

*Max Guderzo**

Half a Loaf Is Better Than None: European Construction, National Interest, and Interdependence

Abstract

This article focuses on European integration from a historical perspective, using the concepts of “national interest” and “interdependence” to analyse and interpret the transformations triggered by the intersecting forces of decolonisation and Cold War dynamics. The argument is structured in three parts:

- (a) The construction of the European Communities was initiated in the 1950s with the specific aim of gradually leading both the ruling elites and the societies of some European States to transcend the traditional notion of a “national interest”. The essay develops this idea by examining whether the concept of a “European interest” emerged or not, and whether it was helped or undermined by the enlargement waves of the 1960s and 1970s.
- (b) During the initial decades of European unification, the governing elites and societies in the participating states experienced a new dimension of international and transnational interdependence. However, traditional identity and relational patterns continued to influence their diplomatic behaviour. This article explores how interdependence coexisted with long-standing trends in the diplomatic action of European States during some phases of the Cold War, with particular reference to the 1960s.

* **Max Guderzo** – University of Siena, Italy, e-mail: massimiliano.guderzo@unisi.it,
ORCID ID: 0000-0002-5283-677X.

- (c) In the security dimension of European integration, this essay sets the concepts of national interest and interdependence against a transatlantic background to understand how the US sought to harmonise these two notions in its broader global strategy, while decolonisation was simultaneously marking the decline of European traditional empires and setting the framework for the possible establishment of a new European “post-empire”.

In conclusion, the end of the Cold War is identified as the crucial moment when, while the new European Union was outlined, the weakness of post-imperial discourse in European societies failed to restructure the transatlantic bond as well as the relationship between Europe and the world at a more mature and responsible level.

Keywords: European Construction, Cold War, Decolonisation, Empires, National Interest, Interdependence

Introduction

It may be argued that the European Communities’ construction began in the 1950s with the specific purpose of encouraging both the governing elites and societies of select European States – “the Six” for the purposes of this article, or, the countries that accepted specific sovereignty limitations – to transcend the traditional notion of “national interest”.

This aim added an innovative dimension to the negotiations that led to the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), turning what could have been standard diplomatic talks into something more groundbreaking. The resulting treaty became a revolutionary document, as it introduced the concept of a “supranational interest” into modern European history for the first time (*Traité instituant la Communauté Européenne du Charbon et de l’Acier*, 1951).

However, in August 1954, the French National Assembly rejected the European Defence Community (EDC) Treaty, revealing that the ECSC countries lacked the strength to extend their innovative supranational approach, triggered by the May 1950 Monnet-Schuman Plan, to security matters. Instead, they, along with the United Kingdom, opted for the Western European Union (WEU) Treaty in October of the same year, which represented a typically intergovernmental pattern of European security, heavily influenced by Britain and its interests.¹

¹ For a direct witness, cf, e.g., HAEUa, pp. 7–9; HAEUb, pp. 34–39; HAEUc, pp. 2–4; HAEUd, pp. 22–24. Examples of the abundant literature available on these themes are quoted in Guderzo, 2015. Further remarks presented here also elaborate on ideas

This article will examine whether or not the concept of “European interests” emerged in the following decades and how it intertwined with intra-European and transatlantic interdependence.

Beyond National Interest

The 1954 setback came at a critical moment for substantive European integration, given that the EDC Treaty, introduced by the Plevin Plan and signed by the Six on 27th May 1952, included the crucial Article 38, which aimed to establish an institutional framework that could be considered proto-federal in nature.² The initial EDC assembly, which integrated delegates from the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), was tasked with creating a new assembly which would be “elected on a democratic basis” and delineating its powers based on the principle that: “the definitive organisation which [would] take the place of the present transitional organisation should be conceived so as to be capable of constituting one of the elements of an ultimate Federal or confederal structure, based upon the principle of the separation of powers and including, particularly, a bicameral representative system” (*Traité instituant la Communauté Européenne de Défense*, 1952).

The potential for a new European political community was evident, as Italian Prime Minister Alcide De Gasperi, likely influenced by the federalist ideas of Altiero Spinelli, believed and hoped. During EDC negotiations, De Gasperi advocated for the granting of constituent powers to the new assembly, recognising the political significance of the initiative extending beyond its formal provisions.³ While he did not live to see his wishes fulfilled, the supranational progress made with the ECSC was politically more important than merely the making of economic or technical advancements. Visionaries such as De Gasperi and Jean Monnet recognised that a significant step forward had been made in the European

circulated in two unpublished working papers of the Machiavelli Center for Cold War Studies, Florence: “The European Community: From Economic Integration to Common Security Policy”; and “Vietnam, 9/11, Europe and the Unilateralist Temptation in U.S. Foreign Policy”. The author wishes to express his gratitude to professors Leopoldo Nuti, Bruna Bagnato, Maria Eleonora Guasconi and Mauro Campus for their useful feedback and kind co-operation.

² See Loth, 2020; among earlier contributions cf. e.g. Preda, 1990; 1993, esp. pp. 53–54; Dumoulin, 2000.

³ Cf. e.g. Preda, 2004, esp. pp. 639–690; Graglia, 2008, esp. pp. 345–360; and the speech delivered in September 2016 by Mario Draghi, President of the European Central Bank (2016).

decision-making process, even if shortsighted politicians and national economic establishments failed to see beyond the economic aspects.⁴

Addressing the Consultative Assembly of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg on 16th September 1952, De Gasperi delivered the following: “Economic cooperation is, of course, a matter of compromise between the natural desire for independence of each participant and overriding political aspirations. If European economic cooperation were dependent upon the compromises put forward by the various administrations concerned, we should probably be led into weaknesses and inconsistencies. So it is the political aspiration for unity which must prevail. We must be guided above all by the overriding realisation that it is essential to build a united Europe in order to ensure for ourselves peace, progress, and social justice” (Draghi, 2016).

