) find for instance that the regulations mainly touch upon procedural and technical issues of the visa lodging process' scope and the nature of required documents.

Insights from fieldwork carried out by the Turkey-based Economic Development Foundation [İktisadi Kalkınma Vakfı, hereinafter: İKV] lend further support to the argument that visa-issuing practices across Schengen states are far from harmonised (Economic Development Foundation 2010).<sup>11</sup> The İKV, who has interviewed Turkish citizens about their Schengen visa application experiences, reports that a majority of the study participants have raised complaints against highly in-transparent visa-issuing practices of Schengen authorities. Most of the individuals were thereby reportedly complaining against German and Belgian visa authorities' practices. Among the most frequently raised problems were that consular officials often demanded extra documents and/or disproportionately high amounts of money on applicants' bank accounts (as a guarantee of their return intentions). Further, 63 per cent of the survey participants reported instances where their visa appeal had been rejected without/or only with unsatisfactory disclosure of refusal grounds.<sup>12</sup> The latter problem has been reported for other contexts as well (see Boratyński et al. 2006).

Latest reports from the field suggest that certain Schengen consulates (among which are Germany, the Netherlands and Italy) have begun entrusting intermediary agencies with the processing of the formal aspects of the visa application procedure (Deutsches Konsulat Istanbul 2012). As a result, individuals no longer engage in face-to-face contact with consular officials because the actual visa application process has been outsourced to private agencies. One consequence of this new regulation is that applicants are now confronted with additional application fees (intermediaries charge about 20 EUR extra). The increased fee, however, constitutes only a minor aspect of the alterations. More important is whether outsourcing will effectively lead to a change in visa-issuing toward more discretionary practices due to the abolishment of direct contact between consular officials and visa applicants. First-hand reports from the field are indicative of highly opaque practices. For instance, individuals who are in principle eligible for a visa-exemption as service providers going to Denmark or Germany (according to Soysal C-228/06) still face immense hurdles in traveling. Although officially exempt from visa-restrictions, service providers apply for a certificate confirming their visa-free status, in effect, nullifying any potential gain their status may hold. What is more, field observations suggest that intermediary agents more than often misguide individuals to apply for standard Schengen visas, even in cases where entitlement for visa-free travel as service providers would be given (e.g. business persons, academics). In a similar manner, it has been observed that fees were charged where none were applicable (e.g. students, family members etc.).<sup>13</sup>

Examining Schengen visa-issuing figures for Turkish applicants yields quite supplementary insights: visa-rejection rates for Turkish nationals were the highest in countries such as Germany, Austria and Belgium with 16, 19 and 23 per cent, respectively, for the total of Turkish visa applications reached in between 2005 and 2010 (see Figure 1). On the bottom of the table are Hungary, Romania, Greece, Italy and Portugal who exhibited mean refusal rates which were lower as two per cent for the time period 2005 to 2010 (see Table 3).

*Figure 1: Schengen Visa Rejection Rates for Turkish applicants (2005-2010). Selected EU countries.*



*Table 3: Schengen Visa Rejection Rates for Turkish applicants, by Schengen country and consulate (Mean values in per cent for the period 2005-2010)*

<b>Country</b>	<b>Ankara</b>	<b>Istanbul</b>	<b>Izmir</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Belgium	27.6	18.9	-	23.3
Austria	29.6	7.9	-	18.8
Germany	26.1	8.4	12.6	15.7
Norway	15.6	-	-	15.6
Estonia	14.4	-	-	14.4
Sweden	22.4	4.2	-	13.3
Malta	-	12.3	-	12.3
Netherlands	16.1	7.1	-	11.6
Finland	11.3	-	-	11.3
Latvia	11.0	-	-	11.0
Denmark	14.9	4.5	-	9.7
France	15.2	3.9	-	9.6
Switzerland	11.1	5.8	-	8.5
Slovenia	6.2	-	-	6.2
Lithuania	5.9	-	-	5.9
Bulgaria	5.1	5.6	-	5.4
Poland	5.8	3.9	-	4.8
Slovakia	5.8	3.0	-	4.4
Spain	6.4	2.2	-	4.3
Czech Republic	6.7	1.8	-	4.3
Hungary	2.2	1.3	-	1.8
Romania	1.5	1.3	1.6	1.5
Greece	1.3	0.7	2.2	1.4
Italy	0.4	0.9	1.7	1.0
Portugal	1.8	0.0	-	0.9
<b>Mean</b>	<b>10.9</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>4.8</b>	<b>8.7</b>

Adapted from European Visa Database (Hobolth 2012)

How have EU member state authorities reacted upon legal case decisions rendered on the topic of visa-free travel for Turkish nationals by the European Court of Justice (ECJ), and national courts?<sup>14</sup> The ECJ, in particular, has ruled in four different instances (Abatay C-317/01; Sahin C-369/01; Tum and Dar C-16/05; Soysal C-228/06), with an additional case (Demirkan C-221/11) still being processed at the time of writing, that visa-restrictions for Turkish service providers run counter the terms of freedom of movement agreed upon between the EC and Turkey in the Ankara Agreement (1963) and an additional protocol signed in 1970. Because the latter stipulate the gradual abolishment of barriers to freedom of movement between the EC/EU and Turkey, and prohibits the enactment of retrograde regulations (standstill clause), legalists have argued that visa restrictions enforced by contracting parties after 1 January 1973 (the coming into force of the additional protocol) are unlawful.<sup>15</sup>

The ECJ's most prominent ruling in this regard is the so-called *Soysal* case (C-228/06) rendered on 19 February 2009. Therein the court invoked the *standstill clause* according to which the re-imposition of travel restrictions after the coming into force of the additional protocol was impermissible.<sup>16</sup> The point of reference thereby is Article 41. It stipulates that "contracting parties are to refrain from introducing between themselves any new restrictions on the freedom of establishment and the freedom to provide services".<sup>17</sup> On this basis ECJ judges ruled that Turkish nationals who wish to undertake short-term travels to the Schengen area must not be subjected to visa-restrictions if they travel in the capacity of service providers (for a detailed account Groenendijk and Guild 2011: 18). The key contention with the *Soysal* ruling, however, lies in the fact that experts arrived at somewhat diverging interpretations as regard the term 'service providers'. For a majority of legal scholars and lawyers the phrase entails both the provision (e.g. business) and reception (e.g. tourism) of services, that is to say, active and passive service provision.<sup>18</sup> These experts based their opinion on pertinent secondary community law which conceptualises both active and passive sorts of service provision under the same umbrella.<sup>19</sup>

In view of the ambiguities around the notion of service provision, several national courts (mostly in Germany and the Netherlands), called upon by individual claimants, have in subsequent decisions ruled that service provision for Turkish nationals encompasses both active and passive activities.<sup>20</sup> Subsequently, the European Commission, in an attempt to bring clarity, issued a statement that was to provide a legal basis for future action (Commission Recommendation C(2009) 7376). The Commission concluded that visa-free travel for Turkish nationals is (i) only applicable to Turkish service providers traveling to Germany and Denmark, and (ii) solely under the proviso that Turkish nationals go as "active" service providers (thus excluding passive service provision such as tourism and alike).<sup>21</sup> These conclusions are striking against the background that a plethora of respected legal scholars have argued that the *Soysal* ruling should be interpreted to encompass both active and passive service provision, and to affect a number of Schengen states including Germany, Belgium, France, Greece, Italy, Luxemburg, Netherlands, Spain and Portugal.<sup>22</sup> The argument is that the states listed above had no short-stay visa-restrictions in place for Turkish nationals in 1973 (at the time of the coming into force of the additional protocol between the EC and Turkey) which, according to the standstill clause, does not entitle them to reinstate visa restrictions for Turkish citizens afterwards.

