

THE EVOLUTION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AS GLOBAL ACTOR IN THE LIGHT OF THE LISBON TREATY

*Alexandra Porumbescu**

Abstract

From the middle of the XXth Century, the European Union represents an unique and innovative model of international organization. For the first time in history, with the integration solutions provided by the creation of the common market, Europe has thrived by peace and the traditional conflicts have been successfully converted in partnerships that benefit all parts involved. In this paper we aim to analyze the evolution of the European Union as a global actor and its actions on the international scene. On the other hand, we question the ways in which this regional organization has the ability to act and influence globally. In order to obtain these answers, we analysed the main institutions introduced by the Treaty of Lisbon that contribute to developing the European foreign policy. We also tried to analyze the relationship between national foreign policy and European foreign policy and which of the two types of institutions are more resourceful in the matter of external action. The conclusion that we reached was that, although the European Union has managed to reach an unprecedented level of integration between its members, and despite the creation of common institutions of foreign affairs, this field is strictly linked to matters of state sovereignty, and the member states are not ready yet to give up completely such resources.

Key words: *Europe, Global, International Actors, Treaty of Lisbon, International Organization*

Fourty years ago, Henry Kissinger wondered: “*Who do I call if I want to call Europe?*”. This question is still of interest today, and should be understood based on at least the following perspectives: first of all, is there a person designated to represent the European Union’s point of view when it comes to international relations, and with the ability to speak on behalf of the interests of all the member states and the Union as a whole? And second, when referring to Europe as the international organization known as the European Union, can one speak of a common interest, do all the member states agree on the matters of their international interests?

Despite Europe’s attempts during the past forty years to advance from an economical community towards political integration, we believe that the answer to this question is yet under debate. This is the conclusion that Kissinger also reached in an interview with a German journal: “*Nation-states have not just given up part of their sovereignty to the European Union but also part of their vision for their own future. Their future is now tied to the European Union, and the EU has not yet achieved a vision and loyalty comparable to the nation-state. So, there is a vacuum between Europe’s past and Europe’s future*”¹.

The debate on Europe as a global actor has been highly polarized. On the one hand, we have seen a profusion of authors detecting the emergence of a genuine global

* Assistant Professor, Ph.D., University of Craiova, Faculty of Law and Social Sciences, Department of Social Sciences, no. 13, A.I. Cuza Street, Dolj County, tel. 0040251418515, e-mail: alexandraporumbescu@yahoo.com.

¹ Interview available at <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/spiegel-interview-with-henry-kissinger-europeans-hide-behind-the-unpopularity-of-president-bush-a-535964.html>

“superpower”¹. For these analysts, by and large, the EU’s “success” derives from conscious political purpose and preferences. On the other hand, there are those with minimal expectations who, however much they might personally wish it were otherwise, see little in the EU’s performance on the global stage other than political muddle, thin rhetoric and even mythology². Here, the argument is essentially driven by a focus on the tensions between the parts and the whole. In between, there is a group of scholars who believe that the EU can influence certain world outcomes, but only around the margins and only as a ‘civilian power’ through the deployment of normative instruments³.

In order to describe the European Union’s evolution as a global actor, we start from the presumption that this organization has, in fact, global action. We must differentiate the common European action from the distinctive relations that the member states have with third parties. Globalization may be defined as a comprehensive world-wide process of the internationalisation of communication, trade and economic organization. In the economic sphere it can be seen in international trade agreements, vast increases in the volume of international trade and growing economic interdependency. It is also marked by the expansion of the size and power of multinational corporations and the development of the American entertainment industry’s domination of international cultural communication⁴. In general, the process is seen as driven by the growth of international capitalism and involving the transformation of the culture and social structures of non-capitalist and pre-industrial societies.

