



## **FORUM PER I PROBLEMI DELLA PACE E DELLA GUERRA**

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#### **RESEARCH REPORT**

## **THE EXTERNAL IMAGE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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The survey *The External Image of the European Union* has been conducted in the Framework of the Jointly Executed Research Project 5.2.1. (*Normative issues*) of the Network of Excellence *Global Governance, Regionalisation and Regulation: the Role of the EU* – GARNET (Contract No 513330); (EU 6<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme 2005-2010; Call Identifier: FP6-2002-Citizens-3 – Garnet web page: <http://wi-garnet.uni-muenster.de/index.php?id=192>). We are grateful to Garnet and to the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for their financial contribution to the project.

# THE EXTERNAL IMAGE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

Edited by Sonia Lucarelli

## CONTENT

About the Authors

Acknowledgments

Summary

Executive Summaries of Reports

### Introduction

- [\*EU political identity, foreign policy and external image\* - Sonia Lucarelli](#)

### Country reports

- [\*Australia\* - Katrina Stats](#)
- [\*Brazil\* - Arlo Poletti](#)
- [\*Canada\* - Osvaldo Croci, Livianna Tossuti](#)
- [\*China\* - Arlo Poletti, Roberto Peruzzi, Shuangquan Zhang](#)
- [\*Egypt\* - Soya Bayoumi](#)
- [\*India\* - Lorenzo Fioramonti](#)
- [\*Japan\* - Natalia Chaban and Mark Kauffmann](#)
- [\*South Africa\* - Lorenzo Fioramonti](#)

### Transversal reports

- [\*NGO image of the EU\* - Massimiliano Andreatta, Nicole Doerr](#)
- [\*The Commission's diplomats and the EU International Image\* - Caterina Carta](#)

### Conclusions

- [\*EU self-representation and the self-other's cognitive gap: drawing some conclusions\*](#)  
- Lorenzo Fioramonti, Sonia Lucarelli

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*Sonia Lucarelli*  
Florence, 28 March 2007



Forum on the Problems of Peace and War & GARNET Jointly Executed Research Project 5.2.1

## THE EXTERNAL IMAGE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

**Director of Research: Sonia Lucarelli**

(Forum on the Problems of Peace and War – Florence - and University of Bologna at Forlì)

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The survey *The External Image of the European Union* has been conducted in the framework of the jointly executed research project 5.2.1. (*Normative issues*) of the Network of Excellence GARNET *Global Governance, Regionalisation and Regulation: the Role of the EU* - (EU 6<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme 2005-2010; Call Identifier: FP6-2002-Citizens-3), with the precious financial support of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The research was coordinated by Sonia Lucarelli as Director of research of the Forum on the Problems of Peace and War in Florence (a member of the Garnet network), but researchers based in different institutions/countries were also involved. Particularly valuable, as far as the analysis of China, Japan and Australia is concerned, was cooperation with the *Asia Pacific Perceptions* project, coordinated by the National Centre for Research on Europe at the University of Canterbury, New Zealand.

The members of the research group included: Massimiliano Andretta (University of Pisa); Soha Bayoumi (Science Po, Paris); Caterina Carta (University of Siena); Natalia Chaban (National Centre for Research on Europe, University of Canterbury, NZ); Nicole Doerr (European University Institute, Florence); Lorenzo Fioramonti (Forum and University of Pretoria, SA); Marc Kauffmann (Correspondent in Japan for *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and *Swiss Tages-Anzeiger*); Roberto Peruzzi (University of Florence); Arlo Poletti (Forum and University of Bologna); Lisa Tormena (University of Bologna); Giuseppe Sergente (Forum); Shuangquan Zhang (Fudan University, China).

The research had four **main aims**: (1) evaluate the degree of academic information already available on how the EU is perceived outside its borders; (2) combine this information with an analysis of the open sources (newspapers, websites, official documents, available opinion polls), as to produce a more detailed investigation of how the EU is perceived outside; (3) evaluate if such perceptions vary across geographic areas of the world, countries and target groups within countries; (4) gain information useful to assess the extent to which there is a gap between the EU's self-representation and the outside views of the EU.

In order to reach these goals, we adopted the following **methodology and deliverables**:

- **Country reports**: we selected a sample of countries in each continent: Canada, Brazil, Australia, China, India, Japan, Egypt; South Africa.
- **Target groups**: we selected four target groups within each country on which to focus attention: political elites, public opinion, the press and organised civil society.



- **Issue areas:** we selected a number of areas that appear to be crucial in the EU's representation of itself and in scholarly literature on the EU's international role: solidarity and the fight against poverty, the prevention of conflicts, the promotion of democracy and human rights and international trade. Though not exclusively, we decided to pay particular attention to these issue areas.
- **Sources:** we gathered information on the image of the EU within each target group by: (i) reviewing the very limited academic literature available and (ii) analysing the open sources available, with particular attention to the analysis of the press. Each researcher chose a research strategy targeted to the needs of the country s/he was analysing.
- **Transversal reports:** In order to enrich the picture, we decided to add two transversal reports - next to the country reports – dealing respectively with the image of the EU among Commission delegates and the prevalent perception of the EU among the NGOs taking part in transnational gatherings such as the Social forum.

## **Main results**

### **(1) Lack of information**

First and foremost, our research highlighted the lack of research in this field (clearly, with a few exceptions) and the limited amount and availability of sources (particularly, quantitative data such as opinion polls and academic studies on people's attitudes).

(2) In substantive terms, the analysis found that:

- There is a rather limited knowledge of the EU (particularly among certain target groups, such as civil society and citizens at large). Furthermore, there exists a general perception of Europe (more than the EU) as a political actor, which is influenced by historical relationships with individual European countries (e.g. former colonial empires). Such a weight of historical and colonial ties is rather prominent also at the level of political elites and the media.
- There is a certain gap between the EU's self-representation and the various images based on external perceptions, particularly as far as countries from the global South are concerned. Southern images/criticisms are frequently shared by NGOs worldwide – in Europe included. As a matter of fact, if it is true that the EU is perceived as:
  - a “strategic opportunity” for the partner countries;
  - a trade giant;
  - a supporter of multilateralism or at least multipolarism;
  - a model of regional integration;
  - a possible counterbalance to US hegemony;

it is also viewed as:

- an actor whose policy is severely influenced by its own security concerns;
- a neo-liberal actor in its attitude to the abroad;
- a protectionist power;

Most of these images call into question the EU's self-representation as a solidaristic actor.

Surprisingly, we could not find much evidence of the EU being widely seen as a “normative power” exporting universal values of democracy and human rights. This image seems to be confined only to a small segment of the organised civil society in the South. Equally surprisingly, the EU does not seem to be regarded anymore as a social model to be imitated.

(3) As regards the methodology, the survey showed that there are a number of methodological problems that deserve further investigation. These issues include: What do



specific sources indicate and how can we best use existing information? How to ensure that the adoption of the same analytical tool for different countries does not risk overlooking important cultural and communicative specificities that should be taken into account? What type of elite and mass opinion poll is able to grasp the real perception of the EU and to what extent the same opinion poll is able to provide indication of the origin of such an image?

On the basis of this research a number of **conclusions** can be drawn:

- There is a strong need for new research projects able to produce ad hoc sources (mass and public opinion polls, interviews; media analysis - yet not limited to the press) and to adopt a methodologically rigorous analysis which, in our view, should be both quantitative and qualitative, with particular attention to country/cultural specificities. Furthermore, such an analysis should be as much dynamic (over time) and interactive (taking into account of the country-EU interaction) as possible.
- Such an academic work, however, cannot substitute a more direct role by the Commission, particularly through its delegations, in establishing a more direct relationship with various constituencies in the abroad countries. The Commission delegations provide an unmatched instrument for the EU not only to shape information campaigns targeted to the country in question, but also to produce assessments of the EU's image in the country and to reach ad hoc agreements for the inclusions of questions on the EU in nation-wide or region-wide opinion polls such as the Asia barometer or the African barometer etc. In other words, the Commission delegations, together with academic researchers should put into place a joint effort to evaluate which are the prevalent external images of the EU, what is their origin and how they can be influenced.
- Finally, the analysis on the external image of the EU should not be limited to how the EU is perceived in non-European countries, but should develop research strategies to also evaluate if and how such external images influence the internal process of identity formation among the Europeans. What do the Europeans know of how the others see them and their institutions? How do the European media assess the reputation of the EU? Those are questions which are neglected by both the research on EU political identity and the research regarding the external image of the EU. On the contrary, we believe that filling this gap is fundamental for the analysis of the process of formation of the EU as a full-fledged political actor. This conviction guided a research project, coordinated by Furio Cerutti and Sonia Lucarelli, which is leading to the publication of the co-edited volume *Political Identity and Legitimacy of the European Union* (London, Routledge; forthcoming 2008), where at least two chapters deal with the relationship between external images and the political identity of the Europeans.

## **Output**

- Presentation, on 19 and 20 April of the results of the Survey at the EU Commission, Office for European Coordination in the Field of Scientific and Technical Research, in the presence of EU Commissioner for Research Janez Potocnik, and of Commission President, José Manuel Barroso.
- An e-book in the working paper series of Garnet (forthcoming April 2007).
- A Special issue of *European Foreign Affairs Review*, approved and due to appear as no. 3/2007 (Autumn).
- Possibly, a collective book published with Routledge, Garnet Series.

### **Follow-up**

- The next step is a Section on *The External Image of the EU* at the 2007 General Conference of the European Consortium for Political Research (Pisa 6-8 September 2007) with seven panels, three to four papers per panel.
- A new round of research with a larger sample of countries, including Israel, Syria or Jordan; Russia; the US; Argentina; Indonesia; a central African country.

**About the coordinator:** Sonia Lucarelli is Lecturer of International Relations and European Security Studies at the University of Bologna at Forlì (Italy) and Director of research at the Forum on the Problems of Peace and War (Florence, Italy). Her fields of interest include: International Relations Theory; European Security; European political identity; EU foreign policy. Among her recent publications: *Europe and the Breakup of Yugoslavia. A Political Failure in Search of a Scholarly Explanation*, The Hague, Kluwer Law International (2000); (ed) *La polis europea. L'Unione europea oltre l'Euro*, Trieste, Asterios, 2002; (co-edited with Claudio Radaelli) *Mobilising Politics and Society? The EU Convention's Impact on Southern Europe*, Routledge, 2005; (co-edited with Ian Manners), *Values and Principles in European Union Foreign Policy*, Routledge 2006; (co-edited with Furio Cerutti) *Identity and Legitimacy in the European Union*, London, Routledge; forthcoming; (ed); *The External Image of the European Union*, Garnet Series e-book, 2007, forthcoming at <http://www.garnet-eu.org/Publications.3.0.html>; (ed) *Beyond Self Perception: The Others' View of the European Union*, Special issue of *European Foreign Affairs Review*, 3/2007 forthcoming; and a wide range of chapters in collected books and articles in areas of her interest.

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## FORUM ON THE PROBLEMS OF PEACE AND WAR GARNET - Jointly Executed Research Project 5.2.1

### **THE EXTERNAL IMAGE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARIES**



The survey *The External Image of the European Union* has been conducted in the Framework of the Jointly Executed Research Project 5.2.1. (*Normative issues*) of the Network of Excellence *Global Governance, Regionalisation and Regulation: the Role of the EU* - GARNET (Contract No. 513330); (EU 6<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme 2005-2010; Call Identifier: FP6-2002-Citizens-3). We are grateful to Garnet and to the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for their financial contribution to the project.

## INTRODUCTION

The EU is currently a relevant player in world affairs and its global capacity can be detected in the wide variety of policies and instruments that fall under its competences. The self-representation of the EU tends to underline a different way of acting in the world, close to what academic observers have called a “civilian power” or “normative power”. The instruments of such actors are said to be mostly multilateralism, solidarity, democracy and human rights support, sustainable development, constructive engagement, partnership, more than traditional political-military means. Such a self-representation is supported by a growing literature on the EU’s peculiar role in world politics.

Such a self representation and the actual practice of foreign policy are relevant also as far as the overall process of polity-building is concerned. As a matter of fact, policy performance is a fundamental component of the processes of identity formation, particularly in such a culturally differentiated entity such as the EU. Policy performance is the framework within which a specific interpretation of core political values (the fundamental component of a political identity) takes place. In this perspective, identity is not a ‘given’ but part of processes of self-identification by the individuals in a group, in which foreign policy is particularly important. The way we conceive our international role is functional to the way in which we conceive ourselves; at the same time, the way we ‘perform’ our role feeds back into our political identity.

A specific component of the impact that foreign policy has on political identity passes through the international image that the EU constructs of itself in the world through its foreign policy. This is a highly neglected area of investigation. This Survey aims to contribute to the analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of EU foreign policy, particularly in terms of gaps between self and others’ image of the EU.

In particular, through a general survey of the data available at the level of public opinion, political elites, organised civil society and the media, this research aims at analysing if and how the EU is perceived in countries in Africa, Asia, Oceania, and America. The final aim is to evaluate how the EU is perceived beyond its borders and whether there are significant gaps between the EU’s self-representation of the others’ image. In our research we have opted for the following choices:

- A predominantly country-focus. The following countries have been selected: Canada; Brazil, Australia, China, India, Japan, Egypt; South Africa;
- The choice of four relevant constituencies in each country (public opinion, elites, media, NGOs);
- The use of the following sources that, combined together, provide an idea of the image of the EU in that country/constituency: public discourses; media, opinion polls, websites, secondary literature;
- The inclusion, next to the country reports, of a sample of transversal chapters, dealing with the existent literature, the perception among organised civil society and Commission delegates.

## REPORT ON AUSTRALIA

Contributing to the GARNET Jointly Executed Research Project 5.2.1, *The External Image of the European Union*, this report seeks to understand how the EU is understood and perceived by the public, political elites, media and civil society organisations in one of its Oceanic partners, Australia. Despite close historical, political, cultural and economic links to Europe, Australia's relationship with the European Union is a fraught one, characterised by ambivalence towards European integration, antagonism, particularly in the area of agriculture, and economic asymmetry. Consequently, as this report demonstrates, although the EU is Australia's most significant trading partner, an important ally in terms of regional aid and development, a prominent environmental actor and a growing international political power, it appears to occupy only a marginal position in Australian society.

Public surveys have demonstrated that while Australians experience largely positive feelings towards the EU/Europe and welcome its international influence (in particular, its potential to counterbalance US global hegemony), they nevertheless regard both its domestic importance and international influence to be less than that of the US, Asia and individual EU member states and typically view the EU as possessing little more than trade power.

These perceptions reflect the Australian government's attitudes towards the EU. A review of official rhetoric suggests that the government has, at least until very recently, been reluctant to recognise and engage with the EU as a unitary actor, focusing instead on its bilateral relations with individual member states and privileging relations with the US over the EU. While representatives of the current government tend to view the EU in negative terms and perceive the current state of the EU-Australia relationship to be 'fine', members of the opposition, who typically view the EU in more positive terms, perceive the EU to be undervalued in terms of its importance for Australia.

Certainly, the EU is not as prominent in the Australian media as one might expect of an international actor of its economic, geographic and demographic size. Across a six month period in 2004, the overall volume of press coverage of the EU in five popular Australian print news outlets was found to be substantially lower than that of the US, for example. Moreover, the EU was rarely the major focus of the article and most frequently reported in the context of third countries (i.e. neither EU nor Australia). It was virtually invisible in the two news broadcasts monitored in the same period, however, when it did appear, it was nearly always the major focus of the news item. Continuing a pattern identified in both public and elite perceptions, member state leaders were more prominent than EU figures in the monitored news outlets. Somewhat surprisingly, however, it was observed that the EU was predominantly framed as a political rather than economic or social actor in the Australian media.

A review of three representative local non-governmental organisations suggests that the EU is not, in general, a point of reference for Australian civil society. Despite shared interests in the delivery of aid and development, especially in the Asia Pacific, and the fact that the EU is an important funding partner of CARE Australia, Australia's largest aid organisation does not appear to engage in active dialogue with the EU. In the area of organised labour, the EU was an infrequent point of reference for the nation's peak trade union body. Significantly, however, when the EU was mentioned, it was in typically positive terms, as a normative leader on issues such as 'decent work' and protection of workers from hazardous chemicals and materials in the workplace. Likewise, references to the EU tended to be positive – and were considerably more common – in the case of Australia's largest environmental organisation. The regular, if cursory, mentions of the EU in this domain arguably reinforce the image of the EU as a leading international environmental actor. Ongoing integration in Europe is a political reality that Australia can no longer afford to ignore. The government has shown recent signs of willingness to revise its approach to Europe and pursue

deeper, more meaningful cooperation. However, as is argued in this report, it is important that this official change of heart towards the EU is supported by the concurrent reprioritisation of EU-Australia relations at all levels of Australian society – amongst political elites, civil society and the general public and in the media.

## **REPORT ON BRAZIL**

Relations between the EU and Brazil have developed dynamically since the beginning of the 1990s. In this period, both parties have come to realise that the commercial, economic and political synergies that they can together bring to bear offer vast opportunities for cooperation that are worth exploring. Europeans increasingly perceive Brazil as a global player whose aspiration to turn its new international status into regional and global clout needs to be fully supported. From Brazil's viewpoint, the growing international assertiveness of the European Union is seen as something to be welcomed and encouraged and, potentially, as a positive factor on the path towards the achievement of the country's strategic goals. The wide array of institutional settings within which relations between the EU and Brazil take place provides evidence of the new quality of this partnership. Although important problems still need to be addressed it is difficult to foresee that mutual political relations will suffer any serious setback.

Building on this background, this country-survey investigates how the EU is perceived in Brazil. The underlying assumption is that in the case of a political identity in-the-making like the EU, its external image is an important component of the overall process of the EU's identification. By providing an outline of how the EU's image is perceived by Brazil's political elite, public opinion and represented by its media, therefore, this research contributes by casting a light on a crucial aspect of the EU's international identity conceptualisation and to carry forward the intellectual conversation on the development of a better understanding on the role of the EU in two ways: on the one hand, it confirms that some of the elements of the self and academic representation of the Union as an international actor have produced similar representations with external actors - on the other hand, it shows that other themes are not, at least in the context of this country-study, as determinant in shaping the EU's image as part of the literature on EU identity often claims.

The most important component of the image the EU has shaped of itself is that of a relevant economic and trading player in world affairs. In this context, the EU is regarded both as an opportunity and a challenge. The identification of the EU as a protectionist power goes hand in hand with the recognition of its importance as a market for exports, as a provider of investment, and more importantly, as a potential ally on the path towards the forging of a "fairer globalisation". In the political sphere, the EU's image is perceived as a positive one. The EU's potential contribution to a more balanced global distribution of power, in fostering multilateralism, and in making of a more solidaristic international system, are all elements that shape a perception of an existing broad convergence with Brazilian long-term interests. The analysis also points to the existing perception of the EU as model of regional integrative efforts in the continent. In this context, the Mercosur represents a driving force in determining future Brazil-EU relations and, accordingly, mutual perceptions. Surprisingly, those elements of European identity associated to the social/solidaristic dimensions, both internal and external, have been found to be largely absent from Brazilian public discourse. These findings indicate that the relevance of social themes in shaping the EU's representation with external actors may be overestimated. Broadly speaking, this research shows that the substantial convergence between how Brazilians perceive the EU and how the EU perceives itself might offer a solid basis upon which a relationship of constructive engagement can be further developed.

