The EU and MLG in the world:

Conceptual Reflections

(Draft version, not for distribution)

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Introduction/Abstract

In the fast changing global landscape, Europe is confronted with the preoccupation, but also with the moral responsibility to maintain its model of integration and diversity within a radically transforming world system. The paper presents some conceptual reflections concerning the European Union in a changing world, in particular in its external relations. The paper is structured along three main parts. The first section focuses on the content of two major new concepts in international relations studies, i.e. multi-level governance and sustainable statehood. Moreover, it proposes a human-centric approach to the interaction between globalisation and Europeanisation at the global and European level. The second part applies the conceptual content to the European context , in particular to Europe's role and its model of society within the globalising world. Finally this is verified for the EU's external relations as to its major characteristics and human-centric perspective.

I. Conceptual Content: Multi-level Governance and Sustainable Statehood

1. Multi-level Governance in perspective

Governance is one of the main keys to the success of the process of European integration. Europe will be strong, its institutions legitimate, its policies effective, and its citizens feeling involved and engaged if its mode of governance guarantees cooperation between the different tiers of government, in order to meet the European Union's political agenda and face the global challenges. The MLG-concept refers to a process whereby elements/actors/layers in society at various international, European, national, regional and local levels(institutions and civil society) wield power and authority, influence and enact policies and decisions concerning public life, economic, social and cultural development. [1]

Changed international context: multilateralism and multipolar world order[2] towards MLG structures

The international political and economic reality presents a complex and heterogeneous governance structure. First of all, there is no single top level in the emerging new multilateralism. The UN and the Bretton Woods institutions, together with new fora such as the G20, stand for a plurality of top-levels. Secondly, at the regional level there is no perfect match between a regional territory and a regional organisation. On the contrary one can identify in most cases many different regional organisations that cover more or less the same territory. Thirdly, there is no fixed set of poles, but there are diverse and shifting poles at the level of continents, regions or states. Fourthly, as the multilateral system is no longer uniquely the playing-ground of states, the possibility is opened up for increased civil society participation in

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[1] The concept was introduced by Gary Marks in Structural Policy and Multi-level Governance in the EC, in Cafruny, A. and Rosenthal, G. (eds), The State of the European Community, New York: Lynne Rienner, 1993, pp. 391-410.
[2] See Télo, M., The EU and global Governance, Routledge/Garnet series: Europe in the World, 2009, 354 p.

governance. And finally, states are not necessarily the lowest level, as in some cases subnational entities can have their own direct relations with the regional or global level without passing through the state level.

What are the main characteristics of the emerging multi-polar world?

1) Diversification of multilateral organisations

A first characteristic of multilateralism is the diversification of multilateral organisations. In recent years there has been a dramatic rise in all kinds of international organisations and regimes. The number of intergovernmental organisations has grown drastically in the last decades. They often operate in a network base, in line with a transnationalisation of policies.[3] The emerging multilateral system implies therefore the rise of transnational policy networks.[4] In sum, states, international and regional organisations, transnational policy networks and nongovernmental actors are the building blocks of the multilateral system.[5] Moreover, it is no longer possible to make a clear distinction between states and international organisations as some of the latter have statehood properties as well! Furthermore, the interactions between all these actors are not organised in a hierarchical way, but in a more networked way. This implies that there is no single decision-making centre in terms of governance, but that various contexts of multilateral relations exist. The nation-state is no longer the only place for coping with global and transnational problems. Governance in areas of changing statehood refers to multi-level governance, which links inter- and transnational actors to local ones in a variety of rule and authority structures.

What does it imply?

A multilateralism that operates in a multipolar world could offer good prospects for generating a non-hegemonic world-order. Instead one can expect a fluid web of multi-stakeholder partnerships between different types of actors at different levels of governance. According to Newman and Thakur, many multilateral processes work most effectively at the regional level, based upon their shared values, identity and regional leadership[6]; regions then become major nodes in the system. On the one hand, they are to be considered as sub-global entities characterised by a dense intensity of economic and political relations that can be relatively autonomous of the rest of the world. On the other hand, they have a centre of gravity that can act as a pole in the multipolar world.

2) Growing importance of non-state actors in the international system at supra and subnational level

Secondly, there is the growing importance of non-state actors in the international system. States have by now created a large number of global and regional institutions that have themselves become players in the international order. Some of these new players, although not states, do resemble states. An international organisation like the EU exemplifies this trend (e.g. its presence as observer in the UN, its voting rights at the IMF and its membership at the G8, etc.).[7] Other regional organisations – although not to the same

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[3] Stone, D., Transfer Agents and Global Networks in the "Transnationalisation" of Policy, in Journal of European Public Policy, 11, 2004, pp. 545-566.

[4] Djelic, M.L. and S. Quach, Globalisations and Institutions, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2003.

[5] Van Langenhove, L., The EU as a global actor in a Multipolar World and Multilateral 2.0 Environment, Egmont Paper 36, March 2010.

[6] Newman, T. and R. Thakur, Multilateralism under Challenge? Power, International Order and Structural Change, Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 2006, p. 539.

[7] Gstöhl, S., Patchwork Power's Europe? The EU's representation in International Institutions, in Bruges Regional Integration & Global governance Papers 2/2008, 30 p.

extent as the EU – are following suit. We are witnessing a transition from a world of exclusively states to a world of regions and states.[8]

This trend is further reinforced by the phenomenon of devolution, whereby state powers are in some states transferred to subnational regions. Both supra and subnational governance entities are created by states and can therefore be regarded as dependent agencies of those states. The sub and supra entities have a tendency to behave "as if" they were states. All of this challenges sovereignty, as both the supranational and subnational regions have indeed to some extent statehood properties. The EU is exemplary as it is the only international organisation that grants citizenship to the citizens of its member states. Together this has weakened the Westphalian relation between state and sovereignty.

