Robert Schuman Centre

Paradoxes of European Foreign Policy

The European Union' Performance in World Politics: How Should We Measure Success?

KNUD ERIK JØRGENSEN

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Jørgensen: *Paradoxes of European Foreign Policy. The European Union's Performance in World Politics: How Should We Measure Success?*

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The European Union's Performance in World Politics: How Should We Measure Success?

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Notions like 'success,' 'failure,' and 'progress' have accompanied the EPC/CFSP process since it was launched in the late 1960s, and they are likely to remain a part of the on-going political process.[1] Like its predecessors, the 1996-1997 intergovernmental conference (IGC) resolutions are bound to be discussed in these terms. It is not surprising, then, that studies of Europe's common foreign policy are also scattered with references to international successes and failures. Indeed, academics and other observers have been eager to describe and explain the EC/EU's successes and failures. These explanations may be fair or unfair, appropriate or inappropriate assessments of events, developments, and responses. But how can we distinguish good assessments from poor ones? One approach suggests that analysts identify clear criteria for both success and failure, then make two lists, one for the EU's foreign policy successes and another for its failures - and subsequently write a balanced analysis. Ideally, the approach requires a fairly high number of detailed case studies, and should differentiate between different sectors, such as external economic relations, diplomatic relations, and military affairs. One also could require an assessment of the impact on various international events and developments. But even a complete guideline would not allow me to address the issue I want to raise. This paper's focus[*] is on the sources from which observers draw to support their conclusions about international successes and failures. In particular, it strikes me that the criteria used to distinguish success from failure rarely have been considered or presented in explicit terms. On the following pages, instead of creating my own yardstick or analysing yardsticks developed by others, I want to inquire into the nature of the yardsticks themselves. I begin by asking; from where should our standard of measurement come? Basically, three sources seem available: 1) from the actors involved in the political process, 2) from outside observers; and finally, 3) from some sort of combination of the two. After discussing the three options, I demonstrate how we can gain insight about standards of success by employing an inside/outside distinction, that is, by considering how the EPC/CFSP function inside and outside the EU. Next, I argue that comparison is a powerful measurement standard and offer two types of comparisons: one informed by a time perspective, and one including non-EU international actors. In the subsequent section, I change from a deconstructive to a constructive approach, i.e., I present six suggestions for studying the success, failure, and progress of EU performance in world politics.[2] Thus, I do not point out problems without suggesting solutions.

[*] I would like to thank Ulla Holm and Jan Zielonka for valuable comments on a previous draft of the article. The usual disclaimer applies.

Who should provide standards of measurement?

In my view, any EU observer should contemplate whether success criteria can and should be externally defined. In other words, should analysts knit together various objective standards? or should we use standards that policy makers find relevant and appropriate for the analysis of *their* political aims and achievements, *their* successes and failures? or should we use a mixture of both? I would argue that CFSP analysts on the whole have been too inclined to use self-made standards. Their standards have been predominantly implicit, that is, they have not presented in explicit terms the pros and cons of their analytical frameworks. I do not suggest that from now on we should depend solely on standards defined by the actors involved - if the Council of Foreign Ministers decides that a certain policy has been a great success, obviously, analysts should be free to disagree. Why, then, do I argue that we have been too inclined to use objective standards? Simply because, in John G. Ruggie's convincing words,

> there exists no Archimedean point from which regimes can be viewed as they 'truly' are. In the final analysis, the 'reality' of regimes resides in the principled and shared understandings of desirable and acceptable forms of behaviour among the relevant actors. Adaptations to new and unforeseen developments, attenuating circumstances, the rationales and justifications for deviations that are proffered, as well as the responsiveness to such reasoning on the part of other states, all are critical in assessing the efficacy of regimes.[3]

Though Ruggie and Kratochwil write about international regimes, their observation clearly applies to our analysis of the European Union's performance in world politics.

Drawing from intersubjective 'principled and shared understandings' has very important consequences both for research design and research findings. For example, if the aim of the EPC during the 1970s was simply for the actors involved to get to know each other and create 'procedure as substitute for policy'[4] then we can celebrate the success of EPC's first decade. But, the outsider analyst taking the rhetoric at face value or dreaming about a European superpower would necessarily be deeply disappointed and would conclude from the empirical findings that the EPC was, on the whole, a failure. There are similar examples in the 1980s and 1990s: if the purpose of declaratory diplomacy during the 1980s was to give Europe's citizens some 'comfort' in believing that European governments were doing something about the problem of superpower tension,[5] then the policy was not at all a failure. At least to some degree, Europe's public was reassured and 'felt' better. Yet, if the purpose of declaratory diplomacy was to influence world politics, 'to give Western Europe a greater say in international politics,'[6] or to have an impact on the developments in the Middle East, South Africa, or other hot spots, then the success was limited, at best.

Similarly, it is interesting to note how differently the EU's institutions have assessed the work of the CFSP, in preparation for the IGC 1996-1997. It is noteworthy that the Council of Minister's evaluation of the CFSP is not at all that negative.[7] True, it acknowledges that not everything worked as well as the Council had hoped and that there have been 'shortcomings.' Yet, the Council contends that certain unfortunate developments are due to the irresponsible behaviour of the European Parliament, which has tried to conquer some turf in EU's inter-institutional power game. By contrast, the European Commission's report is highly critical of the current functioning of the CFSP. European Commissioner Hans van den Broek claims that the CFSP experience has been, quite simply, a big disappointment.[8] A similar analysis was presented in an *International Herald Tribune* article[9] with the telling title: 'Much Distress in Europe Over Talk, Talk, Talk.' I wonder whether the article described the state of CFSP affairs at the time, or was a carefully designed, informal contribution to the IGC process (if things are as described in the article, institutional reform is an imperative if CFSP is to survive).