## **REPORT ON CANADA**

This study analyses Canadian perceptions of the EU. The picture that emerges from this review is that, in Canadian eyes, the EU is primarily an important international economic actor and a large and attractive market of which Canadian companies have yet to take full advantage. At first, Canada paid little attention to the process of European integration. Since the early 1970s, however, the Canadian government has tried to spur Canadian business to look at Europe by signing a number of agreements with the EU and pursuing an elusive multilateral or bilateral free trade deal which would help diversify Canadian international trade and hence reduce its overwhelming reliance on the US which is a source of both vulnerability and unease. Such a strategy, however, has met with limited success because of EU (and, so far at least, US) lack of interest in a transatlantic free trade area and the unsystematic and somewhat timid marketing forays of Canadian businesses in Europe. Canada's complaints about the EU concern primarily its excessive use of trade distorting measures (e.g. agricultural subsidies) and its tendency to over-fish in international waters. EU economic, environmental, and political practices are occasionally mentioned as a model to imitate, especially by Canadian reform liberals sympathetic to the idea of some well-aimed state interventions in the economy. Less often, the same practices are criticised by Canadian classic liberals as an impediment to growth. Our survey, however, does not show that the EU is perceived as social model from which Canada has much to learn. The EU is also perceived as a model of regional integration that could not possibly be replicated in the North-American context. EU institutions, on the other hand, have been examined with some attention, as a possible source of clues to cure the malaise affecting the Canadian federation. Canadians also seem to believe that Canadian and European values and interests are more akin than those between Canada and the US and Europe and the US. Yet, the EU does not occupy a large place in Canadian minds outside the issue of trade expansion. The EU as such receives relatively scarce attention as an international political actor and even our survey of Canadian security elites clearly shows that they do not believe the EU to have a significant capacity to meet most of the current threats the only partial exception being represented by macroeconomic instability and migratory pressures. Thus, Canadian cooperation with the EU in the political field, with the exception of NATO, remains underdeveloped whereas that with the US continues to grow. The survey found hardly any mention of the EU as a potential international political counterweight to the US. The tendency, instead, is to mention at the same time both the US and the EU as indispensable allies.

## **REPORT ON CHINA**

Most analysis of contemporary EU-China affairs seems to suggest that what has for long been described as a "secondary relationship" has today acquired a new quality and depth. In fact, the dramatic growth in ties between China and Europe has been referred to as one of the most important developments in world affairs in recent years and as the new axis in world affairs. These interpretations notwithstanding, it is difficult to deny that relations between the two powers have increasingly deepened and taken the shape of what is today officially defined by both sides a "strategic partnership". Two of the potentially emerging global powers in the post-Cold war era find themselves engaged in a process of solid and deepening cooperation (political, economic and cultural) with no perceived "strategic or systemic conflict of interests" among them. These developments have been subject to growing attention from academic and research institutions. EU-China affairs, however, have been mainly approached from a historical viewpoint or with a normative perspective at political, strategic, and economic level. So far, no systematic study has been carried out with the specific aim of providing an outline of how the EU's image is perceived in China. Much attention paid to the European side of the relationship and very few attempts to understand and investigate systematically the other side of the perceptual dyad. This country-survey's primary objective is to start filling this gap by offering a general outline of how the EU is perceived in China through a survey of the data available at the level of public opinion, political



elites, civil society and the media. The assumption is that understanding how others see us is a crucial pre-condition to better understand ourselves and how we frame our own identity.

At a general level, the study shows that the European growing interest in China is mirrored by an equally strong interest by Chinese politicians, scholars and commentators on the EU and its internal and external developments. At the level of political elites, there is a clear and consistent articulation across time of how Chinese political leaders perceive different dimensions of the European integration process. Paramount is the attention to the EU as a “pole” that shares many fundamental principles with regards to the future architecture of global governance. Few obstacles remain to be addressed but they are highly unlikely to cause major setbacks in a relationship characterized by the absence of any “hard security conflict”. The analysis of China’s Europe’s watchers assessments of the EU and its relations with their homeland, provided a richer picture about how Europe projects its image in the country. The EU’s image, again, is perceived mainly positively with only few criticisms concerning very specific aspects. The more interesting element here concerns the extent to which attention to the EU is put in a wider context including the US and its relations with both the EU and China. The focus on dynamics concerning the China-EU-US strategic triangle is particularly relevant in this context. The US remains an extremely important external parameter to understanding EU-China dynamics. The media analysis section provides a rich and comprehensive overview of the most prominent trends of Chinese media representations.

The survey concludes that the depth and dynamism with which China and EU approach each other is a clear signal that both sides see each other as potential allies in a variety of contexts. The absence of security conflicts is the most important facilitating factor of this process of convergence. In this sense, it is appropriate to think of China and the EU as two actors experiencing a more mature relationship in a changed systemic environment.

## **REPORT ON EGYPT**

This report attempts to review the main sources of information on how the European Union is perceived in Egypt, chiefly through the analysis of existing opinion polls, governmental declarations, political party releases and opinions, the image of the EU in the press as well as the attitudes of organised civil society towards the EU. However, due to the lack of opinion polls, the scarcity of clear sources on the stance of political elites and the lack of a coherent perception by Egyptian civil society of the European Union, more emphasis has been placed over coverage of the EU in the press which acts, in general, as a public forum where various opinions could be presented. It is clear, through this report, that the Egyptian government views the European Union primarily in economic terms, due to its already “well-established” political ties with the United States, widely considered to be its main political ally and guide in regional and international politics. It is, however, also clear that the Egyptian government does not have prior long-term strategies in its relations with the European Union, nor a clear vision of methods and policies in its relations with the Union. The same goes to the political parties that are simply content with insisting on the importance of strengthening relations with the European Union as a strategic partner and ally.

As far as organised civil society is concerned, it is clear that most organisations have not yet developed a comprehensive or outspoken strategy towards foreign affairs in general and towards the EU in particular. The overwhelming majority of these civil society organisations are Muslim-Brotherhood established and run organisations for charity works. The rest are mainly human rights organisations that largely depend on European sources for their funding. Thus, they are usually reluctant to express open opinions, though they might criticise some aspects of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership or some official tendencies of the EU towards the region in general.

## REPORT ON INDIA

Most analysts see India (already the world's 4th largest economy) moving rapidly ahead and overtaking Japan in third position, on the basis of its huge and very young population (expected to overtake China and reach around 1.5 billion people in the coming decades), with the largest pool of engineers in the world, and showing fast-growing progress in the IT and services sectors, as well as attracting ever larger amounts of foreign investment. At the same time, India's new global role has been acknowledged by all major powers and can be seen in strategic partnerships with the USA and Russia and the upswing in relations with China.

In terms of cultural values, there are few major countries with which the EU has more in common in terms of fundamental values, from democracy to free press, to the respect for human rights or the firm belief in religious, ethnic and social tolerance. In spite of this, Indian society does not seem to be particularly interested in the EU and this makes it very difficult to discern how the EU is perceived in this country. This lack of interest for the EU has been recognized by EU officials too. As remarked by Neena Gill, British MEP in the European Parliament, "A vast majority of the people [in India] is not aware of EU or its activities. The political classes and the media in India have to become more aware. We have to realise India and the EU are natural partners. We both believe in a multi-polar world".

### *Public opinion*

There is no available data on the attitude and opinions of Indian citizens regarding the EU and its global role. The survey reports the results of the Pew Global Attitudes opinion polls which show that Indian citizens hold a rather positive opinion of the US (the best, after American citizens themselves). This data is important for an analysis of the EU's image in India because it shows that public perceptions in India are deeply influenced by the US.

### *Political and economic elites*

The Indian government sees the EU as a major role-player in international politics as far as development and trade are concerned. Some relevance is also given to international security issues (mostly the fight against terrorism). Whereas the tone is cordial when government refers to bilateral negotiations, when it comes to multilateral meetings the EU is associated with the rest of the so-called First World (particularly, the US), which enjoys privileges and keeps supporting legislation that perpetuate injustices (especially on around trade issues). Whereas analysts stress that the Indian government looks at the EU as a counter power to the US, when it comes to the political discourse in multilateral venues the EU and the US are seen as two faces of the same coin. In this regard, it is worth noting that the statements reported in the survey show a degree of ambiguity: whereas the US remains the leading power for India, there seems to be an appreciation for the EU as a potential counterpower to the US hegemony, at least in so far as this rivalry might offer opportunities for India's geopolitical aspirations in a multipolar world.

It is important to note that Indian politicians see the EU primarily in strategic terms. The discourse around the EU is quite superficial, as many divergences remain between the Indian government and the EU, particularly regarding issues around trade barriers and disarmament. The limited depth of the discourse, and its inherent rhetorical dimensions, reveals that, behind the political jargon, the EU is generally not viewed as a different global player. Similarly, the private sector sees the EU as an opportunity but also as an economy in decline, vis-à-vis the US and emerging regional powers in the South.

### *Civil society organisations*

The EU is hardly an issue of debate in Indian society and this is obviously reflected in the debate within civil society. Despite the lack of systematic data and the absence of some key organisations (e.g. trade unions) in the survey, some patterns can be detected. First and foremost, it must be

underlined that some of the key topics raised by Indian academics and civil society activists concern the very same issues that are being raised elsewhere in the world when it comes to the discourse around the EU, specifically the distortions in the international trade caused by the EU agricultural subsidies and non-tariff barriers. To most Indian civil society activists, these EU policies represent a new form of commercial exploitation of the Indian society and that of other developing countries.

Interestingly, some activists look at the EU as a valuable opponent of the US when it comes to environmental policies and food security issues, especially the commoditisation of agrarian knowledge through GM products. In this respect the EU, at least in 2004, was seen as a beacon by Indian ecological groups.

Finally, an element that should be underscored is how the EU's global role in high politics is perceived. In this case, the EU is seen as a toothless player, which struggles to have his voice heard when it comes to traditional diplomacy. In this respect, despite criticism, Indian academics still believe that future reforms might equip the EU with more effective instruments to make a difference in international 'power' politics.

### *The press*

Due to a wider spectrum of data, the analysis of the press has provided further insights, while confirming the findings of the previous sections. The newspapers' articles that employ positive tones to describe the EU are slightly more numerous than those espousing a negative attitude (79 and 53 respectively). In line with previous research findings, the most discussed themes are 'trade', 'agriculture', 'human rights' and 'foreign policy', with a specific focus on recent political events that have seen a significant involvement by the EU (such as the democratic breakthrough in Nepal or the war in Lebanon). Interestingly, a number of articles discuss at length the challenges posed by the French and Dutch referendum to the future of the EU and its aspirations to play a unitary role in foreign policy.

The EU's position with regard to the Indian nuclear strategy also features prominently in the press, which mainly records the negative view of India's government officials. Interestingly, when it comes to Iran and North Korea, the Indian newspapers analysed in this survey praise the EU's strategy that privileges diplomatic avenues and criticise the US' resort to military threats. Although limited in numbers (if compared to the visibility the US enjoys in the Indian press), the EU's presence in the newspapers and magazines reviewed in this survey is significant. Moreover, the themes covered by the press broadly mirror those covered in the analysis of the elites and civil society organisations. Within the methodological limitations of the research, this cross-sectoral consistency of the themes associated with the EU confirms that the Indian discourse around the EU shares certain key similarities and privileges the economic (trade policies, investment, etc.) aspects rather than the more political ones. When the EU's role as a global political actor is discussed in the press, it is mainly viewed in terms of humanitarian support and aid policies.

## **REPORT ON JAPAN**

While trying to identify images and perceptions of the European Union in Japan, one is inclined to ask: Does the EU's image have any peculiar features among the Japanese public? Do the EU's actions inside and outside its borders raise its profile as an international actor in Asia in general, and in Japan in particular? Does the EU's image keep 'slipping off the radars' of the government and public attention in Japan? Or is a dialogue between the two economic 'giants' becoming a new priority for Japan's government and public?

Purporting to answer these questions, this report presents a systematic survey of EU images existing in the Japanese public discourses of reputable news media, of national decision- and policy-makers, of the civil society sector, and in the perceptions of the general public. Firstly, EU images in the Japanese news media are traced through coverage of the EU in the three leading newspapers over

two years (2004 -- 2006). The monitored newspapers are *The Daily Yomiuri*, *The ASAHI Shimbun*, and *The Nikkei Weekly*. Further, EU perceptions among the national elites are investigated through the surveying of the relevant texts produced by Japan's Prime Minister and the five government agencies, as well as by Japan's ruling coalition and its current opposition. Among the government agencies under observation are the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Japan Defence Agency, the Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries and the Financial Services Agency. Japan's most influential parties under examination in this study are a country's ruling party, the Liberal Democratic Party, its coalition partner, the New Komeito, and a current opposition party, the Democratic Party of Japan. Civil society sector views on the EU are then studied via representations of the EU in the texts produced by Japan's leading business associations, trade unions, and NGOs (namely, RENGO Japanese Trade Union Confederation, the National Confederation of Trade Unions, the National Federation of Agricultural Co-Operative Associations, Greenpeace, Japan Business Federation, Japan Association of Corporate Executives, and the Japan Chamber of Commerce & Industry). Finally, the perceptions of Europe and the EU held by the Japanese general public are assessed using several public opinion polls administered by a range of institutions at various times. Among those are a longitudinal Japanese Government Poll, the Japanese Public Opinion Database in 1998, and the survey "World Powers in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century – Europe's Global Responsibility" commissioned by a German foundation "Bertelsmann Stiftung" in 2005.

The findings of this systematic survey are discussed within the framework of relevant research, which provides scholarly insights into Japan—EU relations.

## **REPORT ON SOUTH AFRICA**

The EU's image in South Africa is rather marginal. The EU is scarcely known to the South African public at large and vastly ignored by the country's media. In terms of public opinion polls, the EU is one of the least known international institutions, despite being the main source of development aid and the main trading partner for South Africa.

The EU receives only marginal coverage in South African media and, during the years surveyed, media reporting focused mainly on the role of the EU in the Zimbabwean crisis and this negatively affects the way in which the EU is depicted in the media. Due to its mainly technocratic role in the country and the financial constraints it imposed (e.g. trade agreements, the strength of the €), the EU is portrayed as a restrictive rather than an assisting actor in South Africa. Interestingly, the role of the EU as a source of aid and development cooperation is virtually absent in the media reporting confirming that aid policies (development cooperation in general) are not significant enough to revert the negative outcomes of harder forms of policy, such as trade and sanctions.

At the level of political elites, while the EU is at times portrayed as an example for Africa's quest for unity (particularly, as a reference point for the African Union), at the same time government elites as well as opposition parties do not refrain from blaming the EU and its trade policies for the hardship African countries have been going through. Arguably, this is part of the political strategies of national elites who can more easily justify their acceptance of suboptimal trade agreements and play the role of tied-handed negotiators when bargaining with such a powerful counterpart. In this respect, it is true that (as is the case with other African countries) the EU has been used as a scapegoat for the failures or the poor gains of local politicians on the international stage. Most likely the EU is subjected to more frequent criticisms than its member states.

As far as civil society organisations are concerned, the two most important issues associated with the EU in South Africa are fair trade and debt-related issues. The introduction of the EU-South

Africa free trade agreement and the approach adopted by the EU during the negotiations (that many commentators defined as ‘petty politics’, ‘selfish’ and ‘unidimensional’) not only provided room for criticisms on the part of political elites but it also strengthened the perceptions of civil society organisations that the EU is nothing but an actor aiming at spreading those neo-liberal political reforms that hamper the concrete chances of Africa to come out of chronic poverty. Severe criticisms in this respect, are not only common to fair-trade groups, anti-debt coalitions and the trade unions, but also to anti-AIDS networks such as the Treatment Action Campaign.

Overall, it appears that the EU has not managed to convince the South African society that it is an international actor standing for human rights protection, social development and justice. ‘Soft’ issues such as development aid or international agreements for human rights (sectors in which the EU is active and rather progressive) do not make it to the South African media and seldom (if ever) are mentioned in the political and social discourse. What makes the EU more known to the public at large are issues such as trade, debt and international financial agreements. In this respect, it comes as no surprise that in the eyes of many South Africans the EU is nothing but a new form of colonialism and a source of injustice. In this regard, trade agreements and their negative outcomes (in terms of local development and unemployment) contribute to depicting the EU as a technocratic power aiming at strengthening the economic gains of unbalanced trade at the expense of South Africa and Africa at large.

#### **REPORT ON TRADE UNIONS, SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND NGOS: EUROPEAN AND NON EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVES**

This contribution studies the external image of the EU through the construction of imaginaries and images associated with Europe and the European Union on the part of non-state actors (social movements, trade unions and NGOs) outside the EU. Based on a social constructivist approach, this report gives a strong emphasis to the role of the discursive identity formation as a process of social transformation. As for other types of collective and individual identities, the outside view is relevant in shaping Europe’s identity and self-image; for an identity to exist it must be recognised by “others”. The external image of ‘Europe’ not only relates to the institutional identity of the EU but also on EU-internal non-states actors of civil society and their contentious social struggles in the making of ‘Europe’ ‘from below’.

Departing from the assumption that European institutions attribute to their policies the aim of fostering democracy, human rights, a market economy, the welfare state, and cultural diversity, this report asks how these policies are evaluated from outside, by non-state actors in particular. Thus, the interest is in the critical comparison of the self-image of Europe with its reflection by the part of non-EU actors of civil society who struggle for democracy, human rights and global justice. Considering this comparison, the report is particularly interested in possible ‘misfits’ in between external and internal images of the EU as mirroring the interactive nature of a process of identity negotiation and transformation. This research interest in an interactive identity formation was operationalised through a diversified research design, combining quantitative images with qualitative data and discourse analysis. First, a *content analysis* of documents provided by European and Non European non-state actors was conducted (through their homepages). Second, a survey was conducted at the First European Social Forum (held in Florence in 2002). Third, the social context in which the discourse on Europe emerges in interactive public meetings of EU-external and EU-internal activists was studied in the case of the European Social Forum with in-depth interviews and critical discourse analysis.

Given the focus on social movements, trade unions and NGOs the report gives an illustration of the fact that the EU is not only shaped by governmental actors, but that the discourse on Europe and EU

politics is seen essentially in the forms of “contentious politics.” For this, this report provides a comparison of different images of Europe by diverse EU-internal and external non-state actors in order to assess whether their images of Europe differ from each other or, instead, converge. First, the findings illustrate that non-state actors share some “core values” (democracy, human rights, social justice, peace, etc.) which lead to similar framings of the EU. Second, the actors studied are building global transnational networks through which they interact, exchange information and views, and mobilise in world politics. At the transnational and mixed level of the European Social Forum (ESF) the focus is explicitly on the creation of ‘another’ Europe, rather than on the EU alone, that is, the building of an alternative meaning of Europe.