3) Growing interconnectivity between policy domains horizontally

Thirdly, next to the increased relations between vertical levels of governance, there is a growing horizontal interconnectivity between policy domains. Finance cannot be divorced from trade, security, climate, etc. The boundaries between policy domains (and the organisations dealing with them) are becoming more and more blurred. Instead of clearly separated areas of policy concerns and separated institutions to deal with them, there are now communities of different actors and layers that together form a global gathering place of multiple publics and plural institutions.[9] However, the overlapping of competences and the mixed scope and structure of (formal and informal) international organisations have made the current international relations rather unpredictable and full of uncertainties and risks. A responsible and shared management of governance structures at all levels is more than ever needed to deal with different issues and actors involved.

4) the involvement of citizens in the old multilateral system

Finally, the involvement of citizens in the old multilateral system is largely limited to democratic representation at the state-level. The supranational governance layer does not foresee direct involvement of civil society or any other nongovernmental actors. This has resulted in an increased room for nongovernmental actors at all levels, focusing on the social dimension of current developments and taking advantage of the social media.

Organising multilateralism in a state-centric way has only been possible through the postulate of all states being treated as equal. This means that irrespective of the differences in territorial size, the size of population, military power or economic strength, all states have the same legal personality. Or in other words, the Westphalian principle of sovereign equality means that one state equals one vote. This postulate no longer corresponds with reality, therefore a more flexible form of multilateralism is needed, one which could eventually also lead to a more just system with a more equal balance of powers. The social fora, active at all levels of citizens' participation, have become an important instrument in the multi-level governance structures of the multilateral and multipolar world. (See World and European Social Forum, the existence of targeted civil society organisations such as Human Rights Watch, Avaaz, etc.)

What is the impact of these changes?

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[8] Van Langenhove, L. and D. Marchesi, The Lisbon Treaty and the Emergence of Third Generation Regional Integration, in European Journal of Law Reform, X (4), 2008, pp. 477-496.
[9] Stone, D., Global Public Policy, Transnational Policy Communities and their Networks, in Journal of Policy Sciences, 2008, 36(10), pp. 19-38.

This current multidimensional process of globalisation has a paradoxical impact on external and internal relations of states. The dominant spatial paradigm of territoriality and identity-building is being undermined by globalising forces. This paradigm has placed boundaries between some of the most fundamental characteristics of the modern world, notably community, security, nationality, identity and citizenship. Still the power of the territorial narrative remains strong through the reemergence of communal, nationalist and ethnic identities, the misconceived interpretation of sovereignty and the exclusive focus of locally-based communities for sustaining social solidarity. In summary, the globalising world is characterised by a partial asymmetry between the growing extra-territorial nature of its huge power and the continuing territoriality of the ways in which people live their everyday lives. Its seemingly contradictory nature reveals new opportunities for institutional structures along with new forms of politics and civility.

2. Sustainable Statehood

1) Point of departure

The social sciences' debate on governance implicitly or explicitly remains connected to a specific type of modern statehood, exhibiting full domestic sovereignty and the capacity to make, implement and enforce decisions. This traditional statehood consists of five monopolistic dimensions, i.e. security, territory/ borders, (national) citizenship, the practice of democracy and cultural identity. However, the traditional monopoly of statehood exhibited by the national sovereign state has historically been broken down de facto e de jure. The contemporary international political system introduces multiple (pooled) sovereignties with changing statehood.

The changed global setting has moved a multipolar world towards a complex web of relations between four types of actors with statehood properties (i.e. global institutions, regional organisations, states and subnational regional entities) together with non-state actors such as NGOs or transnational policy networks. This new conceptualisation of governance, citizenship and dialogue in international/global relations requires therefore a multiplicity of citizenships as a political-legal status (i.e. post-nationalism), a recognition of diverse and multiple identities (i.e. multiculturalism vs interculturalism) and a citizens' participation on all levels of sovereignty (i.e. transnationalism). Furthermore, the growing awareness of the need for global knowledge and global planning to realise global goods and the recognition of a shared future, favours an interest in universal values of belonging and institutional expressions of global norms.

The new statehood dimensions are the international legal recognition of human rights, the development of intergovernmental and nongovernmental international organisations, the era of planetary interdependence and plural citizenship. These properties seem to have a greater governance capacity, both on a macro and a micro level of the multipolar system. Yet the available conceptual apparatus, i.e. referred to as "methodological nationalism", is not adequately equipped to deal with governance issues in the rapidly changing international system.

2) Conceptual framework

The nucleus of the conceptual framework of the sustainable statehood refers to the theories/approaches of federalism, human development, public goods and multi-level governance. The driving forces in societal development, shaped by seemingly contradictory globalising and localising trends, challenge the characteristics of traditional statehood. Hence, they induce new paradoxes which, due to their magnitude of scale and intensity, are unprecedented and require new insights and innovative approaches to deal with

complex issues such as territorial sovereignty vs responsibility of the international community, the need for global rules vs the need of local enforcement, global world culture vs local identity, the universality of human rights vs the particularity of their application, etc. It is clear that these manifestations all have an implicit tendency to generate conflict and constitute driving forces for change in the international system.

