



**ENGAGE**

ENVISIONING A NEW  
GOVERNANCE ARCHITECTURE  
FOR A GLOBAL EUROPE

# INITIAL BRIEFING FOR PRACTITIONERS #1

## ENGAGE – Envisioning a New Governance Architecture for a Global Europe

December 2021

How can the EU – both its institutions and its Member States – effectively and sustainably harness all of its tools in a joined-up external action alongside the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and its Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) in order to meet strategic challenges and become a stronger global actor?



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement no. 962533.

# ENGAGE: LAYING THE FOUNDATIONS

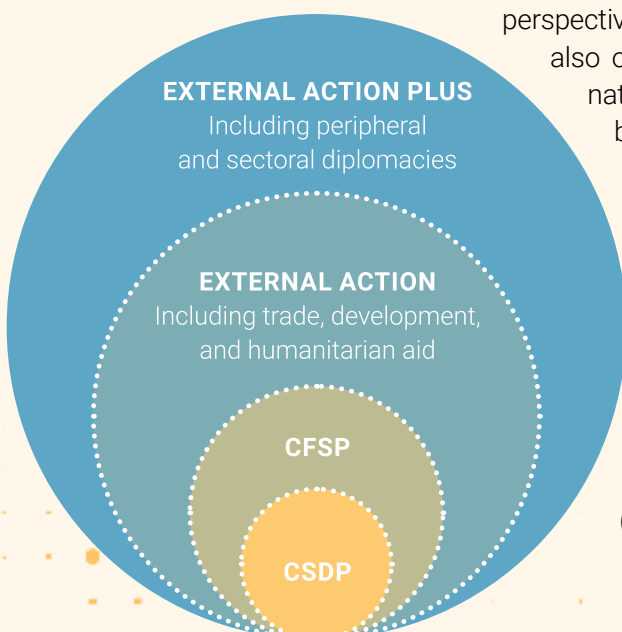
**The specific driving forces that are most likely to determine the EU's security over the next two decades fall into three main categories: climate change and energy, technological revolutions and demographics.**

The EU has a mission to become a stronger global actor. Aiding this, the Horizon 2020 project ENGAGE – ‘Envisioning a New Governance Architecture for a Global Europe’ in full – examines how the EU can effectively and sustainably meet strategic challenges by harnessing all of its tools to become a more assertive global actor. This brief presents **initial practitioner-oriented implications** derived from the research conducted in the first year of the project.

ENGAGE kicked off by analysing the main **contextual hurdles** the EU will face in trying to implement a more effective, coherent and sustainable external action policy. These challenges are both external and internal. When it comes to **challenges emerging from the state of global governance and international relations**, the gravitational shift from West to East, underpinned by the growing geoeconomic, geopolitical, normative and cultural importance of the Indo-Pacific region – and China specifically – stands out. Beyond this structural change, the specific driving forces that are most likely to determine the EU's security over the next two decades fall into three main categories: climate change and energy, technological revolutions and demographics. EU and Member State policymakers should thus take decisive actions in each of these three fields; overarchingly, it will be critical to reach a strong consensus on the place and role of Europe in a global order marked by growing US-China systemic competition. The EU can furthermore shape norms and rules in specific policy areas and fields of global affairs – these need to be pinpointed carefully.

Further challenges are internal, originating from **the acceptability of EU external action at the Member State level**. Given the impact of this factor on the EU's policy outputs and outcomes, the ENGAGE project puts forward a framework that can be used to explain and forecast the acceptability of EU external action in new and existing areas. The framework analytically addresses four groups of domestic actors of relevance – national decisionmakers, the foreign policy bureaucracy, national parliamentarians and the public – using a temporal perspective which focuses not only on the phase of policy adoption, but also on operationalisation and implementation. Acceptability at the national level is dynamic and context-dependent, and it must always be taken into account. National policymakers should promote perceptions of EU external action that increase permissive consensus, with sensitivity to the interconnections between EU-level, international and local policies and their impacts.

To tackle these internal and external challenges, **the ENGAGE project takes a comprehensive approach to the EU's external action, focusing on four interlocking policy dimensions**, represented in the figure to the left. ENGAGE will examine not only the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), but also classical areas of external action – trade,



**To tackle these internal and external challenges, the ENGAGE project takes a comprehensive approach to the EU's external action, focusing on four interlocking policy dimensions.**

development and humanitarian aid – and “external action plus”: that is, the outward dimension of traditionally internal policy areas such as competition, environment and health.