In a first step, the report analyses the external image of Europe and the EU on the part of non-state actors through content analysis of the meanings attributed to the EU and EU politics on the homepages of non-EU NGOs, trade unions and social movements within the global justice movements. Secondly, the report analyses the perspective of non-EU citizens and citizens from the recently accessed or to be accessed member states of the EU within the European Social Forum process as a mixed transnational counter-public with the social transformative objective to create ‘another’ Europe. Thus, the report combines findings from the macro level of content analysis and survey with the micro-analysis of the images on Europe resulting of direct face-to-face interactions of activists from outside the EU with EU-internal activists in the European Social Forum (ESF) process.

The results show that the image of the European Union that NGOs, trade unionists and leftist libertarian social movements develop from ‘outside’ or what one may describe as the ‘borderlands’ of the European Union is an ambivalent picture of a powerful political community with both a hegemonic but also a socially transformative and democratic aspiration. A general finding is that non-European trade unions, social movements and NGOs agree with EU internal groups and organisations on the perception of the EU as a neoliberal political agent, which threatens the social and economic life conditions of ordinary people both within and outside the political boundaries of the European Union. Thereby activists from outside the EU or from its politico-geographical boundaries are consensual with their EU-internal allies from the left libertarian movement about the wish to build a more democratic, peaceful, ecologist and social Europe. At the same time, these activists tend to judge EU politics from the external point of view of those concerned in the most dramatic way by the EU external policies, in particular, when materialistic (social as well as economic) issues are concerned. In many policy fields, the EU receives a bad evaluation from the outside, being often considered in the same vein as the strongly criticised neoliberal actors of the WTO, the World Bank, the IMF and the United States. At the same time, non European NGOs dealing with non-economic issues, such as human rights, women rights and peace, draw a less negative picture in which the EU represents a potential ally to bring progressive change to their countries. Thus, while EU-internal organisations and groups claim the internal democratisation of Europe, EU-external activists see the EU as an important external ally for the implementation of human rights and democratisation (or gender equality) to which they appeal in order to reach, via a boomerang effect, the desired policy changes at the domestic level.

For these reasons, the European Social Forum process as a transnational counter public for ‘another’ Europe is an attractive point for non-EU activists or those from newly accessed EU countries in Central and South Eastern Europe. In dealing with the social context of the European Social Forum, these activists nevertheless perceive it as ambivalent and eurocentric, and choose different strategies dependent on their ideological, financial and national background and gender. While some activists address ‘Europe’ in speaking to the present multipliers in the ESF process, others will more or less disruptively claim more agency and question the perceived eurocentric and exclusive constitution of ‘Europe’ in the internal making of the ESF process itself, struggling for equal recognition. The voices of these activists seem to warn that the democratic constitution of

Europe may be structured by an operational logic (of exclusion and marginalization) which is attributed and imputed to the EU institutions and also, to a certain extent, to the EU-internal social movements willing to construct ‘another’ Europe. Only through the consideration of the outside perspective, and through the work “in coalitions across differences” the political subject of Europe might become a credible agent of social transformation and of democratisation.

In sum, the report provides policy advice in the need to consider the external critique addressed to both the institutional and the societal ‘Europe’ by external to the EU leftist libertarian non-state actors struggling for democracy. In the interactive process of forming its political identity, the legitimacy of EU politics and EU-internal non-state actors crucially depend on the evaluation given by those critical voices ‘from outside’, challenging and thus stimulating the self-image of EU institutions to bring social and political change to Europe and to world politics.

### **REPORT ON THE COMMISSION’S DIPLOMATS AND THE EU INTERNATIONAL IMAGE**

This report intends to present an overall portrait of the Union as an international actor, as stemming from the visions that officials working in the delegations of the European Commission hold. The analysis relies on different sources. First, the report provides an analysis of speeches, declarations, official statements and information materials published on some 80 websites of the Delegations. As it will be argued, the Delegations websites propose a standardised presentation of “the EU as a global player”, which can help us to define the official position of the European Commission on the issue. An “unofficial” picture of the EU as a global player stems from the analysis of 48 semi-structured interviews to A grade civil servants having worked in a Delegation – conducted between October 2003 and March 2004 and in May 2005 - and some 40 questionnaires filled out by Heads of Delegations, out of 74 participants to a cycle of seminars promoted by DG RELEX K/6 for the Heads of Delegations, between the beginning and the end of December 2004.

Although there is a relative homogeneity in the presentation of the EU international image, the “two sides of the coin” are not always interchangeable, so that we can compare differences and analogies between the official position of the Commission and the opinions of its civil servants. It is widely accepted that the foundations of the EU international presence lay on the lessons drawn by its history. Born in the aftermath of the World War II, the EU represents a living laboratory of interstate, peaceful cooperation. Its multilateral commitment on the global scene derives therefore by its genesis, in rendering the advocate of a new model of an international system based on mutual respect and collaboration.

However, it is precisely its multilateral endorsement which weakens its international actorness. The Union is, thus, portrayed as an atypical foreign policy actor: a sum of actors which, at times, is keen to produce a choir, rather than a common voice. Nonetheless, this hindrance constitutes the peculiarity of its international presence: the EU is able to pursue a more balanced model of an international system precisely because it does not merely represent one state’s selfish interest, but a common vision based on shared values.

The role of the Union as a global trade actor is, at times, contested by the Commission’s civil servants. Without any doubts, in the eyes of officials, the Union represents a champion of the multilateral method in trade affairs and pursues “higher goals” through its trade relations (human rights, development, institutional building, poverty reduction, etc). However, as the credentials of the Union as a trade partner are often disputed by international partners, officials do not refer to this factor as the most characteristic element of its international presence, and recognise its problematic nature.



Officials tend to view the Union as a carrier of high values and to assess the consequences of its action as political in nature, through the spread of these values. The EU is mainly portrayed as a development actor, able to pursue important goals – such as respect for human rights and the rule of law, peace, and a more balanced international system – and solidarity for Less Developed Countries.

As an analysis of the recurrent patterns present in the interviews shows, the Union is mainly described through three metaphors: a new model for the international system, a not-into-politics actor, and a developmental actor. Reviewing the images of Europe within the sample, one realises that the element that characterises most officials' image of the EU is the unique character that the European Union holds in the international arena. It is precisely the awareness of not being a state which makes the Union a new model for international system. The attempt to combine different national identities and interests brings about a form of mediation between these identities and interests, which allows the emergence of a European way to international actorness. In officials' eyes, Europeaness in the international arena means being both a model of regional cooperation and being able to guarantee a more balanced system than individual states and not merely the incapacity to act on its own as a state could.



FORUM ON THE PROBLEMS OF PEACE AND WAR  
GARNET - Jointly Executed Research Project 5.2.1

**THE EXTERNAL IMAGE OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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**INTRODUCTION**

*EU POLITICAL IDENTITY, FOREIGN POLICY AND EXTERNAL IMAGE*

**Sonia Lucarelli**



The survey *The External Image of the European Union* has been conducted in the Framework of the Jointly Executed Research Project 5.2.1. (*Normative issues*) of the Network of Excellence *Global Governance, Regionalisation and Regulation: the Role of the EU* - GARNET (contract no. 513330); (EU 6<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme 2005-2010; Call Identifier: FP6-2002-Citizens-3). We are grateful to Garnet and to the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for their financial contribution to the project.

## ABSTRACT

The EU is currently a relevant player in world affairs and its global capacity can be detected in the wide variety of policies and instruments that fall under its competences. The self-representation of the EU tends to underline a different way of staying in the world, close to what academic observers have called a “civilian power” or “normative power”. The instruments of such an actor are said to be prevalently multilateralism, solidarity, democracy and human rights support, sustainable development, constructive engagement, partnership, more than traditional political-military means. Such a self-representation is supported by a growing literature on the EU’s peculiar role in world politics.

Such a self-representation and the actual practice of foreign policy are relevant also in so far as the overall process of polity-building is concerned. As a matter of fact, policy performance is a fundamental component of the processes of identity formation, particularly in such a culturally differentiated entity as the EU. Policy performance is the framework within which a specific interpretation of core political values (the fundamental component of a political identity) takes place. In this perspective, identity is not a ‘given’ but part of processes of self-identification by the individuals in a group, in which foreign policy is particularly important. The way we conceive our international role is functional to the way in which we conceive ourselves; at the same time, the way we ‘perform’ our role feeds back into our political identity.

A specific component of the impact that foreign policy has on political identity passes through the international image that the EU constructs of itself in the world through its foreign policy. This is a highly neglected area of investigation. This Survey aims at contributing to the analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of EU foreign policy, particularly in terms of gaps between self and others’ image of the EU.

In particular, through a general survey of the data available at the level of public opinion, political elites, organised civil society and the media, this research aims at analysing if and how the EU is perceived in countries in Africa, Asia, Oceania, and America. The final aim is to evaluate how the EU is perceived beyond its borders and whether there are significant gaps between the EU’s self-representation of the others’ image. In our research we have opted for the following choices:

- a predominantly country-focus. The following countries have been selected: Canada; Brazil, Australia, China, India, Japan, Egypt; South Africa;
- the choice of four relevant constituencies in each country (public opinion, elites, media, NGOs);
- the use of the following sources that, combined together, provide an idea of the image of the EU in that country/constituency: public discourses; media, opinion polls, websites, secondary literature.
- the inclusion, next to the country reports, of a sample of transversal chapters, dealing with the perception among organised civil society and Commission delegates.

“the EU does not conduct public diplomacy. ... The result? A global player with increasing responsibilities and capabilities that focuses on telling the world what it should think about it, but quite deaf to what the world actually thinks” (Dov Lynch 2005: 31)

“Foreign policy roles are created through a continuous interaction between own role conceptions and structurally based expectations. [...] EU foreign policy [...] is also partly shaped in response to the others’ expectations. [...] [T]hird party understanding about the EU and its roles form a part of the intersubjective international structures that help shape the practices of both Member States and the EU as such.” (Elgström 2006:1)

## INTRODUCTION

The EU is currently an important player in world affairs and its global capacity can be seen by the wide variety of policies and instruments that fall into its sphere of competence. For instance, not only is the EU the most significant market for commodities from all over the world, but its trade policies influence all regions of the globe and affect the internal development of hundreds of countries. In addition, the EU is the world’s biggest donor of development aid, cooperating with its huge variety of instruments to encourage economic and democratic advancement in the most disadvantaged countries in the world. Through its specific institutions (in particular, the Commission), the EU plays a direct role within international organisations such as, for example, the World Trade Organisation, and as a rule is invited to take part in G8 meetings. Furthermore, EU leaders and officials frequently intervene on topics of global importance, in order to fight poverty, promote democracy, protect human rights, encourage sustainable development, and so on.

However, the way in which the Union represents itself and is represented in academic circles as an international actor puts more emphasis on “how” it makes its stance in the world, rather than “what” this stance actually is. The first ever European Security Strategy has given the following outline of Europe’s responsibilities and principled aims:

[T]he European Union is, like it or not, a global actor; it should be ready to share in the responsibility for global security. [...] The development of a stronger international society, well functioning international institutions and a rule-based international order is our objective. [...] *The best protection for our security is a world of well-governed democratic states. Spreading good governance, supporting social and political reform, dealing with corruption and abuse of power, establishing the rule of law and protecting human rights are the best means of strengthening the international order.* [...] We need to be able to act before countries around us deteriorate, when signs of proliferation are detected, and before humanitarian emergencies arise. Preventive engagement can avoid more serious problems in the future. A European Union which takes *greater responsibility* and which is more active will be one which carries greater political weight. (European Council 2003, emphasis added)

The keyword is therefore “structural prevention”, as leading scholars have claimed (Keukeleire; Telò; Manners, to name but a few). The instruments to create this structural prevention are multilateralism, solidarity, democracy and support of human rights, sustainable development, constructive involvement and partnership. Furthermore, the Union is also unique in that it is the only international actor to represent a model of regional integration for other areas of the world (Telò 2001).

However, though quite a large amount of work has been done on the details, strengths and weaknesses of the EU in various foreign policy areas, little has been done to assess whether this internal image that the EU has created of itself has resulted in external actors seeing it in the same light. As a matter of fact, though it may be part of an intentional strategy on the part of the EU to project a specific image, there is little information on the extent to which the rest of the world is

really aware of the EU and, if there is awareness, what type of perception the rest of the world has of its particular role (what literature frequently refers to as the EU's "international identity"). Such attention to the others' view of the EU seems to be largely neglected both by the EU itself (as Dov Linch notes – above) and by the academic literature, which has predominantly focused on speculating on the *EU's distinctiveness* and empirically evaluating the consistency of the distinctiveness thesis (see Lucarelli 2007b).

Indeed, there are very few systematic studies on the others' image of the EU. Amongst them one can highlight Martin Holland's research team on the perceptions of the EU in the Asia-Pacific region (Chaban & Holland 2005); Ole Elgström's research on the perception of the EU among delegates at international negotiations in three different multilateral settings<sup>1</sup> (Elgström 2006; cf. also Chaban, Elgström and Holland 2006), plus some articles (Men 2006) and papers (Lisbonne-de Vergeron 2006; Tsuruoka 2006; Ortega 2004). Very insightful on the Chinese's view of the EU is also a very recent book edited by David Shambaugh, Eberhard Sandschneider, and Zhou Hong (2007).

The corpus of research on the EU's external image is therefore limited and fragmented. The research proposed here is an attempt to contribute to the development of this field of research. But why bother? Why would this be a fruitful terrain of research?

The first reason is, as mentioned above, that this is a rather novel area of investigation in the academic scholarship on the role of the EU in the world which suffers a significant gap that needs to be overcome. The second reason is that, as observed by Linch, the EU behaves "as if" the external image of the EU was not too dissimilar from the EU's self-representation. This might lead to dangerous cognitive dissonances that inevitably have a negative effect on the EU's external relations and its actual impact. The third reason is more crucial, in my view: the external image of the EU is a fundamental component of its political identity. The EU's effort in developing as a full-fledged actor has three main components: the gradual definition of a process of self-identification by the Europeans with the EU as their political referent (political identity), the EU's actual political performance at "home" and abroad (role performance), and the Others's view of the EU as a political actor. The process is complex and highly interactive as political identity contributes to shape roles and, thereby external images, but is also subject to reinterpretation once the external images that are acknowledged by domestic constituencies diverge dramatically from those of relevant Others. Roles, as in Ole Elgstrom's words in the incipit, are the connecting element between internal political identity and external images. In other words, we fail to understand a fundamental component of the EU's international role as well as of the Europeans' self-identification process if we do not investigate what the external images of the EU are.

In the remaining sections of this introduction I will firstly give an outline of how the EU represents itself and is represented in the academic world; secondly, I will clarify some of the concepts used here (identity, foreign policy, external image) and thirdly, I will propose a theoretical understanding of the relationship among them. Finally, I will provide some details on how our research on the external image of the EU has been organised.

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<sup>1</sup> The three settings being: the United Nations Forum on Forestry's fourth session in Geneva in May 2004; the 13th Conference on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, Bangkok, October 2004; the World Trade Organisation (Member State permanent representations in Geneva).

## 2. HOW WE SEE OURSELVES

The EU is increasingly presented as an international actor which behaves in a principled manner in foreign policy. Both key policy actors and academic commentators point to the EU's distinctive role in world politics deriving from its particular nature, as we shall consider here.

### 2.1. The EU's Self-Representation

Key actors in EU foreign policy make frequent reference to values and norms that characterise the EU and should provide the basis for its role in world politics. In the European Security Strategy quoted below there was a clear call for global responsibilities and "ethical" foreign policy on the part of the EU. Another example is in the Laeken Declaration that laid the foundations for the debate on the future of Europe and the European Convention:

Does Europe not, now that is finally unified, have a leading role to play in a new world order, that of a power able both to play a stabilising role worldwide and to point the way ahead for many countries and peoples? Europe as the continent of humane values, the Magna Carta, the Bill of Rights, the French Revolution and the fall of the Berlin Wall; the continent of liberty, solidarity and above all diversity, meaning respect for others' languages, cultures and traditions. ... Europe needs to shoulder its responsibilities in the governance of globalisation.  
(European Council 2001)

The text of the proposed Constitution proclaims:

1. The Union's action on the international scene shall be guided by the *principles which have inspired its own creation, development and enlargement, and which it seeks to advance in the wider world: democracy, the rule of law, the universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for human dignity, the principles of equality and solidarity, and respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law.*(Art. III-292, Title V, emphasis added)

When it comes to the Union's aims, the Constitution states:

The Union [...] shall work for a high degree of cooperation in all fields of international relations, in order to:

(a) safeguard its *values, fundamental interests, security, independence and integrity*; (b) consolidate and support *democracy, the rule of law, human rights* and the principles of *international law*; (c) preserve *peace, prevent conflicts* and strengthen international security, in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter[...]; (d) foster the *sustainable economic, social and environmental development* of developing countries, with the primary aim of *eradicating poverty*; (e) encourage the integration of all countries into the world economy, including through the *progressive abolition of restrictions on international trade*; (f) help develop international measures to preserve and improve the quality of the *environment* and the sustainable management of global natural resources, in order to ensure *sustainable development*; (g) assist populations, countries and regions confronting natural or man-made disasters; (h) promote an international system based on stronger *multilateral cooperation and good global governance* (Art. III-292, Title V, emphasis added)

These and many other declarations and speeches describe the EU as an international actor that has two characteristics rarely assigned to a traditional state actor: its role as a stabiliser in contemporary world politics as a result of its history and values; and its external relations inspired by an 'ethics of responsibility' towards others.

## 2.2. The EU's International Stance and the Academic Representation of the EU as an International Actor

Various observers have underlined that the EU's representation of itself corresponds to a certain extent with its actual behaviour (Lucarelli and Manners eds 2006; Manners 2002). At various points in time, the EU and its member states have made an active challenge to the principles adopted by other international actors and considered cornerstones of foreign policy in the realist tradition which is still predominant in most diplomatic circles. At international negotiations on climate change, for instance, in Kyoto (1997), Bonn (2001) and later in Johannesburg (2002), the inclination of the EU was towards protecting the environment and the possibility of using alternative sources of energy, thus distancing it from the other main power in the world economy – the US (Baker 2006). Differences with the US also emerged at the Doha World Trade Organisation (WTO) summit in November 2001, as well as during various other trade negotiations (van den Hoven 2006). The EU has also shown a different attitude with regards to food protection and research on genetically modified organisms (GMOs) (Welsh 2006). Also of importance is the EU's fight against the death penalty around the world (Manners 2002). Moreover, the EU is a leading figure in the fight to rid the world of landmines (there are more than 60 million mines buried and an estimated stockpile of some 250 million). In terms of development aid, the EU followed on from the Jubilee 2000 movement in its demands to cancel the debt of the world's poorest countries and to revise the highly indebted poor countries initiative. This has resulted in the EU's commitment to systematically open up its markets to these countries for tariff-free trade in all areas except arms. In the area of democratisation, the EU has actively provided assistance for and observed elections. What is more, it has drawn up guidelines that go a step further than simple observation towards the principles of good governance (Balfour 2002). Particularly striking in the aftermath of the Cold War is how the EU has led the way in broadening the understanding of security by linking military security directly to the development of democratic institutions and economic development in third countries (Lucarelli 2002).