In fact, the ECSC High Authority was granted unprecedented competences as a supranational executive, a level of authority that the European Commission, constrained by its partnership with the Council of Ministers, would not attain for over five decades. These competencies transcended the mere juxtaposition of national interests by addressing two key issues, namely, the resources of coal and steel, the control of which had shaped European history, and had often served as triggers of war. By managing those resources supranationally, Europe sought to end the rivalries for dominance that had plagued it, especially the rivalry between Germany and France which had destabilised the region. This approach redefined their historically-contested border as an internal boundary line within a broader framework of economic security (Dehio, 1948; cf. Germond, 2023).

The European Defence Community (EDC) emerged as a logical extension of the supranational approach. While managing the Federal Republic of Germany’s rearmament was an immediate concern, the long-term goal was to form a European army in order to counter any resurgence of national militarism and safeguard the West and its values through a supranational defence. It came as little surprise that the United States eventually supported the idea (see, e.g., Lundestad, 2003). However, the EDC also faced significant opposition. The Soviet Union, unsurprisingly hostile to the EDC’s idea in a polarising Cold War environment, sought to undermine it by influencing opposition parties and movements in Western Europe. Those who rejected supranational politics, such as the Gaullists in France, fought for its defeat. While exceptional Cold War circumstances facilitated the Treaty’s signing, lessening tensions following Stalin’s death and early signs of détente led to its collapse.

⁴ On Monnet and other “founding fathers” of European integration see Gehler, 2023b; Joly, 2017; cf. also earlier contributions, such as Bossuat, 2001.

The failure of the EDC seemed to stall European integration for a time. However, less than three years later, the Rome Treaties were signed in March 1957, reenergising this vision and establishing two reenergising this vision and establishing two new Communities: the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM), designed to coordinate the Six's research into nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, and the European Economic Community (EEC), aimed at creating a common market (*EU Treaties*, 2016).

By January 1958, with the Treaties in effect, it appeared that a significant step from integration to construction had been achieved, leading to the further institutionalisation of the supranational approach chosen by the Six. While security and foreign policies were deliberately excluded from the core of the EEC Treaty following the EDC's failure, provisions for associating other States and territories hinted at broader political and security implications. The EEC Commission, entrusted with representing the common interest, quickly emerged as the most crucial body, even though its executive power was kept under close scrutiny by a Council of Ministers comprised of government representatives with decision-making authority. Nevertheless, the Community's ambitious objectives, including the transition to majority rule for key decisions, made the framework appear to be effective.

General Charles de Gaulle, returning to power in May 1958, disapproved of the supranational trajectory of the European integration project. However, as he envisioned France leading a powerful Europe that could act as a balance between the US and the USSR in world affairs, he could see the strengthening of the Community as a useful means to that end just as long as the supranational elements were kept in check to conform to French national interests (see, e.g., Nuenlist, Locher, Martin, 2010).

This context partly explains why, in the early 1960s, de Gaulle, despite opposing any loss of sovereignty, sought to establish a European Union capable of effectively coordinating international and intergovernmental policies – rather than supranational or proto-federal policies – in various areas, including external relations and security. He believed such a project could elevate Europe's role in international affairs, allowing it to regain influence and prestige in the context of détente, primarily through Franco-German reconciliation and pursuing Soviet cooperation. This vision culminated in the Fouchet Plans, which were two draft treaties aimed at creating a strong Union based on intergovernmental cooperation while respecting the full sovereignty of the Member States. However, these drafts were even less successful than the EDC, and failed to produce a signed treaty by October 1961 and again in January 1962. The other five EEC members consequently devised a more federalist-oriented approach

for political union, which Paris, predictably, rejected (Caviglia, 2000; Kramer, 2003; D'Ottavio, 2008).⁵

De Gaulle's failure to realise his vision of a strong, intergovernmental Europe also undermined the ambitions of EEC Commission President Walter Hallstein, who sought to strengthen the community within the framework of the EEC Treaty, emphasising a quasi-federal approach rather than the intergovernmental provisions introduced in 1957, which de Gaulle deemed necessary. This ideological clash resulted in the so-called "empty-chair" crisis that nearly dismantled the Community in the latter half of 1965. For a time, the remaining five EEC members considered proceeding without France, potentially incorporating the British, whom the General had kept at arm's length for years. However, this option did not seem particularly viable, as the UK was not perceived as being genuinely ready for supranational integration. The Luxembourg Compromise reached in January 1966 indicated that de Gaulle had prevailed; Western Europe would have to await a new French President to revisit both enlargement and political development within the Community.⁶

The enlargement waves of the 1970s and 1980s did little to clarify the notion of a "European interest", often resulting in compromises that balanced the national interests of both existing and newly-admitted Member States. This pattern continued in the subsequent decades as incoming states viewed their membership in the EU primarily as a restoration of their status and rights, rather than as a commitment to new responsibilities towards a collective good. This challenge emerged amid the complex interaction of supranational and national tasks in both the executive and legislative realms, marking a new phase of European construction amid the contentious adoption and ratification of the Lisbon Treaty (*Treaty of Lisbon*, 2007; *Consolidate version of the Treaty on European Union*, 2016).

Have the waves of enlargement since 2004 led to an inevitable dilution of Europe's political integration process, or could they instead foster a coalition of newer and older Member States to accelerate it? To meet the challenges of the coming years, Europeans – governments and citizens alike – may need to articulate and determine the concept of a "European interest", one which is consistent with the exercise of genuine global responsibilities. This would require a shift to a community-oriented approach rather than a primarily intergovernmental one, reminiscent

⁵ Cf. the texts of the two Fouchet plans and the Five's counter-proposals, *Draft Treaty – Fouchet Plan*, 1961. See also HAEUe, pp. 12–15.

⁶ On the compromise and the decision-making process see, e.g., HAEUf, p. 27. On enlargement, see Klimoska, 2024.

of the proto-federal aspirations of the 1950s. The revolutionary concept of European citizenship, introduced in Maastricht in the 1990s and still awaiting full realisation, could play a crucial role in this endeavour. Indeed, this would offer an opportunity to address the significant migration trends currently revitalising Europe with fresh, vital energy.