This brief also summarises two studies that map and assess the current **legal base, decision-making procedures and governance structures** for the policy layers of CSDP and CFSP, while reflecting on existing proposals for reform and options that are foreseen in the Treaties but are yet to come into fruition. When it comes to **CSDP**, specific decision-making rules and procedures in this field can hinder effectiveness. Nevertheless, a number of options are available to facilitate cooperation in this policy area, such as constructive abstention (Art. 31(1) TEU) and flexible cooperation in groups of willing and capable Member States (Art. 44 TEU). Relatedly, Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) has been a crucial element in CSDP since its activation in 2017. However, when it comes to capability development and industrial cooperation overall, further synchronisation is necessary to avoid duplications and fully exploit cooperative efforts and potential.

Policymaking in **CFSP** is likewise hampered by challenges emerging from the decision-making rules and procedures it is subject to. However, the Treaties offer some avenues to facilitate cooperation in this field, such as enhanced use of qualified majority voting (QMV) (Art. 31(2) and 31(3) TEU). The European Council could, for example, unanimously adopt decisions setting the EU's strategic objectives or principles in one or more areas of CFSP, which can then be followed by implementation decisions at the Council level based on QMV. Enhanced cooperation (Art. 20(1) TEU), which allows a group of Member States to pursue advanced cooperation or integration in a particular field of CFSP if certain conditions are met, is another avenue that can be explored.

Research in the ENGAGE project will continue until June 2024, and it will ultimately lead to the publication of a **White Paper on Joined-up, Coherent, Sustainable and Effective EU External Action**. Work in the first year of the ENGAGE project laid common ground to develop this output. First, content and taxonomical research determined that the concepts of **effectiveness, coherence and sustainability** are used in a plethora of ways in EU primary literature on external action, such as speeches and strategic documents. The terms are often not clearly defined, and they come with a variety of meanings – sometimes even within identical contexts. ENGAGE therefore lays out a shared set of definitions for these three concepts. Subsequently, indicators can be developed to gauge the effectiveness, coherence and sustainability of the EU's external action.

Finally, the research created a **shared understanding of the nature of the White Paper** and the elements that will differentiate the ENGAGE paper from other similar documents. The final ENGAGE White Paper, which will go through an extensive validation process with policymakers and other stakeholders in 2023-2024, will put forward an actionable programme for the EU. It will answer the question: **How can the EU – both its institutions and its Member States – effectively and sustainably harness all of its tools in a joined-up external action alongside the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and its Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) in order to meet strategic challenges and become a stronger global actor?**

**The final ENGAGE White Paper, which will go through an extensive validation process with policymakers and other stakeholders in 2023-2024, will put forward an actionable programme for the EU.**

# 01 A TRANSFORMING GLOBAL ORDER

## Diversification of International Relations and the EU: Understanding the Challenges

### 1. What does this paper set out to achieve?

This paper identifies and analyses key trends and dynamics linked to the ongoing transformations of the global order. It asks what challenges and opportunities these transformations bring to the foreign policy of the European Union and its Member States. Building on International Relations literature, the paper identifies the driving forces that will most probably determine the security of the EU over the next two decades by reviewing 20 recent foresight studies and scenario exercises developed by think tanks and public institutions.

### 2. What are the main findings?

- Global affairs are experiencing a gravitational shift, from the West to the East. This shift is underpinned by the growing geoeconomic, geopolitical, normative and cultural importance of the Indo-Pacific Region and, above all, the rise of China.
- The security of the EU and its Member States will be fundamentally impacted by key drivers in three categories: climate change and energy; technological revolutions; and demographics.
- The EU faces challenges related to climate change and natural disasters, including economic costs, human displacements and rising geopolitical competition, which may affect cooperation prospects on these issues. It is also heavily dependent on net imports of energy.
- The fast pace of technological progress creates new pressures, such as increasingly sophisticated cyberthreats, and intensifies old threats, including authoritarianism.
- The EU is confronted by reductions in its relative international demographic weight and a reduction in the available labour force.

### 3. What are the implications for practitioners?

EU and Member States policymakers, particularly in the field of foreign relations and external action,

- must reach a strong consensus on the place and role of Europe in a global order marked by growing US-China systemic competition.
- should identify policy areas and fields of global affairs where the EU has the capacity to shape norms and rules. In parallel, they should identify areas where the EU will need to adapt to changes beyond its control.
- should focus on increasing resilience to natural disasters.
- should aim to retain leadership in the green energy sector, develop renewable energy partnerships, increase diversification of energy supply sources and routes and become a trendsetter in the circular economy.
- should take decisive actions to shape the much-needed norms and governance structures for R&D, trade and use of disruptive innovation and technologies.
- should, in the context of demographic transformations, increase the EU's productivity by encouraging the participation of women and young people in the labour market, as well as highly skilled workers, through tailor-made migration partnerships with third countries.