The reconversion of the nationally defined and border-based statehood passes through the structural reform of the modern state. The principles and structural conditions which make up the constitutive elements of a sustainable state are: (1) the recognition of the primacy of International Law of human rights over Internal Law; (2) the strengthening of the principles of the rule of law in view of their interdependence with the requirements of the welfare state: all human rights (i.e. civil, political, economic, social and cultural) are in fact interdependent and indivisible; (3) the realisation of forms of large functional autonomy, which implies the application of the principle of pluralism in the case of political parties and trade unions, as well as in the case of other legitimate formations of civil society (nongovernmental associations, voluntary groups, ethical banks, etc.); (4) the realisation of pronounced and diffused forms of territorial autonomy: more functions and powers to communities, provinces, regions, Länder, etc. based on the principle that local autonomy is originating, not derived from above; (5) the application of the principle of pluralism beyond the market economy principles; (6) the active belonging to supranational systems of collective security: strengthening the UN system; and (7) the protection and valorisation of the natural environment and cultural goods as a transversal objective of various public policies.

3) A Human-centric approach to sustainable statehood

- Diagnosis of departure

The underlying paradigm of a human-centric approach to international relations is the qualitative inadequacy or capacity deficit of the state-centric structure of the international system, and the reference to the human rights paradigm as a parameter for a human-centric transformation of the system. This approach focuses on forms of humanly sustainable statehood.

The old national, sovereign-armed, border form of the state is no longer capable of exclusively covering and managing the contents of statehood. This criticism is based on the fact that law-enforcing power is no longer an exclusive sovereign function of the state. Other law-making structures of authority exist beyond and above the state, which makes laws, even containing constitutional norms and adopts law binding decisions. As a consequence, the current status of traditional statehood, also concerning its territorial dimension, presents characteristics of pronounced porosity in respect to variables that are external to the traditional domain reserved to the state.

This diagnosis also refers to a crisis of democracy, the main cause of which is linked to the limits of the space in which its experience has been previously circumscribed, i.e. domestic jurisdiction of a space reserved to a single state. A democracy that is only internally defined is therefore an insufficient democracy, and in the end useless, because it runs senseless in the presence of the undeniable fact that big decisions are often made beyond a single state. It is to these enlarged international and transnational frameworks that the democratic experience has to be taken. Of particular relevance in this respect are the political and normative implications that derive from the recognition of the international legal subjectivity of the human person.

Starting from the vital needs of persons and human communities, legal obligation and rational convenience seem to complement each other to realise a new division of politics, going from the micro-local context to

the macro-planetary level. The functional space of sustainable statehood finally coincides with the constitutional space of human rights. In virtue of the international recognition of fundamental rights, the operational space is widened from the internal legal sphere to the global legal sphere.

In short, the International Law of Human Rights, with the applied support of subsidiarity, is the compass that guides the transfer and distribution of functions and structures of democratic statehood along the scale of sustainable statehood, moving from the city, the village, the region, the state, Europe and finally to the supranational institutions. Human rights need therefore to be situation-specific. In other words, they have to be localised or as locally relevant as possible. The contribution of local communities to the interpretation and further normative development of human rights is therefore conceived as essential.

- Basic fundamentals

The mutually reinforcing conceptual building blocks of a human-centric approach to sustainable statehood building, applied to the European setting, are the universality and indivisibility of the human rights and the cosmopolitan perspective of multi-level governance in relation to its local relevance and the importance of global public goods in relation to transnational democratic practices.

(a) Human rights paradigm

The universality of human rights rests on the recognition of the equal importance and interdependence of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. Within the current globalisation debate this implies localising human rights as much as developing a common responsibility across borders of states. The human rights paradigm is conceived as a powerful and universal transcultural and transnational facilitator for human-centric governance and sustainable statehood. This recognition will favour a move from the (increasingly) conflicting stage of multiculturality to the dialogic stage of inter-culturality in globalising societies.

Anchored to the paradigm of human rights are human security and human development.[10]22 They are the new frontiers of global multi-level governance. Both hold the human being as their primary subject. In broad terms, human security shifts our focus from traditional territorial security to that of the person. Human security recognises that an individual's personal protection and preservation comes not just from the safeguarding of the state as a political unit, but also from the individual's access to welfare and quality of life. The security policies of states should be instrumental to the objectives of human security and human development.

(b) Cosmopolitan perspective of multilevel governance in Europe[11]

The globalising world is characterised by some asymmetry between the growing extra-territorial nature of abundant power and the continuing territoriality of the ways in which people live their everyday lives. This seemingly contradictory nature reveals new opportunities for institutional structures along with new forms of management of politics and dialogue at various levels of the globalising landscape. This perspective

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[10] Papisca, A., International law and human rights as a legal basis for the international involvement of local governments, in V. Musch, Van Der Valk, Sizoo, Tajbakhsh (eds.), City Diplomacy. Conflict Prevention, Peace-building, Post-conflict Reconstruction, The Hague, 2008.

[11] Useful references are Archibugi, D. and D. Held (eds.), Cosmopolitan Democracy: An Agenda for a New World Order, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995; Archibugi, D., The Global Commonwealth of Citizens: Toward Cosmopolitan Democracy, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009; U. Beck and E. Grande, op. cit.; Held, D., Democracy and the Global Order: From Modern State to Cosmopolitan Governance, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995.

refs to a cosmopolitan shaping and understanding of the emerging European polity of multi-level governance structures. According to Ulrich Beck, the cosmopolitan state is both a political answer and a useful tool for managing political identities and ethnic fragmentation in the era of globalisation and pluralism.[12]

Point of departure is the weakening of the spatial paradigm of territoriality and identity-building by globalisation forces. European integration has developed into a much more complex and mixed political project, evolving into a "common citizenship" and a transnational democracy. It is characterised by a flexible spatial structure, composed of vertical and horizontal links between models of sovereignty in a transformative interdependence. The European integration process presents an asymmetrical integrative order based on a mixture of intergovernmental and supranational forms of cooperation, in which civil society is becoming a shaping factor and a meeting place of social and political aggregations.