Exercises in Interdependence

In the initial decades of European construction, the governing elites and societies of the participating states encountered an unprecedented level of international and transnational interdependence. This new dimension challenged the traditional notion that alliances and cooperation agreements were the sole means for European states not only to achieve common goals, but also safeguard against external threats, and/or coordinate or temporarily merge their capabilities for specific purposes, ultimately influencing the global balance of power.

It was this growing awareness of interdependence that signalled the significant shift from centuries of intra-European rivalry – culminating in two world wars – to a new era of peace and integration initiated by the Treaties that established the three European Communities.

However, the deeply-rooted patterns of identity and relations of previous eras – such as pride rooted in sovereign independence, patriotism bound to state borders and flags, and a complex mix of co-dependence and counter-dependence – were not entirely replaced by this newfound unity, but in fact continued to shape the behaviour of European States and societies within the Communities.

The coexistence of this legacy and the new interdependence became evident in the diplomatic actions of European States during the Cold War, particularly throughout the 1950s and 1960s, and persisted well into the following two decades with particular regard to common attitudes and actions in foreign and security policies.

The Hague Conference in December 1969 promoted and catalysed a renewed commitment to furthering integration within Europe, and prompted enlargement negotiations which officially began in June 1970 and, by early 1973, the Community had welcomed into its ranks the UK, Ireland, and Denmark. In October 1970, the Foreign Ministers of the Six endorsed the Davignon Report, a pivotal document which aimed to advance political unification in Europe, and underscored a direct and clear link between the pursuit of this goal and the need for cooperation in foreign policy, highlighting two primary objectives:

“a) to ensure greater mutual understanding with respect to the major issues of international politics, by exchanging information and consulting regularly; (b) to increase their solidarity by working for a harmonisation of views, concertation of attitudes and joint action when it appears feasible and desirable” (*Davignon Report*, 1970).⁷

The Davignon report sparked vigorous debate among the European Commission’s highest officials⁸ and within the political commission of the European Parliament.⁹

On 23rd July 1973, three weeks after Helsinki’s Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) commenced, the Foreign Ministers of the nine Member States of the enlarged Community formally approved the Copenhagen report. This document served as the second major report on European Political Co-operation (EPC) in foreign policy, and raised significant expectations due to its ambitious vision: “Europe now needs to establish its position in the world as a distinct entity, especially in international negotiations which are likely to have a decisive influence on the international equilibrium and on the future of the European Community. In the light of this it is essential that, in the spirit of the conclusions of the [1972] Paris Summit Conference, co-operation among the Nine on foreign policy should be such as to enable Europe to make an original contribution to the international equilibrium. Europe has the will to do this, in accordance with its traditionally outward-looking mission and its interest in progress, peace and co-operation. It will do so, loyal to its traditional friends and to the alliances of its Member States, in the spirit of good neighbourliness which must exist between all the countries of Europe both to the east and the west, and responding to the expectations of all the developing countries” (*Second Report on European Political Cooperation on Foreign Policy*, 1973).¹⁰

A few months later, following the Yom Kippur War, the aforementioned nine Member States issued a joint declaration on 6th November 1973, calling for a peaceful solution as regards the Middle East. In the subsequent years, intergovernmental cooperation enabled those nine states to coordinate actions during the CSCE’s Geneva phase (1973–1975) not only on pressing issues such as the Arab-Israeli conflict, but also on pan-European issues

⁷ Cf. the CVCE.eu, 2008a, especially the three sections devoted to the report.

⁸ See e.g., HAEUG; cf. also HAEUH, pp. 386–388.

⁹ HAEUi, p. 26.

¹⁰ Cf. HAEUi, p. 26 – “Déclaration des chefs d’Etat et de gouvernement suite à la conférence des 19–21/10/1972 à Paris. 2ème rapport sur la Coopération politique européenne en matière de politique étrangère”, 23 July 1973; and Meyer’s notes, KM-60.

(Romano, 2008; 2009). Javier Solana, the EU's first High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), later noted that the European Political Co-operation (EPC) represented "an attempt to exert a degree of collective influence on international events. But, if truth be told, our critics had a point: EPC was too reactive, too long on process and too short on substance" (Solana Madariaga, 2005). Still, the EPC exhibited a modest supranational element, oscillating somewhere between intergovernmentalism and supranationalism.¹¹

The direct election of the European Parliament in 1979 marked a turning point in its influence, which went on to grow during the 1980s. The Community's enlargement, incorporating Greece, Spain, and Portugal, bolstered efforts among Member States to define common positions within international organisations. A 1981 report paved the way for the formalisation of political cooperation which culminated in Title III of the European Single Act, signed in February 1986 and effective from July 1987.¹² By then, the EPC had addressed many significant political issues, and the Single Act declared that the High Contracting Parties would "endeavour jointly to formulate and implement a European foreign policy" (*Single European Act*, 1987, Art. 30.1), and considered that "closer co-operation on questions of European security would contribute in an essential way to the development of a European identity in external policy matters", and were "ready to co-ordinate their positions more closely on the political and economic aspects of security" (Art. 30.6.a).

However, reflecting the tension between interdependence and nationalist trends, Title III was not incorporated into the formal Treaties, unlike other sections of the Single European Act. The Member States remained reluctant to extend Community decision-making to foreign policy, leaving political cooperation, despite its formal recognition under the Act, with a lighter, less binding structure than other areas of Community action.

Transatlantic Bonds

Considering the security dimension of European construction, the concepts of national interest and interdependence can also be examined within the context of transatlantic relations. European Community members were compelled by the pressures of Cold War dynamics to manage and mitigate the influence coming from the United States, a country which had been seeking to merge these two concepts within

¹¹ Cf. e.g. Allen, Rummel, Wessels, 1982, p. 13; Zampoli, 2008, p. 44.