# 02 THE IMPORTANCE OF DOMESTIC CONSTITUENCIES

## Evaluating the National Acceptability of EU External Action: Conceptual Framework for the ENGAGE Project

---

### 1. What does this paper set out to achieve?

This report examines in detail the different ways domestic political actors inside EU Member States directly or indirectly impact how EU external action is agreed and implemented. Specifically, it asks *what determines the acceptability of EU external action at the level of the Member State?* Four groups of actors whose perceptions and goals shape foreign policy outputs are considered: national decisionmakers, the foreign policy bureaucracy, national parliamentarians and the public.

### 2. What are the main findings?

- This report generates a set of propositions to study in depth the influence of domestic actors on EU external action. The resulting framework can be used to explain and forecast the acceptability of EU external action in new and existing areas.
- Not enough attention has been paid to four groups of domestic actors (national decisionmakers, the foreign policy bureaucracy, national parliamentarians and the public) whose perception of the acceptability of EU external action ranges from permissive to dismissive.
- Acceptability is dynamic and susceptible to change: increased polarisation between Europeanisation and re-nationalisation of foreign policy heightens volatility and is therefore crucial for an understanding of the EU's capacity to act.
- Veto players are well-studied during the decision-making process but under-studied at the operationalisation and implementation phases (the policy output stages).

### 3. What are the implications for practitioners?

- Always take into consideration the acceptability of EU external action at the national level, because outputs and outcomes will be influenced by it.
- Although domestic actors do not simply internalise European norms and need to be seen beyond the scope of socialisation, national perceptions may still be open to transnational influence.
- Pay attention to the temporal dynamics of national foreign policymaking: consider not just the phase of policy adoption, but also operationalisation and implementation.
- National practitioners should promote perceptions of EU external action that increase permissive consensus, which is formed when national conditions are favourable towards the adoption and implementation of policy decisions. This will facilitate the delivery of actions needed to meet output goals and to increase the sustainability of these goals.
- As more policy areas become implicated in international and transnational relations, foreign policy bureaucracies should take into account that global governance arrangements are becoming more important and have an effect on local issues and concerns. This provides an opportunity to demonstrate the importance of EU actions in policy areas related to local issues. However, for the EU to shape the global governance architecture of the future, internal acceptability of EU external action is necessary.

## 03

**MAPPING CSDP****The Current Legal Basis and Institutional Structures of the EU's Defence Activities****1. What does this paper set out to achieve?**

This report summarises the current legal basis, decision-making procedures and governance structures of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and explores other areas with defence implications. The Working Paper is mainly a legal analysis: it examines the current EU Treaty structures and acts adopted on that basis. The report also analyses the capability- and industry-related aspects of the CSDP and studies recent actions taken to increase defence collaborations and industrial activities. The research relies heavily on recent legal, and partly on political science, scholarship.

**2. What are the main findings?**

- The CFSP/CSDP is subject to specific decision-making rules and procedures (Article 24(1) TEU) that can hamper its effectiveness.
- Constructive abstention, whereby a Member State can abstain in a vote where unanimity is required (Article 31(1) TEU), has the potential to advance defence integration. However, it has rarely been used in practice.
- The current EU legal framework allows the European Council to create 'common defence' in the Union by voting unanimously. To some extent, it has already been established by Article 42(7) TEU, the mutual assistance clause, triggered by France in 2015.
- Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), as one of the sleeping beauties in the Treaties, has been a crucial element in the gradual implementation of CSDP since its activation in 2017.
- Capability Development Processes lack a framework that synchronises the different elements of EU defence planning.
- Although progress has been made, an integrated EU defence market is still far from being accomplished.
- The European Commission took a wider role in the defence industrial sector and its promotion through the European Defence Fund.

**3. What are the implications for practitioners?**

- Member States could more widely explore the use of constructive abstention, under Article 31(1) TEU, to enable more flexibility between Member States in decision-making.
- Member States should consider using Article 44 TEU, which allows a group of willing and capable Member States to carry out certain tasks, to enable flexible cooperation in CSDP.
- Willing Member States should consider increasing their engagement in PESCO commitments.
- EU policymakers should ensure synchronisation among ongoing activities related to capability development and industrial cooperation to avoid duplication of initiatives, fully exploit cooperative efforts and secure lower levels of dependencies over third countries and external supply chains.
- The EU and its Member States should carefully consider levels of spending and investment in R&D to ensure Member States are able to incorporate technological developments into new equipment, to ultimately strengthen CSDP.