One common method of measuring the EU's successes and failures is to use the EU's declared aims and objectives as a point of departure.[10] It is often used in public policy analysis, especially when dealing with implementation. In connection with the CFSP, however, there are a number of problems with using the method. First, Title V in the Treaty on the European Union lists the five principal objectives of the CFSP:

- safeguarding the common values, fundamental interests and independence of the Union;
- strengthening its security;
- preserving peace and strengthening international security;
- promoting international cooperation;
- developing and consolidating democracy and the rule of law, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms

It would be fairly difficult to attempt to measure whether or not these objectives have been met, and it could easily become a meaningless exercise.

Second, even when the EU states clearly and explicitly its objectives serious problems may still arise when attempting to evaluate its success. The EU's policy of applying economic sanctions on ex-Yugoslavia is an illustrative

example. When they were introduced in the autumn of 1991, economic sanctions were used as a coercive instrument to get Serbia to sign a peace agreement. Presumably, since Serbia did not sign, coercive diplomacy failed. However, the function of the sanctions was later changed from a coercive measure to playing a punitive function, and also represented EC solidarity. In other words, the policy became an end in itself rather than a means to a particular goal. As time passed, the sanctions became more difficult to lift because they constituted a sensitive part of EU policy making; they were used as placebo politics by EU politicians who opposed military intervention. This example illustrates how clearly stated policy objectives can change though the policy's name and substance remain the same. Was the EU's use of sanctions in ex-Yugoslavia, then, a success or a failure? The answer is easy - the question is wrong.[11]

Third, there are examples where policy outcomes perfectly match previously stated objectives, but where the full achievement of objectives constitutes a policy disaster. Unintended consequences and changed circumstances can be mentioned as possible explanations for policy disasters. The deployment of NATO mid-range missiles in the early 1980s can serve as an example. Deployment was put on the agenda in 1977 as an optional solution to Europe's lack of confidence in the American nuclear security guarantee. At that time, superpower relations were in a détente mode. But, when the missiles were deployed in the early 1980s, superpower relations had changed into an unstable tension mode. Missile deployment obviously added to this tension, in part because the rationale for deployment had been changed: it seemed to be a response to the deployment of Soviet SS20 missiles. In the late 1980s, however, when a mid-range missile disarmament agreement was signed by NATO and the Soviet Union, the SS20 rationale disappeared and the policy reintroduced the transatlantic nuclear linkage problem. Thus, the policy did not solve problems - it created them. In other words, despite full implementation we got a policy failure.

In sum, I have serious doubts about the conventional, one dimensional analytical procedure. My argument is not that it is always impossible and futile to judge the EU by its own declared and explicit objectives. I hope to point out only that it is not always a straightforward task.

Success on the Inside and the Outside

A well-known method of evaluating EU performance is to list examples of non-compliance with its policies, the incongruity of the EU's words and deeds, its lack of influence in world politics, and its tradition of inaction.[12] Of course, the predictable conclusion of such studies is that EU failures are emphasised more

than its successes. The point I want to raise is not whether this method is fair or unfair, but rather to point out that inevitably we measure outcomes against imagined and qualitatively 'better' outcomes. Take the tradition of EU 'inaction.' In this context, Weiler and Wessels have argued interestingly that Europe's long-lasting vice of inaction can also be seen as a virtue. They emphasise the obstructive function of the EPC and argue that as a result, Europe has avoided getting itself dragged into all sorts of trouble: 'Europe has managed - through its procrastination, mixed responses, apparent confusion and ambiguous outputs of EPC - to sail through a host of international crises in the last two decades with no significant damage done to her chief economic and trade interests nor to her stability and security interests.'[13] Although a full-blooded functionalist would appreciate the functionalist perspective embedded in this view, it raises our awareness of the different possible objectives of the EPC/CFSP. In other words, if Europe aims to conduct its foreign policy in this ungraceful, muddling-through style, is there any reason to expect the straightforward, 'vulgar' policy style of a superpower?

Many observers seem to take for granted that the EPC/CFSP exists solely to meet external challenges. Yet, when we move our attention from the 'outside' to the 'inside' effects of EPC/CFSP, we see that there are legitimate reasons to doubt that assumption. Keukeleire[14] argues that the domestic function of European integration was and is to preserve peace and stability in Western Europe. Following this line of reasoning we can conclude that, while the CFSP may be less successful in solving problems outside the EU, it has been very successful as a shock-absorbing mechanism - protecting outside conflicts from causing problems internally. Thus, if CFSP policies and procedures were designed with this function in mind, it is quite irrelevant when an observer, applying various objective standards of measurement to the external effects of CFSP, declares it a 'failure.'

