



Robert Schuman

*The Future of European Union  
External Relations: From a 'Pass-the-  
Buck' Strategy to a Common Voice?*

-Gabriela Marin Thornton



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These monographic papers address issues relevant to the ongoing European Convention which will conclude in the Spring of 2003. The purpose of this Convention is to submit proposals for a new framework and process of restructuring the European Union. While the European Union has been successful in many areas of integration for over fifty years, the European Union must take more modern challenges and concerns into consideration in an effort to continue to meet its objectives at home and abroad. The main issues of this Convention are Europe's role in the international community, the concerns of the European citizens, and the impending enlargement process. In order for efficiency and progress to prevail, the institutions and decision-making processes must be revamped without jeopardizing the founding principles of this organization. During the Convention proceedings, the Jean Monnet/Robert Schuman Papers will attempt to provide not only concrete information on current Convention issues but also analyze various aspects of and actors involved in this unprecedented event.

The following is a list of tentative topics for this series:

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3. The necessity to maintain a community method in a wider Europe.
4. Is it possible for the member states to jeopardize the results of the Convention?
5. The member states against Europe: the pressures on and warnings to the Convention by the European capitals.
6. Is it possible that the Convention will be a failure? The effects on European integration.
7. Similarities and differences between the European Convention and the Philadelphia Convention of 1787.
8. The role of a politically and economically integrated Europe in the governance of the world.
9. How important is European integration to the United States today?
10. The failure of a necessary partnership? Do the United States and the European Union necessarily have to understand each other? Under what conditions?
11. Is it possible to conceive a strategic partnership between the United States, the European Union and Russia?
12. Russia: a member of the European Union? Who would be interested in this association?

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**The Future of European Union External Relations:  
From a 'Pass-the-Buck' Strategy to a Common Voice?**

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## **THE FUTURE OF EUROPEAN UNION EXTERNAL RELATIONS: FROM A 'PASS-THE-BUCK' STRATEGY TO A COMMON VOICE?**

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Since 1993, when the European Union came into being, the number of writings identifying the European Union as an important actor on the world scene has grown considerably. A book edited by Robert J. Gutman in 2001, has a very challenging subtitle: *Europe in the New Century: Visions of an Emerging Superpower*. Presently, however, most works dealing with the European Union are epitomized by the well-known leitmotif “the European Union is an economic giant and a political dwarf” – meaning that to a certain extent “the hour of Europe” is not yet here, and the road toward becoming a superpower is tremendously difficult. The Bush II administration’s New National Security Strategy tries to ensure that the “hour of Europe” will never come. One of the most striking elements of the new strategy document is its insistence “that the president has no intention of allowing any foreign power to catch up with the huge lead the United States has opened since the fall of the Soviet Union more than a decade ago.”<sup>1</sup> This is another way of saying that America will deter its friends as well as its enemies, if necessary. The new strategy document is a powerful display of the Bush administration’s offensive realist impulses. The question is where does all of this leave the European Union? What is its future as an international actor and what are the determinants that will further shape its role in the world and the conduct of its external relations and of its Common Foreign and Security Policy?

In trying to answer these questions this paper starts from the assumption that external relations and foreign policy are a by-product of international factors as well as of internal factors. Therefore the paper is structured as follows: part one assesses the position of the European Union in the international system and determines the major international factors that will impact the future of the EU and consequently the future of its external relations. The second part identifies internal EU factors that impact the realm of its external relations. The third part will assess the role played by the Convention on the future of Europe, and will attempt to outline some “visions of the European Union’s future”.

### **International Factors and their Impact on the Union**

The international factors that will be discussed in this section are the following: power distribution in the international system; pressures of globalization; aid; and EU enlargement.

The basic assumption of this section is that the European Union is a sub-system of the international system. The European Union grew as a part of the core of Western states

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<sup>1</sup> David E. Sanger, “Bush Outlines Doctrine of Striking Foes First,” New York Times, September 20, 2002.

which in the late twentieth century developed an intense set of shared rules, norms and institutions. As Barry Buzan argues “the EU constitutes a kind of core-within-a core with its member states creating such a thick web of common law and institutions, penetrating so deeply into their societies, that it is no longer altogether clear whether they should be seen as a set of highly “like” units, or as some kind of sui-generis confederal unit – in some senses an actor in its own right in international society.”<sup>2</sup> The conventional wisdom today is that the EU is a sui generis body, built in the beginning on a pragmatic and apolitical functionalist basis, in which cooperation was aimed at accomplishing specific technical tasks: “the focus in the early phase was on survival and performance”, as Caporaso argues. Later, the “EU went far beyond its original task it set for itself.” Two powerful developments generated a new set of expectations. “These two developments had to do with the expansion of market relations across Europe and the growth of the EC’s political institutions.”<sup>3</sup>

Returning to issues of international politics, such as the concept of anarchy, some scholars argue that anarchy among EU member states has been attenuated by complex (or mutual interdependence), which at its highest peak was transformed into economic integration flanked by attempts at political and social integration. Therefore, the anarchy inside the EU reached a phase of maturity (Barry Buzan), which somewhat equates with peace. Other scholars, mainly realists, claim that peace came about in the EU only because NATO (read the United States of America) offered Western Europe a security umbrella under which prosperity and peace have flourished.

