

Call for contributions - Study Days, April 10-11, 2025

The EU's international policy-making power

I. Scientific aspects

In early November, the re-election of Donald Trump reinforced the prospect of an increasingly polarized world. For the European Union, it will certainly put its international policy-making powers to the test. In this respect, it is yet another challenge, in addition to many others such as the security challenge posed by the wars in Ukraine and the Middle East, the economic, commercial and industrial challenges posed by China and the United States, the digital challenge and its global technological race, and the challenge of energy independence, particularly in the face of Russia. Increasingly deadly environmental and climatic disasters, and growing food insecurity, are also of global concern, but are struggling to bring the international community into lasting alignment. In addition, the challenge of a declining multilateralism is slowing down any future normalization of international relations.

According to Article 3§5 of the TEU, the Union is bound, in its international relations, to affirm its values, protect its citizens, contribute to world peace, the sustainable development of the planet, free and fair trade and the development of international law. Meeting these requirements comes up against the challenges listed above. The methods and instruments used by the Union in its international relations are also put to the test. Indeed, it deploys a whole range of strategies - which we shall examine in detail - sometimes attempting to “set itself up as a model”, playing on what might constitute “European exceptionalism”¹. In seeking to build an influential political and legal model, it sometimes lapses into a criticized imperialism. In addition, to mention but a few of the means employed, it also operates on the international stage as a *sui generis* organization with legal personality. In this respect, it sometimes finds itself subject to split personalities, indulging in inconsistencies and even contradictions between its international positions and the European standards it seeks to promote.

In an ever-changing international context, it may be interesting to ask: how and to what extent does the European Union succeed in imposing its power to shape international policies ? In particular, we need to question the methods used by the Union, as well as their limits ; but we also need to identify and discuss the standards it projects internationally, and the challenges they face.

This raises a number of questions, both about the place the Union has taken, and sometimes even given, on the international stage, and about the way it reacts to, or even resists, interests that run counter to its own, and in particular to its values. A study of its

¹ ROBERT Loïc, « L'exceptionnalisme européen », in CARPANO Eric, MARTI Gaëlle (dir.), *L'exception en droit de l'Union européenne*, Droits européens, Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2019, p. 189.

behavior could help to raise broader questions about its participation in the (re)construction of a world order; and could even, from the outside, fuel reflections on the definition of this “political-legal UFO”.

There are a number of avenues to explore in the contributions. The following are just a few of the possible topics:

On the one hand, proposals could focus on *the Union's methods for developing international policies*, and concern :

- A **multilateral method** for the development of international law in its own image, notably through the conclusion of agreements/treaties, its place within the various international institutions, the effectiveness of European diplomacy, the development of a European political community, and so on.
- A **unilateral method**, with the study of European legal imperialism (hard power and soft power of the Union), notably through the Brussels effect, the use of conditionality (e.g. for access to the European market, enlargements, development aid), and the use of sanctions (financial, commercial, sectoral).
- A **method of European exemplarity**, notably in the application of international law (e.g. on sustainable development) or through the attractiveness of a European model (e.g. cultural, social, economic).
- The **challenges and limits of each of these methods**, and their interaction/complementarity, in order to reflect on the Union's over-regulation, the coherence of its international policies, its more geopolitical institutions (e.g. the Commission), the impact of global crises, a Union that is not always exemplary, and so on.

On the other hand, proposals could focus on *the standards promoted by the Union in international policies*, and concern :

- **Fundamental values** (e.g. human rights, democracy, the rule of law) and whether or not they are promoted in international policies.
- **Substantive standards**, their impact on businesses and citizens, and their ability to serve as a model (either through thematic study of social, environmental, digital standards, etc., or through study of targeted examples such as RGPD, REACH, rules on renewable energies, consumer protection, certain so-called “new generation” FTAs).
- **European strategic autonomy**, with a study of the concept (in particular its relationship with European integration and sovereignty, a new standard in international relations?), its dimensions (defense, security, food, digital, energy, health, AI, etc.) and their concretization through common policies (e.g. a defense community, the Draghi and Letta reports, a new European standardization strategy).
- **The challenges facing standards**, such as ensuring European resilience to preserve them, the unity or otherwise of member states with regard to them, preserving multilateralism without compromising them, their competition/criticism opposed by other powers, the weight of dependencies, the risk of double standards, etc.

To encourage a multi-disciplinary approach, proposals may be drawn from public law, private law, political science, economics and other social sciences.

II. Practical information

The study days are organized by the Association des doctorants en études et recherches européennes de Bayonne (ADEREB). It will be held at the College of European and International Studies of the Université de Pau et des Pays de l'Adour, on the Bayonne campus, on **Thursday April 10 and Friday April 11, 2025**.

To respond to this call for contributions, doctoral students and young doctors should send their proposed contribution (maximum two pages - in French, English or Spanish), together with their CV and thesis topic, by e-mail (doctorants.cdre@gmail.com) before **January 8, 2025**.

A reply to each proposal will be given no later than **February 7, 2025**.

A publication of the proceedings is planned at the end of the study day.

Travel to Bayonne and accommodation will be paid for by the participants' laboratories and doctoral schools, or by the participants themselves. A contribution from ADEREB to these expenses cannot be ruled out, as a funding request is currently underway.

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