(c) Global public goods and transnational democracy[13]

We all increasingly live in one world, so that individuals, groups, nations and continents become interdependent in a so-called "global village". Various political, economic, cultural and social factors are shaping the process of globalisation, with drastic consequences on the human development relations between nations, peoples and persons. Today they refer to pervasive and complex global policy challenges such as poverty, development climate change, equity and justice, peace and security, etc. Many of these global challenges and threats result from the under-provision of global public goods such as international financial stability, equity, health, environmental sustainability, respect for human rights.

A global public goods approach takes into account the core systemic features of globalisation, being spatial extension and compression, increasing interconnectedness, temporal acceleration and a growing awareness. It recognises multiple locations of governance, multiple dimensions of integration, multiple modes of interaction and an increasing institutionalisation of the process of globalisation. Such an approach contributes to a better analysis of global policy challenges, including sustainable statehood for good human governance and may recommend strategies for true global policy-making. New opportunities for enhanced networked governance have been created among states, regions and civil society actors.

Global governance is generally defined as "the management of global problems and the pursuit of global objectives through the concerted efforts of states and other international organisations"[14]. The public goods perspective departs from the need of international democracy for internal democracy in a deterritorialised (global) space. Therefore, today's open and interdependent world requires a principle of responsible sovereignty that encompasses both the internal and the external dimensions of governance responsibility. This implies a remodeling of the role of the state that encompasses collective self-interest. A research consequence of this perspective is a focus on the creation, protection and management of global public goods, the subsequent dimensions of global democracy and global democratic community or society, the institutional diversity to promote the common good; and the importance of regional and international

[12] Beck, U., Cosmopolitan Vision, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2006.

[13] See research undertaken by Inge Kaul, UNDP and Global Studies Centre; Reference publications are: Kaul, I. and Grunberg, M.A. Stern, Global Public Goods: International Cooperation in the 21st Century, New York, Oxford: University Press, 1999; Kaul, I., P. Conceicao, K. Le Goulven and R.U. Mendoza (eds.), Providing Global Public Goods: Managing Globalization, New York, Oxford: University Press, 2003.

[14] M. Ortega, Building the Future: The EU's Contribution to Global Governance, Chaillot Paper, 100, Paris, EU Institute for Security Studies, p.46.

organisations as the building blocks of a global community, i.e. a re-inventing of democracy in a global context.

The need for managing global public goods requires international/transnational democratic structures. Today's passionate and creative reality of civil society organisations and social movements, and of local governments acting across and beyond state borders, demonstrate that civic and political roles, that is active citizenship, are no longer limited to the intra-state space, and the geometry of democracy is extending and growing in the world space. The traditional inter-state system has always been an exclusive club of "rulers for rulers". Now it is citizens, especially through their transnational organisations and movements, who are claiming a legitimate role, and showing their visibility in the world's constitutional space. Democratising international institutions and politics in the true sense of democracy – this does not mean "one country, one vote" (a procedural translation of the old principle of state sovereign equality), but more direct legitimacy of the relevant multilateral bodies and more effective political participation in their functioning – has become the new frontier for any significant human-centric and peaceful development of governance.

II.   Multi-level Governance and Sustainable Statehood in European perspective

As Europe is the most regionalised region in the world, with a regional organisation (EU) that aspires to be a global power, it could play a central role in transforming the current multilateral system. Actually, it might also be that Europe needs to play that role in order to safeguard its own position and not to be reduced to a mere spectator in global affairs. [15] The EU's plea for a more "effective multilateralism" is heading towards that direction and can be seen as a (timid) attempt to influence the multilateral playing field. But there is still a long way to go. At the level of the WTO, the EU is talking with one voice: it is the EU Commissioner for Trade who negotiated at the Doha Development Round on behalf of all EU member states. But at the IMF or the World Bank, Europe is not yet at that point. Giving a bigger role to regional organisations in the multilateral system might be the innovation to pursue.

1. European setting in the global world

-        A weakened position of the EU as a Global Actor: external and internal factors

For a long time the EU has had the ambition and capacity to play a global role, especially in first pillar domains such as trade, development, environment and social issues.[16] More recently, the EU has also been increasingly developing its security strategy and architecture with a focus on global ambitions.[17] With the Lisbon Treaty, the EU has made an even more important step forward in realising its global aspirations.[18] This can be called the process of Europeanisation, as a response to the globalisation process. [19]Indeed, ever since the birth of the Industrial Revolution, Europe, and by extension "the West", has been the centre of the world. Along with the scientific and technological inventions that gave rise to unprecedented boosts in productivity, new institutional and political inventions arose in Europe, such as the birth of the liberal state

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[15]   Renard, T., A BRIC in the World: Emerging Powers, Europe and the Coming Order. Brussels: Academic Press for the Royal Institute of International Relations, 2009, p.7.

[16] See for an overview Orbie, J., Europe's Global Role. External Policies of the EU, London: Ashgate, 2008.

[17] See for an overview Tardy, T., European Security in a Global Context. Internal and External Dynamics, London: Routledge, 2009.

[18] Van Langenhove, L. and D. Marchesi, op. cit.