The original treaties establishing first the European Coal and Steel Community in 1952, and then, in 1957, both the European Atomic Energy Community and the European Economic Community made no mention of foreign or security policy. Nonetheless, the Communities were international actors by virtue of their very existence: their international treaty base and their interaction with other global actors and institutions. Furthermore, there was an underlying political assumption that the process of European integration was one that was inherently political and which aspired to the creation of a truly political European community of states. Thus, it was to be expected that shared interests would gradually and increasingly be assigned to a supranational authority which, over time, would further extend its policy reach⁵. Moreover, within this neo-functionalist perspective, it was presumed that such a process would not be limited to domestic welfare issues of trade and production, but that it would also spillover from this area of “low politics” into the “high politics” of international relations and foreign policy. For these theorists, the move from a Common Commercial Policy to a Common Defence Policy was both desirable and inevitable⁶.

¹ S. Haseler, *Super-State: The New Europe and its Challenge to America*, London, I.B. Tauris Publishing, 2004, pp. 121-124; M. Leonard, *Why Europe will run the 21st Century*, London, Fourth Estate Publishing, 2005, p. 76.

² I. Manners, *Global Europa: Mythology of the European Union in World Politics*, in “Journal of Common Market Studies”, Vol. 48, Issue 1, January 2010, pp. 67-87.

³ Z. Laïdi, *Norms over Force: The Enigma of European Power*, New York, Palgrave, 2008, pp. 52-66.

⁴ Robert O. Keohane, Joseph S. Nye, *Putere și interdependență*, Iași, Editura Polirom, 2009, p. 94.

⁵ Ernst Haas, *The Uniting of Europe: Political, Economic and Social Forces, 1950-1957*, Stanford University Press, 1958, p. 32.

⁶ Robert O. Keohane, Joseph S. Nye, *op. cit.*, pp. 145-146.

The nomination of Javier Solana, not only to continue in his role as co-ordinator of the European Union's common foreign and security policy, but also to take over as the European Union's first foreign minister once this function is formally established, was a major boost for continuity in the European Union's foreign relations: "*Europe has to adapt itself and continue to be a player in international affairs*", as Solana has stated.

The amendments introduced by the Lisbon Treaty

Starting with just six member states in 1958 and now with 28, the EU (and its predecessor, the European Economic Community, which evolved into the European Community, or EC) has been a significant force behind the unification of a historically war-torn continent under a peaceful, legally binding democratic covenant. It has encouraged democratic and free-market economic reforms in Greece, Portugal, and Spain (all of which were formerly under authoritarian rule) and in the former communist nations of central and eastern Europe. In the Balkans and in Turkey, the prospect of EU membership has spurred economic and political reforms and promoted democratic values. And the EU has established a single market free of barriers, a common monetary policy (including a common currency for most member states), a zone of passport-free travel (excluding the United Kingdom and Ireland), and a significant body of common laws. For member states to have transferred so much sovereign power to the EU's central institutions is a unique achievement. However, foreign policy has always been the weakest element of the EU's integration project.

Member states began coordinating their foreign policies in the 1970s through an informal process known as the European Political Cooperation, which the Maastricht Treaty later formalized into a distinct intergovernmental decision-making process. Even then, however, the impact of EU foreign policy remained limited. Despite issuing countless declarations and "common positions" setting out official recommendations, the EU was usually unable to shape world events. Its role was largely confined to responding to crises, rather than preventing them or marshaling EU resources proactively to achieve defined objectives.

However, the deep divisions among member states that surfaced during the Iraq war reinforced concerns that flaws in the EU's structure hampered its ability to exert power. One problem was that the European Union's High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy coexisted with the post of European commissioner for external relations, which handled the European Commission's relations with the world (except for trade), including overseeing diplomatic delegations in non-EU countries. The former High Representative had political clout as the member states' representative but had a limited budget, mandate, and staff; the commissioner for external relations had a significant budget and staff, but only spoke for the European Commission, the EU's unelected executive branch. Their overlapping responsibilities and occasional lack of coordination resulted in ineffective uses of scarce resources. Meanwhile, the EU was still represented abroad by a slightly amended but equally unwieldy troika: the High Representative for EU common foreign and security policy, the commissioner for external relations, and the foreign minister of whichever country held the Council of the European Union presidency. It took the Lisbon Treaty to end that arrangement.