¹² For the whole period cf. Gehler, 2023a; Varsori, Mechi, 2023.

a broader global “imperial” framework since the Second World War. During the same period, as decolonisation marked the decline of traditional European empires,¹³ the European integration process laid the groundwork for a potential new global “empire”, grounded in post-imperial values, hinting at the creation of a confederal or federal union of countries that were relinquishing – or had already lost – their former dominance over the world.

Washington’s strategy evolved throughout the twentieth century, focusing on two key ideas: fostering a widespread consensus on the foundational values of US civilisation and shaping the international order to align with its idealistic and pragmatic foreign policy objectives. Over the years, and through oscillating between strategic coherence and tactical wavering, Washington encouraged various forms of international organisation conducive to this vision, while demonstrating a degree of flexibility with respect to the choices of other international actors.

After World War II, both Democratic and Republican administrations of the US, blending *realpolitik* with political idealism, generally supported the concept of European integration and specifically endorsed the groundbreaking initiative to establish a common European defence, which surfaced in the 1950s during the height of the Cold War. However, from the late 1960s to the early 1970s, the Vietnam War eroded US willingness and patience towards European allies, particularly in light of their reluctance to significantly contribute to collective defence efforts. Beyond its relevance as a localised conflict, the war in Southeast Asia became a major source of transatlantic friction, further exacerbating a series of divergences in perceptions and policies related to global issues in both the economic and security domains.

For the US administration, the conflict in Vietnam also served as a critical test of Western Europe’s willingness to share costs and responsibilities within an interdependent Atlantic system aimed at effectively countering Moscow’s challenges and the development model proposed by the USSR and its allies. As the war unfolded, Washington felt increasingly isolated and disillusioned, leading to a temptation during the Nixon, Ford, and Kissinger years to adopt a less multilateral, more unilateral foreign policy, focusing on stabilising the world order in terms of *pax Americana*.

In the final years of the Johnson Administration, this unilateral inclination was captured by an implicit query: what was stopping Washington from acting globally as it had historically done in the

¹³ On the intertwining of decolonisation and European unification see e.g. Migani, 2023; Lima Sakr, 2021.

nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Latin America? The US had viewed Latin America as a sphere where it could implement its foreign policy without needing to consult other global actors. In essence, that mindset gave rise to the following question: why should the US consult with European allies in the 1970s beyond diplomatic formalities? Why not prioritise a new order that treated Western Europe as just one region among many? What underlying factors necessitated the inclusion of European allies as essential partners in relations with the Soviet Union or China, as well as in the competition between differing development models?¹⁴

This temptation intensified, particularly after 1966, when the US escalated its involvement in Vietnam and simultaneously made pivotal decisions regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict. Meanwhile, the Atlantic Alliance faced repercussions stemming from de Gaulle's policies. Between 1966 and 1968, two significant factors transformed transatlantic relations: firstly, there was the Europeans' persistent inability to respond collectively to problems that required a global solution, and secondly, there was the US Administration's deliberate shift in focus regarding the balance between national interest and international commitments.

By the end of Johnson's presidency, it became evident that US officials were still inclined to support European integration, but only within the limits where US national interest – pursued with a long-term perspective – overlapped with European partners' desire to regain prominence and power in the global arena through shared, global responsibilities. However, the Europeans failed to make the substantial concessions of sovereignty necessary for exercising collective influence, despite ongoing concerns about the US's commitment to Europe from the late 1940s. From a European standpoint, it was easy to foresee that Washington's stance on European integration could change abruptly due to, to paraphrase John Foster Dulles, "agonising reappraisals" of US foreign policy.

While the Johnson Administration from 1964 to 1968 maintained its commitment to its relationship with European allies (see more: Schwartz, 2003), the US increasingly felt a lack of support from them during the Vietnam War. This period gradually revealed an unavoidable gap between the vision of a two-pillar Atlantic community, one focused on shared economic and security burdens, and championed by Kennedy and his successor, and the hesitant European response to that vision. The combination of this reluctance with the Vietnam issue led to rising pessimism within the Johnson Administration and among significant

¹⁴ On unilateralism in US foreign policy see, among others, Lieber, 2002; Malone, Khong, 2003; Fabbrini, 2006; Kane, 2006.

segments of US public opinion. Following the pivotal dual challenge by de Gaulle against NATO and the structures of the European Communities between 1965 and 1966, voices within the Administration – particularly from the Department of Treasury (with the Department of State adhering longer to previous policies) as well as in the economic, financial, and media domains began advocating for a more substantial European contribution to the US's “global” efforts for the defence of the West. This shift marked a significant recalibration in transatlantic relations during the détente era (Larres, 2022; Sayle, 2019; for later developments, Grin, 2024).

Sixty years later, on the eve of a new US Administration in the autumn of 2024, a notable parallel has emerged between the geopolitical challenges of the mid-20th century and more recent crises, particularly in Ukraine and the Middle East, which have highlighted Europe's tragic delay in assuming effective global responsibilities despite the devastating impact of and the lessons learned from two World Wars (Cianciara, 2023; for further analogies, see, e.g., Gardner, Young, 2007; Moss, 2008). In the 1990s, Europeans established the Union, yet they squandered a historically unique opportunity by limiting their common foreign and security policy to intergovernmental consultations, resulting in a lack of a real and effective European presence during the crucial period of restructuring the post-Cold War international order (Ratti, 2023; among earlier contributions, e.g., Nuttall, 2000, pp. 149 ff.; Calleo, 2001, pp. 183–374; Laschi, 2014).

Europe today still presents a fragmented front when addressing major challenges, struggling to form a coherent and responsible alternative to persistent US unilateralist tendencies. The alternative – the establishment of a straightforward common foreign and security policy – would inherently prevent another serious intra-European rift, such as the one that emerged during the Iraq crisis in 2003. At that time, Washington once again deemed it necessary to frame it as a “global” issue, despite employing even more questionable justifications than on previous occasions.