In the academic literature, in the 1970s the role of the EU in world politics had already been labelled as "peculiar". François Duchêne's well-known image of the EU (then the EC) as a *civilian power* (1972; 1973) did not just go to describe an economic giant with little political power, but an international actor that spread civilian and democratic standards of governance, on the basis of an 'ethics of responsibility' which is usually associated with home affairs (Duchêne 1973). A recent evolution of this line of thought is Jürgen Habermas's idea of *Weltinnenpolitik* – domestic world politics - that is, the submergence of the barriers between internal and international politics, resulting in the responsibility of all political decision-makers towards all those affected by their decisions, despite formally belonging to a political community (Habermas 1998; Bonanate 2001; Badie 1999). According to this literature, the civilian power of the EU would be better equipped than others to assume such a responsibility.

On the other hand, Ian Manners places more attention on the normative contents of EU foreign policy, describing it as a 'normative power':

The concept of normative power is an attempt to suggest that not only is the EU constructed on a normative basis, but importantly that this predisposes it to act in a normative way in world politics. It is built on the crucial, and usually overlooked observation, that the most important factor shaping the international role of the EU is not what it does or what it says, but what it is. (Manners 2002: 252)

According to Stephan Keukeleire, the EU adopts a 'structural foreign policy' (Keukeleire 2000, 2002), as opposed to a 'traditional foreign policy'. In other words, its foreign policy 'aims at influencing in an enduring and sustainable way the relatively permanent frameworks within which states relate to each other, relate to people, or relate to corporate enterprises or other actors, through the influence of the choice of the game as well as the rules of the game' (Keukeleire 2002: 14).



Mario Telò argues that the Union's structural foreign policy aims at affecting 'particularly the economic and social structures of partners (states, regions, economic actors, international organisations, etc.), it is implemented through pacific and original means (diplomatic relations, agreements, sanctions and so on), and its scope is not conjunctural but rather in the middle and long range' (Telò 2001: 264; 2003). These and other representations of the EU's international identity all tend towards the idea that it is a different type of international actor as it has a different type of foreign policy (see Manners and Whitman 1998, 2003 on international identity). They present the EU as a political actor with the following main characteristics:

1. the EU is a political actor that aims to behave on the basis of its own interest, but also according to the political values inscribed in its initial *telos*, with a view to expanding these values world-wide (a list of these values can be seen in the quotation from the draft Constitution above);
2. the attempt to expand these values, however, is never seen as a crusade, and the preference is towards using long-term, peaceful instruments;
3. the EU recognises that it has global responsibilities and new duties created by the processes of globalisation and their governance demands, striving to make these processes part of a more just and solidarist order (see European Council 2001).

### **3. IDENTITY, FOREIGN POLICY, EXTERNAL IMAGE: CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL REMARKS**

Frequently, literature calls the above the EU's "international identity". I believe that this concept does not make sense as "identity" is an attribute of individuals. So what is meant by "identity" as regards the EU? And by "foreign policy", given the particular framework of the EU's foreign policy? How can we describe the external role of the EU? How can we conceptualise the image that others have of the EU? Finally, what is the relationship between all these concepts?

#### **3.1. The Concepts Used**

##### ***European Union Foreign Policy***

Given the particular nature of the EU, it is more complicated to conceptualise EU foreign policy than to define the foreign policy of a state. To clarify, there are three branches of literature that provide differing ways of looking at the term and that, roughly, refer to pillar I (external relations) or pillar II (common foreign and security policy – CFSP). These branches of literature illuminate three aspects of the complex area of EU foreign policy that should not be separated. The definition of EU foreign policy adopted here by all the contributors is all-inclusive, encompassing all three aspects discussed above, although more emphasis is placed on the EU as a political system rather than on its member states. In other words, *EU foreign policy is here defined as the political actions that are regarded by external actors as 'EU' actions and that can be considered the output of the Union's multilevel system of governance in foreign policy – EU FP* (see White 1999; also Peterson and Sjursen 1998; K. Smith 1999; Bretherton and Vogler 1999; H. Smith 2002).

##### ***Political Identity***

Though frequent reference may be made to the political identity of the EU in the academic literature, all too frequently there is a reification of the concept and an attempt to use it as an attribute of the entire EU.

I believe the contrary: that “political identity” is an attribute of the European citizens and refers to the set of social and political values and principles that Europeans recognise as theirs and give sense to their feeling of belonging to the same political entity. These values and principles do not shape the identity by themselves - they need to be interpreted. Culture, history, legal practices and institutions are the frameworks within which political values are interpreted and thereby assume meaning (Lucarelli 2006a). From this viewpoint, identity is not ‘given’ but part of processes whereby the individuals in a group create their own identity, processes in which foreign policy is particularly important. The way we conceive our international role (Holsti 1970; Walker 1987; Aggestam 1999) plays a part in how we conceive ourselves; at the same time, the way we ‘perform’ our role is fed back into our political identity.

### ***External Image***

The external image of the EU is the perception that other international actors have of the EU *as a political actor*. In the literature, this perception is frequently referred to in a purely impressionistic way. On the contrary, I believe that serious attention should be placed on constructing a research programme on how others see the EU. In order to construct such a programme, a bare minimum of clarity about the methodology is necessary: perception of whom? Identified through which sources? In our research, we have opted for the following choices:

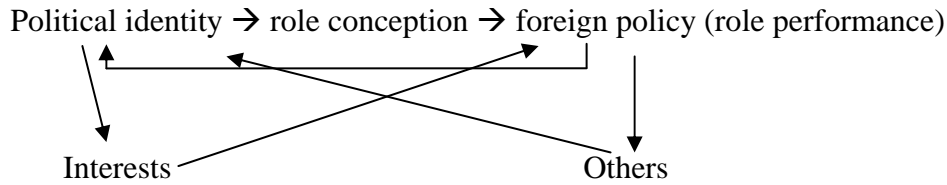
- to focus predominantly on countries as our basic entity (the prevalent perception of the EU in a set of countries);
- to select four relevant constituencies in each country;
- to use the following sources which together provide an idea of the image of the EU in that country/constituency: public speeches, the media, opinion polls, websites, secondary literature.

### **3.2. Theoretical Remarks on the Relationship Between Identity, Foreign Policy and External Image**

As we have seen, there is a tendency to refer to the international role of the EU as its international identity. On the contrary, the term I prefer to use is its “role” (cf. Holsti 1970; Walker 1987; Aggestam 1999). Roles refer to patterns of expected or appropriate behaviour and are determined by both an actor’s own conceptions about appropriate behaviour and by the expectations of other actors (Elgström and Smith 2006). The role-constructing side of the equation is ultimately shaped by an actor’s identity and the others’ expectations (Wendt 1999: 227-8). Ultimately, role conceptions can be regarded as behaviourally related elements of identity (Elgström and Smith 2006). However, as the ‘actor’ in question is a political system in itself (a state, a polity like the EU), the ‘actor’s identity’ is not monolithic, but pertains to the political identity of its citizens. This means that the role is also defined through interaction and involvement on the ‘domestic’ social level.

Culture, history, legal practices and institutions are the frameworks within which political values are interpreted and assume meaning, i.e. they are the frameworks for the *process* of self-identification (Bloom 1990) of the individuals in a group. Playing a particularly important role in this process is *policy*, including foreign policy. The way we conceive our international role plays a part in how we conceive ourselves; at the same time, the way we ‘perform’ our role is fed back into our political identity (see fig. 1). Other feedback comes from the image that we see ‘reflected in the eyes and words of relevant others’ (usually others who we regard as sources of legitimacy). In this respect, ‘Others’ are relevant (cf. Rumelili 2004; Neumann 1996). The relevance of Others may also be ‘comparative’ - “other than me” or (with reference to one’s own past) ‘different from what I was yesterday’ - but not necessarily oppositional, as is thought all too frequently.

Fig. 1 *The Identity-Interests-Foreign Policy Circle*<sup>2</sup>



A credibility crisis (or even a true form of democratic deficit) can take place when the political entity of reference (a state, the EU) does not perform the foreign policy its citizens expect it to perform. However, the extent of the impact of foreign policy on political identity - and level of concern of the group for such an impact - differs as a result of the degree of maturity of the group's political identity. This is an important element in the analysis of identity transformation, something which is usually neglected in the literature. For a political identity in the making like the EU, the self-identification process is particularly sensitive to the image that the political group puts across through its politics and policy, also including foreign policy (Lucarelli 2006b).

As can be seen from what I have said so far, it is clear that this research on the external image of the EU is not just interesting in itself, but it could become part of a wider-reaching programme to understand the processes of self-identification of the Europeans in the EU.

#### 4. ORGANISATION OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT ON THE EXTERNAL IMAGE OF THE EU

The research proposed here can be considered a preliminary investigation and analysis of existing sources on how the rest of the world perceives the EU. The sources that this survey primarily focuses on are opinion polls, media releases, official documents, etc. concerning the EU's role in particularly sensitive issues which appear crucial in the EU's representation of itself and in the scholarly literature: solidarity and the fight against poverty, the prevention of conflicts, the promotion of democracy and human rights and international trade. The analysis is divided into country reports and transversal chapters.

##### *Country Reports*

Country reports make up the core of the survey, as we have seen above. Geographical and linguistic criteria have been used to select the countries, with the aim of taking into account the cultural, territorial and political differences present in each continent:

- Americas: Canada, Brazil
- Oceania: Australia
- Asia: China, India, Japan
- Africa: Egypt; South Africa

Egypt has been selected due to the important role it plays in the Middle Eastern area and its close relations with the European Union. South Africa has been chosen due to its peculiarity in the African context (in terms of development rate), its particular relationship with the EU since its sanctions against the apartheid regime, and the widespread use of English. China is one of the largest countries in the world and a strong commercial competitor on the international market, as well as a country which frequently rejects EU/Western human rights standards on the basis of its cultural distinctiveness. Japan is a highly important case which combines cultural distinctiveness and long-term strong ties with the West. India is the largest non-Western democracy and a growing

<sup>2</sup> The arrows do not indicate causality but influence only.

international commercial power which is developing a different form of capitalism to that in the West; furthermore, the wide use of English makes it an approachable country. Brazil is a good representative of South America, striving to affirm itself as non-US American, by frequently underlining its similarities with European models (welfare state, foreign policy methods, security doctrines). Due to the amount of data and publications available regarding the US vis-à-vis the EU, this research opted not to include this country in the analysis as it was considered more useful to privilege under-researched areas of the world.

Each country is analysed on four levels, corresponding to the four important constituencies in the country:

*Public Opinion* - From time to time, research institutes conduct public opinion polls in different regions of the world in order to register the attitudes of people regarding international events or international actors. The first goal of this preliminary survey is to find out how many opinion polls conducted in non-European countries include questions regarding how the EU is perceived. Secondly, the survey intends to examine the data on the EU gathered by these polls with the aim of providing a general outline of how the public perceives the EU region by region.

*Political Elites* - Political elites are significant players who give rise to global events and constitute an important factor in shaping the overall image of the EU around the world. This survey sets out with the second goal of examining the main documents issued by political parties and governments in a sample of countries in each of the four continents under analysis with the aim of providing an indicative outline of how the EU is perceived by political elites in those countries.

*The Press* - A third important element to investigate is the media. Due to the scarcity of resources, this survey analyses how the EU is perceived in a sample of the most popular newspapers and weekly magazines available in a group of countries in each of the continents under investigation. This data might be extremely useful for those researchers who intend to extend this type of research by including other media such as TV, radio, etc.

*Organised Civil Society* - A fourth interesting field for analysis is the organised segment of civil society, such as the local NGOs, social movements, interest groups, trade unions etc. As a result, the fourth and final aim of this survey is to analyse how the EU is perceived by civil organisations in a sample of countries within the four continents. Through the analysis of all the documents (declarations, media releases, etc.) available, it is possible to understand not only to what extent the EU is present in their discourses, but also how local organisations perceive the international role of the EU.

### ***Transversal Chapters***

Alongside the country reports, we have also worked on two transversal chapters, whose aim is to analyse the image of the EU in a certain group of individuals:

- Trade Unions, Social movements and NGOs (European and non-European);
- Officials working in the delegations of the European Commission.

The first is a sociological and political analysis of the perception of the EU among Trade Unions, Social movements and NGOs present at two selected Social Forums. The aims of this report are to contribute to an overall image of the EU abroad and to evidence possible communalities between the European and the non-European civil society organisations.

The second is a study on the prevalent perception of the EU's international role at the Commission delegations around the world, based on the analysis of Delegation websites and on a set of 88 interviews/questionnaires. The main aim of this report is to evaluate what is the prevalent image of the EU in the Delegations so as to be able to compare it with the prevalent images in the target countries.

A final report will sum up the main results of this work and make proposals for further research.

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FORUM ON THE PROBLEMS OF PEACE AND WAR  
GARNET - Jointly Executed Research Project 5.2.1

**THE EXTERNAL IMAGE OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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**REPORT ON  
AUSTRALIA**

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The survey *The External Image of the European Union* has been conducted in the Framework of the Jointly Executed Research Project 5.2.1. (*Normative issues*) of the Network of Excellence *Global Governance, Regionalisation and Regulation: the Role of the EU* - GARNET (Contract No 513330); (EU 6<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme 2005-2010; Call Identifier: FP6-2002-Citizens-3). We are grateful to Garnet and to the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for their financial contribution to the project.

## ABSTRACT

Contributing to the GARNET Jointly Executed Research Project 5.2.1, *The External Image of the European Union*, this report seeks to understand how the EU is understood and perceived by the public, political elites, media and civil society organisations in one of its Oceanic partners, Australia. Despite close historical, political, cultural and economic links to Europe, Australia's relationship with the European Union is a fraught one, characterised by ambivalence towards European integration, antagonism, particularly in the area of agriculture, and economic asymmetry. Consequently, as this report demonstrates, although the EU is Australia's most significant trading partner, an important ally in terms of regional aid and development, a prominent environmental actor and a growing international political power, it appears to occupy only a marginal position in Australian society.

Public surveys have demonstrated that while Australians experience largely positive feelings towards the EU/Europe and welcome its international influence (in particular, its potential to counterbalance US global hegemony), they nevertheless regard both its domestic importance and international influence to be less than that of the US, Asia and individual EU member states and typically view the EU as possessing little more than trade power.

These perceptions reflect the Australian government's attitudes towards the EU. A review of official rhetoric suggests that the government has, at least until very recently, been reluctant to recognise and engage with the EU as a unitary actor, focusing instead on its bilateral relations with individual member states and privileging relations with the US over the EU. While representatives of the current government tend to view the EU in negative terms and perceive the current state of the EU-Australia relationship to be 'fine', members of the opposition, who typically view the EU in more positive terms, perceive the EU to be undervalued in terms of its importance for Australia.

Certainly, the EU is not as prominent in the Australian media as one might expect of an international actor of its economic, geographic and demographic size. Across a six month period in 2004, the overall volume of press coverage of the EU in five popular Australian print news outlets was found to be substantially lower than that of the US, for example. Moreover, the EU was rarely the major focus of the article and most frequently reported in the context of third countries (i.e. neither EU nor Australia). It was virtually invisible in the two news broadcasts monitored in the same period, however, when it did appear, it was nearly always the major focus of the news item. Continuing a pattern identified in both public and elite perceptions, member state leaders were more prominent than EU figures in the monitored news outlets. Somewhat surprisingly, however, it was observed that the EU was predominantly framed as a political rather than economic or social actor in the Australian media.

A review of three representative local non-governmental organisations suggests that the EU is not, in general, a point of reference for Australian civil society. Despite shared interests in the delivery of aid and development, especially in the Asia Pacific, and the fact that the EU is an important funding partner of CARE Australia, Australia's largest aid organisation does not appear to engage in active dialogue with the EU. In the area of organised labour, the EU was an infrequent point of reference for the nation's peak trade union body. Significantly, however, when the EU was mentioned, it was in typically positive terms, as a normative leader on issues such as 'decent work' and protection of workers from hazardous chemicals and materials in the workplace. Likewise, references to the EU tended to be positive – and were considerably more common – in the case of Australia's largest environmental

organisation. The regular, if cursory, mentions of the EU in this domain arguably reinforce the image of the EU as a leading international environmental actor.

Ongoing integration in Europe is a political reality that Australia can no longer afford to ignore. The government has shown recent signs of willingness to revise its approach to Europe and pursue deeper, more meaningful cooperation. However, as is argued in this report, it is important that this official change of heart towards the EU is supported by the concurrent reprioritisation of EU-Australia relations at all levels of Australian society – amongst political elites, civil society and the general public and in the media.

## INTRODUCTION\*

The demise of the proposed constitutional treaty at the hands of the French and Dutch voters in 2005 pointed to a crisis of legitimacy for the European Union (EU). In order to build internal legitimacy, the EU needs to firmly establish and promote both its internal *and* its international identity. While there is a large and growing body of literature exploring the way in which the EU is perceived and integration experienced by its own citizens, external perceptions of the integration process is an area that has largely been neglected to date, despite the significant ramifications for other regions and countries outside the EU's borders. The study of external perceptions of the EU can both inform and reinforce the identity-building project since, as Evans and Grant have noted, "[a] central element in any country's identity is how it perceives and relates to the outside world, *and how in turn others respond to it.*" (1991: 321-2, emphasis added). Martin Holland has argued that external perceptions of the EU's efficacy (or lack thereof) can impact on the internal experience of European integration (1999: 230-46). This report, which examines Australian perceptions of the EU as part of the broader GARNET Jointly Executed Research Project 5.2.1 entitled, *The External Image of the European Union*, thus responds to this important but long-neglected task.

### 1.1 Structure of paper

In contributing to the construction of a broader picture of external perceptions of the EU, this report provides an understanding of how it is perceived in the eyes of one of its Oceanic partners, Australia. The report addresses the following questions:

1. How is the EU perceived and understood by the Australian public?
2. How is the EU represented in the official discourse of the Australian government and perceived by Australia's political elites?
3. What are the primary news frames and images used to report the EU in the Australian media?
4. How significant is the EU in Australian civil society discourse?