The Lisbon Treaty is the latest in a long line of EU reform efforts. It is the fifth amendment to the 1957 Treaty of Rome. Following the Single European Act of 1986 –

which laid the foundations for Europe's single market, assuring for the first time the free flow of goods, capital, people, and services among the member states – the EU reformed its institutions and decision-making process through the Maastricht Treaty of 1992, the Amsterdam Treaty of 1997, and the Nice Treaty of 2001. But with the cumulative effect of these amendments widely acknowledged to have complicated decision-making – and with the organization planning to enlarge from 15 to 25 member states in 2004 – EU leaders sought to replace the confusing patchwork of EU treaties with a single, overarching constitution. The resulting document, drafted by a constitutional convention in 2002-3, was signed by all EU heads of government in 2004 but was rejected the following year by French and Dutch voters, who feared that a European constitution would limit their countries' national voting rights, sovereignty, and access to EU funds¹.

In its 1997 publication, *Agenda 2000: For a stronger and wider Europe*, the European Commission proposes a range of ambitious, global roles for the European Union²: “*The Union must increase its influence in world affairs, promote values such as peace and security, democracy and human rights, provide aid for the least developed countries, defend its social model and establish its presence on the world markets...prevent major damage to the environment and ensure sustainable growth with an optimum use of world resources. Collective action by the European Union is an ever increasing necessity if these interests are to be defended, if full advantage is to be taken of the benefits of globalization and if the constraints it imposes are to be faced successfully. Europe's partners...expect it to carry out fully its responsibilities*”.

On December the 1st, 2009, after nearly a decade of acrimonious debate, the Treaty of Lisbon entered into force across the 27 member states of the European Union. The treaty reformed all the EU's institutions, making the organization more accountable to voters and enhancing its ability to address European and global challenges. On the long term, the treaty may make the EU a more coherent international actor, thereby significantly affecting non-EU countries, including the United States.

Europe's foreign affairs institutions

The Lisbon Treaty created the post of High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, who serves a five-year term as EU foreign minister and is supported by a large corps of diplomats. This new High Representative, who also serves as a vice president of the European Commission, carries out policies determined by the member states. The responsibilities of the High Representative were previously held by two separate persons within the EU: the High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the Commissioner for External Relations. The Treaty of Lisbon therefore puts all of the powers related to common foreign and security policy into the hands of one person. The aim is to improve the consistency, effectiveness and visibility of the EU's external action. The new post replaced Solana's, and although it bears a title similar to the one that was held by Solana, it has a clearer mandate. The treaty establishes, for example, that the new High Representative speaks for the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy in international forums and organizations, which the troika

¹ Jordan Gheorghe Bărbulescu, *Procesul decizional în Uniunea Europeană*, Iași, Editura Polirom, 2008, p. 431.

² Commission Communication (I), *Agenda 2000 for a stronger and wider Union*, in “Bulletin of the European Union”, 15.07.1997, p. 90.

used to do. This new streamlined system should enhance the EU's credibility, continuity, and communication.

However, the High Representative of the Union does not have the monopoly on the EU's external representation. The Treaty of Lisbon also gives the President of the European Council responsibility for the external representation of the EU, at a separate level, without prejudice to the powers of the High Representative. However, the text does not specify how the work is to be divided between the two, allowing practical experience to determine their respective roles.

Also, the High Representative participates actively in the common foreign and security policy of the Union. First of all, he contributes to the development of that policy by submitting proposals to the Council and the European Council. He then enforces the decisions adopted, as a representative of the Council.

The High Representative of the Union also has a duty of representation, by conducting political dialogue with third countries and is responsible for expressing the EU's positions in international organisations.

In replacing the High Representative for CFSP and the Commissioner for External Relations, the High Representative has also inherited their respective responsibilities. Within the Council, he is responsible for ensuring the consistency and continuity of the work relating to EU foreign policy. To this end, he chairs the Foreign Affairs Council. On the other hand, within the Commission, he holds the responsibilities of the latter in the field of external relations. In addition, he is responsible for ensuring coordination between external policy and the Commission's other policies and other services¹.

The High Representative is appointed by the European Council² acting by a qualified majority with the agreement of the President of the Commission. The European Council may also end the High Representative's mandate in accordance with the same procedure.