Conclusions: New Goals

Based on these interpretations, several concluding observations can be made regarding the end of the Cold War as a pivotal juncture in European history. During this period, as the project of the new European Union began to take shape, the absence of a post-imperial discourse in European societies hindered the restructuring of the Atlantic relationship. This void limited the potential for a genuinely united Europe to assume new responsibilities, which could have allowed it to inherit from the USSR

a balancing role with respect to the US, in a shift from competition to cooperation. This would have likely enhanced Europe's global interactions at a more mature and responsible level.

The long journey from economic integration in the mid-twentieth century to the EU's potential global role in the new century suggests that the evolution of European construction has gradually adopted an "imperial" dimension, particularly since the 1970s. This shift has been marked by successive waves of enlargement.¹⁵ If we view this construction as the gradual establishment of a shared value space, it becomes apparent that enlargement largely hinges on the willingness of external actors to embrace these values. Existing members assess the political, economic, and social criteria that must be met for new entrants. The newcomers, in turn, transition to being active participants in European enlargement rather than merely passive observers, gaining the benefit of belonging to this new *imperium*.¹⁶

However, the centre of this atypical "empire" has still to fully clarify the distribution of decision-making powers both within its hierarchical internal structure – whether at the regional, state, federal or confederal levels or within the reciprocal relations of its highest authorities: the European Parliament; a yet-to-be European "Government"; and the European judiciary. Furthermore, it has not established military nor police capabilities that would allow its citizens to entrust the use of force to the Union, rather than relying on personal or merely national means of defence.

The redistribution of powers has been a central challenge throughout the enlargement phases since 2004 and will undoubtedly remain so in the future. The expansion of the European "empire", characterised by the peaceful growth of an area founded on peace, democracy, respect for human rights, and personal dignity (despite occasional setbacks), hinges on courageously addressing the allocation of these powers with a forward-looking perspective rather than a nostalgic one. Confronting the future demands that the principal actors in Europe raise a vital question to new generations – one which is ethical, even more than political; to what extent, and with which goals and means, can the European *ethos*, namely, the collective embodiment of the Union's founding values, contribute to the development of a *global ethos*?

As the theologian Hans Küng (1997) argued so persuasively in the 1990s and in the decades that followed, the concept of *Weltethos*

¹⁵ Cf. e.g., Beck, Grande, 2004; Zielonka, 2006. Among the wave of studies on the "imperial" theme, see also Etzioni, 2004; Ferguson, 2004; Talbott, 2008.

¹⁶ See, e.g., the case of the Western Balkans in Adamczyk, 2018. On the subject cf. among others, Reid, 2004; Rifkin, 2004; Dell'Orto, 2008.

forms a triad with *Weltpolitik* (the political and legal framework) and *Weltwirtschaft* (the global economy) serving as the pillars for future planetary governance. Contributing to this *Weltethos* through the gradual expansion of its supranational empire – rooted in inclusion, citizenship, and moral suasion – requires Europe to embrace the values of others. This ecumenical openness recognises that while empires inevitably decline and fall, their legacies endure. Precisely because empires fade, they can leave lasting contributions by growing, melting, and ultimately dissolving into a larger, more mature global community.

This broad theme – interpreting the European construction as the gradual creation of a new space of values that bridges traditional European identity with a more complex, multi-layered citizenship of the future – offers a compelling framework for understanding the development of common defence and security policies within the EC/EU. The historical perspective allows us to appreciate how that theme has been woven into the *longue durée* pattern of “national empires, to community, to supranational empire” as evidenced by the parallel processes of deepening integration and enlargement throughout the European construction journey.

Other key themes, useful for both comparative studies and deriving lessons, include the asymmetry between the rapid pace of European economic integration and the slower evolution of new concepts and frameworks for cooperative and supranational security. Examining this through a historical lens, one can discern the close relationship between this uneven development and the gradual emergence of a “European interest” defined by shared goals in economics, welfare, foreign policy, and security. Additionally, the roles of external powers, such as the United States, the Soviet Union (during the Cold War), post-1991 Russia, and China, offer insight into regional security prospects, particularly in relation to the challenge of transferring sovereignty from the national to the supranational level. This challenge is not only economic but also deeply intertwined with defence and security matters, given both historical and current conflicts and challenges.¹⁷

The quantum leap from national to supranational governance, while incomplete, especially in the realm of foreign and security policies, remains central to the EU’s identity and future as a comprehensive world power.¹⁸ Future generations will ultimately judge whether we possessed

¹⁷ For further comments on this, may readers be referred to Guderzo, 2024.

¹⁸ See, among others, CVCEb. Cf. Bojinović Fenko, Brsakoska-Bazerkoska, 2024. Among earlier contributions: Laschi, Telò, 2007; Kunzmann, Schmid, Koll-Schretzenmayr, 2009; on the EU and Asia, e.g. Seidelmann, Vasilache, 2008. Cf. also Lucarelli, Manners, 2006; Laïdi, 2008; Malici, 2008; Mérand, 2008; Orbie, 2008.

the resilience and the good fortune to take advantage of favourable circumstances – circumstances that, paradoxically, have often emerged in difficult and dangerous times and have proved to be catalysts for European unification in the past – to finally complete this ambitious task.