The ECJ is currently processing a court case (Demirkan C-221/11) which is to clarify once and for all the definitional discrepancies between active and passive service provision and thus the question whether Turkish nationals would *de facto* be eligible for visa-free short-travel. If the court should rule in the affirmative - that is to say, establish that both forms of service provision fall under the same umbrella - it would effectively open up the way for visa exemption for Turkish nationals travelling to the Schengen states listed above. To sum up, then, the empirical evidence amassed above is quite suggestive of past and ongoing securitisations of the Turkish visa issue in the

bureaucratic realm. Important to note thereby is the occurrence of security-framing practices via diverse techniques (visa-issuing process, national and supranational regulatory attempts). This leads us to the next question, namely, how security-framing practices have unfolded in the political domain.

### **Political Securitisation**

European elites have quite differently conceived of Schengen visa liberalisation for Turkey. By no means all and by far no majority of member states have actually resisted waiving Turkish travellers the Schengen visa requirement (see Table 4). According to Paul, "Germany, Austria, Cyprus and the Netherlands in particular have been opposed to giving Turkey a visa-free regime" (2012: 29).

Table 4: EU Member State Preferences on Turkish Schengen Visa Liberalisation

<b>Oppose</b>	<b>Support</b>
Germany	Italy
Austria	Sweden
Netherlands	Finland
France	Poland
Cyprus*	Spain

Sources: Paul (2012), Kücükkosum (6 April 2013); \* see endnote 23.

With the exception of Cyprus, whose preference on the matter can be said to follow a generally antagonistic stance vis-à-vis Turkey and its EU credentials, the analysis of the political-discursive securitisation strategies in the other three countries (Germany, Austria and the Netherlands) should aid understanding the specific dynamics that have driven visa politics on the EU level.<sup>23</sup>

In Germany, the Turkish visa issue has for the first time been made subject to political debate by the leftist party (*Die Linke*) in 2009.<sup>24</sup> Following the ECJ's Soysal ruling, the party lodged a parliamentary interpellation (*kleine Anfrage*) to bring light to the implications of the ECJ court case for Germany. The conservative CDU-FDP coalition government's response to the inquiry was highly limited in scope and content. Their position drew upon the distinction between active and passive service provision (advanced by a small group of legalists as described above) in order to argue that the implications of the Soysal case ruling solely entitled Turkish lorry drivers to visa-free travel to Schengen states (the ECJ court case was indeed filed on these two lorry drivers' requests). A year later, the Green Party, dissatisfied with the government's dealing with the issue, handed in a petition urging the latter comply with the ECJ's ruling, and to push for a visa-liberalisation for Turkey on the EU level. The governing coalition ultimately voted down the request in Parliament. CDU spokesman Reinhard Grindel justified the government's decision on the grounds that a Turkish visa-waiver would cause massive illegal immigrations to Germany, and, as a corollary, aggravate domestic integration problems. His statement in parliament read as follows:

'We put the integration of foreigners living here on the centre stage [...] this



pertains particularly to those [...] who have been living here for many years but have so far made little use of our integration offers. [...] Visa exemption for Turkish nationals can lead to a dramatic increase in uncontrolled immigration to Germany. In consequence, this means: Visa-free travel for Turkish nationals aggravates integration problems. We reject it.' (Deutscher Bundestag 2010).<sup>25</sup>

More recently, the Minister of Home Affairs, Hans-Peter Friedrich, reiterated his government's position by stating that general visa-liberalisation for Turkey is unfeasible because he, as the responsible minister, has to 'keep security risks in mind'. To be sure, the security risk Friedrich alludes to is the purported threat of illegal immigration stemming from Turkey.<sup>26</sup> This premise leads Friedrich to argue that visa facilitation measures for Turkish business people via application bureaus would constitute the only feasible option at the time.<sup>27</sup> Overall, the speech-acts of both Grindel and Friedrich's embody language that is vague and based on beliefs that seem assumed to be common (see Salter and Piche 2011: 936). The belief that foreigners are not adequately integrated, particularly those of Turkish origin, is widespread in Germany (Schaefer, Austin and Parker 2005: 1). Conservative political figures often particularly appeal to this "integration deficit" argument when making claims for stricter immigration policies, or, visa restrictions for that matter.<sup>28</sup>

Austria, in contrast, has not had any comparable parliamentary debate on the Turkish Schengen visa issue.<sup>29</sup> In 2012, following a bid by Christoph Leitl the president of the Austrian Chamber of Commerce to lift visa-restrictions for Russian and Turkish travellers as a means to boost economic relations, Minister of Home Affairs, Johanna Mikl-Leitner, from the conservative Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) responded with a resolute "that's out of question".<sup>30</sup> Generally speaking, Johanna Mikl-Leitner has been very much on the same page as her German counterpart Hans-Peter Friedrich on matters related to Turkey's Schengen visa liberalisation. Both have on various occasions uttered that they oppose a visa waiver for Turkey on the grounds that it would cause massive illegal immigration.<sup>31</sup> More recently, also, Mikl-Leitner joined a group of European elites in a petition to the European Commission urging the examination of the possibility of a suspension clause for visa-exemptions already given to some Balkan countries (particularly Serbia, Macedonia, Romania).<sup>32</sup> It is thereby important to note that both Austria's Mikl-Leitner and Germany's Friedrich barely made an effort to differentiate between the immigration of third country nationals via Turkey through the Turkish-Greek border (transit migrants) and actual Turkish citizens who choose to migrate to EU territory. This is an important distinction to make as the number of transit migrants is exponentially higher.<sup>33</sup> Yet, the abolishment of short-term travel Schengen visas for Turkish citizens is recurrently lumped together with the issue of transit migration. This confusion all the more fortifies the purported migratory threat argument.<sup>34</sup> Overall, the securitisation process in Austria has been largely driven by the Ministry of Home Affairs without much involvement of other actors such as Parliament.

In the Netherlands the debate has, quite similar to Germany, ensued following the ECJ's Soysal ruling on Turkish visa requirements – to which a reaction in Austria, for instance, has remained totally absent. In response to a national court case in Harleem which had ruled that Turkish service providers could travel visa-free to the Netherlands (as a number of other German courts), the Minister of Immigration and Asylum Geerd Leers announced that he would appeal the ruling: 'EU court ruling does not affect the Netherlands. The ruling in Harlem goes against our principles'.<sup>35</sup> Reportedly, an "emergency debate" took place in a committee immediately after the announcement of the ECJ ruling in March 2009.<sup>36</sup> Maxime Verhagen, then Minister of Foreign Affairs, is portrayed as follows in a newspaper at that time: 'There will be a tsunami of Turks and that is the fault of Verhagen'.<sup>37</sup> Overall, the debate in the Netherlands has very much resembled the Austrian setting where much of the issue has been handled on the ministerial level.