By virtue of his position, the High Representative is one of the Vice-Presidents of the Commission. In this capacity, he is subject, together with the President and the other members of the Commission, to a vote of approval by the European Parliament. The Treaty on European Union provides that, in the event of a censure motion passed by the Parliament against the Commission, the High Representative must resign from his functions within the Commission. *Per a contrario*, he retains the responsibilities which he holds within the Council until the new Commission is formed³.

Foreign policy has always been the weakest element of the EU's integration project. Cameron's proposals highlight a central issue regarding the Lisbon Treaty and the EU in general: their ultimate effectiveness will depend on whether politicians and voters in the member states embrace integration or focus instead on maintaining their own national prerogatives.

The European External Action Service (EEAS or EAS) was first included in the original European Constitution, a single EU external relations department was seen as necessary to support the proposed single High Representative post; as Charles Grant, Director of the Centre for European Reform, says, it would "...be like having a conductor

¹ *Treaty amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty Establishing the European Community*, in "Official Journal of the European Union", 17.12.2007, art. 18.2.

² *Ibidem*, art. 18.1.

³ Iordan Gheorghe Bărbulescu, *op. cit.*, p. 455.

*without an orchestra or rather, a conductor trying to conduct two separate orchestras at the same time*¹. Following the rejection of the Constitution, the changes were revived in the Treaty of Lisbon which came into force in 2009.

The mandate for the External Action Service is laid down under article 13a-III of the Treaty of Lisbon (TEU Article 27), and states the following: *“In fulfilling his mandate, the High Representative shall be assisted by a European External Action Service. This service shall work in cooperation with the diplomatic services of the Member States and shall comprise officials from relevant departments of the General Secretariat of the Council and of the Commission as well as staff seconded from national diplomatic services of the Member States. The organisation and functioning of the European External Action Service shall be established by a decision of the Council. The Council shall act on a proposal from the High Representative after consulting the European Parliament and after obtaining the consent of the Commission”*².

Shortly before the treaty came into force, Catherine Ashton was named High Representative and tasked with drawing up the structure of the new EEAS. Following the 2010 Haiti earthquake, Ashton chaired a meeting of the foreign policy actors across the Commission, Council and member states to give a coordinated response to the disaster. Although she refused to describe it as the first act of the external action service, Ashton did stress that it was the first time that such a co-ordination between all the various EU foreign policy actors had been accomplished before³.

Throughout the first half of 2010 the High Representative fought for agreement between the Council, Parliament and the Commission as to the future shape of the EEAS. The Commission wanted to retain as many of its existing competencies (trade, development, enlargement, representations and so forth) as possible⁴, while the Parliament fought to gain as much oversight over the EEAS as possible by demanding scrutiny of appointments and budgets. The Parliament removed the last hurdle to the plan on the 8th of July, when the members of the European Parliament approved the service by 549 votes for and 78 against with 17 abstentions. The Council approved the transfer of departments to the EAS on the 20th of July. Until the EEAS became operational, Ashton was only been supported by around 30 people on a floor of the Berlaymont building⁵. The EEAS was formally launched at the Commission headquarters in a low key event on 1 December 2010⁶.

In achieving his mission, the new High Representative's main tools are a budget estimated at 4 billion euros and the European External Action Service, a team of 3,000 diplomats stationed in 130 delegations in countries and international organizations worldwide. These delegations represent the entire EU, not just the European

¹ Charles Grant, *Constitutional fudge. The EU's foreign policy arrangements are dysfunctional, so why is Britain trying to block plans to make them more effective?*, in “Guardian blog”, 19 June 2007.

² *Treaty amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty Establishing the European Community*, in “Official Journal of the European Union”, 17.12.2007, p. 27.

³ Andrew Rettman, *EU foreign relations chief tests new powers in earthquake response*, in “EU Observer”, 14 January 2010.

⁴ Jan Gaspers, *Putting Europe First*, in “World Today”, Vol. 66 Issue 1, January 2010, p. 20.

⁵ Council of the European Union, *Council decision establishing the organisation and functioning of the European External Action Service*, Brussels, 20 July 2010.

⁶ Andrew Rettman, *EU foreign relations chief tests new powers in earthquake response*, in “EU Observer”, 14 January 2010.