[19] Bekemans, L., Europeanisation versus Globalisation. A Human-centric perspective, Brussels: P.I.E. Peter Lang, 2013.

and the idea that peace and trade were interlinked. Combined with new ideas about sovereignty, legitimacy of state power and nationalism, this resulted in a system of interstate competition with dramatic economic and geopolitical consequences. Meanwhile, Western values and assumptions have been internalised to a great extent in almost every other major culture.[20] Today, the international system is more complex, more interdependent and more and diverse actors are now involved.

Although the EU is still the world's leading exporter of goods, largest trader of services and biggest donor of development and humanitarian aid, the second largest foreign investor and the second largest destination for foreign migrants, there is now more competition in those areas. But, with the current global economic and financial crisis, one can easily speak of a European malaise and a decline of its economic and political power, even of a systemic crisis. This can be related to a combination of various factors, which existed before the crisis: external factors of increasing competition at the global level and management of complexity and internal factors of demographic developments and EU governance deficit, in particular the lack of economic or fiscal governance.

In carefully managing the global crisis the EU is slowly taking measures for greater economic, fiscal and financial convergent policies, first in the framework of the previous Stability and Growth Pact and now, since January 1st 2013, with the Fiscal Compact (formally the Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance in the Economic and Monetary Union; or more plainly the Fiscal Stability Treaty). Much greater fiscal union, at least in the Eurozone, is seen as a necessary solution to the current European sovereign debt crisis, as well as a natural next step in European integration. As the financial crisis evolved and has turned into the Eurozone debt crisis, deeper integration of the banking system was needed. As of 2014 the emerging European Bank Union consists of a Single Supervisory Mechanism (ECB) and a Single Resolution Mechanism for banks, representing another step towards European financial governance.

- The EU as an international reference or a "model of society"

Two essential and distinctive dimensions of the EU's contribution to global governance can be distinguished: the EU's internal/external influence as a model of national and supranational democracy and its impact on international democratisation.[21]

Since its creation in the 1950s, the European Community and now the EU has played a key role in underpinning and strengthening democratic processes throughout its several enlargements, from the Mediterranean to the Central and Eastern enlargements. Furthermore, the EU represents a regional democratic political integration sui generis. Its regional democratic polity is already offering a twofold international reference of democratic practice: for democracy within the state and for democracy between states.

Finally, for centuries the global implications of the European contribution towards peacebuilding has been addressed by political thought, from Immanuel Kant to Jürgen Habermas. Jean-Marc Ferry analyses the modern cosmopolitan perspective in light of the European structural peace and democratic transnationalism.[22] Even for realist scholars, such as Christopher Hill, the EU is already a regional form of international society,[23] marked by reconciliation, recognition and deep cooperation among former

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[20] 12 Roberts, J.M., The Triumph of the West. The Origin, Rise and Legacy of Western Civilisation, London: Phoenix Press, 1985, p. 278.

[21] Magnette, P. and K. Nicolaïdis, The European Union's Democratic Agenda, in M. Télo, op. cit., p. 43-63.

[22] Ferry, J.-M., Europe, La Voie kantienne: Essai sur l'identité post-nationale, Paris: Cerf, 2005.

[23] Télo, M., op. cit., p.11.

enemies. Some idealist social scientists, such as Ulrich Beck, have professed the EU to be a cosmopolitan Empire within a Westphalian world[24]. Different names have been given by international relations' scholars to the European integration model, mainly stressing its changing characteristics in comparison with the traditional international organisations. [25] All these views and concepts imply new challenges in terms of the distinctive, international European identity, its external policy-making, and its innovative notions of power.

2. Future Paths

If Europe wants to respond adequately to the global challenges and to the newly emerging world order, it needs a strengthened vision and a new storyline.[26] One can point to many possible issues that could become part of such a new storyline. Given the working hypotheses of this first section, one can think of two (interrelated) tracks that could further strengthen Europe's position in the multipolar world of tomorrow: (1) deepening Western integration and (2) acting as a change-agent within the multilateral system.

1) Deepening Integration: the road to European federalism Europe and the EU in particular, has a serious handicap to its ambition of being a global actor. As size matters, both for economic and political power, being divided into a multiplicity of small actors does not help. Of course, it has come a long way since the start of the integration process, after the First World War. But much more needs to be done. Notwithstanding the Euro as common currency, economic policy is still, to a large extent, the national policy of the member states. The same holds for security policy. Although there are EU-wide security policy documents, the major member states still have their own national security strategies.

Increased European integration seems therefore to be the only way forward. Only then will the national interest of all member states become part of the overall European interest. But perhaps an increased European integration will not be enough to counterbalance the fact that Europe's relevance in the world is shrinking. Perhaps even a fully integrated Europe will not be enough to allow the realisation of its global ambitions. In this context, transatlantic relations gain importance. Moreover, since 2001 a primary contextual rationale for articulating a European identity within the EU has increasingly become the idea of a common foreign policy. A new grand project for making Europe a true global player is being forth.[27]

2) Acting as a change-agent in the international system In the emerging new international system world order, states, international and regional organisations, transnational policy networks and non-governmental actors are the building blocks of the multilateral system. In other words, states are merely players amongst others. Moreover, it is no longer possible to make a clear distinction between states and international organisations as some of the latter have statehood properties as well. Furthermore, the interactions between all these actors are not organised in a hierarchical way but in a networked way. This implies that there is no single "centre of the universe" in terms of governance. It also implies that there are no sufficient "spaces of multilateral relations". Instead one can expect a fluid web of multi-stakeholder partnerships between different types of actors at different levels of governance including the regional level.