However, if the EU is at peace, the external environment in which it operates remains anarchical in essence and plagued by wars and conflicts. Moreover, the world outside the EU is not only anarchical and consequently very conflictual, but the distribution of military power is extremely uneven. The United States is the sole and “lonely superpower,” at least in military capabilities. Jonathan Freedland argues that notions such as “sole superpower,” or “hyperpower,” a term favored mostly by the French, or “hegemon,” a term employed by academics, might be too mild, for in describing the United States “the word of the hour is empire.”<sup>4</sup> If this empire helped build a peaceful and prosperous European Union, lately, with the war on terrorism, the conflict in the Middle East and an apparent imminent attack on Iraq, America has transformed itself, I will argue, from “Europe’s pacifier” into “Europe’s headache.”

The important question here is what is the European Union’s response to the latest developments in the international arena? In regard to the Middle East, even if Europe found a common voice, the Union’s lack of military power confers little potency to its voice. With respect to Iraq, the Union has been speaking with “many voices.” There is no European “common voice” that can be heard in Washington. The three big players of the Union, Britain, France, and Germany speak for themselves, not for Europe. Therefore

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<sup>2</sup> Barry Buzan and Richard Little, International Systems in World History: Remaking the Study of International Relations, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 338.

<sup>3</sup> James A. Caporaso, The European Union: Dilemmas of Regional Integration, Boulder: Westview Press, 2000, p. 49.

<sup>4</sup> Jonathan Freedland, “Rome, AD...Rome, DC?” The Guardian, September 18, 2002.

if the European Union has developed *common positions* with respect to Russia, Ukraine and the Mediterranean, it certainly lacks a common position in regard to the United States. Unless, of course the EU wants to call the new division of labor which seems to have emerged in the international system – America does the bombing and Europe does the cleaning up afterwards – a sort of a “European informal common position” with respect to the United States. As long as the European Union does not have a unified position with respect to the United States, and moreover has no military capabilities to counterbalance American power, its chances of becoming a “superpower” are pretty slim. Therefore it is not going out on a limb to say that the present distribution of power in the international system negatively impacts the chances of the European Union becoming a superpower in the foreseeable future. Furthermore, the future of the EU’s external relations and Common Foreign and Security Policy are also impacted. It is very difficult to create a common political voice for the EU, when in many instances, EU member states’ national interests are divergent. Regional conflicts are differently perceived in different member states. Consequently the response of the Union with respect to international crises is chaotic. The U.S. administration constantly complains that Europe does not speak with one voice, knowing very well that for Europe it is difficult to find that very desired common voice. The U.S. administration is also very aware that even if Europe did have a common voice, it would not be taken into consideration by Washington, unless Europe could militarily back up its common voice.

Nonetheless, as Jessica T. Mathews argues, “recent unilateral US behavior on matters that command wide international support maybe pushing the EU into political coherence faster than the Union could otherwise achieve it.”<sup>5</sup> This is an argument which deserves a detailed analysis, for if the present distribution of military power at the level of the international system negatively impacts the Union, it may at the same time increase the determination of political leaders inside the Union to find a way of building a “common voice” much sooner than might have been expected.

The challenges posed to the European Union by the distribution of military power at the level of the international system is not the only factor that impacts the EU. Some scholars argue that the Union has to mount a coherent defense against the disintegrating pressures of globalization. However, the process of globalization creates several methodological and empirical difficulties in trying to assess its precise impact on the EU. Daniel W. Drezner argues that very important in the study of globalization is the rescue of the concept itself from pop-commentators. “One reason that globalization is important,” Drezner points out, “is the perception by many scholars and policymakers that it transforms international politics. The evidence to date reject this perception. Globalization is not deterministic: there is no single predicted location for policy convergence.”<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Jessica T. Mathews, “Estranged Partners,” *Foreign Policy*, November/December 2001.

<sup>6</sup> Daniel W. Drezner, “Globalization and Policy Convergence,” *International Studies Review*, Vol. 3, 1, Spring 2001.