Two other versions of EU 'inside' stories belong to the field of European public administration. The first version concerns the survival and adaptation of national foreign ministries. Most diplomats probably deplore the fact that foreign ministries are largely ignored in studies of EU foreign policy. When reading the exceptions to this rule, we learn that the establishment of the EPC was based in part on the idea that national foreign ministries would lose their pre-eminent role in national foreign policy making if they were not 'Europeanised.'[15] Evidence confirms that most foreign ministries in EU member states have retained a 'coordinating' role in the process of national preference formation, i.e., 'Europeanisation' seems to have been successful: the foreign ministries have been able to fend off other ministry's attempts to conquer their turf. It is also noteworthy that foreign ministries have not been scaled down in terms of

personnel or budgets. An in-depth study of foreign ministry adaptation reveals the degree to which ministries - to paraphrase di Lampedusa - have changed everything in order to keep everything as it is.[16] It is also worth considering Moravcsik's argument that European integration strengthens the executive branches of the state.[17] A similar argument has been made concerning the control of foreign policy making, and currently it is accepted widely that national parliaments have lost ground to the executive, including, of course, its administrative level. Again, had strengthening the executive branch of each member state been among EU objectives, there would be reason to celebrate its great success.

Finally, another problem arises when we follow the reasoning - so common in recent literature - that international institutions serve, at least partly, a scapegoat function. The theory goes that institutions exist to take the blame for failures, while politicians from member states exist to be credited with policy successes. For example, the European Commission could do a good job, successfully promote a genuine common foreign policy, and be more active than expected, but regardless of its success, the Council of Ministers or national capitals, could choose not to see it as a success when it suits their interests to do so. It is time to put on the brakes. What can an analyst do in this paradoxical situation when the apparent success becomes a failure in 'reality'?

How success is influenced by time perspectives

Teleology in Practice. The observer's image of a desirable conclusion to European integration can have a significant impact on definitions of EU success. In other words, strategic vision can have a powerful impact on analysis. The 'United States of Europe'-minded observer is therefore bound to view the EPC/CFSP as a failure because it is not a genuine foreign policy and a genuine foreign ministry has not been established. This is a perfect example of today's CFSP being judged by its imagined performance in the future: if institutional dynamics do not point in the direction of a particular end point of European integration, the observer can only conclude, with affliction and frustration, that so far success has been absent. Sometimes, the telos-informed analysis is backed by an apocalyptic vision of the future, if the EU does not adopt their proposed policy prescriptions.[18] All in all, it is a very powerful diagnostic package.

Escape from the Past. Some observers are in their analysis strongly influenced by certain images of Europe's negative past. This is one of the real classic schools of thought.[19] Similar thinking most likely prompts Keukeleire to state that, 'The European integration process can be considered as one of the most

successful conflict management operations in 20th century European history.'[20] When the Secretary-General of the Western European Union, José Cutileiro, argues that the organisation serves as a guardian against the revival of an ugly past, he provides a similar example. In theoretical terms, the argument equals what Mearsheimer criticises as 'the promise of institutionalism,'[21] that is, the idea that European institutions mitigate potential conflicts among European states and help them redefine their identities and interests. The problem with the institutional success argument is that it is extremely difficult first to isolate different explanatory factors and then rank their explanatory power. Thus, has the EU single-handedly succeeded in mitigating conflicts between EU member states? or was it NATO? Could it have been the balance of power - as the crudest version of realism would have it? Or did the existence of 'peace-loving' democracies in Western Europe - as some Kantians would argue - lead to 50 years of peace in Western Europe? Basically, we do not know. It is very difficult to obtain conclusive answers and, by extension, to credit specific institutions for the long peace.

Those Were the Days. Brian Breedham[22] raises the question, 'where has Europe's power gone?' But why does he ask this question? Well for starters, he notes that Europe did not have much to say at the so-called Europe-Asia Summit in February 1996. Secondly, he asserts that 'Europe of 1996 stumbles around the world in a daze,' it did not intervene in the rows between Greece and Turkey, it 'missed the main point' of the disaster in the former Yugoslavia; and he reports that to 'a visitor coming to Europe from Washington or Tokyo, the foreign policy horizon of most European politicians remains astonishingly narrow.' Explanations for this state of affairs are offered too. One reason is that 'It takes a long time for a wounded continent to recover from a century like this,' another is that Europe has no common will to 'drive the machinery.' because a common will requires that Europeans 'see the world in roughly the same way.' In my view, Breedham's analysis contains an interesting diagnosis and includes powerful explanatory factors. In fact, it is more strategically framed than many of the other studies on the topic. Yet, it remains curious to me that Europe's present external relations are compared with its glorious past, when Europe was the undisputed centre of the world - 'Britannia rules the wave' and all that. In other words, should we expect failure upon failure until that glorious past is eventually re-established? If so, it's going to be a long, long, frustrating wait. Furthermore, what would a success story look like: would internal disagreements completely disappear? Would member states never 'go it alone,' become non-compliant, or stick to their own idiosyncratic world views?[23] Would the European Union intervene in every crisis around the world? Would the Western European Union send the marines? Should good old *Clemenceau*, the French aircraft carrier, plough the waters of the South China Sea?