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[24] Beck, U. and E. Grande, op. cit.
[25] "new, post-Hobbsian order" (Schmitter 1991); "a post-modern state" (Ruggie 1993; Caporaso 1996); "a network of pooling and sharing sovereignty" (Keohane and Hoffmann 1991); "system of multi-level governance" (Hooghe and Marks 2001); "network governance" (Eising and Kohler-Koch 1999).
[26] Fritz-Vannahme, J., Europe's Bold New Story, Spotlight Europe, Bertelsmann Stiftung, no. 4, 2009, p. 1-8.
[27] Kolvraa, Christoffer, Imagining Europe as a Global Player, The new Ideological Construction of a new European Identity within the EU, Brussels: P.I.E. Peter Lang, 2014.

Already in 1997 Moravcsik wrote that "The EU provides the best laboratory for studying theoretical issues only just emerging elsewhere, such as […] binding interstate legislative procedures, multi-level system and legal dispute resolution".[28] For policy makers too, lessons from the EU experience are directly applicable to problems facing the WTO, Mercosur, NAFTA or other internatiomal organisations.

3. European statehood building in a MLG structure

The European Union, as previously stated, proposes itself as a new form of statehood at the international level, in which the adaptation process seems ongoing. Still the architecture of new global and European governance can only be structured according to a scheme of multi-level and supranational governance, linking the territorial and vertical dimension of subsidiarity with its functional and horizontal dimension. In this sense, the EU can be conceived as a container of sustainable statehood, exhibiting a double responsibility, i.e. an internal responsibility to guiding the member states in the process of adaptation and an external responsibility to being a civil actor promoting global governance.

The multi-directional building process of formal and informal governance building in the European and international system assumes various levels of governance (up, down, across and beyond) with institutional, political, educational, sociological and legal consequences. In Europe a four-fold process of cooperation/integration can be observed: the building up of a joint management of pooled sovereignty; the building down to regions within Europe, including some border regions; the building across, that is the fostering and consolidating of ties between groups on a transnational basis, often with an important functional and thematic connotation; and finally the building beyond, in the form of a variety of cooperation agreements in the European and global landscape (such as EU, Mercosur, ASEAN, ECOWAS, AU, NAFTA, Andean Community, G20, etc.). These interlinkages have an impact on changing statehood and governance, illustrating a growing importance of interregional governance relations.

The European Union is a specific regional integration model and a sui generis political system with a European layer, a national and a regional layer with governance implications. These multi-level governance structures have gradually been institutionalised and stepped up by EU practices. In line with the EU's White Paper on European Governance (2001)[29] the Committee of the Regions published in 2009 a White Paper on Multi-level governance[30] reflecting its determination to "build Europe in partnership". The principle of multi-level governance was defined as "coordinated action by the European Union, the Member States and local and regional authorities, based on partnership, taking the form of operational and institutionalised cooperation in the drawing up and implementing of the EU policies[31]. States and regional and local authorities according to the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality and in partnership, in the drawing-up and implementation of the European Union's policies".

Two main strategic objectives were clearly set: encouraging participation in the European process and reinforcing the efficiency of Community action. Several proposals were suggested, such as Regional Action Plans, tools, territorial pacts, inclusive method of coordination, vertical and horizontal partnerships. Regional Practices of European multi-level governance were established. The European Grouping of

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[28] ECSA Review, Vol. X, 1997, no 3, p. 4.
[29] European Commission, White Paper on Governance, 2001;
http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/institutional_affairs/decisionmaking_process/l10109_en.htm
[30] Committee of the Regions, White Paper on Multi-level Governance, 2009;
http://cor.europa.eu/en/activities/governance/Documents/mlg-white-paper/0387_inside-en-last.pdf
[31] CdR 273/2011 fin

Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) was created in 2006[32] as a legal and financial tool to facilitate cross-border, trans-national or inter-regional cooperation; the Committee of the Regions organised in 2008-2010 workshops to strengthen the multi-level governance approach; the launching of a European Union Charter on MLG [33] in May 2014 as a collaborative process. As a follow-up to its 2009 White paper on Multilevel Governance a scoreboard [34] was introduced as a tool to monitor on a yearly basis the development of MLG at European Union level.

III. Multi-level Governance in EU's External Relations

Since its birth in the 1950s, the European Union has been developing relations with the rest of the world through a common policy on trade, development assistance and formal trade and cooperation agreements with individual countries or regional groups. It has become a global player in the changing international economic and political landscape. Its main strategic foreign policy objectives are building of a stable Europe with a strong(er) voice in the world, securing its international competitiveness through promoting global commerce and consolidating its socio-economic model of society. In order to conduct its external relations the EU has a complex institutional and decision-making framework, now fully embedded in the Lisbon Treaty.

The EU foreign policy is contextualised in a European and global setting. We first focus on the main characteristics of its external relations, in particular the phased development of the EU common foreign and security policy. Secondly, we propose an assessment of the EU external relations from the human-centric perspective as was explained earlier, referring to the basic fundamentals of the human rights paradigm, the cosmopolitan perspective of multi-level governance and the global public goods approach.

1) Main characteristics: a dynamic management of the EU's external relations

The EU is a globally important trade power, still accounting for nearly 20 % of global exports and imports and generating one quarter of global wealth. Open trade among members of the EU has led to the so-called single European market with freedom of movement for people, goods, services and capital. The Union has always taken the lead in pushing for further trade liberalisation at world level. Therefore trade sanctions (such as removing trade preferences or limiting or freezing trade with a partner in breach of human rights or other international standards of behaviour) have always been tools of European foreign policy.