References

- Adamczyk, A. (2018) “Prospects for Extending the European Union to the Countries of the Western Balkans”, *Studia Europejskie – Studies in European Affairs*. Vol. 22/4, pp. 125–148.
- Allen, D., Rummel, R. and Wessels, W. (eds.) (1982) *European Political Cooperation: Towards a Foreign Policy for Western Europe*. London–Boston: Butterworth Scientific.
- Beck, U. and Grande, E. (2004) *Das kosmopolitische Europa. Gesellschaft und Politik in der Zweiten Moderne*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.
- Bitumi A., D’Ottavio, G. and Laschi, G. (eds.) (2008) *La Comunità europea e le relazioni esterne, 1957–1992*. Bologna: CLUEB.
- Bojinović Fenko, A. and Brsakoska-Bazerkoska, J. (2024) “The EU as a Global Actor: The Significance of Changes in the World Order from 2004 to 2024 as Regards EU Actorness”, *Studia Europejskie – Studies in European Affairs*. Vol. 28/2, pp. 7–26. DOI: 10.33067/SE.2.2024.1.
- Bossuat, G. (2001) *Les fondateurs de l’unité européenne*. Paris: Belin.
- Calleo, D.P. (2001) *Rethinking Europe’s Future*. Princeton (N.J.) – Oxford: Princeton Univ. Press. DOI: 10.1515/9781400824304.
- Caviglia, D. (2000) *De Gaulle e il tentativo di spostare l’asse politico europeo: il piano Fouchet*. Padua: CEDAM.
- Cianciara, A. (2023) “De-bordering and Re-bordering the European Union after the Russian Invasion of Ukraine”, *Studia Europejskie – Studies in European Affairs*. Vol. 27/4, pp. 41–56. DOI: 10.33067/SE.4.2023.3.
- Consolidate version of the Treaty on European Union* (2016) *Official Journal C202*, 7 June, pp. 13 ff. Available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A02016M%2FTXT-20240901> (Access 10.10.2024).
- CVCE.eu (2008a) *Étienne Davignon Interview*. Available at: <https://www.cvce.eu/en/histoire-orale/unit-content/-/unit/73cbe169-674f-4cd8-808d-dd0ce6759176/fba58b6c-2e0d-4168-8c96-1452f693c03b> (Access 10.10.2024).
- CVCE.eu (2008b) *Bronisław Geremek Interview*, 11.06. Available at: <https://www.cvce.eu/en/histoire-orale/unit-content/-/unit/b80f1be0-8dd5-4b7d-bfe0-ddd15fe9c136> (Access 10.10.2024).

- D'Ottavio, G. (2008) *Il piano Fouchet ovvero la storia di uno o di più fallimenti* in Bitumi, A., D'Ottavio, G. and Laschi, G. (eds.) *La Comunità europea e le relazioni esterne, 1957–1992*. Bologna: CLUEB, pp. 19–40.
- Davignon Report* (1970) *Bulletin of the European Communities*. No. 11, pp. 9–14.
- Dehio, L. (1948) *Gleichgewicht oder Hegemonie*. Krefeld: Scherpe, 1948 (English transl.: New York: Knopf, 1962).
- Dell'Orto, G. (2008) *The Hidden Power of the American Dream. Why Europe's Shaken Confidence in the United States Threatens the Future of U.S. Influence*. Westport (Conn.)–London: Praeger Security International. DOI: 10.5040/9798400663253.
- Draft Treaty – Fouchet Plan* (1961) Available at: https://www.cvce.eu/obj/draft_treaty_fouchet_plan_i_2_november_1961-en-485fa02e-f21e-4e4d-9665-92f0820a0c22.html (Access 10.10.2024).
- Draghi, M. (2016) *Reviving the Spirit of De Gasperi: Working together for an Effective and Inclusive Union*. Available at: <https://www.ecb.europa.eu/press/key/date/2016/html/sp160913.en.html> (Access 10.10.2024).
- Dumoulin, M. (ed.) (2000) *La Communauté européenne de défense, leçons pour demain?* Brussels: Peter Lang.
- Etzioni, A. (2004) *From Empire to Community. A New Approach to International Relations*. New York–Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- EU Treaties* (2016) *Official Journal C202-203*, 7.06., pp. 1 ff. Available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/collection/eu-law/treaties.html> (Access 10.10.2024).
- Fabbrini, S. (ed.) (2006) *The United States Contested. American Unilateralism and European Discontent*. London–New York: Routledge.
- Ferguson, N. (2004) *Colossus. The Price of America's Empire*. New York: The Penguin Press.
- Gardner, L.C. and Young, M.B. (eds.) (2007) *Iraq and the Lessons of Vietnam, or, How Not to Learn from the Past*. New York: New Press.
- Gehler, M. (2023a) *From Messina and Rome to the Single European Act* in Segers, M. and Hecke, S. van (eds.) *The Cambridge History of the European Union*, vol. 2, *European Integration Inside-Out*. Cambridge–New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, pp. 60–92. DOI: 10.1017/9781108781480.003.
- Gehler, M. (2023b) *The “Saints” of European Integration: From Visionaries to Architects* in Segers, M. and Hecke, S. van (eds.) *The Cambridge History of the European Union*, vol. 2, *European Integration Inside-Out*. Cambridge–New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, pp. 508–539. DOI: 10.1017/9781108781480.019.
- Germond, C. (2023) *War, Peace and Memory: Franco-German Reconciliation* in Segers, M. and Hecke, S. van (eds.) *The Cambridge*