The Worst is yet to Come. Many analysts seem to have a positive attitude towards the EPC/CFSP. But while some project high aspirations for their object of study, other analysts are informed by what they regard as a very negative Utopia. Though Johan Galtung did not write specifically about the CFSP, he can, nonetheless, serve as a representative for this analytical tendency. In *The European Community: A Superpower in the Making*, he argues that the EC is destined to become a superpower, which is about the worst thing Galtung can imagine.[24] Because Galtung's analysis of the present is highly consistent with his nightmarish visions of the future, it is hardly surprising that Galtung offers a very negative assessment of the EC's role in the ex-Yugoslavia.[25] The EU is *a priori* stigmatised by this event and no matter what the EU did or did not do it was bound to be perceived negatively. Galtung shares his views with a considerable part of the Nordic peace research community.

Cassandra's Problem. In Greek mythology, Cassandra, the daughter of Priam and Hecuba, manages to manoeuvre herself into a situation where she possesses the power of prophecy. But her prophecies were never believed. The CFSP community is full of Cassandras. Along these lines, I would like to add that the image of a bleak future opposes to the *Worse is to Come* option. In other words, the problem is not that the EU is a new international actor, it is the lack of EU responsiveness. Analysts of the Cassandra breed see the problems of the future, problems that require CFSP action in the present. A plan of action unfortunately remains absent, which prompts analysts to conclude that the CFSP is a fatal failure. But, as a Danish poet reminds us, the pleasure of being proven right in a pessimistic forecast is short and bitter.[26] In the political sphere, Cassandra-like analysis was common in the late 1980s, when Jacques Delors kept insisting that 'History doesn't wait, we have to act.' Similarly, very soon we can expect that the 'demands' of the 21st century will enter into various CFSP studies - in fact, the first has already appeared.[27] Jacques Delors's approach is also interesting for its blending of concepts of past and future. Not only did he act like a technocratic Cassandra, but he also entered into discussions about neo-medievalism with historians like Jacques le Goff, that is, neo-medievalism as a diagnosis of the near future.

How is the Contemporary World? We need not limit our attention to the influence of various imagined futures and pasts. Similarly, the present is a time frame with its own powerful ways of influencing our analysis. According to Duchêne's classical prescriptive analysis, the EC *is* and *ought* to continue to be a 'civilian power.'[28] Any attempt to merge civilian and military dimensions in the process of European integration must therefore be seen by Duchêne, not as a success, but as something to be avoided. Bull basically agrees with Duchêne that Europe is 'civilian' yet disagrees with the prescriptive conclusion[29]. Bull regards

Duchêne's concept of 'civilian power' to be a contradiction in terms, and proposes that the EC should develop its military power. If the EC does not, he asserts, it will never become a successful international actor.

A different version is provided by conjunctural analysis. A perfect example emerged around the time of the fall of the Berlin Wall. The New World Order *in statu nascendi* was supposed widely to be an ideal context for an international actor like the EC, if not because 'power' was expected to disappear altogether, then because military power was expected to be outmoded and replaced by economic-political power. Yet, instead of an ideal foreign policy environment for the EU, an expectation capability gap emerged,[30] and frustration and pessimism became a widespread outlook, fuelling the well-known European optimism-pessimism cycle.

Dynamic conceptions present a different perspective from which we can measure success. The following concepts all connote change and progress: *plateau*, *saut qualitatif* and *acquis politique*. Regelsberger introduced the concept 'plateau' in order to argue that the EPC and CFSP has become more ambitious over time.[31] Similarly, Schoutheete argues that it was the limited ambition of the EPC's founders to define a 'common denominator' between the fairly diverse sets of national foreign policy traditions and that the EPC became 'the expression of the common denominator'.[32] Later on, higher ambitions were introduced and EPC reached a higher plateau. Thus, when we allow dynamic processes to enter our framework for analysis it becomes clear that what constitutes success at T1 easily can become a failure at T2. Goodwin adds further complexity to our measurement when he writes in the following succinctly framed terms, 'However, a good deal of this [EPC] activity [until 1977] has been procedural in nature rather than substantive and at times such modest progress as has been achieved has been extolled beyond its due, if only to conceal the lack of progress on the internal side.'[33] Following, if not actually founding, a conventional analytical fashion, he notes the procedural character of early EPC, yet he also notes that limited EPC progress has been exploited to cover even more limited progress in communautarian affairs. What is certain is that it becomes extremely difficult to distinguish success from failure.

Comparisons with other actors

For Better or Worse. Comparison with other actors is sometimes assumed to be an appropriate method for gaining insights about success and failure. But who are the relevant actors to include in our analysis? What is comparable? Some consider the US to be the obvious 'other.' One example is Birch and Scott who

analyse European defence integration. Thus, when reading Birch and Scott, we learn, among other things, that Europe's 'most serious weakness, however, stems from a lack of fleet carriers' and that 'Europe's need for a satisfactory airlift wing is acute, as combined national capabilities are not impressive.'[34] That may be true, but what defence missions require a carrier fleet? what causes the 'acute need' for an airlift wing? what is 'satisfactory' and 'impressive'? What imagined conflict theatres demand a significantly strengthened European airlift wing? Why does it make sense to compare Europe to the US, given that the US armed forces in a global context is a one-of-a-kind force, some 20-30 years ahead of any armed force in the global 2nd division. In other words, Birch and Scott's analysis may be very precise in its identification of problems in contemporary European defence policy, but some of the failures seem only to exist because the US is used as the standard for comparison.