Despite Drezner's conclusion one can identify disintegration as well as integration pressures mounted by globalization with respect to the European Union. On the one hand, firms facing competitive threats from world markets may intensify their lobby for further liberalization of the European market space, which in return may impact policy making processes in the European Union. On the other hand, as Ben Rosamond(1999) argues, "the Commission has shown a tendency in recent years to define the external environment as 'globalized' and, therefore, threatening to the competitiveness of the European economy. This not only coincides with and supports preferences for market liberalization, but also help to legitimize European-level action, as opposed to a reversion to national solutions."<sup>7</sup> Therefore one can identify the Commission's tendency to use some aspects of globalization in order to reinforce actions on a supranational level. Areas such as terrorism, drug-trafficking, trafficking in human beings, and migration have received intensified support for a coherent European level action. Globalization, to a large extent, has generated powerful new incentives for Europe's integration.<sup>8</sup>

There is a third aspect of the international arena, more or less short of serious disorder, that impacts the EU's role as a international actor. Different sets of countries continue to harbor great hopes of what the EU can do for them.<sup>9</sup> One set of these countries is the developing countries, another set is constituted by the states of East Asia and a third set is composed of the member states of ASEM. In terms of aid "given the United States' established preference for encouraging development through tough conditionality and self-reliance, needy states will continue to look to the EU as their main source of salvation".<sup>10</sup> Therefore they will continue to pressure the Union in order to obtain help. For instance, since the fall of the Berlin Wall countries encompassed by the Lome Convention have intensified their pressure on the Union, feeling threatened by the EU's relations with countries in Central and Eastern Europe, and by the whole enlargement process. Consequently the competition over EU aid has intensified. The EU solved this problem by creating a separate service for enlargement, presently headed by Commissioner Verheugen. The candidate countries were given a special separate status with respect to other regions of the world that also receive aid form the Union.

Apart from the enlargement process, the question here is what prompts Europe to be the largest donor of the world and, consequently, to keep the aid flowing toward countries in need. How this flow of aid concretely helps the Union is not clear. Some scholars and policymakers have argued that it is necessary, for it boosts support for the European position in different international organizations such as the United Nations and the WTO.

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<sup>7</sup> Ben Rosamond, Theories of European Integration, New York: St. Martin Press, 2000.

<sup>8</sup> David P. Calleo, Rethinking Europe's Future, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001, p. 150.

<sup>9</sup> Christopher Hill, "Closing the Capabilities-Expectation Gap?" in A Common Foreign policy for Europe? Competing Visions of the CFSP, John Peterson and Helen Sjursen (eds.), New York: Routledge, 1998.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

Nonetheless there is another important factor that pushes the Union to keep the aid flowing: “security reasons” on the Union’s eastern borders. In addressing this issue, and to give only one example, the EU has been the largest donor to Kosovo, giving it some 1 billion euros. It gave the province 320 million euros in 2001 and 134 million euros last year. On September 19, 2002, Commissioner Chris Patten said in Prishtina that the Union will give Kosovo only 50 million euros (\$49 million) in aid next year, nearly a two thirds cut from its 2002 support. Commissioner Patten said: "Kosovo has been a terrific success story, but the story isn't over.... As Kosovo moves from crisis to normality, our help is shifting from a focus on physical reconstruction to building strong institutions to help your politicians deliver effective government, justice, and a robust economy."<sup>11</sup> However, the consequences of cutting the aid for Kosovo remain to be seen. Presently, the vision of the European Union, as a panacea for underdevelopment- a vision that emerged in the 1990s - has vanished. Still, countries in need outside the EU seem to retain elements of that vision. In the international arena, the EU –as the largest donor of the world - is perceived by most countries as the “good guy,” while the United States is increasingly perceived as “the bad guy.”

The enlargement process is another “external” factor which has mounted pressures on the European Union. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, quickly followed by the German reunification, scholars of the European Union have emphasized that one of the most salient consequences to come would be the enlargement of the European Union. Great pressure has been placed on candidate countries to accomplish the *acquis communautaire*, an established institutional framework of the EU, in order to be eligible for membership in the Union. Strong claims have been made that enlargement disadvantages candidate countries by excluding them from the decision making process, by requiring them to accept the institutional framework for European laws and procedures in full, and by placing the onus of change on candidate countries.<sup>12</sup>

However, the enlargement process also holds strong challenges for the European Union. From agricultural and environmental problems, to issues of identity and migration, a myriad of invitations to competitive actions lie ahead for political and economic actors involved in one way or another in the enlargement process. Hans van den Broek, former EU Commissioner for External Relations in charge of the enlargement process, once said “The European Union is not trying to join the Czech Republic,” but since then things have changed. Targeting the Union’s institutional reform, one could argue that the irony of Europe’s planned enlargement into Eastern Europe is that – despite howls of pain from redundant Polish steelworkers and downsized Czech businesses – by the end of 1999 it was already having more impact on the European

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<sup>11</sup> As reported by Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty; RFE/RL Newline, Vol. 6, No. 178, September 20, 2002.