The report is thus divided into the following sections:

Section 1 provides the background against which the empirical assessment of Australian perceptions of the EU is cast. It provides a historical survey of Australia-EU relations and describes the current economic and political ties. Section 2 explores public opinion of the EU in Australia. It draws on a number of national public surveys from which assessments of the EU are indirectly inferred as well as the first major survey of Australian perceptions of the EU conducted in 2004 as part of the Asia Pacific Perceptions (APP) project. Section 3 examines how the EU features in official discourse of the current government which has been in power for the last decade. Drawing on a 2001-2 survey and a series of interviews conducted in 2005, this section also explores the perceptions of Australia's political elites (government and non-government representatives) who are

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\* First of all, I would like to thank the coordinator of the survey, Sonia Lucarelli, for inviting me to contribute to this important research project. Parts of this report draw on work I conducted for the transnational research project, Public, Media and Elite Perceptions of the EU in the Asia Pacific, otherwise known as the APP project. I would thus like to acknowledge the support of the lead organisation of this project, the National Centre for Research on Europe (NCRE) at the University of Canterbury in Christchurch, New Zealand and its director, Prof. Martin Holland, as well as my host organisation in Australia, the Contemporary Europe Research Centre (CERC) at the University of Melbourne. Finally, I would like to offer particular thanks to the coordinator of the APP project, also a contributor to the current project, Dr. Natalia Chaban for her generous and expert guidance.

assumed to have a greater awareness of the EU-Australia relationship than the general public as well as a greater investment in its health.

In seeking to explain and further explore these public and elite perceptions, Section 4 examines what is credited by many researchers as the “number-one ... international image former” (Galtung and Ruge, 1965: 64), the local news media. According to McCombs’ (2004) agenda-setting theory, the media influences both what we think about and how we think about it. *What* we think about is influenced by what is given salience in the media. *How* we think about it is influenced by the way it is portrayed in the media. This section therefore examines both the prominence and the portrayal of the EU in a representative sample of the Australian print and broadcast media over a six-month period in 2004. Section 5 examines how the EU is regarded by local civil society organisations by reviewing the peak Australian trade union body, its largest international aid organisation and its leading environmental foundation.

The concluding section, Section 6, draws these findings together, discussing the implications of, and attempting to explain, the puzzling discrepancy between the EU’s significance for Australia and the incommensurate position it occupies, not only in terms of official priorities, but also in the Australian media discourse and, as a result, in the minds of the Australian public and elites.

## 1.2 Historical Context

Settled by the British in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, Australia initially derived the majority of its population from European (especially British and Irish, and later Italian and Greek) migration. According to the Australian Foreign Minister, Alexander Downer, almost 90 per cent of the total Australian population claim some sort of European heritage (Downer, 2003). Melbourne, Australia’s second largest city is often said to house the second largest Greek population after Athens. Although the percentage of the Australian population born in Europe has declined steadily over the past decade, the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) reports that European-born Australians still make up over 50 per cent of those born overseas (ABS, 2005). A staggering 26 per cent of all Australians born overseas came to Australia from the UK and Ireland (*ibid.*).

As a result, Australia shares many European cultural traditions and values and has always related more closely to its distant European cousins than its Asian neighbours, despite its geographical reality. The Australian political system is based on British Westminster system, for example, with the separation of judicial, legislative and executive powers, and Christmas is associated with plum puddings and roast meats despite the soaring December temperatures. Australia’s most prominent architectural icon, the Sydney Opera House, was designed not by a renowned Australian but a Danish architect, Jørn Utzon, and its gleaming sails are constructed from Swedish tiles. European news is printed and broadcast daily on public free-to-air television and radio in a variety of European languages for local audiences. Along with their cuisine, both urban and rural Australians have enthusiastically adopted the Mediterranean tradition of alfresco dining and the continental café culture and Australian sparkling wines today rival their French inspiration even though they cannot be named after it.

For these reasons, (amongst others), the European Commission’s Delegation ‘Down Under’ has suggested that the Europe Union and Australia make “*natural* political, economic and social partners” (EC Delegation, 2004, emphasis added) despite “the tyranny of distance” that historian Geoffrey Blainey famously examined (1966). Others, however, argue that this diplomatic rhetoric overlooks the “shallowness of the [Australia-EU] relationship at the leadership level, an associated lack of interest in Europe by many Australian business leaders and a lack of Australian media coverage of EU affairs ... that its diplomatic representatives in Canberra fret about constantly”

(Kitney, 2004a: 13). For while Australia's bilateral relations with many European countries, particularly Britain, have traditionally been very strong, its relationship with the European Union has been one of ambivalence, antagonism and asymmetry.

The official response to the prospect of European integration was initially one of unapologetic apathy. When the Treaty of Rome was signed in 1957 to form the European Economic Community (EEC), the Australian Prime Minister of the day, Robert Menzies, declared at a press conference in London that "if Italy, France, Germany, Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg care to make a treaty with one another and ultimately to ratify it, that is their business and there is nothing that anybody can do about it" (Menzies, 1957). This apparent indifference quickly dissipated, however, when the United Kingdom (UK) first announced its interest in joining. The UK was at that time both the biggest agricultural export market in the world and Australia's most important trading partner by far. The anticipated damage to Australia's agriculture industry as a consequence of the loss of privileged access conditions to the lucrative British market thus created the initial (and continuing) Australian hostility towards the European integration project. Longo (2006: 2), for example, suggests that Australian ambivalence towards the EU "is, to a very large extent, founded on evidence and perceptions of economic disadvantage to Australian interests flowing from EU agricultural policies". Certainly, the effects of the UK's eventual accession in 1973 were felt immediately. The proportion of Australia's beef and veal exports taken by the EC-9 dropped from 31 per cent in 1965-66 to just 2 per cent in 1979-80. Dairy products and eggs dropped from 58 per cent and sugar from 47 per cent to next to nothing in the same period (Burnett, 1983: 111).

Dependant as it is upon its agricultural trade, agricultural issues have remained the main source of antagonism between Australia and the EU. Battles over agricultural issues led to Australia playing a leading role in the formation of the Cairns Group of agricultural exporting countries in 1986 in an attempt to counter the EU and US dominance of the WTO and push for the reform of protectionist policies, in particular, the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) (Fischer, 1998). Current Prime Minister John Howard was proud to boast that he has "spent a large part of my political life denigrating, quite rightly, with some passion, the rotten anti-Australian policies of the EU that have done such immense damage to the agricultural industries of Australia and represent one of the high-water marks of world trading hypocrisy" (Kelly, 1998).

However, while this antagonism has been fierce, it has had much less effect on the EU than it has domestically on Australia; as the Vice-President of Union, Sir Leon Britton nonchalantly remarked, "Being completely frank, we [the EU] haven't suffered terribly from Australia's attitude" (Kelly, 1998). It is perhaps for this reason that while Australia instituted diplomatic relations with the Community in 1962 following Britain's initial application for membership, the EC did not establish its Delegation to Australia and New Zealand (based in Canberra) until nearly 20 years later, a telling indication of the perceived importance of the small Pacific nations to the European power. The EU's indifference to Australia is also evident in its official rhetoric. For example, a document entitled *The European Union and the World* produced by the European Commission in 2004 claims to cover "all aspects of the European Union's relations with other countries and peoples of the world" (European Commission, 2004) but contains no reference whatsoever to Australia. And while it is true that John Howard has "flown over Europe many more times than he has set foot in it during his various prime ministerial visits to London and Washington" (Kitney, 2004: 13), Australia is yet to receive a visit from either the President of the European Commission, or its foreign policy chief, Javier Solana. Despite being 'natural partners', Australia, it seems, is simply not a foreign policy priority for the EU.

### 1.3 Economic Ties

The economic relationship is similarly asymmetrical. As Figures 1 and 2 clearly demonstrate, the EU literally towers over Australia in terms of both the size of its population (housing over 22 times Australia's population in a landmass half the size) and its economy (US\$14,206 billion compared to Australia's US\$743.7) (DFAT, 2006d; DFAT 2006c). These disparities mean that the EU is of greater economic consequence for Australia than the reverse.

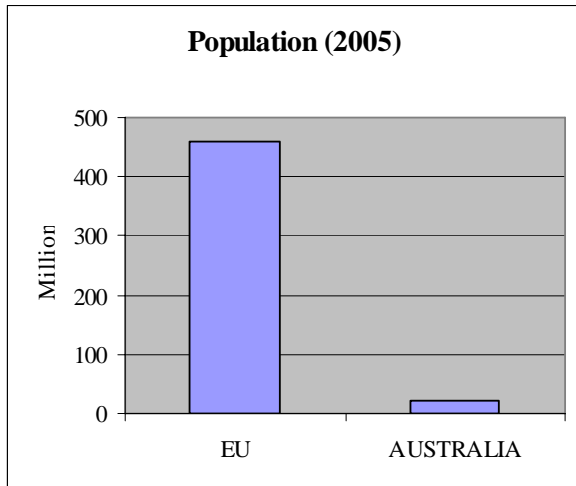


Figure 1: Comparing populations of Australia and the EU

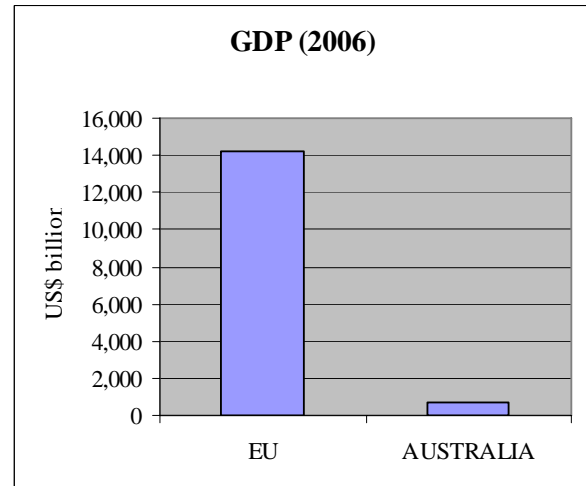


Figure 2: Comparing gross domestic product (GDP) of Australia and the EU

As Figure 3 reveals, the EU overtook Japan as Australia's leading partner in terms of two-way trade in 1996, almost doubling in volume in the decade between 1994 and 2003. Figure 4 shows that Australia's import trade with the EU has grown consistently and substantially over the past decade. Likewise, Australia's export trading relationship with the EU has experienced steady growth over the same period of time while exports to the US, ASEAN and the nation's biggest export destination, Japan, have declined (ABS, 2005). In overall terms, the EU accounts for 20 per cent of Australia's total world trade, 15 per cent of total exports and 23 per cent of all imports (DFAT, 2004a). Australia, by contrast, accounts for just 2 per cent of the EU's export trade and contributes only 0.8 per cent of its total imports (DFAT, 2006c).

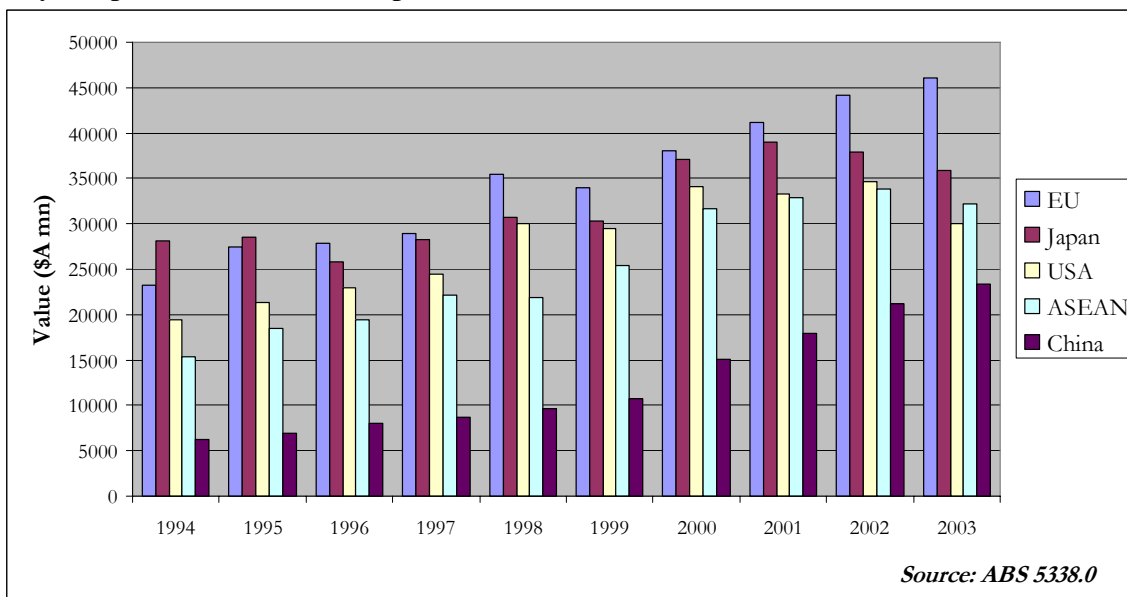


Figure 3: Australia's Two-Way Trade with Major Partners, 1994-2003

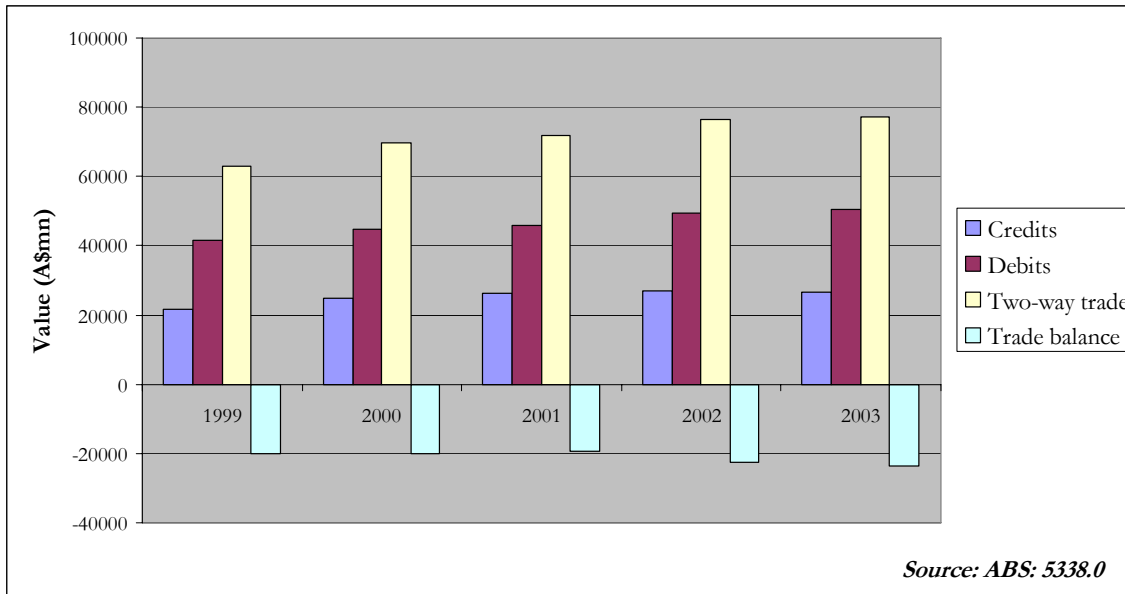


Figure 4: Australia's Total Economic Transactions with the EU, 1999-2003

## 1.4 Political Relations

Political relations between Australia and the EU are governed by *1997 Joint Declaration on Relations between Australia and the European Union* (European Commission/DFAT, 1997). However, it is worth pointing out that the Declaration is a non-treaty status political agreement and thus a rhetorical commitment to shared values and priorities rather than a binding agreement. It was drawn up to replace a legally binding Framework Agreement that was never signed after negotiations broke down, in part, as a result of a dispute over the inclusion of the EU's signature human rights clause supported by enforceable sanctions in the Agreement. Despite reiterating a strong commitment to human rights, the Australian government baulked fearing that the clause would allow for domestic disputes with disaffected groups – members of the Australian Aboriginal community and local trade unions for example – to be taken to the EU (Brenchley, 1997).

Recognising areas of common interest and mutual benefit, the 1997 Declaration describes ambitions to build a stronger relationship in order to:

- support democracy, rule of law and human rights;
- promote regional and international peace and security;
- support international efforts in the area of non-proliferation of weapons;
- pursue a sound world economy with low inflation, high employment, environmental protection, equitable social conditions and a stable international finance system;
- foster greater understanding and tolerance amongst peoples and cultures;
- and support developing nation-states and sustainable development (European Commission/DFAT, 1997).

The Declaration affirms a commitment to open dialogue and enhanced cooperation particularly in the areas of trade and economic cooperation; employment; scientific and cultural cooperation, education and training; environmental protections; and development cooperation. It sets out a framework for the pursuit of these goals that includes summit meetings as well as consultations between officials on specific aspects of the relationship and consultations between the President of the Council, the European Commission and Australia. These mutual aims and interests were



reaffirmed in the five year *Agenda for Cooperation* adopted by Australia and the European Commission in 2003 (European Commission/DFAT, 2003).

## **1. PUBLIC OPINION**

Little research that directly explores public opinion of the European Union has been conducted in Australia. A search of all the major Australian public opinion and affairs institutes (including Hawker Britton, Newspoll, Roy Morgan and the Lowy Institute) yielded very little material regarding public perceptions of the EU. Instead, surveys such as the Hawker Britton Omnibus were notable for overlooking the inclusion of the EU in questions of international relations (the UK was most frequently included as a representative of Europe) (UMR, 2006a) and issues on which Australian public opinion is aligned with European opinion and EU action such as the withdrawal of troops from Iraq and climate change (UMR, 2006b; UMR, 2004).

This information deficit was recently addressed as part of an international study of perceptions of the EU in the Asia Pacific region (Australia, New Zealand, South Korea and Thailand) coordinated by the National Centre for Research on Europe (NCRE) at the University of Canterbury in New Zealand. This section of the report therefore draws primarily on the public survey conducted in Australia after the EU's most recent enlargement as part of this study, known as the Asia Pacific Perceptions (APP) project. In addition, it examines three located surveys (Global Scan, 2005; Lowy Institute, 2005; 2006) that indirectly assess Australian perceptions of the EU.

### **2.1. Global Scan with the Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA), 2005** *23 Nation Poll: Evaluating the World Powers*

In December 2004, Global Scan, together with the Program on International Policy Attitudes (PIPA), conducted a survey of 23,518 people in 23 countries including Australia on their perceptions of global influence (2005). The survey found that in 20 of the 23 countries, citizens believed it would be "mainly positive" if Europe were to become more influential than the US in world affairs (see Table 1). Australians felt particularly strongly about this, 62 per cent of respondents saying it would be mainly positive compared to the global average<sup>1</sup> of 58 per cent. In addition, 74 per cent of Australians felt that Europe has a mainly positive influence in the world at present (above the global average of 68 per cent) while a majority felt that the United States has a mainly negative influence in the world (52 per cent). It is also worth noting that Europe's global influence was seen as mainly positive by a greater proportion of Australian respondents than that of EU member states France (51 per cent) or Britain (65 per cent).

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<sup>1</sup> The average of the 23 countries surveyed.