- History of the European Union*, vol. 2, *European Integration Inside-Out*. Cambridge–New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, pp. 481–507. DOI: 10.1017/9781108781480.018.
- Graglia, P.S. (2008) *Altiero Spinelli*. Bologna: Il Mulino.
- Grin, G. (2024) “The United States and the EC from 1985 to 1992”, *Journal of European Integration History*. Vol. 30/1, pp. 81–107. DOI: 10.5771/0947-9511-2024-1-81.
- Guderzo, M. (2015) *The US Perception of EC Enlargement: Cold War Constraints and Empire-Building, 1962–1973* in Winand, P., Benvenuti, A. and Guderzo, M. (eds.) *The External Relations of the European Union*. Brussels: PIE-Peter Lang, pp. 243–256.
- Guderzo, M. (2024) “Les grandes espérances: la Grande-Bretagne et l’inclusion de la Russie soviétique et post-soviétique dans le système de sécurité européen (1984–1994)”, *Relations Internationales*. Vol. 50, No. 196, Jan.–Mar., pp. 47–61. DOI: 10.3917/ri.196.0047.
- HAEUa (n.d.) Historical Archives of the European Union. Oral History (OH), Int 487, Hervé Alphand, pp. 7–9. Available at: http://archives.eui.eu/en/oral_history/INT487 (Access 10.10.2024).
- HAEUb (n.d.) Historical Archives of the European Union. Oral History (OH), Int 601, Maurice Faure, pp. 34–39. Available at: http://archives.eui.eu/en/oral_history/INT601 (Access 10.10.2024).
- HAEUc (n.d.) Historical Archives of the European Union. Oral History (OH), Int 593, Carlo Russo, pp. 2–4. Available at: http://archives.eui.eu/en/oral_history/INT593 (Access 10.10.2024).
- HAEUd (n.d.) Historical Archives of the European Union. Oral History (OH), Int 555, Max Kohnstamm, pp. 22–24. Available at: http://archives.eui.eu/en/oral_history/INT555 (Access 10.10.2024).
- HAEUe (n.d.) Historical Archives of the European Union. Oral History (OH), Int 614, Étienne Davignon, pp. 12–15. Available at: http://archives.eui.eu/en/oral_history/INT614; Int 593 cit. (Russo), pp. 7–10 (Access 10.10.2024).
- HAEUf (n.d.) Historical Archives of the European Union. Oral History (OH), Int 564, Christopher Audland, p. 27. Available at: http://archives.eui.eu/en/oral_history/INT564 (Access 10.10.2024).
- HAEUg (n.d.) Historical Archives of the European Union. Fonds Franco Maria Malfatti (FMM), 37, “Communication du Président Malfatti concernant les implications sur le fonctionnement de la communauté de la coopération en matière d’union politique”; “Projet de note établie par Albonetti au nom de Spinelli portant sur la construction progressive d’une Communauté politique européenne”. Available at: <https://archives.eui.eu/en/fonds/151146?item=FMM> (Access 10.10.2024).

- HAEU_h, Historical Archives of the European Union. Fonds Emile Noël (EN), 386, 387, 388. Available at: <https://archives.eui.eu/en/fonds/112268?item=EN.07.01-02.01-77> (Access 10.10.2024).
- HAEU_i, Historical Archives of the European Union. Fonds Klaus Meyer (KM), 26, “Compte-rendu de la réunion de la Commission politique du Parlement européen du 24–25 septembre 1970, Bruxelles”. Available at: <https://archives.eui.eu/en/fonds/155861?item=KM> (Access 10.10.2024).
- Joly, M. (2017) *L'Europe de Jean Monnet: éléments pour une sociologie historique de la construction européenne*. Paris: CNRS Éditions.
- Kane, T.M. (2006) *Theoretical Roots of US Foreign Policy: Machiavelli and American Unilateralism*. London–New York: Routledge. DOI: 10.4324/9780203968048.
- Klimoska, K. (2024) “The European Enlargement Policy Undergoing a Process of Change”, *Studia Europejskie – Studies in European Affairs*. Vol. 28/3, pp. 89–103. DOI: 10.33067/SE.3.2024.5.
- Kramer, E. (2003) *Europäisches oder atlantisches Europa? Kontinuität und Wandel in den Verhandlungen über eine politische Union 1958–1970*. Baden-Baden: Nomos.
- Krotz, U., Patel, K.K. and Romero, F. (eds.) (2020) *Europe's Cold War Relations: The EC towards a Global Role*. London–New York: Bloomsbury Academic.
- Küng, H. (1997) *Weltethos für Weltpolitik und Weltwirtschaft*. Munich: Piper.
- Kunzmann, K.R., Schmid, W.A. and Koll-Schretzenmayr, M. (eds.) (2009) *China and Europe: The Implications of the Rise of China as a Global Economic Power for Europe*. Abingdon, Oxon–New York: Routledge. DOI: 10.4324/9780203872734.
- Läidi, Z. (ed.) (2008) *EU Foreign Policy in a Globalized World: Normative Power and Social Preferences*. Abingdon, Oxon–New York: Routledge. DOI: 10.4324/9780203927403.
- Larres, K. (2022) *Uncertain Allies: Nixon, Kissinger, and the Threat of a United Europe*. New Haven: Yale Univ. Press. DOI: 10.12987/yale/9780300173192.001.0001.
- Laschi, G. (ed.) (2014) *The European Communities and the World: A Historical Perspective*. Brussels: PIE-Peter Lang.
- Laschi, G. and Telò, M. (eds.) (2007) *Europa potenza civile o entità in declino? Contributi a una nuova stagione multidisciplinare degli studi europei*. Bologna: Il Mulino.
- Lieber, R.J. (ed.) (2002) *Eagle Rules? Foreign Policy and American Primacy in the Twenty-First Century*. Upper Saddle River (N.J.): Prentice Hall.