In sum, the political discourse on the Turkish visa liberalisation in the three countries

analysed above - Germany, Austria and Netherlands – can be said to have taken place under the shadow of a purported migratory threat. By equating visa-free short-term travel with a “security risk” (Austria, Netherlands, Germany) and by establishing a causal link between Turkish immigration and domestic integration problems (Germany), politicians have effectively superimposed an aura of threat on the topic of Turkish Schengen visa liberalisation in the EU, reflecting, by the same token, a more general trend of the securitisation of the issue of migration in the EU also (Huysmans 2000, 2006; Van Munster 2009, Bourbeau 2011). The socially constructed threat around the issue of visa-free travel for Turkish nationals, in turn, has enabled European policy makers to keep in force visa restrictions – here, the respective “extraordinary measure” (Buzan, Waever and De Wilde 1998: 21) - deployed in order to curb the purported Turkish migratory threat.

## CONCLUSION

This article has drawn upon the case of the EU’s visa regime towards Turkey to illustrate the multiple arenas and diverse techniques through which securitisation can occur in the real world.<sup>38</sup> Substantively, it has been argued that the EU’s ongoing restrictive visa regime towards Turkey stems from its securitisation in three member states: Germany, Austria and the Netherlands. Security-framing activities were thereby located in the bureaucratic (visa issuing process in consulates; national and supranational regulatory units) as well as political arenas (elite level discourse). While both processes showed nodes of inter-linkage, it appears that the political security-framing process seem to have been more relevant than bureaucratic securitisation in the coming about of governmental policy preferences. This, of course, is not surprising given that politicians are in possession of the competency to render binding political decisions. A subject certainly worthwhile probing into in this regard is the extent to which bureaucratic security-knowledge production affects political security-framing logics, and vice versa: in which arena (political or bureaucratic) resides decisive security expertise and in which the prerogative for interpretation? Another stimulating question in this context may lie in asking to what extent securitization matters on its own merit in the coming about of policy preferences, and to what extent it operates as a form of triggering/intermediate mechanism actuating other sources of domestic preferences such as public opinion, analogous to the mechanism of politicisation (Hooghe and Marks 2009). Given the limited scope of this paper, I leave these questions for prospective studies.

These being potential avenues for future research, the article’s findings bear three further political and theoretical implications. First, European visa authorities seem to follow their own visa-issuing policies despite regulations put into force on the EU level (e.g. Common Consular Instructions, the Schengen Border Handbook, and the Visa Codex). The fact that similar observations have also been made in other contexts (Boratyński et al. 2006) indicates that the EU’s visa harmonisation efforts have not been successful. The problem with hitherto devised EU regulations can be said to lie in their overemphasis on formal and technical aspects of the visa issuing process. A genuine visa harmonisation, however, would require EU policy makers to stipulate precise decision-making instructions for national authorities.

Second, the EU’s differential treatment of Turkey on the visa issue as compared to the Western Balkan candidate countries is disadvantageous insofar as it only further weakens the EU’s credibility towards Turkey (Yildirim et al. *forthcoming*). In the absence of a genuine membership prospect, it is contended here that the EU needs to make better use of policy-based intermediate rewards (Trauner 2009) if it wishes to see rule adoption in target countries continue.

Third and finally, the purported theoretical divide between the Copenhagen and Paris School’s approaches to securitisation seems, on palpable empirical grounds, rather

disadvantageous. The treatment of these two strands of theory as distinct lenses is likely to lead authors to miss out on security-framing practices (e.g. bureaucratic-technical and political-discursive) in their capacity to occur interconnected as part of the same security *dispositif*. As Buzan has stressed elsewhere, securitisation is 'not just a speech act, but a much more elaborate phenomenon linking together sets of discourses of unease, bureaucratic and technical practices' (in the Preface of Huysmans 2006).

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<sup>1</sup> At the time of writing, amongst these countries, Macedonia and Serbia were membership candidates, and only Montenegro and Turkey had entered EU accession negotiations. Other states in the EU neighbourhood, such as Georgia, Russia or the Ukraine, in a similar procedure (visa deals in return for readmission agreements) were granted visa-facilitation concessions.

<sup>2</sup> These principles are stated in the Copenhagen Criteria and said to form the normative basis of the EU. Among these principles are rule of law, democracy, human rights, societal diversity and pluralism. These norms also imply the idea of freedom of movement. As Juan Diez puts it, these principles are at the same time 'constructed as characteristics of all EU member states' (2005: 630).

<sup>3</sup> Currency converted from EUR to USD by author at rate of EUR/USD 1.3 (1 August 2013).

<sup>4</sup> An important point to note here is that Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, or Montenegro – who had lower income levels on average than Turkey at the time of the signing of the readmission agreement – have easily achieved to attain visa-waivers from the EU. Assuming that overall wealth is taken as a crucial factor in the assessment of immigration potentials, this is a puzzling paradox.

<sup>5</sup> Currency converted from EUR to USD by author at rate of EUR/USD 1.3 (1 August 2013).

<sup>6</sup> It is also important to note at this point that general migration scholarship has found that individuals typically prefer to stay rather than migrate (*natural inertia*). This choice is due to the relatively high costs and uncertainty associated with movement in general and international migration in particular (Faist 2000).

<sup>7</sup> Available at <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/population/data/database>. Accessed on 5 February 2013.

<sup>8</sup> One last issue that has not been expressly taken up in this discussion is the population factor. Obviously, Turkey, with a population of approximately 76 million is much larger than the Western Balkan countries, which altogether, are home to about 16 million people. Turkey's population size makes it the second biggest state after Germany in the EU. While the population factor, in fact, is a crucial one in debates on Turkey's EU membership, it has, to my knowledge, not been an express matter of concern in the context of the issue of Turkish Schengen visa exemption. It is for this reason omitted in the present discussion.

<sup>9</sup> It is important to note here that CS scholars have also stressed that securitisation can occur in the absence of the objective reality of a threat as well (Waeber 1995: 82, footnote 58). As Waeber puts it: 'the utterance itself is the act' (1995: 55). The probably most prominent illustration of such an occurrence is how the Bush administration has discursively represented and portrayed Saddam Hussein 'as a grave and gathering danger' (Hughes 2007: 83), which in turn legitimised the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

<sup>10</sup> Note that, following Stefano Guzzini (2011), securitisation is herein understood as a causal mechanism.

<sup>11</sup> Here it is referred to the IKV's two-month Visa-Hotline study conducted from November 2009 to January 2010 (see Economic Development Foundation 2010).

<sup>12</sup> As of 5 April 2012, with the implementation of the so-called Visa Codex, national authorities are

obliged to notify applicants about the grounds of refusal by means of a 'standard form' in either the applicant's native language or one of the EU's working languages - e.g. English, French (see [http://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/policies/borders/docs/c\\_2010\\_1620\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/policies/borders/docs/c_2010_1620_en.pdf)). It remains to see, however, whether and to which extent consular officials will factually abide by this new rule.

<sup>13</sup> Whether these practices occur systematically or merely sporadically remains an open question and subject to further interrogation.

<sup>14</sup> Since EU law is supreme to national law, the formula applies that member states are obliged to comply with ECJ rulings (Alter 1998: 134).

<sup>15</sup> A brief historical note is in order: Up until the 1980s, Turkish nationals were able to travel to almost all European countries without visa restrictions (Abadan-Unat 2011). However, growing civil unrest and intensifying political turmoil in Turkey in the second half of the 1970s changed the situation fundamentally. An increasing number of political and non-political asylum seekers turned to Europe for refuge. To illustrate, Germany alone registered 57.913 asylum requests from Turkey in 1980, as compared to merely 809 in 1970. As a consequence, following the years after the Turkish military coup of 12 September 1980, almost all European countries except England and Italy required Turkish citizens to obtain a visa (Abadan-Unat 2011: 20).