<sup>12</sup> John K. Glenn, “European Enlargement and the Transformation of the Nation-State,” paper presented at the ECSA 2001 International Conference, Madison, Wisconsin.



Union than on the candidate countries.”<sup>13</sup> The admission of the poor easterners into the European Union not only requires extensive institutional changes, but also dramatic modifications to the way the Union finances its budget and allocates its structural funds, which were designed to level regional inequalities.<sup>14</sup>

In sum, this section has tried to assess the impact of the international factors on the European Union. It claims the following: (1) The present distribution of power in the international system negatively impacts the chances of the European Union to speak with one voice. At the same time, however, Washington’s unilateralist behavior might increase the EU leaders’ determination to find a “common voice.” (2) Globalization forces are mounting disintegration as well as integration forces on the European Union. Nonetheless, globalization constitutes an incentive for the European Commission to legitimate European-level action. (3) Demands for aid coming from developing countries add to the determination of the EU to remain the world’s biggest donor; however claims are made that by keeping the aid flowing the European Union tries to reinforce its position in different international organizations such as the United Nations and the WTO (4) The enlargement process certainly is having a great impact on the Union. The expansion toward the east is seen as necessary in order “to provide stability in the more troublesome part of the continent and in order to protect fledgling democracy there.”<sup>15</sup> Moreover, there is no question about that the future enlargement of the Union makes weaknesses that might have been tolerated before unacceptable in the future. This is, as Helen Wallace argues, “especially so when there is such a pressing agenda in the field of foreign and defense policies, where the Union is being challenged to demonstrate a real capacity to act and to deliver solid and sustainable commitments.”<sup>16</sup>

In trying to assess the most important international factors that impact the Union’s external relations and foreign policy one runs into a crucial problem – namely the hierarchy between military power and economic power. For neo-institutionalists of our époque the answer is clear: economic interdependence because it generates peace. For realists, the answer is military power – and starting with this assumption realists easily can craft the following hypothesis: *the chances of the EU member states agreeing on any external issue are inversely proportional to the issue’s importance*. Nonetheless, there is another branch of realism called defensive realism which argues that expansion strategies are self-defeating. From this point of view all the Union has to do in order to become a superpower is to wait for an international decline of the United States caused by “the problem of imperial overstretch”. In today’s interdependent world, a strategy like this could be very tricky. An economic decline of the United States might also trigger economic decline in Europe. Consequently, Europe needs to enforce its economic presence in Asia and Latin America.

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<sup>13</sup> Martin Walker, “Enlargement of the European Union: How New EU Members will Change the Shape of Europe,” Europe in the New Century: Visions of an Emerging Superpower, Robert J. Guttman (ed.), Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2001, p. 58.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p. 61.

<sup>15</sup> Stanley Hoffman, “Toward a Common European Foreign and Security Policy?” Journal of Common Market Studies, June 2000, Vol. 38, No.2.

<sup>16</sup> Philippe de Schoutheete and Helen Wallace, “The European Council,” Research and European Issues, No. 19, September 2002.

## **Internal Factors and Their Impact on the European's Foreign Policy**

This section addresses the following question: What are the internal EU factors that shape its external relations and its foreign policy? In trying to answer this question, this section will analyze Europe's Common Foreign and Security Policy as it stands today, and the role played by the European Commission.

### *Common Foreign and Security Policy*

The idea of creating a Common Foreign and Security Policy for the European Union, as a mechanism for coordination, can be traced back to the creation of the European Political Cooperation in the early 1970s. The CFSP's forerunner, the European Political Cooperation (EPC), was established on October 27, 1970, when the foreign ministers of the European Community adopted the Luxembourg Report. Twenty years later, on November 1, 1993, the Treaty on European Union entered into force and brought into being the Common Foreign and Security Policy.<sup>17</sup>

This CFSP has been the subject of much analysis. Some have even called into question the utility of a body such as the CFSP and have claimed that it is difficult enough to compose a single EU voice. To compose a voice to which others would listen appears to be impossible without a militarily muscular body.<sup>18</sup> Claims have been made that "foreign policy is not steel and coal," and consequently no seminal steps could be taken in favor of a real political integration. The concept of a Common Foreign and Security Policy, initially formulated by Helmut Kohl and François Mitterrand, was written into the Treaty of the European Union without any in-depth discussion of its meaning and its implications. No serious debate took place in regard to the Common Foreign and Security Policy.<sup>19</sup> If one compares this to the treatment of a similarly complex and important objective – namely Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) – the contrast is clear. A group of central bankers and experts, chaired by Jacques Delors, debated for more than a year and drafted a detailed report of EMU even before the intergovernmental conference was called. Nothing similar was ever attempted for foreign and security policy.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Simon Nuttall, "Two Decades of EPC Performance," Foreign Policy of the European Union: From EPC to CFSP and Beyond. Elfriede Regelsberger, Philippe de Schoutheete de Tervarent, and Wolfgang Wessels (eds.), Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1997.