However, not only the US is used for comparison. Note the fashion in which Commissioner van den Broek slips, *en passant*, comparisons in time and between actors into his analysis,

> Either the Union will be enlarged as a genuinely integrated structure, bound by common interests, based on unity, while respecting the diversity of the Member States, and speaking with one voice in world affairs; or a wider Union will become a kind of Congress of Europe, with little internal coherence and, consequently, little external clout; a largely intergovernmental organisation, slow at taking decisions, fragmented in its policies, and unable to compete on a equal basis with the USA, Japan and the world's other major powers.[35]

Other analysts compare the actions of the European Union to those of individual member states. For example, Ludlow argues that in its policy on Yugoslavia, the European Community was 'condemned to succeed by one basic fact, which is that the member states have long reached the limits of their power in circumstances such as the Yugoslav crisis - they may scream at their Community but if they did not do it through that instrument they will not do it through any other.'[36] In this context, the point is not so much whether Ludlow's argument is valid or not, but that he makes his argument by way of comparison.[37]

A somewhat different comparison is made by a diplomat, quoted by Tonra: 'what's more important for a (minor) state; to move the policy of the Twelve, with their enormous economic and political weight two or three inches, or to run ahead a mile with little or no real impact?'[38] In this example, criteria for success depend on whether policies are designed with the actual impact on external environments in mind, or designed for the well-being of policy makers and their domestic audiences. If success equals influence, there can be no doubt about the

answer. Yet if the prime aim of policy is to celebrate one's 'self', then it probably feels wonderful to be a mile ahead.

Comparisons between the European Union and member states can also be presented in different ways and lead to different conclusions. The excessive expectations that the European Union would be the significant new international actor is an obvious point of departure. These were really 'puzzling' expectations, given that the two former imperial European states, France and the UK, have been declining for years, and that Germany only acquired full sovereignty in the early 1990s, and that a well-informed observer writes about 'declining immobilismo' in Italian foreign policy[39] and another about the tradition of *isolationism* in Spanish foreign policy,[40] and that minor states are usually just that in international affairs. Given all these factors, how can anyone expect that the fore-mentioned actors could be able to provide the impetus for a qualitative leap into great-power status on the international scene?

Should the EU be Compared with Other International Organisations? If we take a look at the EU's own position on this issue, it is noteworthy that there has been a certain pronounced reluctance to enter into comparisons with other international organisations. The reason seems to be that such an endeavour runs counter to the claim that the EU is a *unique*, *sui generis* institution. A clear conception of *exceptionalism* is at play here.[41] In connection with this view, it is sometimes claimed that the EU experience has been so successful in Europe that it can function as a role model, and be exported to other regions needing integration, democracy, and progress.

When the EU actually does engage in comparing itself to other international organisations, it tends foremost to see different categories of institutions. The EU seems to regard most international institutions as arenas for EU action. This is, in essence, an elevated model of the familiar concept of member state-EU relations. In a sense, the metaphor 'concentric circles' expresses the relationship between the EU *actor* and the international organisation *arenas*. The actor-arena relationship applies in the UN (minus the Security Council) and the OSCE, in which the EU, as often as possible, presents itself as a unitary actor. For various reasons it is more tricky for the EU to do so in NATO. The then-Assistant Secretary of State, Richard Holbrooke, provides one reason: 'an inescapable but little realised fact: the United States has become a European power in a sense that goes beyond traditional assertions of America's 'commitment' to Europe. In the 21st century, Europe will still need the active American involvement that has been a necessary component of the continental balance for half a century.'[42] The prime multilateral framework for this American

'presence' has been, and continues to be, NATO. How it works in practice has been summarised concisely by Michael Brenner.[43]

In some cases, other international organisations are seen as being inferior to the EU, as something the EU must resist being degenerated into. For example, EFTA has been regarded as a mere 'free trade area' and, as noted above, Hans van den Broek warns against the EU becoming 'a kind of Congress of Europe.' Conceptions of success and failure are here, for once, spelled out in clear language. Current debates on flexibility vs. coherence precisely determine the Union's identity between member states and international organisations.

From deconstruction to construction

Some may think that this paper so far has a more deconstructive than encyclopaedic nature. My aim has been to deconstruct a few key terms that are widely used in studies of European Union performance in world politics. I hope to have demonstrated that the use of these terms tends to obscure things more than necessary. So, is my argument that everything is relative? In a sense, yes, but I hasten to add that one should remember the difference between *is* and *ought*. The rationale of the paper has been to demonstrate just how casually and implicitly these key terms are used. In that sense, everything *is* relative, and the paper can be seen as a plea to change this current state of affairs.

