

# THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE PROMOTION OF INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY

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**Abstract:** This paper examines the role of the European Union in promoting international peace and security, highlighting its diplomatic, operational and normative instruments. It underlines how European integration in the decades after the Second World War linked the promotion of the internal market and democratic political union to objectives that largely transcended the economic dimension. The European approach is presented as a model of effective multilateralism and commitment to the international order based on stable and fair rules.

**Keywords:** European Union; International Security; Peacebuilding.

The European Union constitutes a manifestation par excellence of the constructive power of political and legal ideas and its ability to respond to the desires for justice and peace of individuals and nations. The result of an integration process designed and carried out in the aftermath of the Second World War, it also demonstrates that gradual transformations can culminate in qualitative changes and paradigmatic shifts. What began as an attempt to relaunch the economic growth of European nations that emerged from the armed conflict and prevent the use of raw materials and energy sources for military purposes, became a political union structured in accordance with constitutional principles of respect for human rights. human rights, democracy and the rule of social and environmental law. The European Union today

presents itself as an association of States and constitutions, with sui generis political, legal and institutional characteristics, endowed with the capacity to unify and positively shape the destinies of the European peoples and to exert considerable influence throughout the world.

It is undoubtedly built on the various religious, political, economic and cultural foundations that, for centuries, have made possible the historical development of a true European identity, of Greek, Roman, Jewish and Christian origin, immediately perceptible, in particular, in architecture, painting, sculpture, literature or music which have two culminating points in the Carolingian revival and the reform of Pope Gregory VII. The religious impulse led to the creation of medieval universities, which preserved and transmitted the scientific and technological knowledge acquired, gradually increased it and proceeded to its critical revision. Christian political philosophy taught that the Monarch was subject to a superior law, which gave legitimacy, meaning and limits to his power and forced him to define himself as the first servant of the people. Political, economic and religious motivations impelled Europeans to sail around the world and consolidate their imperial projects. But don't think that the history of Europe was a quiet one. Political, economic and religious tensions manifested themselves in dynastic wars between European monarchs, economic rivalries between the various states, political-religious wars, conflicting colonialist and nationalist claims and popular revolts and revolutions.

Theological debates led to schisms that had repercussions in political ideologies and economic theories and led to different visions of the world. In the name of these were important conflicts, such as the Crusades, the Battle of Lepanto or the war for two thirty years. After the Peace of Westphalia, European nations fought against each other as rival economic powers in a predatory struggle, obeying a mercantilist, metalist, nationalist and colonialist logic. Caesarism and Monarchical Absolutism laid the foundations of authoritarian and

nationalist political philosophies. States competed among themselves for control of peoples, territories and resources, Rivalry gave rise to successive armed conflicts such as, among others, the Napoleonic Wars, the Crimean War or the Franco-Prussian War, culminating in the two world wars of the twentieth century.

The developments that have taken place ever since then are well known. The Treaty of Paris (1951) created the European Coal and Steel Community, which has since been extinguished, and the Treaty of Rome (1957) established the European Atomic Energy Community and the European Economic Community. In the beginning, there were only six States, namely Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the Federal Republic of Germany. For them, Europe should be a civilized area of rational and fraternal cooperation.

From then on, Community law emerged, which, through judicial rulings of seminal boldness and relevance, saw its primacy over national law and its direct effect on public and private entities affirmed, making possible a true silent revolution in the culture and constitutional structure of the European States and peoples. It was largely around this right that the European project developed, which was increasingly expanded and consolidated as it became clear that economic aspects are inseparable from the political, civic, social, cultural, environmental, and security and defence dimensions and that an economic union inevitably requires the gradual unification of all these dimensions.

Strengthened and impelled by this awareness, European politicians decide to take decisive and decisive, but gradual and prudent steps, towards ever higher levels of integration and harmonisation. This process proved to be quite complex and full of interesting vicissitudes, and it is only worth noting here that the Treaty of Maastricht (1992) created the European Union, the Treaty of Amsterdam (1997) strengthened its constitutional substance and the Treaty of Lisbon gave shape, content and legal force to the Bill of Powers and the

Bill of Rights that today structure European Union law. namely the Treaty on European Union, the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

With this normative canon, elements considered essential to the European project can be affirmed or reinvigorated, such as European citizenship, fundamental rights, the internal market, economic and monetary union, the external border, the abolition of internal borders, the area of freedom, security and justice, police and judicial cooperation or the common foreign and security policy.

The European Union has seen its competences extended to areas such as education, culture, vocational training, the environment, energy and industrial policy, developing what it could only have been discerned at an early stage. There are very few areas of social life in which the European Union does not exercise any competence. In addition, it came to integrate twenty-eight states and suffered a weight loss with the departure of the United Kingdom.

Its seven institutions – the European Parliament, the European Council, the Council, the European Commission, the Court of Justice of the European Union, the European Central Bank and the Court of Auditors – today exercise political, legislative, administrative, regulatory, jurisdictional, financial, monetary, exchange rate and control functions, of continental scope, in accordance with the most important constitutional principles – democracy, Rule of law, separation of powers, loyal cooperation – of national and federal matrix and following higher standards of governance and political and legal action, increasing the quality of representation and collaborative democratic participation of European States, peoples and citizens.