<sup>18</sup> Desmond Dinan, Ever Closer Union: An Introduction to European Integration, Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1999.

<sup>19</sup> Philippe de Schoutheete de Tervarent, "The Creation of the Common Foreign and Security Policy," Foreign Policy of the European Union: From EPC to CFSP and Beyond. Elfriede Regelsberger, Philippe de Schoutheete de Tervarent, and Wolfgang Wessels (eds.), Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1997.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

The Amsterdam treaty spells out five major objectives for the CFSP:

- to safeguard common values, fundamental interests, independence and integrity of the Union in conformity with the principles of the United Nations Charter;
- to strengthen the security of the Union in all ways;
- to preserve peace and strengthen international security;
- to promote international cooperation; and,
- to develop and consolidate democracy and the rule of law, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.<sup>21</sup>

In an effort to clarify and enhance the means available to the CFSP, the Treaty of Amsterdam (Article 12 TEU) identifies four policy instruments: *Principles and guidelines* -adopted by the European Council- provide general political directions. *Common strategies* -adopted by the European Council- establish an umbrella under which the Council may adopt joint actions and common positions by QMV (except those with military and defense implications); *Joint actions* -adopted by the European Council- are further refined to address specific situations requiring “operational actions”; and *Common positions*.<sup>22</sup> There are two broad contributions of the Commission to CFSP. On the one hand, the Commission is “fully associated with the CFSP work; it has a right of policy initiative, manages the CFSP budget and brings to the CFSP debate the EC policy areas where it has a clearly defined role. On the other hand, the Commission plays a role as external representative in all European Community areas.”<sup>23</sup>

From an instrumental rationalist viewpoint, the difficulties of moving towards a real Common Foreign and Security Policy are seen as resulting from divergent policy goals among the member state governments, and of course, from the high premium placed by states upon foreign policy autonomy.<sup>24</sup> The whole issue of Europe’s Common Foreign and Security Policy is strongly related to intergovernmentalism which may relate to formal institutional reality, but it cannot capture the emerging norms and rules of the game, the governance regime of CFSP.<sup>25</sup> In this regard the actors in the process of treaty negotiation are very diverse: Commission officials, national ministers and prime ministers, Members of the European Parliament and public servants.<sup>26</sup> Therefore, I will argue that CFSP, to a certain degree, displays some tendencies toward supranationalism, especially fostered by the European Commission’s role in CFSP.

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<sup>21</sup> Website of the European Union [http://europe.eu.int/external\\_relations/cfsp/intro/index.htm](http://europe.eu.int/external_relations/cfsp/intro/index.htm).

<sup>22</sup> Dinan.

<sup>23</sup> Website of the European Union.

<sup>24</sup> Rosamond, p. 121.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p. 174.

<sup>26</sup> Thomas Christiansen and Knud Erik Jørgensen, “The Amsterdam Process: A Structurationist Perspective on EU Treaty Reform,” European Integration online Papers (EioP), Vol. 3, No. 1, 1999, <http://eiop.or.at/eiop/text/1999-001a.htm>

However, the Common Foreign and Security Policy was not always efficient in making decisions or in implementing them. Consequently “treaty modification has become a regular diet for heads of government and they are not always good at it: Amsterdam produced important leftovers and Nice was so chaotic that Tony Blair concluded that ‘we cannot go on working like this.’”<sup>27</sup> The need for reform became urgent.

### *The Role of the Commission*

The European Commission’s primary responsibilities include: proposing and shaping legislation, administering and implementing Community policy, managing the budget, conducting external relations, policing Community law, and pointing the way forward.<sup>28</sup>

The European Union website informs internet surfers that the Prodi Commission has undertaken a fundamental restructuring of the European Commission’s services dealing with external relations. Six Commissioners –in charge of six external relations services – share responsibilities. The External Relations Directorate-General is headed by Commissioner Chris Patten. Gunter Verheugen heads the enlargement, Pascal Lamy the trade, and Paul Nielson heads the Development Directorate-General, the Humanitarian Aid Office, and together with Commissioner Patten, the EuropeAid Cooperation Office. In general the tasks of the External Relations Directorate-General are the following: relations with European countries that are not members of the European Union and not part of the enlargement process; relations with South Eastern Europe, Caucasus and the Central Asian Republics; relations with North America, Australia, Japan, and Korea; relations with the Middle East and the Southern Mediterranean; Latin America; relations with international organizations i.e. United Nations, NATO, WEU, OSCE, the Council of Europe, assures the Commission’s participation in the Common Foreign and Security Policy and administrates more than 120 Commission delegations in third countries (the external service).<sup>29</sup>