<sup>16</sup> The entry into force of the additional protocol (1970) thereby constituting the reference point.

<sup>17</sup> Available at [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009\\_2014/documents/d-tr/dv/0928\\_05\\_/0928\\_05\\_en.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/d-tr/dv/0928_05_/0928_05_en.pdf). Accessed on 21 February 2013.

<sup>18</sup> See for instance <http://www.migrationsrecht.net/european-immigration-migration-law/1334-effects-of-the-soysal-decision-by-the-ecj-on-the-visa-process-for-turkish-citizens-in-germany.html>. Accessed on 12 February 2013.

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.migrationsrecht.net/european-immigration-migration-law/soysal-decision-european-court-justice.html>. Accessed on 12 February 2013.

<sup>20</sup> German and Dutch courts have on various occasions and independent from one another ruled in the affirmative. For an overview see <http://www.westphal-stoppa.de/Tuerken-Einreise.htm>, accessed on 20 February 2013; see also <http://www.europeanunionplatform.org/2012/03/15/top-dutch-administrative-court-rules-in-favor-of-visa-free-entrance-for-turkish-businesspeople/>. Accessed on 1 March 2013

<sup>21</sup> It is important to note that the otherwise integrationist Commission surprisingly exerted restraint in its conclusions on the issue. What is more, both Danish and German consulates have made it a requirement for Turkish service providers to attain an eligibility proof prior to travel at one of their consulates. In effect, this procedure does not render service providers' travel procedure much different from normal visa applications. Individuals who want to take advantage of the service recipient clause still need to audit before the respective member state consulate, or intermediary agency for that matter. Depending on the respective country, consulates may require additional proof of the services intended to be provided on Schengen soil (e.g. invitation letter by the transacting party stating duration of stay, financial remuneration and so forth) and evidence of employment in Turkey. It is also important to note that countries such as Germany have variously made it an requirement for individuals to lodge their application files and documents in German language (certified translations, if necessary) therewith impinging further difficulties and costs on applicants.

<sup>22</sup> See <http://www.westphal-stoppa.de/Tuerken-Einreise.htm>. Accessed on 20 February 2013.

<sup>23</sup> The case selection strategy is underpinned by the rationale to analyse member states who were opposed to Turkish visa liberalisation. According to secondary sources, these are Germany, Austria, the Netherlands. In some other source France and Cyprus are mentioned as well. The latter two, however, are theoretically of little interest for the following reasons: as regard France, much of its opposition during Sarkozy's tenure derived from his government's individual antagonisms. As regard Cyprus, its stance mostly derives from a generally antagonistic stance towards Turkey and the latter's EU credentials. Therefore, study cases selected for analysis are Germany, Austria, and the Netherlands.

<sup>24</sup> Bundestag Drucksache 16/12562. Available at <http://dip21.bundestag.de/dip21/btd/16/125/1612562.pdf>. Accessed on 1 March 2013.

<sup>25</sup> Translated by the author.

<sup>26</sup> Available at [http://www.saarbruecker-zeitung.de/aufmacher/berliner\\_buero/art182516,4523479#.UVFkG1spYyA](http://www.saarbruecker-zeitung.de/aufmacher/berliner_buero/art182516,4523479#.UVFkG1spYyA). Accessed on 1 March 2013.

<sup>27</sup> Yet, a similar facilitation practice is already in place, as described further above (see endnote 18), and quite far from working in the spirit of a genuine visa facilitation measure.

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/oct/11/germany-immigration-horst-seehofer>, accessed 14 June 2013.

<sup>29</sup> An interesting phenomenon is that Austrian deputies have recently handed in a parliamentary interpellation asking about the reasons why Turkey has visa-restrictions in place for Austrian citizens but not, for instance, for German or Swiss nationals (see [http://www.parlament.gv.at/PAKT/VHG/XXIV/J/J\\_10133/fname\\_238562.pdf](http://www.parlament.gv.at/PAKT/VHG/XXIV/J/J_10133/fname_238562.pdf). Accessed on 10 March 2013).

<sup>30</sup> *Tiroler Tageszeitung*, 4 November 2012 (see: <http://www.tt.com/%C3%9Cberblick/Wirtschaft/Wirtschaft%C3%96sterreich/5508746-42/leitl->

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f%C3%BCr-visa-freiheit-von-russen-und-t%C3%BCrken.csp, access 15 March 2013).

<sup>31</sup> That assessment has been dealt with at length in section two and refuted.

<http://kurier.at/politik/tuerkei-will-visafreiheit-fuer-mehr-grenzschutz/770.435>. Accessed on 20 March 2013.

<sup>32</sup> [http://www.krone.at/Oesterreich/Asyl\\_Mikl-Leitner\\_fuer\\_Aufhebung\\_der\\_Visafreiheit-Balkan\\_im\\_Visier-Story-338743](http://www.krone.at/Oesterreich/Asyl_Mikl-Leitner_fuer_Aufhebung_der_Visafreiheit-Balkan_im_Visier-Story-338743). Accessed on 20 March 2013.

<sup>33</sup> [http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/15/world/europe/illegal-immigrants-slip-into-europe-by-way-of-greek-border.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/07/15/world/europe/illegal-immigrants-slip-into-europe-by-way-of-greek-border.html?_r=0). Accessed on 10 March 2013.

<sup>34</sup> <http://derstandard.at/1331206756124/Druck-auf-Griechenland-Oesterreich-schmiedet-Allianz-gegen-illegale-Migration>. Accessed on 27 March 2013.

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2011/02/17/geen-visumplicht-voor-turken-die-naar-nederland-reizen/>. Accessed on 27 February 2013

<sup>36</sup> <http://www.publiekrechtropolitiek.nl/visumplicht-voor-turkse-zelfstandigen-en-artikel-94-grondwet/>. Accessed on 15 February 2013

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.welingelichtekringen.nl/politiek/29436/er-komt-een-tsunami-van-turken-en-dat-is-de-schuld-van-verhagen.html>. Accessed on 20 February 2013

<sup>38</sup> Epistemologically, this article conceptualized securitisation thereby as a causal mechanism which opened up room for process-tracing analysis that is in line with the theory's post-structural and reflexive epistemological foundations (Guzzini 2011: 331).

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Reflections

## Could and Should Britain have Joined the European Exchange Rate Mechanism in 1979? A Personal Memoir

**Michael Franklin**

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In 1985, the annual Ditchley Foundation lecture was given by Giscard D'Estaing, the former French President. Its title was "The ECU and its Contribution to the Stability of the International Monetary System". Together with German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, he had been the prime mover in the creation of the European Monetary System (EMS).<sup>1</sup> The lecture was chaired by James Callaghan, who had been British Prime Minister at the time. During the discussion that followed the lecture, Sir John Hunt, who had then been Cabinet Secretary made the remark that in fact he had been in favour of British entry. Callaghan shot back: "I wish you had told me at the time". As I had then been Head of the European Secretariat in the Cabinet Office and hence adviser to both Hunt and Callaghan I felt that the comment equally applied to me. I have long wondered whether in fact we had done our duty and whether we could have altered in any way the decision that was taken at the end of 1978 not to join the key part of the EMS, the exchange rate mechanism (ERM).<sup>2</sup>

There have already been two excellent accounts of the history of the second half of 1978 when much of the discussion and decision making about the EMS took place, both in Brussels and in London. Peter Ludlow's book *The Making of the European Monetary System: a Case Study of the Politics of the European Community* (1982) came out soon afterwards. Later, in 1994, Edmund Dell, who had been a member of Callaghan's Cabinet gave his version of the story in the *Contemporary European History* journal. Between them they provide a valuable record of what was a key period in UK/EU relations.