Table 1: Australian perceptions of global influence

Global Scan and PIPA - 23 Nation Poll: Evaluating the World Powers				April 2005	
If in the future Europe becomes more influential than the United States in world affairs would it be:		Mainly positive	Mainly negative	Depends	Don't know/NA
Australia		62	23	5	9
Average w/o Europe		53	25	8	14
Average of 23 countries		58	23	6	13
Please tell me if you think each of the following are having a mainly positive or mainly negative influence in the world:		Mainly positive	Mainly negative	Depends	Don't know/NA
Europe	Australia	74	11	6	9
	Average w/o Europe	63	15	7	14
	Average of 23 countries	68	13	6	13
France	Australia	51	30	4	15
	Average w/o France	58	20	6	16
	Average of 23 countries	59	20	6	15
Great Britain	Australia	65	22	4	9
	Average w/o Britain	50	29	6	15
	Average of 23 countries	50	29	6	15
China	Australia	56	28	5	11
	Average w/o China	48	30	6	16
	Average of 23 countries	50	29	6	15
Russia	Australia	29	46	4	20
	Average w/o Russia	35	40	6	19
	Average of 23 countries	37	38	6	18
United States	Australia	40	52	5	3
	Average w/o US	38	47	6	9
	Average of 23 countries	39	46	6	9

## 2.2 Lowy Institute Poll, 2005

### *Australians Speak 2005: Public Opinion and Foreign Policy*

The Lowy Institute for International Policy is an independent international policy think-tank based in Sydney and driven by the mission to “inform and deepen the international policy debate in Australia and around the world” (Cook, 2005: 5). In 2005, the Institute conducted the first of what was to become a regular comprehensive survey of public opinion on Australia’s international policy. 1,000 randomly sampled and nationally representative Australians (margin of error = 3.1 per cent) were surveyed between 5-10 February on a variety of issues including Australia’s place in the world, its foreign policy, international security and international trade. The European Union was not included as one of the international actors that respondents were asked to assess; rather, as in the Global Scan survey, the more generic category of Europe was used, and featured only once in the final report, *Australians Speak 2005: Public Opinion and Foreign Policy* (Cook, 2005: 8). Significantly, it was amongst the countries/groups/regions that Australians felt most warmly about (85 per cent), well above the United States (58 per cent) reiterating the sentiments of the Global Scan survey. The results of this survey item are shown below in Table 2.

Table 2: Australian's feelings towards other countries/groups/regions

<b>Lowy Institute Poll 2005 - <i>Australians Speak 2005: Public Opinion and Foreign Policy</i></b>				<b>5-10 February 2005</b>
When you think about the following countries, groups or regions of the world, do you have positive or negative feelings about them?				
	Positive (%)	Negative (%)	Unsure (%)	Net positive (%)
New Zealand	94	4	2	90
United Kingdom	86	11	3	75
Europe	85	11	4	75
Japan	84	12	5	71
Singapore	83	13	3	70
China	69	25	6	44
France	66	28	6	38
United Nations	65	30	5	36
Malaysia	62	32	6	30
Papua New Guinea	60	33	7	27
United States	58	39	3	19
Indonesia	52	42	6	11
Middle East	25	69	6	-43
Iran	24	68	8	-44
Iraq	23	72	5	-49

### 2.3 Lowy Institute Poll, 2006 *Australia, Indonesia and the World*

In 2006, the Lowy Institute repeated the survey in modified form, this time including the EU as one of the international actors about which the 1,007 participants were asked. The survey, entitled *Australia, Indonesia and the World* (Cook, 2006), contributed to a multinational poll, *Global Views 2006*, coordinated by the Chicago Council of Global Affairs, which sought global public opinion on the emergence of China and India as global powers to be reckoned with and the possible realignment of international power and influence along these lines in order to assist the US in its response to these challenges.

A crude measure, it is nonetheless worth noting that the vast majority of respondents (83 per cent) were able to name the European common currency, the euro, suggesting a degree of basic knowledge about the European Union. By way of contrast, only 41 per cent were able to correctly name the Secretary-General of the United Nations (see Table 3).

Table 3: Australian's general knowledge of international organisations

<b>Lowy Institute Poll 2006 - <i>Australia, Indonesia and the World</i></b>	1. Euro 2. Kofi Annan	Other	Don't know	<b>19 Jun – 6 Jul 2006</b>
1. The countries of the European Union have introduced a common currency. To the best of your knowledge, what is the currency called?	83%	1%	16%	
2. Can you name the Secretary-General of the United Nations?	41%	4%	54%	

Although 69 per cent of respondents felt that Australia's relations with the EU were unchanging or worsening while a majority (51 per cent) saw relations with the US as improving (Figure 5), the survey revealed a desire amongst Australian citizens for the European Union to play a greater role in international affairs than the United States.

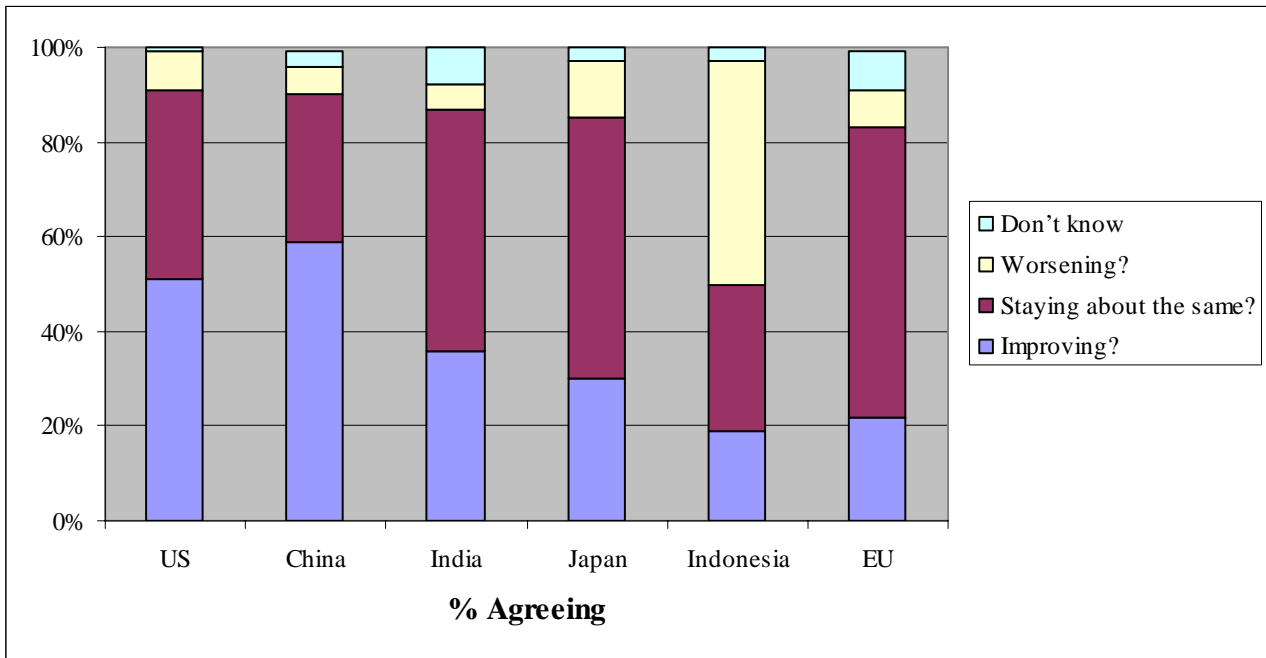


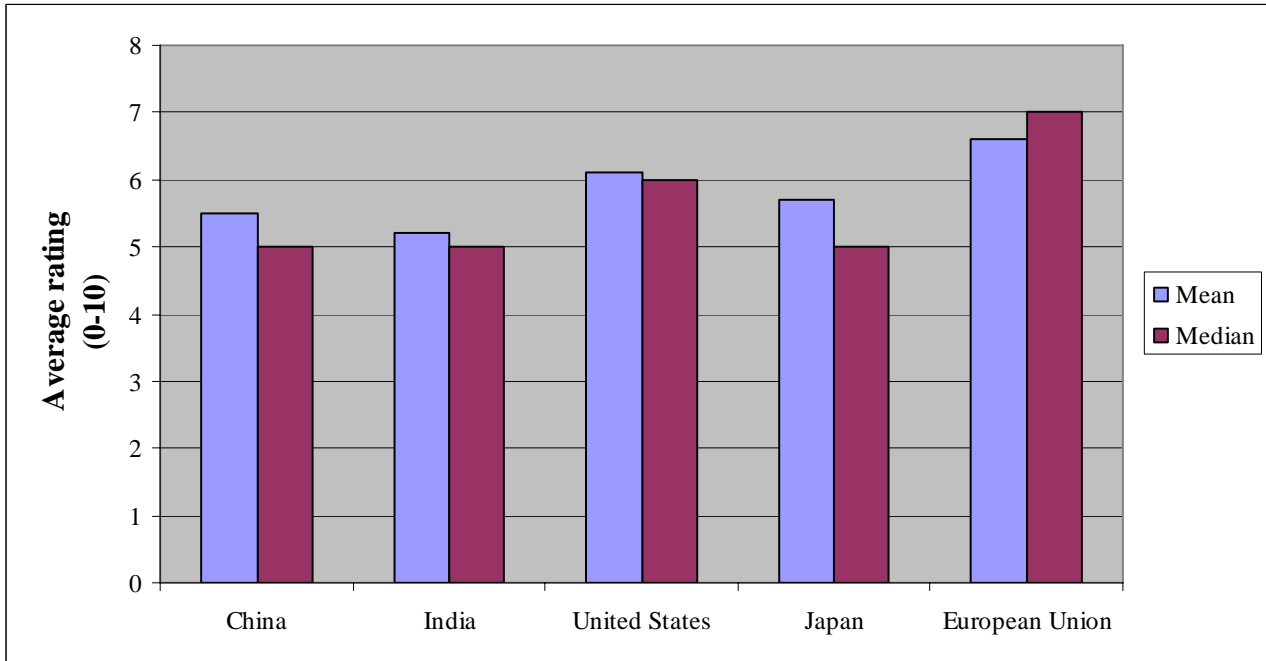
Figure 5: Perceptions of Australia's relationship with international partners

Supporting the findings of the earlier Global Scan survey, the poll found that Australians would like the US to have less global influence than it currently possesses (Table 5). A great majority of Australian respondents agreed with the statement that “the US does not have the responsibility to play the role of world policeman” (69 per cent) and 79 per cent felt that it “is playing the role of world policeman more than it should be” (Chicago Council, 2006: 51). Even so, 60 per cent of Australians agreed that the US can be trusted somewhat or a great deal to act responsibly (*Ibid.*: 52).

Table 4: Australian perceptions of the role of the United States

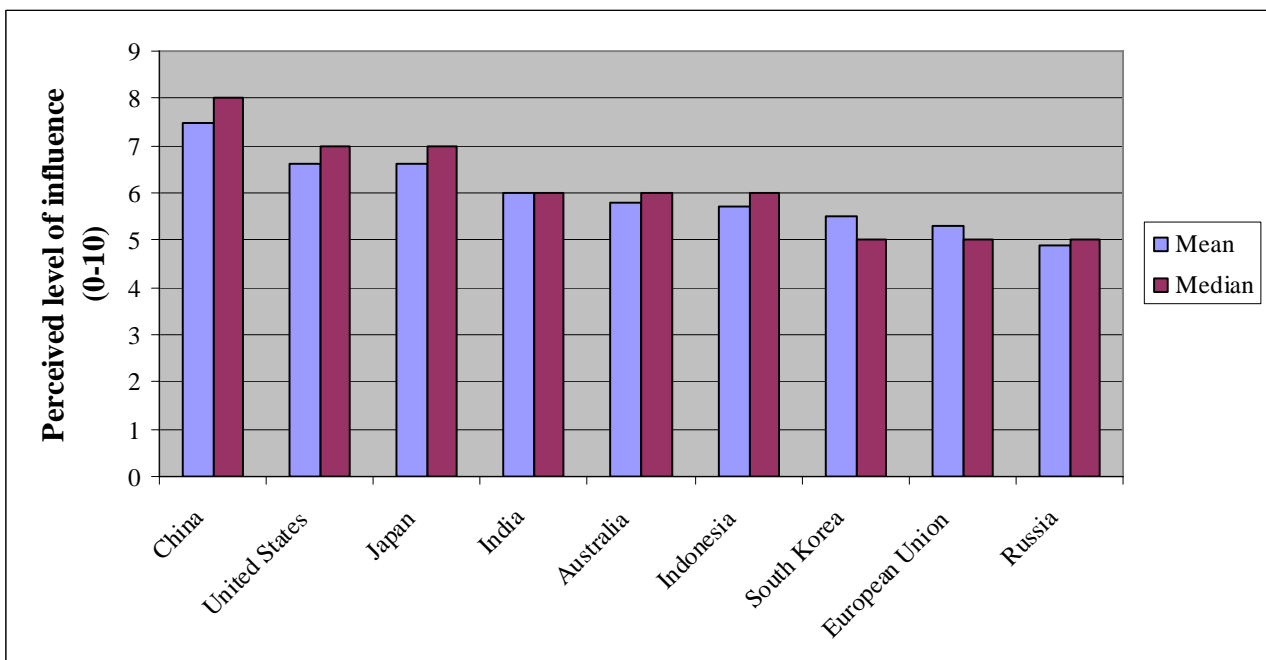
Lowy Institute Poll 2006 - Australia, Indonesia and the World			19 Jun – 6 Jul 2006
	Yes	No	Don't know
Do you think that the United States has the responsibility to play the role of 'world policeman' -, that is, to fight violations of international law and aggression wherever they occur?	27%	69%	3%
Please say if you agree or disagree with the following statement: the United States is playing the role of world policeman more than it should be.	79%	19%	2%

While respondents were not quizzed in the same manner about the EU's global role, another item asked them to rate (on a scale of 0-10) how influential they would want a list of countries/regions, including the EU, to be in global affairs. Interestingly, as Figure 6 shows, the EU was rated highest of the five options with an average rating of 6.6, ahead of the United States (6.1).



**Figure 6: Desired level of influence of various countries/regions**

Despite this desire for greater European influence in international affairs, the EU was not currently perceived as being particularly influential in Asia at present, rated above Russia only (Figure7).



**Figure 7: Perceived Level of Influence in Asia**

### 2.3 APP Project Public Survey, 2004

As part of the aforementioned APP project, a total of 405 randomly selected members of the Australian public participated in 15 minute telephone interviews in December 2004. Participants

were not aware that the survey was interested in their perceptions of the EU; they were told only that the survey was about Australian views on overseas issues.

***Perceived Comparative Importance of the EU for Australia***

The first item asked participants to name those countries or regions they considered to be Australia’s ‘most important’ partners. Responses were self-generated and respondents could provide multiple responses. As Figure 8 reveals, the US was the most popular response, named by 52.5 per cent of survey respondents whereas only 11 per cent of the survey respondents considered the EU to be one of Australia’s most important partners. Notably, the UK was mentioned two and half times more frequently than the EU. Asia (42 per cent), China (20.25 per cent), New Zealand (20 per cent) and Japan (15.25 per cent) were all named more frequently than the EU.

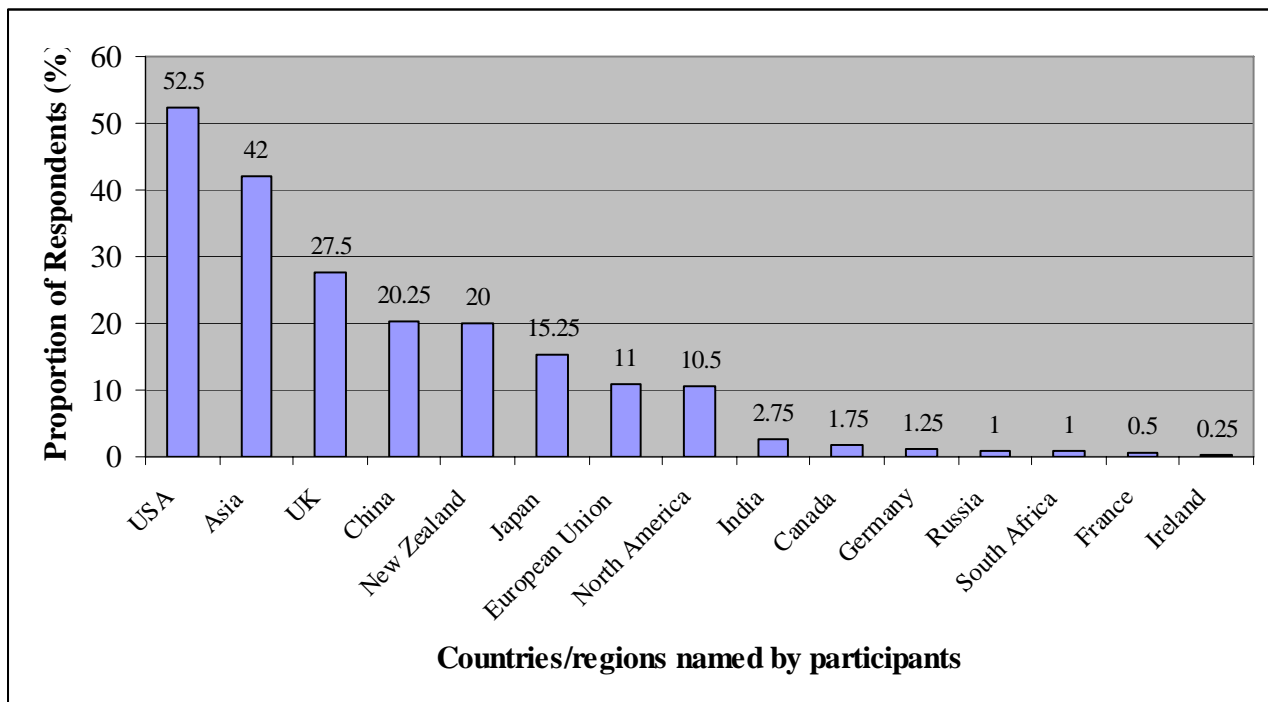


Figure 8: Public Perceptions of Australia’s Most Important Partner

The participants were then provided with a pre-selected list of countries and regions that they were asked to rate on a one to five scale (where 1 is not important at all and 5 is very important) in terms of their importance to Australia’s future. The results are shown in Figure 9.