Hence, to paraphrase Lenin: what ought to be done? I limit myself to six suggestions. First, in order to present the actually existing relativism in CFSP research, I have been forced to point out the existence of these 'multiple realities'. I know that this term makes some scholars allergic to, paradoxically, relativism, Cartesian anxiety, and related evils.[44] Nonetheless, I think we can change this into our advantage. Hence, I contend that a first step to get a better understanding of the European Union's performance in world politics is to acknowledge the existence of multiple realities. And actually, it is a less radical, and indeed a more common sense idea than many science-minded scholars are ready to accept. Note, for instance, how Christopher Tugendhat describes his experience as an EC Commissioner:

> To attempt a description of the European Community is rather like trying to explain a psychic experience. It exists on so many different planes: the one on which it presents itself; the way in which politicians try to mould it; the actual; and the potential. The overlap between them is often small, and the first two vie with each other in unreality.[45]

As the quotation demonstrates, a practitioner like Tugendhat does not reject the idea of multiple realities, so why should scholars? Furthermore, it may comfort some that the idea of multiple realities has strong philosophical and sociological underpinnings.[46] I cannot possibly outline all the lines of argument which can be deduced from such a constructivist stance. Yet, in the previous section, I have demonstrated the existence of multiple realities within the sphere of European foreign affairs. It seems plausible to me that a link between these observations and the general idea can be constructed by some of Searle's theoretical constructs: theory of speech acts, of intentionality, and of rule governed behaviour. However, that is for another occasion and for others to demonstrate.

My second suggestion logically follows the first. Having accepted the idea of multiple realities, the next step will be to identify the most prominent realities in the sphere of European foreign affairs. Imagine a spectrum of conceptions ranging from 'flat denial of EU performance,' over denigration of the EU's international 'actorness,' to the euphoric enthusiasm displayed from 1989 to 1990; expect differences between conceptions held in national capitals, European institutions, and external actors who either recognise or do not recognise the EU as an international actor; and note the advantage of applying a dynamic perspective on these matters (i.e., dynamic as the opposite of static). A second line of inquiry begins with the question: where do social realities reside if not in collective ideas? Hence, we should trace and identify the mentalities of decision makers, and the relationship between current collective ideas and trends in European foreign policy.[47]

Third, from the vantage point we have reached now, we should proceed to discuss predictable contradictions between different conceptions of what constitute reasonable criteria for success within each social reality. It is hardly surprising that the Council of Ministers, the European Commission, and the European Parliament have different ideas about what foreign policy successes and failures are, how they come into being, and how failure can be turned into success. Equally unsurprising are the differences between member states of different sizes and status. Note the tension between the following two quotations. A senior diplomat from a minor member state reflects on CFSP habits: 'Even a rather stupid German minister will be listened to because he speaks for Germany.'[48] And a newspaper quotes a senior European diplomat: 'When a little country is speaking, you can see the faces of Kinkel and de Charette saying, 'Why do I have to listen to this guy?' They think it is waste of time.[49]

Fourth, it would be a pity if the many meanings of success led to the abandonment of the concept. This step would repeat previous mistakes of abandoning essentially contested concepts from the language of scientific

inquiry.[50] Yet, if we are not going to abandon these terms, then what? We must continue to analyse successes and failures, but avoid implicit assumptions about criteria for success, abstain from one dimensional analysis, and approach the subject matter from different perspectives.

Fifth, to some degree I think that different conceptions of success and failure reflect the fact that we are dealing with a moving target. In order to create insightful understandings of our subject, it seems advantageous to me to leave the general statements, the *grosso modo* perspectives, and the paintbrush descriptions of success and failure behind us. If for no other reason, we should do this because the outcomes of this type of analysis often say more about the observer than about the object of research.

Sixth, instead of *grosso modo* perspectives, we should consider how to construct an issue and time differentiated framework for analysis, and then conduct in-depth systematic cross-issue, cross-temporal comparative analysis. To give an example, it seems fair to assume more successes in the realm of international political economy than in international military crisis management.[51] Holland has previously made a plea for comparative analysis, yet his plea has sadly gone largely unnoticed.[52] Finally, it is worth noting Tugendhat's observation that 'It is when it [EPC/CFSP] is out of the limelight and involved in a continuos negotiation of the sort that enables diplomats and ministers to follow a consistent line of policy and build on what has gone before that the system of Political Co-operation works best.'[53] By concluding that the EU's joint action on the Non-Proliferation Treaty was 'an outstanding success,' Müller and van Dassen's findings[54] support Tugendhat's hypothesis.

Obviously, this list of suggestions is in no sense comprehensive. My aim is merely to present a few platforms and guidelines for future research on the European Union's performance in world politics.

Conclusion: Success is (maybe) not what it used to be

The European Union's performance in world politics is likely to provoke continued and increased attention among observers. It probably reflects the fact that the Union plays an ever-increasing role in international affairs. To be sure, residual traditions in foreign policy making can be found, but do they really matter? When the British Royal Yacht, *Britannia*, sailed out of Hong Kong harbour on 1 July 1997, it was to escort the last British Governor out of the country. Afterwards the royal yacht was decommissioned and not replaced: an exit of one of the prime symbols of the British Empire. In general, national

foreign policies tend to fade away from our horizon. A quick browse through major book catalogues reveals that it has indeed been a while since a major work on a European national foreign policy has emerged.

Accordingly, we have to accept the 'messy' state of European foreign affairs in which we find an erosion of the domestic-foreign policy divide and where the boundary of the European Union remains blurred. Indeed, there was no political will to codify the protection of the Union's outside borders and its territorial integrity in the Amsterdam Treaty on European Union. The foreign policies of member states and of the European Union are still in the process of being thoroughly reconsidered after the end of the Cold War. This messy state-of-affairs ought to be acknowledged when successes and failures in international politics are analysed.