The account I want to give starts with the decision of Schmidt and Giscard to appointment a 'secret committee' to begin preparations for some kind of monetary system which could replace the system which rather loosely linked some European currencies, the so-called 'snake'. Schmidt nominated Horst Schulman, the Chancellor's principal economic advisor and the French Bernard Clappier, Governor of the *Banque de France*. Callaghan was invited to send a representative. Ken Stowe, his Principal Private Secretary, suggested either Sir Kenneth Couzens, Second Permanent Secretary for Overseas Finance at the Treasury, or Kit McMahon from the Bank of England. The Prime Minister chose Couzens and in many ways he was the obvious choice, although in fact he had spent most of his Treasury career dealing with domestic public expenditure and had only recently come to deal with international financial matters. Edmund Dell says he brought to the party a sceptical mind imbued with memories of past UK devaluations and of the attempt in 1972 to link sterling to the snake. The very first evaluation Couzens produced for the PM contained eight 'cons' and two 'pros'! Ludlow says it was a mistake appointing a Treasury official and "not counteracting his scepticism" (1982: 109). The outcome might have been different if the choice had fallen on Kit McMahon - Deputy Governor of the Bank of England, Clappier's opposite number, a professional economist, personally emollient and fully conversant with the subject. There were indeed other choices that could have been made: to mirror Schulman's position in the Chancellor's office, the UK representative might have been John Hunt, myself or someone else from the Cabinet Office. At the FCO, Michael Butler, the Deputy Under Secretary for international economic affairs, had all the right credentials. Harold Lever, at that time Paymaster General and someone from whom Callaghan subsequently sought advice on the EMS, was another possibility: indeed Schmidt apparently suggested his name to Callaghan once Couzens had dropped out (Ludlow 1982: 112). Whoever had been appointed, they would have had a difficult relationship with the other two since both Schmidt and Giscard were determined to press ahead whereas Callaghan was cautious to say the least. According to Dell, Couzens had strict instructions not to agree to anything. It is thus not surprising that Schulman and Clappier refused to go on working with him, and when the committee produced its report for the European Council meeting in Bremen in July, it appeared over their two signatures alone.<sup>3</sup>

Study of the initiative proceeded in great secrecy. The first meeting the Prime Minister called on 4th April was restricted to the Foreign Secretary, Couzens, the Governor and McMahon from the Bank and (unbeknown to me) John Hunt. Only later were the Chancellor and Sir Douglas Wass, Treasury Permanent Secretary, included. It was not until the beginning of July (Callaghan having been told by Schmidt of his "exotic idea" in March) that I became fully involved. At that point, the European Secretariat would normally have swung into action and called the necessary interdepartmental meetings. But it was not to be. Couzens was a Second Permanent Secretary and I was a rank lower, a Deputy Secretary. He refused to come to meetings in the Cabinet Office, the only such occasion during my four years in the European Secretariat. Our whole *raison d'être* was to provide a neutral forum where representatives from the various Departments concerned with a European issue could discuss their different points of view and thrash out a common line to be offered to ministers or to provide the relevant instructions to the UK's Permanent Representation in Brussels (UKREP). On every other topic this was what happened but not with the negotiations over the EMS. There were as I recall one or two meetings on the EMS, one at least of which I attended, but they were held in the Treasury under Ken Couzens's chairmanship. By then, No.10's instructions to keep matters to himself had long since lapsed. The Treasury has never been the most co-operative of departments but this was unprecedented and caused considerable disquiet not just to me and the European Secretariat but to other departments, notably the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) which, as the lead department on EEC matters, manifestly had a major interest in the EMS project which dominated EEC activity during much of 1978/9. It was not as if the Foreign Office lacked expertise: its chief economist, Jim Rollo, was well versed in EEC affairs, and Michael Butler, who headed up the relevant FCO department, was (and remains) a notable economic expert on European monetary matters. I discuss later the relationships at ministerial level but at official level there was certainly a sense of frustration at not being able to have frank interdepartmental discussion on this key issue. Looking back, what I should have done was ask John Hunt to convene a meeting or meetings, then there could have been no room for pulling rank.<sup>4</sup>

The result was that departments other than the Treasury, and notably the FCO, lacked purchase at official level on the on-going negotiations. This meant in particular that the wider political considerations in favour of joining largely went by default. It must also have made discussion of tactics – normally shared between the relevant Whitehall departments and UKREP – particularly difficult. Meetings were held in the Treasury, attended by officials from the Bank of England, sometimes by the FCO and rarely by anyone from the European Secretariat. Much of the technical discussion and exchange of papers went on between Treasury officials and the Bank of England, with papers only occasionally copied to the FCO. The general conclusion of Treasury economists was that entry might reduce inflation but would slow down growth, increase unemployment and worsen the balance of payments. Opinion within the Bank of England was somewhat divided but the majority of senior Bank officials was against the UK joining.

One important tactical decision taken early on was to make our entry conditional upon some transfer of resources to the UK, chiefly through a reduction in our excessive net contribution to the European budget (see Ludlow's detailed narrative, 1982: 170-180). This may have arisen from the Treasury's assessment that membership might be economically beneficial if *either* the scheme was altered to put more of the burden of adjustment on to the stronger currencies (i.e. Germany) *or* there was a resource transfer in our favour.<sup>5</sup> But it was also thought of as a tactical device to get the rest of the EEC to address what we had long seen as the injustice of a budgetary system which left us paying a disproportionate share of the cost. As such it was doomed to failure. There was no way that Germany was willing in the EMS context to take on the additional burden of helping out the British and the link was quietly and sensibly dropped when it became clear that we had no effective leverage (and were not going to join anyway!). But what became known as the 'concurrent studies' received a great deal of attention during the

later months of 1978 and became important in the debate about Italian and Irish membership.<sup>6</sup>

While discussions on both the terms of the EMS and the 'concurrent studies' continued in Brussels, there were frequent discussions in Cabinet. Indeed, for the reasons given, this was probably a rare case when the issues were more discussed at ministerial level than in inter-departmental discussions among officials. The subject came up at most Cabinet meetings during November and December. Back in July, the Prime Minister set up a special Ministerial Group on European Monetary Co-operation (GEN136) under the chairmanship of the Chancellor, Denis Healey. The relevant Departmental Ministers were members but, unusually for a ministerial committee, Ken Couzens was also made a member. The secretaries were myself and Peter Mountfield from the economic side of the Cabinet Office. At the final meeting of the Group on 10th October, the Prime Minister took the chair and, in addition to the usual members, Sir John Hunt, Gordon Richardson, the Governor of the Bank of England and Sir Kenneth Berrill, Head of the Central Policy Review Staff also attended.<sup>7</sup> The meeting had before it a long paper from the Treasury and a shorter paper from the Department of Industry and, notably, none from the FCO. The Treasury paper contained a brief reference to the fact that our influence within the EEC might be less if we stayed out, but essentially it was a long and detailed analysis of the economic arguments which would have left the reader in no doubt about which way the Treasury leaned. And it was accompanied by a note from the Chancellor advising that the UK should stay out unless the German position could be changed. The Department of Industry paper said British industry would benefit from membership provided there was exchange rate flexibility (which there was - and the Department wanted a 5-10 per cent devaluation on joining), strong currency countries would reflate or revalue their currencies (the Achilles heel) and the UK would have access to the European Monetary Fund (probably no problem); and ended very tellingly with the thought that "being in at the start, as well as preserving the UK position at the top table, would give us more influence over the initial constitution, the working philosophy and the subsequent development of the EMS". But the Prime Minister's summing up was adamant: "the group by a large majority felt that it was clearly not in our interests to join the proposed European Monetary System in the form it was likely to emerge" though there should be "no advance disclosure" and for tactical reasons we should "continue to play a part constructively". Ministers did however endorse the idea put forward by the Treasury that, while staying out of the ERM we could become a nominal member of the EMS. In fact this idea originated with Michael Butler in the FCO, and in particular the proposal that, although not entering the ERM, we along with the ERM members should deposit 20 per cent of central bank gold and deposit reserves to finance short term intervention in ecus. It was known rather inaccurately as the 'half way house'. It is doubtful whether it cut a great deal of ice with our partners but for those who feared that by staying out we left ourselves bare of influence, it was at least a fig leaf.<sup>8</sup>