Commission, as past delegations did. This means that these delegations (rather than the embassy of the country holding the rotating Council of the European Union presidency) represent the EU in non-EU countries on all matters of foreign policy. If this new diplomatic corps builds broad and deep expertise on foreign policy and facilitates the emergence of an EU-wide perspective, it may prove to be the Lisbon Treaty's most significant innovation.

There are, however, certain factors that may limit the High Representative's possibility of action and practical achievements. On the one hand, despite the fact that the High Representative is the central figure in the foreign policy of the European Commission, four other commissioners are responsible for related external issues: international trade; EU enlargement and "neighborhood policy" toward non-EU countries that are not candidates for accession; international cooperation, humanitarian aid, and crisis response; and development assistance. So, it is still to be seen how effective this commissioners will be in coordinating their responsibilities. The Lisbon Treaty partly ends the inefficient system of six-monthly rotations in the leadership of the Council of the European Union by providing that the High Representative shall chair and craft the agenda for all monthly Council of the European Union meetings on foreign affairs. However, the old system lives on to some extent because the relevant minister from the country holding the rotating presidency will continue to chair and craft the agenda for meetings on general affairs – which include some affairs of international significance, such as EU enlargement, humanitarian aid, climate change, energy security, and economic and monetary policy. The High Representative might therefore have some difficulties in ensuring that all the matters of the EU's foreign policy are consistent.

On the other hand, managing the diversity of interests among the 28 EU member states will be another challenge. Any further accessions, of course, will compound the challenge. Also, it is possible that energetic national leaders may seize the diplomatic center stage, much as French President Nicolas Sarkozy did in early 2009 when he sought to broker a halt to Israeli-Palestinian clashes even after France's six-month presidency of the Council of the European Union had ended. Germany's increasing assertiveness in foreign policy – and unwillingness to subordinate its national interests to those of the EU – may continue to complicate the search for consensus among EU members, especially on issues of particular concern to Germany, such as energy security and the relationship with Russia.

However, one may assume that the Lisbon Treaty does little to resolve the tense relationship between the foreign policies of each of the member states and that of the entire union. Despite the fact that the treaty offers sufficient tools for making the common foreign policy more effective, member states will probably still pursue their own policies. As a matter of fact, on almost every foreign and security policy issue, the High Representative is only able to act with the unanimous consent of the member states. This means that even one small country – such as Cyprus, Luxembourg, or Malta – can block an action supported by all the other EU member states. Likewise, the overseas delegations of the European External Action Service will cooperate with, but not replace, the diplomatic missions of the member states throughout the world¹. Under the Lisbon

¹ *Treaty amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty Establishing the European Community*, in "Official Journal of the European Union", 17.12.2007, art. 27.1.

Treaty, neither the High Representative nor the External Action Service affects the “responsibilities and powers of each Member State in relation to the formulation and conduct of its foreign policy, its national diplomatic service, relations with third countries and participation in international organisations, including a Member State’s membership of the United Nations”¹. In other words, foreign policy decision-making remains intergovernmental, rather than supranational.

European foreign policies

The EU’s emerging foreign policy has not, as we have already seen, lent itself to easy categorisation and has successfully resisted being boxed into our existing understanding of European integration or international relations. It might even be argued that the EU is best viewed as a transitional entity, or one that generates international relations but which also remains itself a subsystem of those international relations². In recent years too, the development of the EU’s international capacity has made the effort to understand it even more challenging. This is rooted in the EU foreign policy’s capacity to transform the construction, content and expression of the national foreign policies of the EU Member States. Regarding the construction of foreign policies, it is clear that institutionalised policy coordination involving common EU-wide work practices and structures, a partially shared information base, a common substantive agenda and a unique policymaking structure has established a truly collective context through which a significant share of “national” foreign policy is now formulated and pursued. Whether characterised as “Brusselsization”³ or “Brussels-based intergovernmentalism”, it amounts to a fundamental shift in the way that national foreign policies are being constructed. This does not put aside the role of national perspectives or even of declared “national interests”. It does, however, underline the degree to which national foreign policies are translated and formulated through a European context even before they get to an intergovernmental negotiating table.