As Michel Bauer argues the desire to reform the European Commission is almost as old as the institution itself. DECODE, SEM 2000, MAP 2000, ABB, ABM and IAS are the latest acronyms in the long list of projects to reshuffle the organization ‘at the heart of the Union’.<sup>30</sup> The new institutionalism in organization theory opens up new avenues for thinking about the relationship between culture or ideas, and institutional development. Policy makers are said to initiate policies or organizational reforms because the latter have been validated by the relevant cultural authorities or in the forums that are

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<sup>27</sup> de Schoutheete and Wallace.

<sup>28</sup> Dinan.

<sup>29</sup> Internet available on the website of the European Union  
[http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/external\\_relations/general/mission\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/external_relations/general/mission_en.htm)

<sup>30</sup> Michael W. Bauer, “Reforming the European Commission – A (missed?) Academic Opportunity,” European Integration online Papers (EIoP), Vol. 6, 2002. internet available at  
<http://eiop.or.at/eiop/texte/2002 - 008a.htm>.

indispensable reference points for their spheres of endeavor.<sup>31</sup> The website of the European Union informs us with respect to the new reform that “one of the key changes already carried out, is the transfer of management responsibility for external assistance projects to a local level: 21 Commission Delegation offices in third countries have already taken over management projects, and by the end of the year the figure will be nearly 50”.<sup>32</sup> Spence (2002) argues that past reforms had little impact on the Commission’s institutional development. The crucial question is the following: Does the current reform have any chance of breaking this trend? Bauer’s answer is “probably yes”, because, “Never before has the change of the internal management culture been pursued so comprehensively and seriously”.<sup>33</sup> Thus the management of the Union’s external affairs could be positively impacted by the new reform in the foreseeable future .

### *Conclusions*

What are the European Union’s accomplishments in the realm of external relations and Common Foreign and Security Policy? The answer is that the Union has played a tremendous role in the democratization processes in Central and Eastern Europe, a role that is not sufficiently explored by academics. It disbursed a great amount of aid throughout the world. It opened political dialogues with regions such as Latin America and East Asia. Reality shows that in matters of “soft issues” Europe can find a common voice, which seems to surprise even Commissioner Patten, who recently said in an interview: “Foreign Policy goes right to the heart of what it means to be a sovereign state. The wonder is that we manage to develop common positions on as many issues as we do.”<sup>34</sup>

However, in security matters things were, and are, more difficult. Since 1993 one clearly detects EU’s efforts to address security. By the end of the 1990s, after the wars in Bosnia and Kosovo, a more autonomous capacity for collective security seemed increasingly significant for the EU’s overall cohesion and momentum.<sup>35</sup> The first step in making the EU a truly effective international power was to be fulfilled at Laeken by launching an “operational” European security and defense force. The important question is how all this is going to impact the future of the Union? Prior to the Laeken Declaration, in trying to answer this question, Rosamond brought to attention Ole Waever’s argument (1998) that the achievement of a security community in the EU was fulfilled through a

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<sup>31</sup> Peter A. Hall, “The Role of Interests, Institutions, and Ideas in the Comparative Political Economy of the Industrialized Nations,” *Comparative Politics: Rationality, Culture, and Structure*, Mark. I. Lichbach and Alan S. Zuckerman (eds.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

<sup>32</sup> “Better representation of the EU: European Commission announces next step in reform of its External Service”. Brussels, July 2, 2002. Internet available at [http://europa.eu.int/comm/external\\_relations/delegations/reforms/ip02\\_987.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/delegations/reforms/ip02_987.htm).

<sup>33</sup> Kinnock 2000, as cited by Michel W. Bauer, “Reforming the European Commission – A (missed?) Academic Opportunity, European Integration online Papers (EIoP), Vol. 6, 2002. Internet available at <http://eiop.or.at/eiop/texte/2002 - 008a.htm>

<sup>34</sup> Chris Patten quoted by Timothy Garton Ash in his article “Europe Has One Voice. And Another and Another,” *New York Times*, September 22, 2002.

<sup>35</sup> Calleo, p. 150.

process of “desecuritization”. The deepening of the formal European integration has brought “security” back to the agenda, preeminently with the aspiration to create a true Common Foreign and Security Policy - and this could become a threat to the stability of the EU because it “re-securitizes” the agenda, which in turn, may be the source of insecurity.<sup>36</sup>

As long as the European Union does not have a common political voice backed by military power, Commissioner Chris Patten’s words are very true: “the EU is not a superpower in the traditional sense.” Nevertheless, Commissioner Patten continued: “and does not cherish the ambition to become one.”<sup>37</sup> It is doubtful whether this last part of his statement reflects the view of all major EU political actors.