In all the ministerial discussions leading up to the decision to stay out, the line-up of ministers was predictable. The eurosceptics, led by Tony Benn, were adamantly opposed. More surprisingly, Edmund Dell, one of the pro-Europeans in the Cabinet, was against the concept of attempting to achieve monetary union within the EEC and thus joined the opposition. The lone voice in favour of joining was Harold Lever, but he lacked any departmental backing.<sup>9</sup> It is noteworthy that, notwithstanding the advice he would undoubtedly have received from the Foreign Office, the young and recently appointed David Owen, lined up with the sceptics. He had aspirations to lead the Labour Party and may have been anxious to ingratiate himself with the left of the Party by not appearing to be too pro-Europe. Even if he had spoken up strongly in favour of joining, he would have been no match for the heavyweight Chancellor of the Exchequer. Healey himself in his autobiography (1989) says that he began by being fairly agnostic but then turned against it, concluding that the way it would work in practice would only serve to help Germany keep the DM competitive. His position would have been reinforced by the advice of the Treasury.

As to the Prime Minister himself, Edmund Dell claims that he had decided early on against joining on the grounds that to enter would split the Labour Party, but kept up the pretence of an open mind to avoid what he feared would be a sterling crisis if the UK failed to join. Dell's testimony must be somewhat suspect given his opposition to the whole project. Callaghan certainly proceeded cautiously, but if it were the case that he had already decided against, he managed to conceal it for quite a long time: in April he was still reported as hoping that if anything came of the ideas, the UK would be associated with them. It is possible that he genuinely wanted to keep his options open. There is no doubt that he blew hot and cold, often tactically but also probably because he was genuinely in doubt. Callaghan's biographer's assessment is that, as time went on, Callaghan "became somewhat more enthusiastic about joining ... than were his Cabinet colleagues, although not by a great margin" (Morgan 1997: 615). The evidence, however, rather points in the opposite direction i.e. that he showed interest in the idea at the beginning and gradually cooled towards it. Indeed, he apparently said to Healey in September that he was "cooling off on the whole business". When he met the Commission President in early November, he did not contradict Roy Jenkins's impression that the UK would stay out. (Callaghan's comment at Ditchley might suggest that in later years, however, he came to regret his decision).

The Opposition was more positive. The majority of the Shadow Cabinet led by Geoffrey Howe was in favour of British entry but there were several sceptics including, it would appear, the Leader of the Opposition, Margaret Thatcher. Nevertheless, when it came to the debate in the House of Commons she declared that failure to join was a sign of Britain's economic weakness and of Labour's divisions and "a sad day for Europe" (in Moore 2013: 381).

And so I come to the two questions in the title of this essay: could and should we have joined? As to the first, Dell's case that it was politically impossible is a powerful one. The majority of the Cabinet was against and there was strong resistance within the Labour Party. The Government's position in the Commons was weak. Without the support of the Chancellor it is doubtful whether the Prime Minister could have carried the day even if he had given a strong lead. There is a plausible case to be made that, had we had a more open minded representative in the group of three, with a more positive remit from the PM, he might have been able with the help of Clappier to secure terms for the EMS which were less deflationary and therefore less objectionable to the Labour Party. In that event, the Chancellor might have come out in favour of joining and thus swung the balance within the Cabinet, including the Prime Minister, to a more positive view. However, it was not to be. The evidence is that, if not impossible, the domestic political cards were heavily stacked against our joining at the outset. Ludlow cites as reasons for our failure to join: the indecision of the Prime Minister; the lukewarmness of the Conservative Party; the failure of the Foreign Office to "insist that the political case for membership should be decisive" (1982: 295); and the Treasury's "want of imagination and a surfeit of prejudice" (1982: 296). It is indeed hard to quarrel with his overall conclusion that the key to our policies towards the EMS was both "political and psychological" (Ludlow 1982: 256-7).

But should we have joined? As Healey had concluded, there was no doubt that as the negotiations proceeded, the system emerged in a way that put more of the burden of adjustment on the weaker currencies and gave the stronger currencies the upper hand. It is therefore hardly surprising that a Labour Government should have been nervous about joining a monetary system with a built-in deflationary bias. But this argument may to some extent have been based on the mistaken belief that it would have meant locking sterling irrevocably to a strong DM.<sup>10</sup> Throughout the negotiations, however, it was clear that the system would not be a fixed rate system but both legally and in practice a fixed but variable one, providing for realignment between the currencies albeit by agreement.<sup>11</sup> This would have allowed Britain to devalue against the DM as France did and it is at least arguable that had Britain joined the ERM at the outset and taken

advantage of the possibilities of realignment during the succeeding years, we would have ended up in 1990 with a more realistic rate than the one chosen by Nigel Lawson when the then Conservative government decided to join in October of that year, thus avoiding the debacle of Black Wednesday.<sup>12</sup> Nor should it be overlooked that the economic assessment offered to Ministers by the Treasury bore all the hallmarks of the Couzens scepticism.<sup>13</sup> It was widely rumoured at the time that Sir Douglas Wass, the Permanent Secretary at the Treasury, thought the economic arguments were finely balanced. It is not without significance that, a few years later and after Couzens had left, the Treasury, under Lawson, was arguing strongly for entry into the ERM.<sup>14</sup> One can perhaps also detect in the EMS discussion a common failing in our dealings with the EU: continuing to address the intrinsic merits of a policy even after it had been decided.<sup>15</sup> From the middle of 1978 it was clear that there was going to be an EMS: and instead of continuing with the analysis of the scheme per se, the only question for us to address was should we be part of it as it was likely to emerge.

If the economic case for joining was more balanced than might have appeared, there is a strong case for saying that, for the reasons I have given, the wider EEC considerations which would have favoured joining were not given their due weight in the final decision. Here was another example of the UK wanting to go it alone, and failing properly, and in a timely fashion, to assess the merits and demerits of failing to join a system which, like it or not, was going to form a key part of the European project. By the countries which favoured the EMS, and notably Germany, we were perceived as both opportunist and obstructive. It did nothing to foster the belief that we were fully committed to the European enterprise and may have made our ability to get our way on other important issues, notably the UK's excessive contribution to the budget, that much more difficult. Conversely, had we shown a more positive attitude towards the EMS project, if not with the crusading enthusiasm of Schmidt at least with the hard-headed realism of Giscard D'Estaing, the subsequent inevitable battle over our net contribution might have been less traumatic than it turned out to be. As it was, our reputation as a semi-detached member was confirmed. Secondly, we lost an opportunity, long the dream of many of us, to enter an equal partnership with France and Germany. Schmidt and Giscard's offer to Callaghan at the outset of the EMS concept was genuine and we chose in effect to turn it down.