The process of European integration has not ceased to represent a Copernican revolution in the legal order of the States and in the teaching of law. The centre of gravity is no longer constitutional

law – which a few decades earlier had dethroned civil law – and has become European Union law. In addition to national laws, regulations, administrative acts and court rulings, legal operators have to adapt quickly to the new reality of European regulations, directives and decisions, currently legislative or non-legislative in nature, recommendations and opinions. The national executives gave in to the European Commission's initiative.

The importance of national legislative procedures has been put into perspective in favour of the ordinary and special legislative procedures of the European Parliament and the Council. National political, legislative, administrative and judicial authorities know that they are subject to European Union law and that their violation opens the door to possible sanctions against the State accompanied by civil liability actions. The judges already consider it absolutely normal to refer a preliminary ruling to the Court of Justice of the European Union, which is experiencing an exponentially growing litigation.

The teaching of law has become more demanding, but also stimulating from an intellectual and cultural point of view. Law students have seen their horizons broadened and are confronted with a federal law that is equally valid and effective throughout the European Union. The Erasmus programmes have enhanced and normalised their coexistence with European colleagues from all backgrounds, making the concept of European citizenship current, relevant and immediately perceptible. The national legal order was suddenly reduced to the status of partial law, inviting students to look beyond the old physical and mental boundaries. When studying European Union law, one quickly realizes that what appeared to be a surrender, a ceding of sovereignty by European states, resulted, in the end, in the reinvigoration of their respective visibility and preeminence and in the increase of their capacity to act and influence in the world.

Naturally, the geographical and demographic enlargement and the political, legal, economic and commercial strengthening of the

European Union have not gone unnoticed and do not please everyone equally. Russia reacted with astonishment and resentment – after the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union – to the unification of Germany and the accession to the European Union of the newly independent Baltic states and a considerable number of their former satellite states. This enlargement was seen by the most imperialist Russian sectors as a boldness and insolence, which should not be without due consequences.

The United States sees in the European Union a political ally and an economic and commercial rival, not hiding its aversion to European power in trade negotiations and perceiving the Euro as a long-term threat to the supremacy of the Dollar. In addition, they find the European Union's regulatory propensity especially irritating, which has a direct impact on their companies, namely in the technological, pharmaceutical, financial or agri-food sectors.

They will not hesitate to take the measures deemed appropriate to weaken the European economy – as they did with the United Kingdom and France after the world wars – by adopting protectionist measures and by sabotaging and emptying the World Trade Organization's Dispute Settlement Body if, as long as and whenever this is deemed necessary or opportune. Other powerful economic blocs, such as China, India or Brazil, would also prefer to negotiate with twenty-seven small European states rather than with the European Union.

External forces know where they can take if they want to weaken Europe. They know European history and the vulnerabilities that come with it. They can start by fomenting and financing the Eurosceptic, nationalist, regionalist and independence movements that exist in Europe. Similarly, these forces will seek to take advantage of migratory pressures and the multicultural difficulties they raise to revive memories of distant religious conflicts and sow disorder in the streets of European capitals. In addition, they are able to exert their influence by questioning old border markers, opening old wounds and

resurrecting old ghosts. Divide and rule continues to be a fundamental motto.

Russian interference in Brexit is an example of this strategy, as is foreign support for Catalan nationalism, just to mention two more notorious examples. In addition, these forces will seek to control strategic interests and key infrastructure in areas such as the media, technology, energy or the financial system, in a way that distorts the functioning of the sphere of public discourse and the democratic political system and creates relations of political and economic dependence and subordination. There has been no shortage of ambitious European politicians willing to receive large sums of money in exchange for collaborating with extra-European and anti-European goals and interests. Against this background, European democracy must be both vigilant and militant.

The European integration project has been a successful trajectory that has ensured more than six decades of harmony and tranquility in the old continent, which even earned it the Nobel Peace Prize in 2012. This is an unfinished movement, anticipating the accession of new States, in a process not free from trepidation, controversy and internal and external contestation. The stakes are high and some political actors seem to be bored and tired with so much peace time. When some States opt for the unilateral defense of their own interests, the European Union must promote multilateral solutions and promote respect for international law, as it has done recently by helping to implement an alternative body to the WTO's appellate body for dispute settlement, sadly boycotted by the United States of America.

The European Union must be able to provide a unified and sovereign response to external challenges, seeking to preserve its original vocation for peace and to find a realistic balance with its geopolitical security and defence needs. It must know how to reform itself internally in order to speak with one voice on the international stage, but without ever creating a barrier of personal and institutional

separation between European governance and national governance, an option that sooner or later would be likely to potentiate and aggravate internal tensions.

Above all, the European Union must not forget nor be ashamed of its roots, on the pretext of promoting some ideologically artificial and sterile idea of multiculturalism and inclusion, without historical and cultural traction. It was these roots that allowed them to build their fascinating civilization and that built their identity. It is its sap that still nourishes its collective unconscious, its power of achievement and its capacity for attraction. Europe's spiritual and intangible heritage is its greatest and most valuable intangible asset. European roots must be rediscovered and revitalized. The seeds of human dignity, peace and justice that gave them life must be re-sown on European soil and spread throughout the world.