### **The Future of the EU’s External Relations**

In trying to outline possible future versions of the European Union, this section will look at the following: the Laeken Declaration and the work of the Convention.

**The Laeken Declaration** (December, 15, 2001) outlines the stringent need for EU institutional reform. Boldly, the Declaration also established a Convention on the Future of Europe which had its inaugural meeting on March 1, 2002. Mr. Valery Giscard d’Estaing was appointed as Chairman of the Convention by the European Council. He is flanked by Mr. G. Amato and Mr. J.L. Dehaene as Vice-Chairmen. The Convention’s main task, according to the Declaration is “to consider the key issues arising for the Union’s future development and try to identify the various possible responses.” The vagueness of some of the Declaration’s language should not minimize the challenge: institutional reform together with the Convention may very well lead to the adoption of a European constitution.

The aim of this new institutional reform, as outlined in the Laeken Declaration, is to establish a better division and definition of competence in the European Union, a simplification of the Union’s instruments, and to bring more democracy, transparency and efficiency into the Union. The overall goal is to create a stronger and closer Union to act as an effective power in the international arena, while responding more efficiently to the needs of its citizens. The Convention is to find answers to the most ardent EU problems: the lack of an EU constitution, the so-called “democratic deficit” of the Union, to name but a few. While “democracy beyond the state” is not yet a handy practical experiment, it is possible that the Convention, made up of members of the European and national parliaments, government representatives, and EU commissioners, might find a creative solution to this problem.

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<sup>36</sup> Rosamond, p. 170.

<sup>37</sup> Chris Patten, “The European Union in the World,” in Europe in the New Century: Visions of an Emerging Superpower, Robert J. Guttman (ed.), Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2001, p. 87.

The first step in making the EU a truly effective international power was to be fulfilled at Laeken through the launching of an “operational” European Security and Defense Force. The “last minute Greek veto” because of an agreement between the Union and Turkey aimed at giving the EU access to NATO assets came as a blow. Despite this controversy, the EU rapid-reaction force was declared “operational.”

In any case, the Laeken Declaration remains one of the most “integrationist” among EU declarations. The federalist camp, led at Laeken by the Belgian Prime Minister Guy Verhofstandt, managed to openly address sensitive problems related to the creation of “a closer Union”. However, as Michael Stabenow wrote immediately after Laeken: “Britain’s Tony Blair has not metamorphosed into a fervent federalist any more than Sweden’s Goran Persson has become a champion of a European army. The EU leaders have committed themselves only to an assessment of the convention’s recommendations .... Still, the convention could very well be able to hammer out a workable proposal ...” (Michael Stabenow – “A Real Alternative”, FAZ)

What *was* the Convention able to hammer out in its first months of work? On July 11-12, 2002, the European Convention held a debate on the Common Foreign and Security Policy. Communitarianist visions clashed with intergovernmentalism, and sometimes a *mélange* of the two approaches was heard. Peter Hain (UK Government representative) advanced an intergovernmental approach to the future of the EU’s external relations and Common Foreign and Security Policy. By contrast Peter Glotz (German Government representative) spoke in favor of a communitarisation of CFSP. Commissioner Michel Barnier argued that the EU should apply the method that has been delivering positive results over the last decade: namely the Community method,<sup>38</sup> which basically means extending the capacity of the Commission to define common policies and act as a guardian of the common interest in the field of EU’s Foreign Policy.<sup>39</sup> Most participants spoke in favor of merging the job of the High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy with that of the Commissioner responsible for external affairs. However some advanced the idea of a double-hatted position, with a foot in the Commission and a special status to accommodate member states’ interests. A minority supported the status quo with some minor modifications. Alain Lamassoure submitted to the Convention a three-stage project leading to a full-fledged CFSP by establishing objectives, conditions, appropriate bodies; a project crafted along the lines of the preparation for the European Monetary Union.<sup>40</sup> Others preferred to improve coherence through reform within the Commission and the Council and through better coordination between the Council and the Commission.<sup>41</sup> Calls for a more “pro-active” foreign policy were also made. Some argued that the requirement for unanimity in CFSP restricts the Union’s capacity to act. However the Germans went much further than others in Brussels

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<sup>38</sup> Giovanni Grevi, “The Europe We Need,” paper available on the European Policy Center website. <http://www.theeepc.be/europe>, September 20, 2002.

<sup>39</sup> The European Convention. “Summary Report of the Plenary Session – Brussels 11 and 12 July,” Available on the website of the European Union.

<sup>40</sup> Grevi.