And so we are left with the question I have to address: might Callaghan's position have been different had he received powerful advice from the Cabinet Office which – to use Ludlow's expression – counteracted Couzens's scepticism? He had received advice not just from the Treasury and the Bank but from other quarters including Ken Berrill and from Bernard Donougue, Head of the Policy Unit in No.10 (the former marginally in favour and the latter hesitant and wanting the PM to postpone a decision until after the election) but never, so far as my memory goes, a considered assessment from the Cabinet Office bringing to the fore the wider arguments for Britain to be a founder member of this important EEC development. Thus Callaghan's admonishment with which this essay began can be said to have been justified, though whether it would have altered the outcome must be highly doubtful.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful for help from Sir Stephen Wall and Sir Michael Butler in the preparation of this essay. Much of it is based on my personal recollections with some limited research in the archives of the Bank of England and the National Archives.

**NOTE FROM THE EDITOR**

From 1977 to 1981, Sir Michael Franklin was head of the European Secretariat in the Cabinet Office. Before that he was a Deputy Director General for Agriculture in the European Commission and subsequently Permanent Secretary of the Board of Trade and then of the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. After retirement from the public service he was a non-executive director of Barclays Bank, Whitbread plc and other companies. Among his publications are *Britain's Future in Europe* (1990), *The EC Budget: Realism, Redistribution and Radical Reform* (1992), *EU financing, 2007-13: 'I want my money back'* (2005) and, as editor, *Joining the CAP: The Agricultural Negotiations for British Accession to the European Economic Community, 1961-73* (2010).

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<sup>1</sup> Roy Jenkins, the President of the European Commission, made up a triumvirate, thanks to his position and his enthusiasm for monetary union as presciently set out in his Jean Monnet lecture 'Europe's Present Challenge and Future Opportunity' given at the European University Institute in Florence on 27 October, 1977.

<sup>2</sup> The exchange rate mechanism (ERM) was the key part of the European Monetary System (EMS). As discussed later the British Government made the gesture of joining the EMS but decided to stay out of the ERM.

<sup>3</sup> Known as 'the Bremen Annex'.

<sup>4</sup> John Hunt did eventually chair a meeting of Permanent Secretaries, but only in September of 1979 when the new Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, called for a reappraisal of Britain's EMS membership.

<sup>5</sup> Healey adopted this line when he gave dinner to Commissioner Ortoli on 5 September, 1978.

<sup>6</sup> The communiqué following the Bremen summit called for "concurrent studies of the action needed to strengthen the economies of the less prosperous members in the context of [EMS]". At that time, Britain claimed to fall into that category. The eventual outcome was meagre although one notable British achievement was to persuade the Commission to produce a table showing the net contributions of each member state, something which up to that time they had strenuously resisted.

<sup>7</sup> Dennis Healey, David Owen, John Varley, Edmund Dell, John Silkin and Harold Lever

<sup>8</sup> For the Minutes of this meeting see National Archives CAB 130/1047.

<sup>9</sup> Although he did get some informal briefing from Michael Butler (personal information).

<sup>10</sup> This misconception seems to have been widespread. For instance, speaking about the EMS in a House of Lords debate in November, 1978, Lord Roberthall, a former Government Economic Advisor, disliked the idea of being "committed to a fixed rate" (Jones 1994:179).

<sup>11</sup> There were in fact eleven parity changes or realignments during the life of the EMS, seven during the first four years and four in the subsequent four years. Between 1979 and 1987, the Italian lira depreciated by 45 per cent against the DM. The most notable adjustments were between the DM and the French franc in April 1986 and again in January 1987.

<sup>12</sup> 16<sup>th</sup> September, 1992.

<sup>13</sup> That his reluctance to see Britain join persisted is perhaps exemplified by a later incident recorded by the Bank of England (from an unreferenced document in the EMS file in the Bank of England archive). In early 1980, the question of possible UK membership could apparently be raised again. Couzens was happy to tell the Governor that he had been told by the French that they would find it "inconvenient and unwelcome if we joined at this stage". The note goes on to say that "some days previously, de la Geniere [Deputy Governor of the *Banque de France*] had told Sir Gordon Richardson the exact opposite".

<sup>14</sup> To become Permanent Secretary at the Department of Energy and later Deputy Chairman of the Coal Board. He died in 2004.

<sup>15</sup> Minuting the Chancellor on 2 October, Couzens wrote: I am clear that it would have been better for the UK on every count if this plan had never come forward!

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# Book Review

**Feyza Basar Gulersen**

*Regulating Corporate Governance in the EU: Towards a Marketization of Corporate Control*

by Laura Horn

Palgrave Macmillan, ISBN: 9780230247505 (hb)

Corporations are created as legal persons by the laws and regulations of particular jurisdictions and they are directed and controlled by the system referred to as 'corporate governance'. Corporate governance determines the way in which rights and responsibilities are distributed among different participants, like managers, shareholders, as well as workers and other stakeholders in corporations, and also specifies the rules and procedures for making decisions in corporate affairs. In this sense, it is closely related to "those practices that define and reflect the power relations within the corporation and the way, and to which purpose, it is run" (p.32). Therefore, corporate governance provides the structure for corporations to set and pursue their objectives within the context of economic, social and regulatory environment in which they are incorporated or run their business. It is one of the key elements in improving economic efficiency and growth as well as enhancing investor confidence. However, the high-profile collapse of several large corporations in 2001 and 2002 and the recent financial crisis have revealed serious shortcomings in corporate governance.

In this book, the author gives a broad perspective on the historical and theoretical basis of corporate governance and its transformation at the national and EU levels, the development of company law and its role in European integration, as well as the construction and extension of the capitalist market and its mechanism. It is also easy to read and understand as the author explains very complicated issues in a very simple way without affecting its academic value. This important book therefore provides a valuable resource for economists, EU experts, legal practitioners and academics, who are interested in corporate governance.

The book consists of eight chapters, opening with an introductory chapter which sets out a range of perspectives on corporate governance and discusses the key concepts applied in the book. The author's theoretical framework, analysing the transformation of corporate governance and its regulation from the critical political economy point of view is the subject of Chapter Two. Here, she also examines the role of the capitalist state and regulation in the social construction of markets and the configuration of power relations in the modern corporations, together with the internal and external dimensions of corporate governance. In the third chapter, global capitalist restructuring and corporate governance regulation in the European political economy is analysed in both the national and EU contexts. Regulatory developments after the corporate scandals of 2001-2 are covered. Here too, different corporate governance regimes in the EU, including those of the UK, France and Germany in are compared alongside the USA from the perspective of financial market integration. Chapter Four focuses on company law in the EU. It is wide-ranging, dealing with the initiation of and legal base for the company law and harmonisation programme, historical developments in company law and corporate governance in the light of directives, as well as the European Company Statute and workers participation. Here, the author discusses how the objective, as well as the subject, of company law has changed with respect to worker participation and why

worker rights have been consigned to the area of labour law whilst the company law, and corporate governance regulation have become increasingly focused on the rights of shareholders.