If I have been fully successful in my endeavour, your notion of success will by now be different than hitherto. Yet, even if I have only managed to create a few cracks in the citadel of one dimensional analysis, or certain doubts about self-confident announcements of success and failure, I will consider the writing of the paper a worthwhile activity. Equally so, if my suggestions for a research agenda can serve as a source of inspiration for future studies.

Notes:

[1] Cf. Ludlow, et al, 1995; Progress Report, 1995.

[2] By a 'deconstructive' approach I mean merely 'questioning' implicit assumptions, 'breaking down' things taken for granted, and 'undermining' structures of meaning presented in numerous studies of the CFSP. Readers should not expect applications of, say Derridaian deconstructive theory.

[3] Kratochwil, Friedrich and John G. Ruggie, 'International Organisation: A state of the art on an art of the State,' *International Organisation* 40 (1986) : 753-776.

[4] Wallace, William and David Allen, 'Political Cooperation: Procedure as Substitute for Policy,' in *Policy-Making in the European Community*, eds. Helen Wallace et al. (Chichester: John Wiley and Sons, 1977).

[5] Guéhenno, Jean-Marie, 'Sicherheit und Verteidigung in Europa,' *Dokumente*, 482 (1991): 121-127.

[6] Scheel, Walter, 'Preface,' in *European Political Cooperation in the 1980s. A Common Foreign Policy for Europe?* ed. Alfred Pijpers et al. (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1988).

[7] Council of Ministers, Report on the Functioning of the Treaty on European Union, May 1995.

[8] Report on the Operation of the Treaty on European Union, European Commission, 10th May 1995. Hans van den Broek has presented his views on several occasions, see for instance, 'Why Europe Needs a Common Foreign and Security Policy', *European Foreign Affairs Review*, 1(1): 1-5; 'The Common Foreign and Security Policy in the Context of the 1996 Intergovernmental Conference', speech at the Royal Institute of International Affairs, Brussels, 4 July 1995; Further contributions from the Commission include Dr. Günther Burghardt, The Potential and Limits of CFSP - Implementing Maastricht, *CFSP Forum* 3/94; see also the expert report, *European foreign, security and defence policy: towards stronger external action by the European Union*, AVT95/BZ 40141, 30 March 1995.

[9] *International Herald Tribune* (30 April, 1997).

[10] I am grateful to Peter Viggo Jakobsen and Karen Elizabeth Smith for proposals to include the method.

[11] See my analysis of successes and failures in the EU's policy on ex-Yugoslavia, 'The European Union as an Actor in World Politics: the Case of Yugoslavia', *Quaderni Forum* 4 (1996).

[12] Inaction has many faces: 'As Martin Wight reminded us, respect for multilateralism is always in danger of becoming an excuse for doing nothing' (quoted in Inis L. Claude, 1993: 225). Does inaction at European Union level merely mirror inaction at the level of member states?, and does European institution function as a shield, designed to fend off criticism of inaction?

[13] Weiler, Joseph and Wolfgang Wessels, 'EPC and the challenge of theory,' in *European Political Cooperation in the 1980s. A Common Foreign Policy for Europe?* ed. Alfred Pijpers et al. (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1988): 252.

[14] Keukeleire, Stephan, 'The European Community and Crisis Management,' in *The Art of Conflict Prevention,* eds. W. Bauwens and Luc Reychler (London: Brassey's, 1994).

[15] Hill, Christopher, ed. *National Foreign Policies and European Political Cooperation* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1983).

[16] Further in Hocking, Brian and David Spence, eds., *EU Member State Foreign Ministries: Change and Adaptation* (Forthcoming).

[17] Moravcsik, Andrew, 'Why the European Community Strengthens the State: Domestic Politics and International Cooperation,' paper presented at the Conference of Europeanists, Chicago (April 1994).

[18] Weiler, Joseph and Wolfgang Wessels, 'EPC and the challenge of theory,' in *European Political Cooperation in the 1980s. A Common Foreign Policy for Europe?* ed. Alfred Pijpers et al. (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1988): 241-242.

[19] Duroselle, Jean-Baptiste, *Fra fortid i splittelse til fremtid i fællesskab* (København: Lademann, 1990). The title chosen for the Danish edition of Duroselle's book is more telling than its British counterpart (in translation: *Europe: from a Past in Conflict to a Future in Community*).

[20] Keukeleire, Stephan, 'The European Community and Crisis Management,' in *The Art of Conflict Prevention,* eds. W. Bauwens and Luc Reychler (London: Brassey's, 1994): 137.

[21] Mearsheimer, John, 'The False Promise of Institutionalism,' *International Security* 19:3 (1995): 5-49.

[22] Breedham, Brian, 'Where has Europe's power gone,' *The Globe and Mail* (March 9, 1996).

[23] This point concerns the relationship between principles and pragmatism, or law and politics. A lot of CFSP analysts are strong defenders of principles and legal rules. If only the CFSP were to become governed by *communautarian* rules, success after success in international performance would be secured. Healthy antidotes of pragmatism in the analysis of foreign affairs have been presented by John G. Ruggie (1991) and Inis L. Claude (1993).

[24] Galtung, Johan, *The European Community: A Superpower in the Making* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1973).

[25] Galtung, Johan, 'Reflection on Peace Prospects for Yugoslavia,' in *Yugoslavia, War,* eds. Tonci Kuzmanic and Arno Truger (Schlaining and Ljubliana: Austrian Study Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution/Peace Institute, 1992). However, when compared with the image of a potent superpower, the analysis of the present CFSP could, in principle, also result in a

conclusion like this: The CFSP is not, after all, too bad, yet. But it could, easily, because of the European *mystique*, turn into something really bad, pretty soon.