The EU has always been a generous provider of aid to developing countries in various ways. Development assistance and cooperation, originally concentrated in Africa, was extended to Asia, Latin America and the southern and eastern Mediterranean countries in the mid-1970s. The special trade and aid relationship between the EU and the 79 countries of the African-Caribbean-Pacific (ACP) group dates from the Lomé Agreements of 1975. This relationship is now being further developed through the 'economic partnership agreements' (EPA), combining EU trade and aid in a new way. The ACP countries are encouraged to foster economic integration with regional neighbours as a step towards their global integration, while more aid is focused on institution-building and good governance. Under the EPA the development dimension has

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[32] European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) https://portal.cor.europa.eu/egtc/Pages/welcome.aspx
[33] http://cor.europa.eu/en/activities/governance/Pages/charter-for-multiLevel-governance.aspx

[34] So far two editions of the Scoreboard have been produced, covering the period 2010-2012. Each of these scoreboards provides a comparative assessment of the MLG performance at EU level under four priority policy strategies of the EU; See http://cor.europa.eu/en/activities/governance/Pages/mlg-scoreboard.aspx

become the cornerstone of the EU-ACP relationship. Through its external aid programmes, managed by Europe Aid, the EU and its Member States still provide more than half of all official development assistance and two thirds of grant aid. The primary objective of EU development cooperation is the eradication of poverty in the context of sustainable development, including the pursuit of the millennium development goals. .

The EU began providing humanitarian aid to those in need around the world in the 1970s. Assistance is unconditional: it does not matter whether the disaster is natural or man-made. The aim is to get help to the victims as quickly as possible, irrespective of their race, religion or the political convictions of their government. The EU channels emergency relief funding through the Commission's European Community Humanitarian Office, its humanitarian aid department (ECHO). Since it was set up in 1992, ECHO has been active in more than 100 countries around the world, getting essential equipment and emergency supplies to disaster victims as soon as possible. From its budget of more than € 700 million a year, ECHO also funds medical teams, mine-clearance experts, transport and communications, food aid and logistical support.

2) EU Foreign and Security Policy

1) Global Context: challenges

The complexities of the globalising world and various acute policy dilemmas (the Ukraine crisis, the Mediterranean turmoil with dramatic refugee flows and IS- slaughters, etc.) challenge the pursuit of the five EU foreign policy objectives (i.e. the encouragement of regional cooperation, the advancement of human rights, the promotion of democracy and good governance, the prevention of violent conflicts and the fight against international crime, including terrorism).

The world has increasingly become globalised and interdependent. There is a permanent tensed interaction between the global trends (i.e. global politics, global economy and global culture) and global threats (i.e. economic and social inequality , environmental degradation, climate change and global warming and organised crime and terrorism). A new multi-polar world is emerging where power is more diffuse, international dynamics more complex and management of global goods and bads the major challenge. It is within this context that the EU has to face up the world's dramatic transformations and develop its foreign policy. The thematic priorities refer to enhanced EU credibility in conflict prevention, crisis management and peace building, a broad, comprehensive and UN legitimised policy of fighting against terrorism, a structured support for the International Criminal Court, a normative Human Rights policy, credible security guarantees for non-proliferation and stronger controls against arms export.

The EU is also facing new challenges. Global warming is one of the main environmental, social and economic challenges facing humanity. The Lisbon Treaty identifies measures to tackle these problems. One of the Union's objectives is to promote sustainable development in Europe, based on a high-level of environmental protection and enhancement. Measures are promoted at international level to tackle regional or global environmental problems, in particular climate change. Europe also has to guarantee secure, competitive and clean sources of energy. The Lisbon Treaty clarifies and complements the rules governing energy policy in the current Treaties with a new section on energy. The EU has taken the international lead in seeking to limit the effects of global warming by cutting its carbon emissions and greenhouse gas emissions In this area. Its objective is to ensure that the energy market functions well, in particular as regards energy supply, and to ensure energy efficiency and energy savings as well as the development of new and renewable energy sources.

2) Human-centric Assessment

The impact of the Treaty of Lisbon provisions on the EU foreign and security policy can be assessed, using as reference points the building blocks of the human-centric approach to sustainable statehood, i.e. the human rights paradigm, the cosmopolitan perspective and the public goods' focus . The Lisbon Treaty strengthens citizen's rights from the human rights perspective, renews the democratic fundamentals of the European Union in a globalising world and introduces a greater concern for the public good.

- Human Rights and Citizenship

The European Union sees human rights as universal and indivisible. It actively promotes and defends them both within its borders and when engaging in relations with non-EU countries. Human rights, democracy and the rule of law are core values of the European Union's external relations. Embedded in its founding Treaty, they were reinforced when the EU adopted the Charter of Fundamental Rights in 2000, and strengthened still further when the Charter became legally binding with the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009.

Article 21 of the Treaty on European Union reaffirmed the EU's determination to promote human rights and democracy through all its external actions. The Union's action on the international scene shall be guided by the principles which have inspired its own creation […] and which it seeks to advance in the wider world: democracy, the rule of law, the universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for human dignity. It implies that countries seeking to join the EU must respect human rights. Furthermore, all trade and cooperation agreements with third countries contain a clause stipulating that human rights are an essential element in relations between the parties. In other words, Human Rights have become an explicit EU Foreign Policy Objective.