These early chapters provide the basis for Chapter Five and its subject matter, corporate governance in the EU with a detailed analysis of the integration of financial markets through the Financial Services Action Plan, the Take Over Directive, the role of the High Level Group of Company Law Experts (HLG) and other expert groups in the policymaking process. In this chapter, the author also examines those corporate scandals that emerged in the early 2000s as a result of auditing and accounting failures. It looks too at the other regulatory shortcomings in corporate governance and the Commission's Company Law Action Plan designed to re-establish investors' confidence, to strengthen shareholders' rights and to foster the efficiency and competitiveness of business. The role of the European Court of Justice through its rulings on the freedom of establishment and golden shares forms another significant part of this chapter. Chapter Six moves us to the question raised in the title, delivering an analysis of the marketization of corporate control as a political project. In this chapter, the author discusses the marked shift in the relationship between company law, labour law and capital market and securities law, which are the main constituents of the regulatory framework for the modern corporation. She particularly emphasises the change in the social purpose of company law, briefly touching upon corporate social responsibility in connection with workers' rights. Here, she explains how various aspects of corporate control, for instance with regard to worker participation, were excluded from the perception of corporate governance and now it is perceived merely to include internal and external control mechanisms between shareholders and managers. Other matters covered here are the role of external control in corporate governance regulation, the changing form of regulation, social forces in the making of the marketization project and its European dimension and, the transnational politics of corporate governance. The seventh chapter deals with the global financial crisis that started in 2006-7 and those regulatory responses to it that have emerged in both the USA and the EU since then. The final, concluding chapter places a particular emphasis on the role of the state in creating the legal and political preconditions for the modern corporation, and in encouraging the development of a particular form of corporate governance.

In this well-structured and stimulating book, the author provides answers to a number of topical questions as well as identifying new questions for further studies. Particularly, the author's approach to the social aspects of the corporate governance makes this book very significant and distinguishes it from the other books about corporate governance. In this fast-moving area, however, the book would already benefit from some updating, especially with regard to certain articles renewed in the EU Treaties.

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# Book Review

**Tim Haesebrouck** *Ghent University*

*The EU and Military Operations: A comparative analysis*

by Katarina Engberg

Routledge, ISBN: 9780415821360 (hb)

In the ten years that the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) has been fully operational, the military missions conducted under its aegis have received a tremendous amount of scholarly attention. Until recently however, the rich academic literature on the CSDP lacked systematic comparative studies that help to unravel the dynamics behind EU-led deployments. Katarina Engberg's book is one of the recent efforts to fill this substantive gap. It provides a comparative analysis of six EU-led military operations, along with three cases where such operations were considered but not deployed. The overall goal is to draw general conclusions about the conditions that determine whether a CSDP operation is launched. As Minister for Defence Affairs at the Permanent Representation of Sweden to the EU during the mid-2000s, the author is very well-placed to achieve this goal. Her involvement in the decision-making processes on some of the operations under investigation provides the book with a wealth of empirical material.

An "Analytical Tool" is introduced in the beginning of the book to examine the cases systematically. This is partly inspired by the academic literature on the use of force and collective security, out of which two building blocks are derived. First of all, the interplay between political factors and military resources during the decision-making process on the use of force is emphasised. Secondly, the influence of local actors on this process is identified as an important factor. These general factors are further operationalised and supplemented by building on insights from techniques of defence planning and conclusions drawn from one of the main case studies, the Lebanon war of 2006. This results in a list of 15 indicators, which are expected to determine whether a crisis constitutes an appropriate opportunity for launching a CSDP operation.

A striking feature, and distinctive strength, of the analytical tool is the integration of some more practical factors; like access to appropriate command and control structures and the availability of necessary military resources for fulfilling the operation's mandate. The flipside of this strength is that several variables that are emphasised in the academic literature on the use of force are not taken into account. For example, the electoral considerations of political leaders, according to many studies of primary importance in decisions on the use of force, are not incorporated. In spite of this minor defect, the analytical tool encompasses a wide range of empirically relevant factors and provides the necessary structure for the case studies.

These case studies contain a wealth of empirical information on the decision-making process that precedes the launch of military operations under the CSDP. Some may find it disappointing, however, that the first three CSDP operations – Concordia (2003), Artemis (2003) and EUFOR Althea (2004) - are not discussed in depth. Unfortunately, the analytical tool was not even applied to operation Artemis, for which the author merely claimed that "all important factors would be marked as positive and driving" (p. 61).

The short length of the single chapter that describes these first three operations contrasts starkly with the three chapters on the two main case studies: the Lebanon war

and EUFOR Congo (2006). The discussion of how an EU-led operation did not materialise in the aftermath of the Lebanon war clearly demonstrates the relevance of some of the inhibiting factors incorporated in the analytical tool, like the importance of the availability of appropriate command structures and local support, which was not forthcoming because of the sceptical view of Hezbollah. These findings are strengthened by contrasting the decision-making process on a possible EU-led operation during the Lebanon war to the process that eventually led to an operation in Congo, where local parties were generally supportive of an EU-led deployment and Germany and France provided the necessary command and control structures. The two main cases also demonstrate the risk-adversity that characterises the CSDP: the author convincingly describes how the Lebanon war, with its high level of unregulated violence, would have constituted a much more challenging theatre than Congo, causing it not to be considered an appropriate opportunity for an EU-led operation.

After the discussion of the two main cases, two further chapters are devoted to other cases. The first compares the operation in Chad with the "non-case" of Eastern Congo in 2008. France's position was particularly important for explaining the different outcome in these cases. While Paris was willing to provide the headquarters and the lion's share of the forces for EUFOR Chad, it explicitly rejected a UN request for an operation in Eastern Congo. Again, some of the criteria of the analytical tool turned out to be relevant for understanding these divergent positions. The presence of Rwandan troops in Eastern Congo, for instance, partly explains French reluctance to support an operation, demonstrating the importance of local actors in decisions on the use of forces. The last empirical chapter covers several very recent cases. It discusses the maritime operation Atalanta (2009) and the most recent CSDP operation, EUTM Mali (2013). Like the first three operations, these are only very concisely described. Much more interesting is the empirically very rich section on the non-case of Libya 2011, in which the author discusses how the EU failed to launch an operation in Libya on three different occasions. Although additional inhibiting factors were identified in each one of them, it was intra-EU divisions that thwarted the launch of a CSDP operation throughout the crisis.

In the concluding chapter, the author highlights the empirical relevance of some of the criteria that were included in the analytical tool. By drawing on evidence from the case studies, the author convincingly demonstrates that the EU is more likely to launch an operation under the following conditions: i) when both its interests in the conflict and the tasks and risks of the operation are situated in the low to middle bandwidth; ii) individual European nations or the EU have intervened before in the theatre of operation; iii) other regional security providers support the operation; iv) influential local actors consent to an EU-led mission and appropriate command; v) and control structures are available. Unfortunately, the author only draws some general conclusions on the relevance of these criteria, but does not arrive at a parsimonious and integrated explanation for the pattern of EU-led military operations. Strikingly, none of the criteria of the analytical tool was eventually deemed unimportant. These defects could probably have been avoided by using a more stringent comparative research design and a more systematic data-analysis technique.

In spite of the minor defects mentioned above, this first book-length comparative study of the circumstances that drive and inhibit EU-led operations can be highly recommended to anyone interested in the EU's military activity. Not only does it constitute one of the most empirically founded analyses of these operations, it also draws interesting general conclusions on the dynamics behind them. By discussing the non-cases of Lebanon 2006 and Libya 2011, the book provides new empirical material to augment academic debate on the CSDP and the practical experiences of the author induced her to pay the appropriate attention to the more practical factors that are more easily missed by full-time academics.

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