<sup>41</sup> The European Convention.

by proposing that a single European diplomatic service should replace national ones. Basically, *Au Revoir Quai d'Orsay* and farewell to King Charles street, writes the Economist.

With respect to the Defense and Security Policy some members argued that the whole issue must be left in NATO's care. Others called for "enhanced cooperation" to be extended to the area of security and defense. Some saw the development of a security and defense policy based on a staged approach, allowing for gradual development of capability.<sup>42</sup> In regard to the General Affairs Council, the End Term Report on the Convention on the Future of Europe, released September 10, 2002 states "It is widely agreed that this is not functioning effectively and many believe that it is necessary to separate the General Affairs Council from a CFSP Council. The former would consist of senior ministers appointed by the Prime Minister; the latter would comprise the foreign ministers. This is not, however, the direction taken at the recent Seville Summit, and the debate is likely to develop further".

### *Conclusions*

There is commitment in Brussels for accomplishing an effective institutional reform. Probably a middle ground between intergovernmentalist positions and communitarianist ones ought to be found. The idea of staging the reform of Europe's CFSP, as advanced by Alain Lamassoure, is probably the best at this moment. The European Union built its success on a functionalist basis. Therefore why not build a common voice for Europe, using the same "baby steps" approach? One can easily discard my argument by pointing out that political integration does not equate functionalism. This is very true. However, I will argue that in order to build a real CFSP the Union needs to combine the Community method which means extending the capacity of the Commission to define common policies and act as a guardian of the common interest in the field of EU's Foreign Policy with functionalist exercises.

### **Conclusions: Could Europe have a Common Voice?**

Where is the EU going and what will be the future of its external relations? Which dimension will be more important - the international dimension or the "internal" one? Will Europe have a common voice in the foreseeable future? My answer to the latter question is that Europe has a very good chance of developing a common voice.

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<sup>42</sup> The European Convention. Summary Report of the Plenary Session – Brussels 11 and 12 July. Available on the website of the European Union



From a theoretical point of view, and with respect to international factors, realists argue that what Europe needs in order to develop a common voice is “perhaps a clear and common enemy” as Timothy Garton Ash pointed out in an article titled, “Europe has one voice. And Another and Another.”<sup>43</sup> I will soften his approach and submit for further research the following hypothesis: The more conflictual the international system, the higher the chances of Europe to find a common voice. Crises tend to part or to bring together. Europe means more than “rhetoric” advanced by different heads of member states all over the world. Europe is not only Tony Blair’s voice, America’s “eternal” friend, who echoes President Bush’s determination to attack Iraq; Europe is not only Jacques Chirac’s voice who tries to find a mid-ground position with respect to Iraq; and it is not Schroeder’s voice who recently discovered the benefits of a populist approach toward international peace. Europe’s common voice is not always Monsieur PESC’s voice. The European Union is more than that. The European Union is a collection of institutions which nowadays, as neo-institutionalists argue, has a life of its own. Therefore taking an institutionalist approach, one could claim that the more coherent the present institutional reform is going to be, the higher the chances for Europe to find a common voice. However, for the moment Europe does not have a “common” voice with respect to “high politics”; but it does have a common strategy (more to come).

However, today’s European Union is a sui generis body in which fights take place between intergovernmentalism and supranationalism (fights which call for a redefinition of the nation-state); between regionalism and European level actions – sometimes called “Europeanization”; between right-wing nationalism and rationalist liberal voices. Despite these disagreements, today’s Europe is a “super place,”<sup>44</sup> which many argue builds on multi-level governance, a metaphor used to illustrate that authority is dispersed rather than concentrated and political action occurs at and between various levels of governance.<sup>45</sup> Presently, there is no evidence that multi-level governance cannot generate a common voice. To the contrary, there is strong evidence, as previously stated, that in “soft issues” the Union has a common voice. If one equates security with military power, things are certainly more complicated.

Nonetheless if the international system gets more and more conflictual, academics might say that there are probably only two choices for Europe. The first choice will be to jump on the U.S. bandwagon, as Europe presently does. The second choice will be to counterbalance American power by developing a viable European military and/or by seeking allies elsewhere in the world. **However, my claim is that by having so many voices, Europe has managed to unintentionally create an “informal common strategy” with respect to “high politics” in the international arena.** What kind of strategy? The answer here is a “pass-the-buck strategy” which plays for the moment in the Union’s favor. The European Union needs to buy time in order to conduct its new institutional reform and to emerge as a great and credible power in the international arena.

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<sup>43</sup> Timothy Garton Ash, “Europe Has One Voice. And Another and Another,” New York Times, September 22, 2002

<sup>44</sup> Term used by Timothy Garton Ash to describe Europe.

<sup>45</sup> Rosamond.