The Union's human rights policy encompasses civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. It also seeks to promote the rights of women, of children, of those persons belonging to minorities, and of displaced persons. With a budget of €1.1 billion between 2007 and 2013, the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights supported non-governmental organisations. In particular it supported those promoting human rights, democracy and the rule of law; abolishing the death penalty; combating torture; and fighting racism and other forms of discrimination.

- Cosmopolitan perspective of EU

The cosmopolitan perspective refers to the place and role of the EU in the world. The EU has to defend its interests in a changing world order. Defending responsible interdependence requires in turn a world where the mayor players support and agree to work within a system of multilateral governance. Therefore, the Union needs to become a much more assertive player on the international scene. From increasing Europe's competitiveness in its external economic relations to advancing in the knowledge society and providing its citizens with freedom and security, the challenges at stake are global. It needs to become a driving force in shaping new rules of global governance. The Lisbon Treaty has reinforced the principles on which the Union's action is based: democracy, the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for human dignity and the principles of equality and solidarity.

Moreover, the reinforcement of actors involved in EU foreign affairs might help to develop an EU approach to global governance reform that responds to the cosmopolitan view. The institutional strengthening of the position of High Representative of the Union for Foreign and Security Policy should lend greater consistency

to the Union's external action beyond national borders and increase its visibility worldwide. The High Representative has also access to an external action service which should favour a more effective implementation of the policies of the Union and its Member States. Finally, the President of the European Council represents the Union at international level on issues associated with the common foreign and security policy, adding to the gradual cosmopolitisation of the EU multi-level governance structure in external relations.

Europe is thus perceived as a new kind of transnational, cosmopolitan, quasi-state structure, which draws its political strength precisely from the affirmation and management of diversities. In reality, this requires a political Europe that seeks to reconstitute its power at the intersection of global, national, regional and local systems of governance. Its application to the practice of European governance suggests that the EU is a multilayered system of decision-making in dealing with complex problems in the European and global risk society. Such a forward-looking vision of a state structure should be firmly based on the recognition and integration of differences. It implies that the institutional distribution of competences is not based on a territorial dimension but on functional and issue related criteria. The result is the emergence of complex and hybrid systems of governance and policy networks, termed by Jeremy Rifkin in his "European dream" as the characteristics of a soft world power.[35]

- Global/European Public Goods and social democracy and responsibility

Article 2 of the Lisbon Treaty defines explicitly and clearly the values on which the Union is founded: "*respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail*". Respect for them is not only a condition sine-qua- non for EU membership but should also be a guiding line for developing a common strategy in EU's external relations.

Much is related to Europe's role and responsibility at global level. The globalisation of an increasingly unipolar world urges Europe to claim a bigger role in the global governance structures and to start speaking with one single voice. Europe has the responsibility to conduct a more daring and coherent common security and foreign policy and, subsequently, actually favour a culture of peace, genuine dialogue, solidarity and sustainable development. This seems not be easy, given the present international developments and diverging viewpoints. Still a modest institutional step was made by the Treaty of Lisbon: it created the function of a High Representative of Foreign affairs of the Union, who is also the vice-president of the European Commission. With a courageous foreign policy Europe can develop to a strong and trustful partner in a multilateral world order through a series of new cooperation structures. Of course this requires the pursuit of common strategies in high priority foreign policy areas with the international law framework.

The provision of European pubic goods is also very much related to the concept of social democracy. The Lisbon Treaty has stepped up the Union's social objectives and introduced new social concepts in European law and policy-making. At the heart of the European Union is a distinctive economic and social model, now referred to as a sustainable social market economy. The Union has to work towards the social dimension of sustainable development, based on balanced economic growth, price stability and a highly competitive social market economy, with the aim of achieving economic and social progress. This also implies a careful applied consideration of the social dimension of the globalisation process in its external relations.

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[35] Rifkin, J., The European Dream, Cambridge, Polity Press, 2004.

Conclusion

Europe has the moral responsibility to defend its values and principles of solidarity, tolerance, democracy in the needy but open dialogue between cultures and peoples within and outside Europe. This requires a change in mentality, much imagination and an active thinking and acting from the basis, but also political leadership and particularly an education that focuses on learning to responsibility. However, the question has to be put (the answer is unsure) if Europe within a further unifying European economic space can guarantee an acceptable common institutional basis in which states, regions and communities can live their diversity (guarantee of internal solidarity) and if Europe can offer an open societal model within the process of further globalisation (guarantee of external solidarity versus the European fortress)

The challenge for further European integration is the search for a new equilibrium between diversity and unity in a globalising world. The European model should take into account the economic, historic, social and political changes which are taken place at the international level, but it must be faithful to its principles of internal and external solidarity.

In short, Europe is in need of bridge builders who can concretely complete the rhetoric of the European story and the European ideals of peace, unity in diversity, freedom and solidarity and mobilise the young people for the European model of society. The role of education is herein fundamental. It also assumes that new forms and places of dialogue, active citizenship and cooperation can develop outside the existing institutionalised structures of representative representation. The European civil society becomes emancipated and develops opportunities in the globalising society through which persons, peoples and cultures within and outside Europe can meet peacefully and respectfully.

In line with the Report to the European Council by the Reflection Group on the Future of the EU 2030 (May 2010) globalisation and re-balancing of power in the world provide an important new rationale for joint EU action on the global scene. This requires political courage, collective ambition, solid pragmatism and a clear sense of a community of shared values and ideals. The Lisbon Treaty has introduced some political and legal changes, which may be further steps towards the developments of the EU as a global, responsible and cosmopolitan player in the rapidly changing international political landscape.