# 04 MAPPING CFSP

## The Current Legal Basis and Governance Structures of the EU's CFSP

### 1. What does this paper set out to achieve?

This report summarises the current legal and governance structure of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and explores the possibilities to enhance decision-making procedures in this field. The report is a legal analysis: it examines the current EU Treaty structures and case-law of the Court of Justice of the EU. The report also relies heavily on recent legal, and partly on political science, scholarship.

### 2. What are the main findings?

- The CFSP faces challenges emerging from the specific decision-making rules and procedures (Article 24(1) TEU) it is subject to.
- The requirement of unanimity still prevails in CFSP, but current EU Treaties offer the possibility to use qualified majority voting (QMV) more widely:
  - QMV may be used in CFSP matters if certain conditions, described by Article 31(2) of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU), are met.
  - Some of these 'QMV possibilities' are currently being used – for example, already existing sanctions regimes are amended on the basis of Article 31(2) TEU.
  - Beyond the situations described in Article 31(2) TEU, QMV may be extended to include other CFSP matters on the basis of a unanimous decision taken by the European Council (Article 31(3) TEU).
- Enhanced cooperation (Article 20(1) TEU) can also be used to advance the EU's foreign and security policy objectives.
  - A group of Member States may pursue advanced cooperation or integration in a particular field of CFSP if certain conditions are met.

### 3. What are the implications for practitioners?

- Member States and EU institutions should keep in consideration current Treaty provisions that allow for a wider use of QMV in CFSP matters.
- Contemplate the option of the European Council unanimously adopting decisions that set the EU's strategic objectives and principles in one or more areas of CFSP. These can be followed by implementation decisions taken at the Council level based on QMV, in accordance with Article 31(2).
- Member States could consider extending QMV specifically to the areas of sanctions regimes and human rights questions in international fora.
- Treat EU external action in a comprehensive manner – as the Treaties do – rather than seeing CFSP as an isolated policy area. CFSP is not the only 'route' to achieve the EU's external relations objectives: all tools (explicitly external, as well as internal policy areas with outward effects) should be considered.

## 05

## LAYING THE GROUND FOR THE ENGAGE WHITE PAPER Towards an Effective, Coherent and Sustainable EU External Action

### 1. What does this paper set out to achieve?

This paper establishes a common ground for research in the ENGAGE project. It puts forward shared definitions of the effectiveness, coherence and sustainability of the EU's external action and explains how corresponding indicators can be developed. The paper also builds the foundations for the final product of the ENGAGE project – a White Paper on Joined-up, Coherent, Sustainable and Effective EU External Action – by sharpening the understanding of the defining characteristics of a White Paper and the elements that will differentiate the ENGAGE paper from other similar documents. The research is based on content and taxonomical analysis of both primary and secondary literature and documents.

### 2. What are the main findings?

- In the EU documents reviewed, the effectiveness, coherence and sustainability of EU external action lack a clear definition and they are not utilised uniformly but come with a variety of meanings – sometimes even within identical contexts.
- We propose to understand: **\*effectiveness** of EU external action as the Union's ability to influence world affairs in accordance with its objectives and to produce a desired result; **\*horizontal coherence** as the EU's capacity to coordinate and manage policies and institutions that are involved in the pursuit of Union's external objectives and **\*vertical coherence** as the EU's capacity to work together with Member States on the pursuit of external objectives and to coordinate between the foreign policies of the Member States and the foreign policy of the EU; **\*sustainability** of EU external action as the capacity of external action to continue over time, along four dimensions: the environmental, social, economic and political.
- Three components are necessary to construct an indicator: the concept to be measured, the nature (or type) of the indicator to be used and the information source of the indicator.
- The final ENGAGE White Paper will put forward an actionable programme for the EU. It will approach the EU's external action comprehensively in order to discuss solutions to problems in this field and provide the Union with specific policy recommendations to operationalise the proposed solutions.

### 3. What are the implications for practitioners?

- Strengthen the common understanding of effectiveness, coherence and sustainability of EU external action by applying consistent definitions of these three terms (for example along the lines proposed above).
- Further mainstream the dimensions of effectiveness, coherence and sustainability when designing, implementing and evaluating all policies related to the EU's external action.
- Develop and apply well-designed indicators to gauge effectiveness, coherence and sustainability when evaluating the EU's external action policies.
- Engage in dialogue with researchers on how to improve the effectiveness, coherence and sustainability of EU external action (for example by participating in the validation process of the ENGAGE White Paper in 2023-2024).