The Treaty of Lisbon sought to strengthen the role of the European Union on the international affairs scene. The reforms introduced by the Treaty aimed to make the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) of the EU more coherent and to increase its visibility.

To this end, the Treaty of Lisbon introduced two major innovations: first of all, it created the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the European External Action Service, as stated above; furthermore, it enhanced the development of the Common Security and Defence Policy. Alongside these two innovations, the Treaty of Lisbon also introduced other less important changes, specifically concerning the procedures for implementing the CFSP.

The CFSP previously formed the 2nd pillar of the old EU structure. It was governed by intergovernmental cooperation, within which decisions were adopted mainly unanimously by the Council or the European Council.

The Treaty of Lisbon reforms the old EU structure by abolishing the distinction between the three pillars. However, this merging of the pillars does not affect the

¹ *Ibidem*, art. 27.3.

² M.S. Filtenborg, S. Gänzle, and E. Johansson, *An Alternative Approach to EU Foreign Policy: Network Governance and the Case of the Northern Dimension Initiative*, in “Cooperation and Conflict”, December 2002, vol. 37 no. 4, p. 390.

³ Ernst Haas, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

decision-making procedures for CFSP matters. The main roles of the European Council and the Council of the EU are maintained, as is the principle of unanimity.

Furthermore, the merging of the pillars effectively makes the European Community disappear, to be replaced by the EU. The EU thereby has legal personality, which was previously an attribute of the European Community only. This legal personality confers on the EU new rights at international level. For example, the EU is henceforth capable of concluding international agreements and joining international organisations and conventions.

The Treaty of Lisbon modified the types of act adopted in the field of the CFSP. The previous instruments such as common strategies, common positions and common actions are replaced. Henceforth, the European Council and the Council of the EU shall only adopt decisions on¹: the strategic interests and objectives of the Union; the actions to be undertaken by the Union; the positions to be taken by the Union; the procedures for implementing the actions and positions of the Union. Furthermore, no legislative act can be adopted in the field of the CFSP.

However, the Treaty of Lisbon does not make any major changes to the decision-making process in the field of the CFSP: the European Council is still the institution responsible for defining the general guidelines and strategies of the EU. On this basis, the Council of the EU is then responsible for developing and putting in place the implementing measures.

On matters relating to the CFSP, Member States and the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy have a right of initiative. The High Representative exercises this right with the support of the Commission. In addition, the High Representative must regularly inform and consult the European Parliament on the implementation of the CFSP. It is the part of the High Representative to make sure that the views of the European Parliament are taken into consideration at all times.

Unanimity remains the general rule for decisions adopted by the Council and the European Council concerning the CFSP. However, the Treaty of Lisbon introduces a specific bridging clause use applicable to the whole of the CFSP. Exceptions are made for decisions with military implications or those in the area of defence. Using the bridging clause, the European Council may authorise the Council to act by a qualified majority to adopt certain measures.

The Treaty of Lisbon maintains the principle of the lack of jurisdiction of the Court of Justice in the field of the CFSP². However, it provides for two exceptions where the Court of Justice may exercise judicial control: reviewing the legality of restrictive measures taken by the Union against natural or legal persons³; monitoring compliance with Article 40 of the Treaty on EU and monitoring respect of the powers of European institutions when implementing the CFSP. Furthermore, Article 218 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU provides that an opinion of the Court of Justice may be obtained as to whether an international agreement is compatible with the founding Treaties of the EU.

¹ *Treaty amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty Establishing the European Community*, in "Official Journal of the European Union", 17.12.2007, art. 297.

² *Ibidem*, art. 24.

³ *Ibidem*, art. 275.

Regarding the content of national foreign policies, there is also evidence of fundamental processes of change.

These are best illustrated by “*a consequent internalisation of norms and expectations arising from a complex, collective policymaking system*”¹. Hill and Wallace² define this process as one in which rationality is seen differently as a result of intensive exchange between officials. Earlier, Nuttall identified this as a “consultation reflex” in which officials sought out the views of colleagues before constructing their own analyses of the situation and possible policy responses. The impact of this internalisation of beliefs and norms is that the content of national foreign policies has gradually shifted over time.