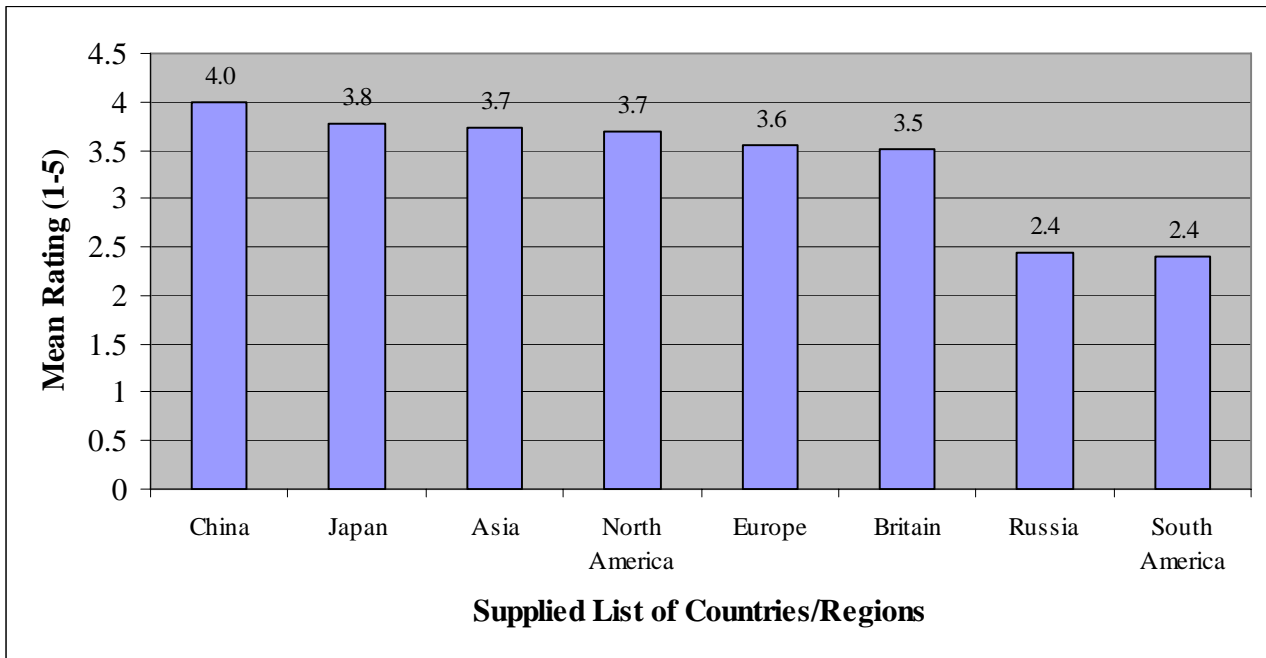


Figure 9: Public Perceptions of the Importance of Other Countries/Regions for Australia’s Future

Interestingly, the results did not reflect the most popular self-generated responses that were shown in Figure 8. Rather, China had the highest mean rating (4), followed by Japan and Asia in general. Europe (3.55) was again rated lower than North America (3.69) but, higher (though only marginally) than the UK (3.52) when presented in this manner.

***Spontaneous images***

Respondents were asked to name up to three images or thoughts that the term ‘European Union’ evoked. So as to avoid priming effects, this was the first item that dealt with the EU specifically. These images were divided into broad categories (shown in Figure 10)<sup>2</sup> and assessed according to the implicit evaluations (positive, negative or neutral) of the responses (see Figure 11).

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<sup>2</sup> Categories containing less than ten references are not included here. These included freedom of movement (7), the continent of Europe (6), defence (5), distance (5), bureaucracy (4), environment (3), democracy (3), terrorism (3) and the European Parliament (2). An additional group of responses eluded any sort of categorisation.

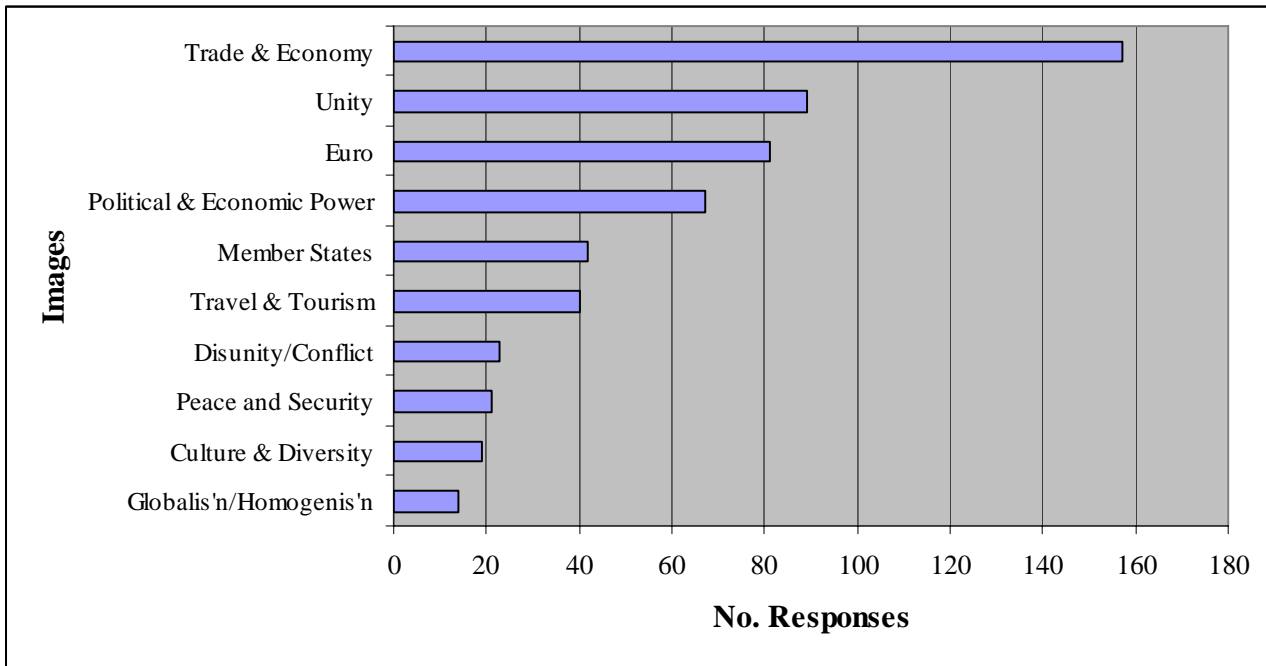
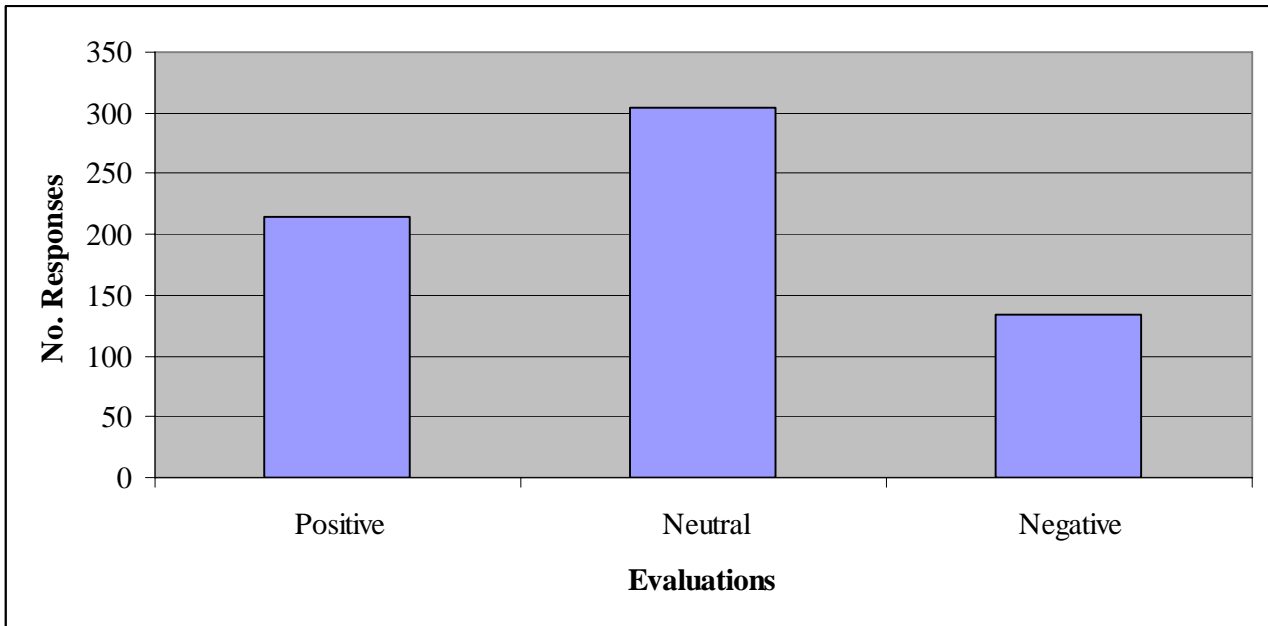


Figure 10: Spontaneous Images of the EU - Public

Trade and economy related images were by far the most common responses. These responses tended to be predominately negative images of protectionism, subsidies and exclusion. However, the second most popular category of responses was of largely (though not exclusively) positive images of unity. The euro emerged as a powerful image associated with the EU by the public and, given that this category was undoubtedly the most homogenous in terms of responses, it might be argued that the euro was, in fact, the most common image of the EU. The EU's economic might and its political power were commonly mentioned by respondents forming the next category of responses. However, these images often carried negative connotations when expressed in relation to Australia; the EU was considered to be "too big" for Australia to compete with and to negotiate with fairly. On the other hand, many regarded the EU as a superpower or potential superpower capable of 'taking on' the US economically, counteracting "US imperialism" and balancing its global influence by offering "an alternative world force [to] the Americans". This was unanimously considered to be a positive thing. EU member states were commonly associated by respondents with the EU, however, these responses were limited to just four of the (at that time) 25 member states, namely, the UK, France, Germany and Italy (plus two references to non-member Russia). Positive images related to tourism and travel were also plentiful since Europe was seen as "a good place for a holiday" and European integration had improved "the ease of travel" through EU member states with the relaxation of borders and the introduction of the common currency.

Overall, as Figure 11 shows, nearly half of the responses carried neutral evaluations (46 per cent). The remaining responses were more often positive (33 per cent) than negative (22 per cent).

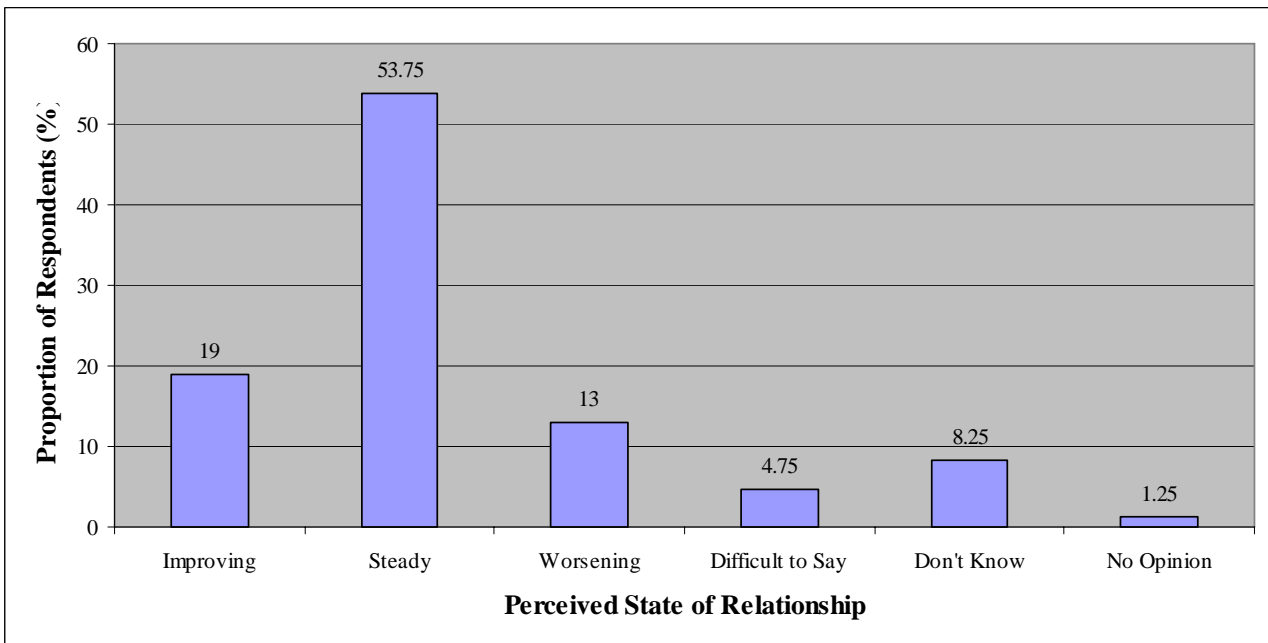




**Figure 11: Evaluations Implied by Public's Spontaneous Images of the EU**

***Perceptions of the EU-Australia Relationship***

Respondents were then asked to assess the state of the relationship between Australia and Europe/the EU. The results, shown in Figure 12, mirror the implicit evaluations that were associated with the spontaneous images of the EU. That is to say, that while the majority (54 per cent) of respondents felt that the relationship was steady, a greater number of the remaining respondents (19 per cent) felt that it was improving than the number who felt it was worsening (13 per cent).



**Figure 12: Public Perceptions of Australia's Relationship with the EU**

**2.4. Summary**

Drawing on four different surveys of Australian public opinion, three dealing only indirectly with the EU and one designed to examine perceptions of the EU, a consistent pattern of perceptions emerged. The results suggested that Australians have largely positive feelings about Europe/the EU, especially in comparison to the US, and welcome its international influence and potential to counterbalance US global hegemony. Nevertheless, the EU's international influence, however

desirable, and its importance for Australia were not considered to be particularly great at present; the US, Asia and individual EU member states all seen as more important and influential. The more detailed APP survey revealed that the EU is regarded primarily, though not exclusively, as a trade power by the Australian public.

The lack of available data on Australian public perceptions of the EU speaks volumes in itself. Arguably, this effectively transmits the idea that the EU is not an important and cohesive international actor worth taking note of. Rather, it reinforces the prevailing perception of the US as the pre-eminent world power and the importance of Australia's relationship with individual European member states, especially its historical ally, Britain.

### **3. POLITICAL ELITES**

This section first of all examines the way the EU has been represented in the official discourse of the current conservative Liberal-National coalition government led by Prime-Minister John Howard since 1996 when it first won office. In particular, it analyses key documents produced by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), through which most of Australia's official engagement with the EU takes place. It then examines the results of a written survey of political elites conducted by Philomena Murray in 2001-2 and a set of in-depth interviews with federal parliamentarians from all of the major parties conducted as part of the APP project in 2005 in order to gain further insight into how the EU and Australia's relations with it are understood.

#### **3.1. Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)**

Until very recently the EU has been notably absent from Australian official discourses. In general, the current Australian Government (in power since 1996) regards the EU as both "complex and difficult" (DFAT, 1997: 103) and has been demonstrably reluctant to recognise its increasing cohesiveness and engage with it as a unitary international actor (Stats, 2006). Despite its clear importance to the national interest, the EU barely rates a mention in the previous two foreign policy White papers, named (thus somewhat ironically), *In the National Interest* (DFAT, 1997) and *Advancing the National Interest* (DFAT, 2003).

In the former, there are only two specific references to the European Union, one of which refers to the EU rather inauspiciously as one of the "major European organisations" (DFAT, 1997: 67). Revealing the government's firm preference for bilateral dealings on realist terms (i.e. state to state), the 1997 paper insists that, "Australia's interests in Europe are best served when our bilateral relations with its major countries – especially the UK, France, Germany, Italy and Russia – are sound and comprehensive" (*Ibid.*). The later paper, published just prior to the fifth and most substantial enlargement to date, which took place on 1 May 2004, included a chapter entitled, "Developing Relations with an Enlarged and Increasingly Cohesive Europe" (DFAT, 2003: 98-105). According to the Foreign Minister, it was "a powerful statement of the importance we attach to our relations" (Downer, 2003), and included the promise that "the Government will seek closer policy dialogue and cooperation with the expanding and deepening European Union" (DFAT, 2003: 98). However, despite the rhetoric, it nevertheless focuses primarily on bilateral relations with the member states, described as "the bedrock of Australia's European engagement" (*Ibid.*: 99). In tables of economic data the EU appears only in parenthesis since, as it is explained, it "is not a country" (*Ibid.*: 142). In other DFAT publications, the EU has, until very recently, been curiously absent altogether from lists of Australia's top trading partners (see, for example, DFAT, 2004b, which

suggests that Australia’s top trading partners in 2003 were the United States, Japan, China and the United Kingdom).

In the latest trade publication, *Trade 2006*, although the EU is included in some graphs such as Australia’s major resource export markets, for example, it is somewhat strangely omitted from others, such as Australia’s major partners in goods and services, and the report erroneously insists that Japan is Australia’s “leading trade partner” (DFAT, 2006a: 17). This is despite the fact that other DFAT documents indicate that, in terms of two-way trade, the EU, though listed only in italics, clearly outstrips its Japanese rival (see Figure 13). Its italicised status in the source document for these figures (DFAT, 2006b) suggests that the EU is still not regarded to be a major partner for Australia – indeed, its leading partner – because of its “complex and difficult” (DFAT, 1997: 103) supranational status.

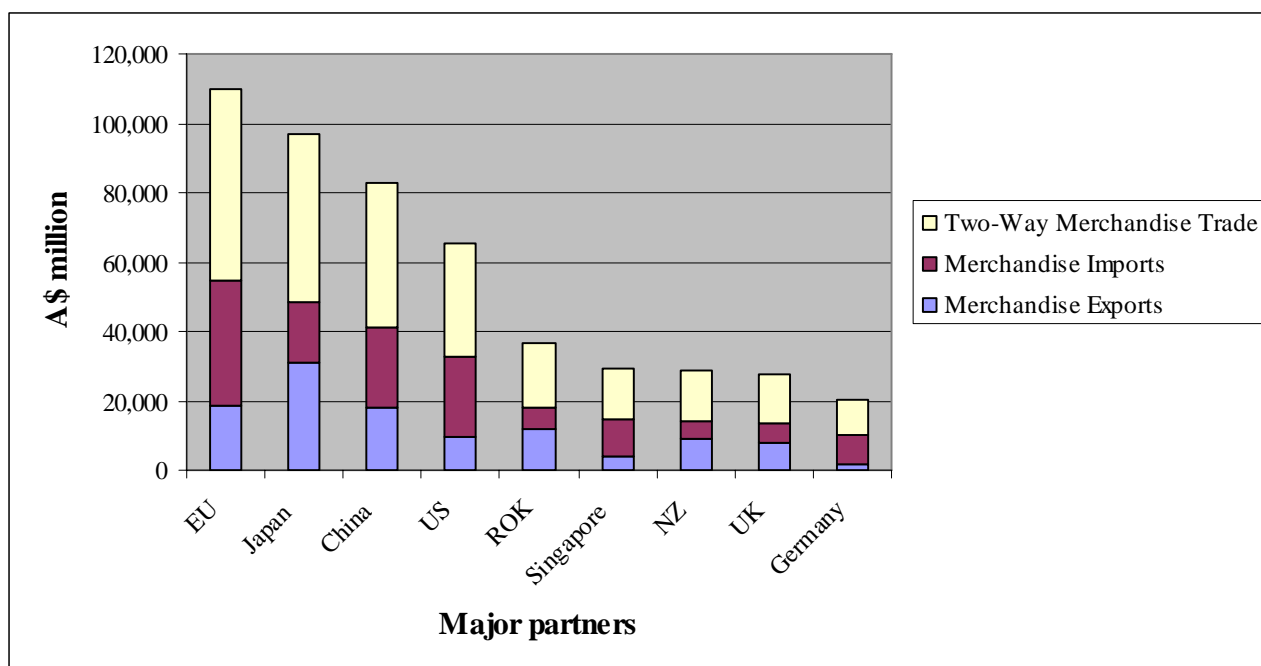


Figure 13: Australia’s merchandise trade with major partners, 2005-6 (Source: DFAT, 2006b).