- Lima Sakr, R. (2021) “From Colonialism to Regionalism: The Yaoundé Conventions (1963–1974)”, *The International and Comparative Law Quarterly*. Vol. 70/2, pp. 449–489. DOI: 10.1017/S0020589321000014.
- Loth, W. (2020) *The EC and Foreign and Security Policy: The Dream of Autonomy* in Krotz, U., Patel, K.K. and Romero, F. (eds.) *Europe’s Cold War Relations: The EC towards a Global Role*. London–New York: Bloomsbury Academic, pp. 145–163. DOI: 10.5040/9781350118539.ch-009.
- Lucarelli, S. and Manners, I. (eds.) (2006) *Values and Principles in European Union Foreign Policy*. London–New York: Routledge. DOI: 10.4324/9780203968758.
- Lundestad, G. (2003) *The United States and Western Europe since 1945. From “Empire” by Invitation to Transatlantic Drift*. Oxford–New York: Oxford Univ. Press. DOI: 10.1093/0199266689.001.0001.
- Malici, A. (2008) *The Search for a Common European Foreign and Security Policy. Leaders, Cognitions and Questions of Institutional Viability*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. DOI: 10.1057/9780230611221_2.
- Malone, D.M. and Khong, Y.F. (eds.) (2003) *Unilateralism and U.S. Foreign Policy. International Perspectives*. Boulder (Colo.)–London: Lynne Rienner. DOI: 10.1515/9781685859268.
- Mérand, F. (2008) *European Defence Policy: Beyond the Nation State*. Oxford–New York, Oxford Univ. Press. DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199533244.001.0001.
- Migani, G. (2023) *Europe, Decolonisation and the Challenge of Developing Countries* in Segers, M. and Hecke, S. van (eds.) *The Cambridge History of the European Union*, vol. 1, *European Integration Outside-In*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, pp. 78–105. DOI: 10.1017/9781108780865.004.
- Moss, K.B. (2008) *Undeclared War and the Future of U.S. Foreign Policy*. Washington (D.C.): Woodrow Wilson Center Press; Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Univ. Press.
- Nuenlist, C., Locher, A. and Martin, G. (eds.) (2010) *Globalizing de Gaulle: International Perspectives on French Foreign Policies, 1958–1969*. Lanham (Md.): Lexington Books.
- Nuttall, S.J. (2000) *European Foreign Policy*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press. DOI: 10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198293361.001.0001.
- Orbie, J. (ed.) (2008), *Europe’s Global Role. External Policies of the European Union*. Aldershot-Burlington: Ashgate.
- Preda, D. (1990) *Storia di una speranza. La battaglia per la CED e la Federazione europea*. Milan: Jaca Book.
- Preda, D. (1993) *Sulla soglia dell’Unione. La vicenda della Comunità Politica Europea*. Milan: Jaca Book.

- Preda, D. (2004) *Alcide De Gasperi federalista europeo*. Bologna: Il Mulino.
- Ratti, L. (2023) *The Enduring Relationship between NATO and European Integration* in Segers, M. and Hecke, S. van (eds.) *The Cambridge History of the European Union*, vol. 1, *European Integration Outside-In*. Cambridge–New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, pp. 308–344. DOI: 10.1017/9781108780865.013.
- Reid, T.R. (2004) *The United States of Europe. The New Superpower and the End of American Supremacy*. New York: The Penguin Press.
- Rifkin, J. (2004) *The European Dream. How Europe's Vision of the Future Is Quietly Eclipsing the American Dream*. New York: Tarcher/Penguin.
- Romano, A. (2008) *La Comunità Europea e il blocco sovietico negli anni Settanta* in Bitumi, A., D'Ottavio, G. and Laschi, G. (eds.), *La Comunità europea e le relazioni esterne, 1957–1992*, pp. 107–131.
- Romano, A. (2009) *From Détente in Europe to European Détente. How the West Shaped the Helsinki CSCE*. Brussels: Peter Lang.
- Sayle, T.A. (2019) *Enduring Alliance. A History of NATO and the Postwar Global Order*. Ithaca (N.Y.): Cornell Univ. Press. DOI: 10.7591/9781501735516.
- Schwartz, T.A. (2003) *Lyndon Johnson and Europe. In the Shadow of Vietnam*. Cambridge (Mass.)–London, Harvard Univ. Press.
- Second Report on European Political Cooperation on Foreign Policy* (1973) *Bulletin of the European Communities*, Sept., No. 9, pp. 14–21.
- Segers, M. and Hecke, S. van (eds.) (2023) *The Cambridge History of the European Union*, 2 vols. (1: *European Integration Outside-In*; 2: *European Integration Inside-Out*). Cambridge–New York: Cambridge Univ. Press. DOI: 10.1017/9781108780865.001.
- Seidelmann, R. and Vasilache, A. (eds.) (2008) *European Union and Asia: A Dialogue on Regionalism and Interregional Cooperation*. Baden-Baden: Nomos. DOI: 10.5771/9783845207513.
- Single European Act* (1987) *Official Journal L169*, 29.06. Available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:a519205f-924a-4978-96a2-b9af8a598b85.0004.02/DOC_1&format=PDF (Access 10.10.2024).
- Solana Madariaga, F.J. (2005) *Speech by Javier Solana, EU High Representative for the CFSP, Man of the Year 2005 Award*, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 11 May. Previously available at: <http://eu-un.europa.eu/speech-by-euhr-solana-man-of-the-year-2005-award/>.
- Talbott, S. (2008) *The Great Experiment. The Story of Ancient Empires, Modern States, and the Quest for a Global Nation*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Traité instituant la Communauté Européenne de Défense* (1952) Available at: <https://www.cvce.eu/en/recherche/unit-content/-/unit/b9fe3d6d-e79c->

- 495e-856d-9729144d2cbd/d950eb8f-aad6-463a-a67f-030cc9d03ded/ Resources (Access 10.10.2024).
- Traité instituant la Communauté Européenne du Charbon et de l'Acier* (1951) Available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/FR/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:11951K/TXT&from=EN> (Access 10.10.2024).
- Treaty of Lisbon amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community* (2007) *Official Journal* C306, 17.12. Available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=OJ:C:2007:306:TOC> (Access 10.10.2024).
- Varsori, A. and Mechi, L. (2023) *A Pillar of the Golden Age? European Integration and the "Trente Glorieuses"* in Segers, M. and Hecke, S. van (eds.) *The Cambridge History of the European Union*, vol. 1, *European Integration Outside-In*. Cambridge–New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, pp. 189–208. DOI: 10.1017/9781108780865.008.
- Winand, P., Benvenuti, A. and Guderzo, M. (eds.) (2015) *The External Relations of the European Union*. Brussels: PIE-Peter Lang. DOI: 10.3726/978-3-0352-6497-5.
- Zampoli, D. (2008) *Verso una politica estera comune: problemi di coordinamento tra i lavori della Cooperazione Politica e della Comunità negli anni Settanta* in Bitumi, A., D'Ottavio G. and Laschi, G. (eds.) *La Comunità europea e le relazioni esterne*, CLUEB, pp. 41–63.
- Zielonka, J. (2006) *Europe as Empire. The Nature of the Enlarged European Union*. Oxford–New York: Oxford Univ. Press. DOI: 10.1093/0199292213.001.0001.