Despite the fact that the Lisbon Treaty is an important step forward, EU member states still need to develop a common view of their international security environment. It would be unrealistic to expect member states’ fundamentally nationalist policies to become entirely consistent, but there are signs of convergence. We must acknowledge that European foreign policies are gradually becoming more “Europeanized”. For instance, member states’ foreign ministers now gather under EU auspices as regularly as they meet with their own cabinets. Even though we expect that times of crisis will continue to reveal high-profile disagreements among member states, the general instinct in European foreign ministries is increasingly to find a common European position on most issues, even at the price of making compromises. For instance, the EU’s member states nearly always vote as a group in UN bodies and other international forums, such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe³. This process is likely to continue and should, along with the Lisbon Treaty, result in a more coherent EU foreign policy.

To conclude, the significance of the Lisbon Treaty should not be measured only according to the highest benchmarks, such as whether it could have ensured a common EU policy during the wars in the Balkans and Iraq. History has shown that better EU decision-making procedures improve the speed and quality of the decisions themselves and that it takes time for institutions to reach their full potential. The Lisbon Treaty may not compensate for strongly divergent views or a lack of political will among the EU’s member states, but it will promote coherence and effectiveness when consensus is possible. Most likely, its effects will prove to be evolutionary, rather than revolutionary.

Bibliography

Bărbulescu, Iordan Gheorghe, *Procesul decizional în Uniunea Europeană*, Iași, Editura Polirom, 2008.

Buzan, Barry, Little, Richard, *Sistemele internaționale în istoria lumii, (International systems in the history of the world)*, Iași, Editura Polirom, 2009.

Commission Communication (I), *Agenda 2000 for a stronger and wider Union*, in “Bulletin of the European Union”, 15.07.1997.

Council of the European Union, *Council decision establishing the organisation and functioning of the European External Action Service*, Brussels, 20 July 2010.

¹ Simon Nuttall, *European Political Cooperation*, London, Clarendon Press, 1992, p. 35.

² Christopher Hill and William Wallace, *Introduction: Actors and Actions*, in Christopher Hill (editor), *The Actors in Europe’s Foreign Policy*, Oxford, Routledge, 1996, p. 124.

³ Barry Buzan, Richard Little, *Sistemele internaționale în istoria lumii*, Iași, Editura Polirom, 2009, p. 423.

Filtborg, M.S., Gänzle, S. and E. Johansson, *An Alternative Approach to EU Foreign Policy: Network Governance and the Case of the Northern Dimension Initiative*, in "Cooperation and Conflict", December 2002, vol. 37 no. 4, pp. 387-407.

Gaspers, Jan, *Putting Europe First*, in "World Today", January 2010, vol. 66, Issue 1.

Grant, Charles, *Constitutional fudge. The EU's foreign policy arrangements are dysfunctional, so why is Britain trying to block plans to make them more effective?*, in "Guardian blog", 19 June 2007.

Haas, Ernst, *The Uniting of Europe: Political, Economic and Social Forces, 1950-1957*, Stanford University Press, 1958.

Haseler, S., *Super-State: The New Europe and its Challenge to America*, London, I.B. Tauris Publishing, 2004.

Hill, Christopher, Wallace, William, *Introduction: Actors and Actions*, in Hill, Christopher (editor), *The Actors in Europe's Foreign Policy*, Oxford, Routledge, 1996.

Keohane, Robert O., Nye, Joseph S., *Putere și interdependență (Power and interdependence)*, Iași, Editura Polirom, 2009.

Läidi, Z., *Norms over Force: The Enigma of European Power*, New York, Palgrave, 2008.

Leonard, M., *Why Europe will run the 21st Century*, London, Fourth Estate Publishing, 2005.

Manners, I., *Global Europa: Mythology of the European Union in World Politics*, in "Journal of Common Market Studies", Vol. 48, Issue 1, January 2010, pp. 67-87.

Nuttal, Simon, *European Political Cooperation*, London, Clarendon Press, 1992.

Rettman, Andrew, *EU foreign relations chief tests new powers in earthquake response*, in "EU Observer", 14 January 2010.

Treaty amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty Establishing the European Community, in "Official Journal of the European Union", 17.12.2007.