[26] Henrik Nordbrandt, 'Istanbul under mine vinger', *Morgenavisen Jyllands Posten*, 22 April 1997.

[27] European Security, *European Security Policy Towards 2000: ways and means to establish credibility, First Report*, 19 December, Brussels: European Commission (1994).

[28] Duchêne, Francois, 'Europe's role in world peace,' in *Europe Tomorrow*, ed. Richard Mayne (London: Fontana, 1972).

[29] Bull, Hedley, 'Civilian Power Europe: A Contradiction in Terms,' *Journal of Common Market Studies* 21:1-2 (1982): 149-164.

[30] Hill, Christopher, 'The Capability-Expectations Gap, or Conceptualizing Europe's International Role,' *Journal of Common Market Studies* 31:3 (1993): 305-328.

[31] Regelsberger, Elfriede, 'EPC in the 1980s: Reaching another Plateau?,' in *European Political Cooperation in the 1980s,* eds. Alfred Pijpers et al. (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhoff, 1988).

[32] Schoutheete de Tervarent, Philippe, 'Political Cooperation and National Foreign Policies,' *European Affairs* 4 (1987): 62-67.

[33] Goodwin, Geoffrey, 'The external relations of the European Community - shadow and substance,' *British Journal of International Studies* 3 (1977): 39.

[34] Birch, Timothy J. and John H. Scott, 'European Defense Integration: National Interests, National Sensitivities,' in *The State of the European Community: The Maastricht Debates and Beyond,* eds. Alan W. Cafruny and Glenda G. Rosenthal, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1993): 273-274.

[35] Broek, Hans van den, 'Why Europe Needs a Common Foreign and Security Policy,' *European Foreign Affairs Review* 1:1 (1996): 2.

[36] Gow, James and James D.D. Smith, *Peace-making, Peace-keeping: European Security and the Yugoslav Wars* (London: Brassey's, 1992): note 95.

[37] In other contexts, I would take issue with Ludlow's analysis. It seems to me that Europe's response to the Yugoslav imbroglio demonstrated that EU member states could act individually or in smaller groupings than the EU. These potentials should not conceal, however, that states acted through the EU longer than would typically be expected.

[38] Tonra, Ben, 'The Impact of Political Cooperation,' in *Reflective Approaches to European Governance,* ed. Knud Erik Jørgensen (London: Macmillan, 1997): 197.

[39] LaPalombara, L., 'Italian Foreign Policy - Declining Immobility,' *Relazioni Internazionali* (September 1989): 95-105.

[40] Ortéga, Andrés, 'Spain in the Post-Cold War World,' in *Democratic Spain: reshaping external relations in a changing world,* eds. Richard Gillespie, Fernando Rodrigo and Jonathan Story (London: Routledge, 1994).

[41] Most major global power centres probably have tendencies to claim that they are exceptional. Such claims are somewhat paradoxically mixed with reasoning in universal terms. On the other hand, it is not uncommon to meet the following line of reasoning. 'It is because of our exceptionality that we are obliged to reason in universal terms.' I am grateful to Ulla Holm who made me aware of this point.

[42] Holbrooke, Richard, 'America, a European Power,' *Foreign Affairs* (March/April 1995).

[43] Brenner, Michael, Multilateralism and European Security, *Survival* 35:2 (1992):138-155.
[44] Bernstein, Richard J., *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism: science, hermeneutics, and praxis* (Oxford and New York: Basil Blackwell, 1983).

[45] Tugendhat, Christopher, *Making Sense of Europe* (London: Penguin Books, 1987): 15.

[46] Searle, John R., *The Construction of Social Reality* (New York: The Free Press, 1995). See also Schütz, Alfred, *Collected Papers Vol. 1: The Problem of Social Reality,* ed. Maurice Natanson (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1967).

[47] 'Mentalities' refer to individual, shared and collective ideas. It is somewhat paradoxical that a fairly old book like Federico Chabod's, *Italian Foreign Policy: The Statecraft of the Founders*, can serve as inspiration.

[48] Tonra, Ben, 'The Impact of Political Cooperation,' in *Reflective Approaches to European Governance,* ed. Knud Erik Jørgensen (London: Macmillan, 1997): 196.

[49] *International Herald Tribune* (30 April 1997).

[50] On the term 'essentially contested concepts', see Connonly, 1983: 9-44; on criticism of the term 'balance of power', see James E. Dougherty and Robert L. Pfalzgraff, 1971: 30-36.

[51] Jørgensen, Knud Erik, ed. *European Approaches to Crisis Management* (The Hague, London, and Boston: Kluwer Law International, 1997).

[52] Holland, Martin, *The Future of European Cooperation* (London: Macmillan, 1991).

[53] Tugendhat, Christopher, *Making Sense of Europe* (London: Penguin Books, 1987): 65.
[54] Müller, Harald and Lars von Dassen, 'From Cacophony to Joint Action: Successes and Shortcomings of European Nuclear Nonproliferation Policy,' paper presented at the Second Pan-European Conference in International Relations, Paris (13-15 September 1995).

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