# RESEARCH PARAMETERS

## 1. About ENGAGE

The ENGAGE (Envisioning a New Governance Architecture for a Global Europe) project examines how the EU – both the institutions and its Member States – can effectively and sustainably harness all of its tools in joined-up external action alongside the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and its Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) to meet key strategic challenges and become a stronger global actor.

ENGAGE identifies key challenges the EU's external action faces, from the rise of nationalism, the contestation of multilateralism, climate change and conflicts in the EU's neighbourhood to the acceptability of EU external action from the perspective of citizens and national decisionmakers. With these challenges in mind, the project assesses existing governance structures, treaties and strategic objectives – engaging with strategic partners, neighbouring regions, and conflict scenarios – to provide policymakers with concrete recommendations and tools. The work of the project will ultimately lead to a White Paper for Joined-Up, Coherent, Sustainable and Effective External Action, to inspire an inclusive and representative EU-wide conversation.

## 2. Project objectives

The overall objective of ENGAGE is to provide policymakers with a toolbox to improve the capacities and capabilities of EU external action. In order to do so, ENGAGE pursues five general objectives:

1. To analyse the most pressing contextual challenges faced by the EU's external action, including challenges emerging from the state of global governance and international relations, as well as those emerging from the acceptability of EU external action among EU citizens and Member States.
2. To assess existing governance structures and policy processes related to the multiple domains of the EU's external action.
3. To examine ways in which the EU can more effectively achieve its strategic goals, including successful engagement with strategic partners, neighbouring regions, and conflict and crisis scenarios.
4. To formulate recommendations on how to accommodate the multiple action domains, including traditionally internal policy areas, in a joined-up, coherent, sustainable and effective external action.
5. To inform policymakers on the governance structures needed to ensure a joined-up and EU diplomatic action and international cooperation.

## 3. Methodology

ENGAGE uses a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods along with a comprehensive review of state-of-the-art literature and in-depth case studies. This includes theoretically analysing and developing key concepts and criteria; mapping and analysing the legal and institutional basis of EU external action from an interdisciplinary angle; conducting in-depth case studies and semi-structured interviews; and engaging in document analysis, big data mining and advanced sentiment analysis. Further, ENGAGE takes a dual gender-sensitive research approach, reflected in the composition and internal mechanisms of the consortium, and in the research content.

## Project identity:

---

- **Project name:** ENGAGE (Envisioning a New Governance Architecture for a Global Europe)
- **Coordinator:** Fundació Esade (Spain)
- **Consortium:** Carnegie Europe Foundation (Belgium); College of Europe, Natolin (Poland); GLOBSEC (Slovakia); Fundació Esade (Spain); Hertie School (Germany); Institut Barcelona d'Estudis Internacionals (Spain); Institut de Relations Internationales et Stratégiques (France); International Institute for Strategic Studies (Germany and United Kingdom); Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (Belgium); Rijksuniversiteit Groningen (The Netherlands); Sabanci University (Turkey); Tampere University (Finland); and The University of Edinburgh (United Kingdom)
- **Funding scheme:** Research and Innovation action of the European Union's Horizon 2020 Framework Programme. Grant agreement no. 962533, under the topic "SU-GOVERNANCE-07-2020 - The Common Foreign and Security Policy and the expanding scope of the EU's external engagement"
- **Duration:** 1 January 2021 – 30 June 2024
- **Budget:** € 2 999 973,75
- **Website:** [www.engage-eu.eu](http://www.engage-eu.eu)

© **Copyright ENGAGE Consortium:** All rights, amongst which the copyright, on the materials described in this document rest with the original authors of the text, except where referenced. Without prior permission in writing from the authors and the Fundació ESADE, this document may not be used, in whole or in part, for the lodging of claims, for conducting proceedings, for publicity and/or for the benefit or acquisition in a more general sense.

**Legal Disclaimer:** The European Commission's support does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which only reflect the views of the author. The Commission is not responsible for any use of the information contained therein.

## For more information:

---

### EsadeGeo-Center for Global Economy and Geopolitics

#### ENGAGE

Avenida Pedralbes, 60-62

08034, Barcelona, Spain

[www.engage-eu.eu](http://www.engage-eu.eu)

[marie.vandendriessche@esade.edu](mailto:marie.vandendriessche@esade.edu)

 @ENGAGE\_Europe

 engage\_europe



## ENGAGE

ENVISIONING A NEW  
GOVERNANCE ARCHITECTURE  
FOR A GLOBAL EUROPE



This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement no. 962533.