More recently, the government appears to be taking greater notice of the EU. At the annual Schuman Lecture on Europe Day in Canberra in 2006, for example, the Australian Foreign Minister, Alexander Downer described Australia as “a key partner of Europe” and the relationship between Australia and the EU as a “dynamic” one based on “shared values, a common historical thread and the warmth of the people-to-people links which transcend our geographic separation”. He unequivocally acknowledged the EU as Australia’s largest trading partner and stated that “no-one should be under any illusion about how important Europe is for Australia.” Downer furthermore welcomed the EU’s increasing external engagement and suggested that the EU and Australia look at ways of improving cooperation (Downer, 2006).

The apparent growing interest in the EU might be attributed to a 34 per cent increase of Australian merchandise exports to the EU, growth in two-way investment and a substantial decrease in Australia’s trade deficit with the EU (DFAT, 2007). However, while DFAT’s EU briefing notes have been updated to take into account the accession of Bulgaria and Romania in January 2007, and now openly acknowledge the EU as Australia’s largest trading partner, this statement is nevertheless qualified by the preface “as a single entity” implying that it is still not the norm but the exception to view the EU in this way (DFAT, 2007).

### 3.2. 2001-2 CERC Elite Survey

The 2001-2 survey of Australian elite perceptions of the EU conducted by Philomena Murray of the Contemporary Europe Research Centre at the University of Melbourne was motivated by “significant development in the [EU-Australia] relationship and the growth of the EU’s international role” (Murray, 2003: 105) and was the first of its kind to directly explore the Australian elite perceptions of EU. The political elites invited to take part in the written survey included members of Australian parliamentary delegations to the EU, officials in government departments and government ministers.

Unfortunately, there is no available information regarding partisan differences or differences between the different types of political elites from this survey. Nevertheless, two interesting points can be extracted from the findings by comparing the responses of the political elites to those of the other cohorts. Firstly, political respondents tended to be far more positive about the present *state* of the Australia-EU relationship than the other two cohorts of academic and business elites. Secondly, although a majority from all three cohorts rated the *importance* of the relationship as ‘high’ (86% of business elites, 84% of political respondents and 72% of academics), only 32% of business respondents and just 31% of academics considered the *state* of the relationship to be ‘good’ compared to nearly 60% of political respondents. This suggests a much greater discrepancy between the perceived *importance* of the relationship and the perceived *state* of the relationship in the case of the business and academic cohorts as opposed to the political cohort.

### 3.3. 2005 APP Interviews with Representatives of the Major Parties

Following up on this previous survey, nine in-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted with Australian federal political representatives in 2005 as part of the APP project. As Table 8 shows, the list included politicians from both the Upper and Lower houses of Parliament (the Senate and the House of Representatives respectively) and representing the two major parties – the Liberal Party of Australia (governing in coalition with the National Party) and the opposition Australian Labor Party (ALP), as well as the Australian Democrats (DEM) who traditionally (though no longer) held the balance of power in Australian politics. The interviews averaged 45 minutes in length and were audio-recorded with the permission of the interviewees and transcribed verbatim.

Table 5: List of Interviewees

PARTY	NAME	ROLE	HOUSE of PARLIAMENT
LIB	Bruce Billson	Federal Member for Dunkley, Parliamentary Secretary for Foreign Affairs and Trade	House of Representatives
ALP	Anthony Albanese	Shadow Minister for Environment	House of Representatives
ALP	Lindsay Tanner	Member for Melbourne	House of Representatives
LIB	Grant Chapman	Head of the EU-Australia Parliamentary Friendship Group	Senate
ALP	Anne McEwen	Senator for South Australia	Senate
LIB	Warren Entsch	Parliamentary Secretary for Industry, Tourism and Resources	House of Representatives
LIB	Andrew Buttsworth (on behalf of Senator Hill)	Chief of Staff to Senator Robert Hill, Minister for Defence	(Senate)
DEM	Lyn Allison	Leader of the Democrats	Senate
ALP	Laurie Ferguson	Federal Member for Reid, Shadow Minister for Immigration	House of Representatives

#### *Perceived Comparative Importance of the EU for Australia*

Interviewees were asked to rate both the EU's current and future importance for Australia on a scale of one to five (where 1 is not important at all and 5 is very important). They were then asked to compare the EU's importance for Australia to that of other countries and regions.

Table 6: Perceived Current and Future Comparative Importance of the EU for Australia

APP Elite Interviews, 2005			Jun-Sep 2005
On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is not important at all and 5 is very important, how would you rate the importance of the EU to Australia...	...at present?	...in the future?	Difference
LIB	3.13	3.13	0
ALP	3.25	3.50	+0.25
DEM	n/a	n/a	n/a
AVERAGE	3.19	3.31	+0.13

On average, respondents rated the EU's current importance to Australia 3.19 and saw it as increasing in the future (3.31) (see Table 9). Even so, there was a general consensus that the EU was not Australia's most important partner in either economic terms or "in terms of diplomatic clout and influence around the world" (Tanner, 2005). While members of the current government suggested that the US was paramount in terms of its importance for Australia, members of the opposition Labor and Democrat parties considered it to be equal to Europe or overrated. They argued instead that "immediacy" was crucial in terms of Australia's economic relations and it was therefore important to "look close to home first and foremost", namely to the nation's Asian neighbours (McEwen, 2005; Allison, 2005).

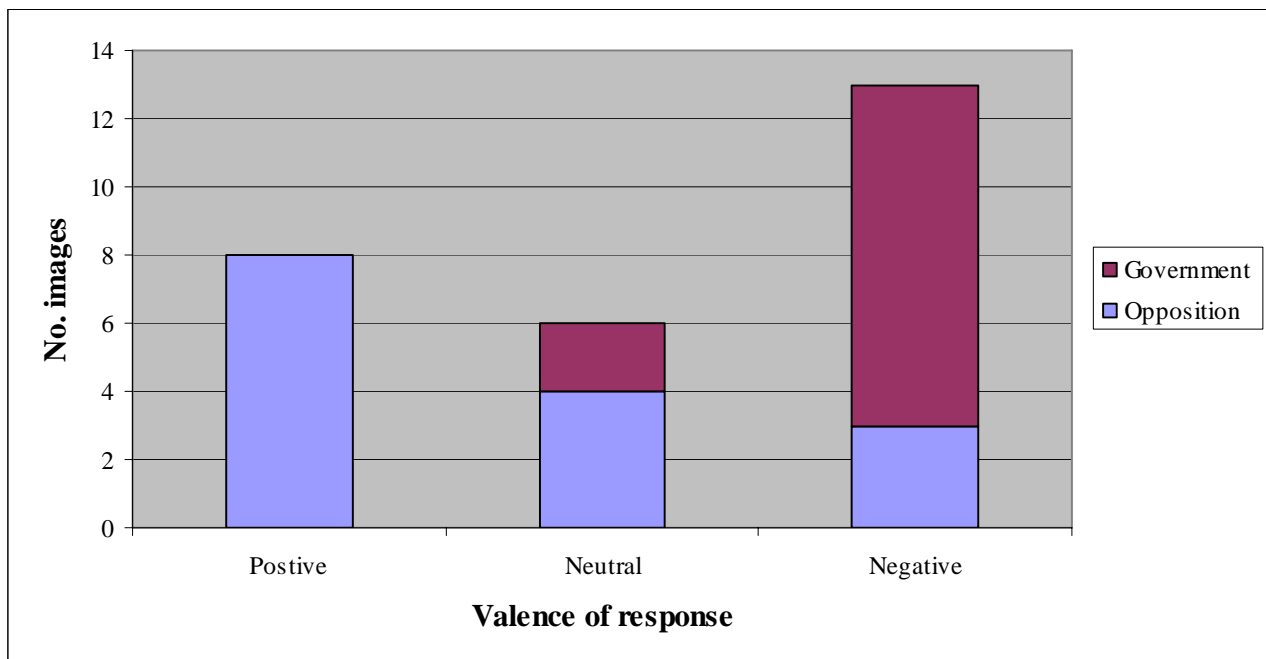
Government representatives, who, on average rated both the EU's current and future importance lower than members of the opposition (a stagnant average of 3.13), considered the perceived level of the EU's importance to Australia to be appropriate; as one explained, "we don't undervalue [Australia's relationship with the EU] in any sense of the word, but it doesn't trump the crucial importance of our relationship with our neighbours in our region. It doesn't trump our crucial relationship with the United States. It doesn't trump our role as major economy in this particular Pacific area" (Billson, 2005). The EU's primary importance, according to another government representative, was as a "source of cultural heritage" (Chapman, 2005).

Members of the opposition, on the other hand, believed that the EU's importance for Australia was likely to augment in the future (from an average rating of 3.25 to 3.50) and thus cautioned that "Europe should also not be forgotten" (Albanese, 2005). They highlighted its significance as an important environmental actor (McEwen, 2005) and its "usefulness" as a point of reference for immigration issues (Ferguson, 2005).

#### *Spontaneous images*

The spontaneous images that the interviewees produced some insight into the subtle partisan differences outlined above. Interviewees were asked to name three ideas or images that the term 'European Union' evoked. The responses were categorised and assessed according to the implied evaluation (positive, negative or neutral). Trade barriers including the CAP were the most common spontaneous images, noted by four of the nine interviewees. The second most frequent response was the image of the EU as a positive global force or influence. Other images evoked by more than one respondent included images of disunity (internal friction and debate and countries breaking the economic requirements of the Union, fragmentation) which were balanced by an equal number of images of unity, the European Parliament, and the EU's commitment to human rights and animal welfare. Additional images (mentioned by one respondent only) included UK Prime Minister Tony Blair (the only actor mentioned), the failed constitutional treaty, bureaucracy, the 'Big Three' of France, Germany and the UK, the euro, the geographical image of Europe, complexity and loss of identity.

The responses were overall, predominantly negative, however, as Figure 14 demonstrates, the negative images were largely supplied by representatives of the governing Liberal party and the positive imagery exclusively by representatives the two opposition parties.



**Figure 14:** Spontaneous images grouped according to implicit evaluations

The images listed by one government representative were all of conflict: agricultural subsidies (external conflict), budget debates (internal operational conflict) and the constitution (internal philosophical conflict) (Buttsworth, 2005). The EU was seen by another government representative as an “aggregating influence to combat, counter and curtail other points of view” (Billson, 2005) while a third saw it as eroding national identities and resulting in “lowest common denominator decisions” (Entsch, 2005).

Members of the opposition Labor party and the Democrats, on the other hand, described the EU as a “force for good” (Allison, 2005), a “nation-improving influence” (Tanner, 2005) and as an important “countermeasure [to] the United States in international affairs” (Ferguson, 2005). Its objectives were perceived as “sound” and its efforts as “worthy” (Allison, 2005). In particular, the EU’s commitment to human rights was highlighted along with its support of the United Nations. Instead of the erosion of national identities, the “breaking down of national boundaries” was seen in a positive light (Albanese, 2005) and the introduction of the euro was seen as “mak[ing] a big difference” both in Europe and in dealing with Europe (*Ibid.*).

### ***Perceptions of the EU-Australia Relationship***

It is interesting to observe then, that the picture was reversed when respondents were asked to evaluate the state of the relationship between Australia and the EU (see Figure 15). That is to say, that the relationship was predominantly perceived to be positive but that the majority of these positive evaluations came from representatives of the current government who were unanimous in their assessment. The EU-Australia relationship was said to be based on historical connections and mutual respect (Billson, 2005) and relations were described as, “fine” (*Ibid.*; Entsch, 2005), “positive” (Chapman, 2005; Entsch, 2005), “friendly” (Chapman, 2005), and “cordial” (Buttsworth, 2005) by members of the government.

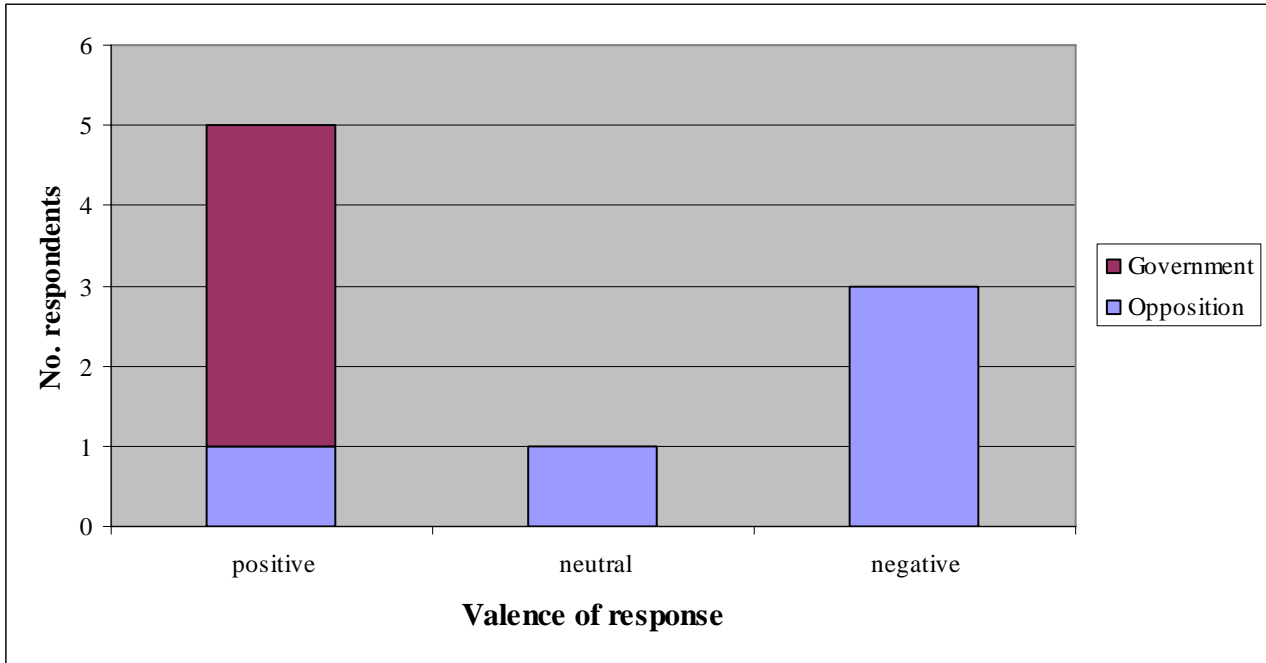


Figure 15: Perceptions of the Australia-EU Relationship<sup>3</sup>

By contrast, negative assessments of the Australia-EU relationship came exclusively from members of the opposition parties, who considered the Australian government’s alignment with the US, which has often placed the country in direct opposition to the EU on matters such as the war in Iraq and the Kyoto Protocol, as having rendered Australia’s relations with Europe as more “tenuous...and fraught with difficulties” (Ferguson, 2005). The deliberate development of close ties with the US was seen as “backward” and evidence of not wanting to know about Europe, in one interviewee’s opinion (Allison, 2005), and as the result of not understanding the EU in the view of another (McEwen, 2005).

### 3.4. Summary

The Australian government’s response to the complex institutional structure, dense treaty basis and novel economic configuration of the EU has, until very recently, been to ignore its increasing cohesiveness and to refuse to engage with it as a unitary international actor. As the first part of this section demonstrated, it has been largely absent from official rhetoric and, where it does feature, its importance has been understated. In light of the EU’s significance for Australia primarily in economic but also political and normative terms as outlined in the Introduction, the government’s apparent indifference to the EU is puzzling.

The review of a written survey from 2001-2 and a series of interviews with political elites conducted in 2004 presented here arguably helps to explain this puzzle. The earlier survey suggested that the state and importance of the EU-Australia relationship are viewed differently by political elites and other elite cohorts. The interviews with political elites in 2004 found a further distinction between political elites representing the current government and those representing opposition parties. Elites who did not belong to the current government (business people and academics in the earlier survey and non-government political elites in the later one) described a

<sup>3</sup> Interviewees were not asked to rate the state of the relationship as such, but rather to describe it. Their responses were analysed and judged as suggesting a positive, negative or neutral/stable relationship between Australia and the EU.

negative gap between the current state and the importance of the EU-Australia relationship. That is to say, that the state of the relationship did not reflect but rather underestimated the actual importance of the EU for Australia. This gap was significantly smaller in the case of government representatives. Thus, while all respondents in both studies typically agreed that the EU was, at present, a less significant partner for Australia than the US or Asia, this was considered unfortunate by the former but appropriate by the latter. The respective positions of government and non-government elites were reinforced by the spontaneous images of the EU each cohort supplied; while opposition representatives saw the EU in largely positive terms, representatives of the government tended to describe it in negative terms.

#### 4. MEDIA REVIEW

In a 1995 study of the pattern of international news in Australia, Putnis *et al.* (2000) observed that the United States was the ‘most important country’ in 16.4 per cent of the total international news sample, the most prominent country after Australia itself.<sup>4</sup> Europe, by contrast, was the ‘most important country’ in just 0.56 per cent of the total international news coverage.<sup>5</sup> While individual European countries were much more prominent, the results of this study revealed that Europe (or the European Union) was rarely portrayed in the mainstream Australian media as a cohesive whole.

In order to assess whether the EU’s media profile had grown over the subsequent decade and to investigate the type of exposure it receives, this section draws on a comprehensive review of five major daily print and two broadcast media outlets in Australia over a six-month period beginning 1 January 2004 and ending 30 June 2004 conducted as part of the aforementioned APP project. This time-frame was selected on account of the high number of prominent and thus newsworthy events it encompassed including the European Parliament elections, the drafting of the ill-fated constitutional treaty and the fifth and largest enlargement of the EU. It was thus considered a particularly pertinent time to measure EU media exposure.

The five newspapers included in the review were Australia’s only two national dailies, representing Australia’s two major newspaper empires, *The Australian* (News Limited) and the *Australian Financial Review* (Fairfax). Australia’s most popular daily newspaper, the tabloid-style *Herald Sun* (News Limited) was selected in Melbourne and the more reputable broadsheet, the *Sydney Morning Herald* (Fairfax) from Sydney. Finally, the independently-owned *Canberra Times* was selected to ensure the nation’s capital was represented in the sample. The primetime news bulletin of the leading commercial station, Channel Nine (6pm), and the leading public broadcaster, the ABC (Australian Broadcasting Corporation) (7pm) were selected for the broadcast sample.

##### 4.1. Volume

A search of these five papers across the nominated six month period for either of two terms, “EU” or “European Union”, yielded a library of 947 articles. Figure 16 puts this figure into perspective by

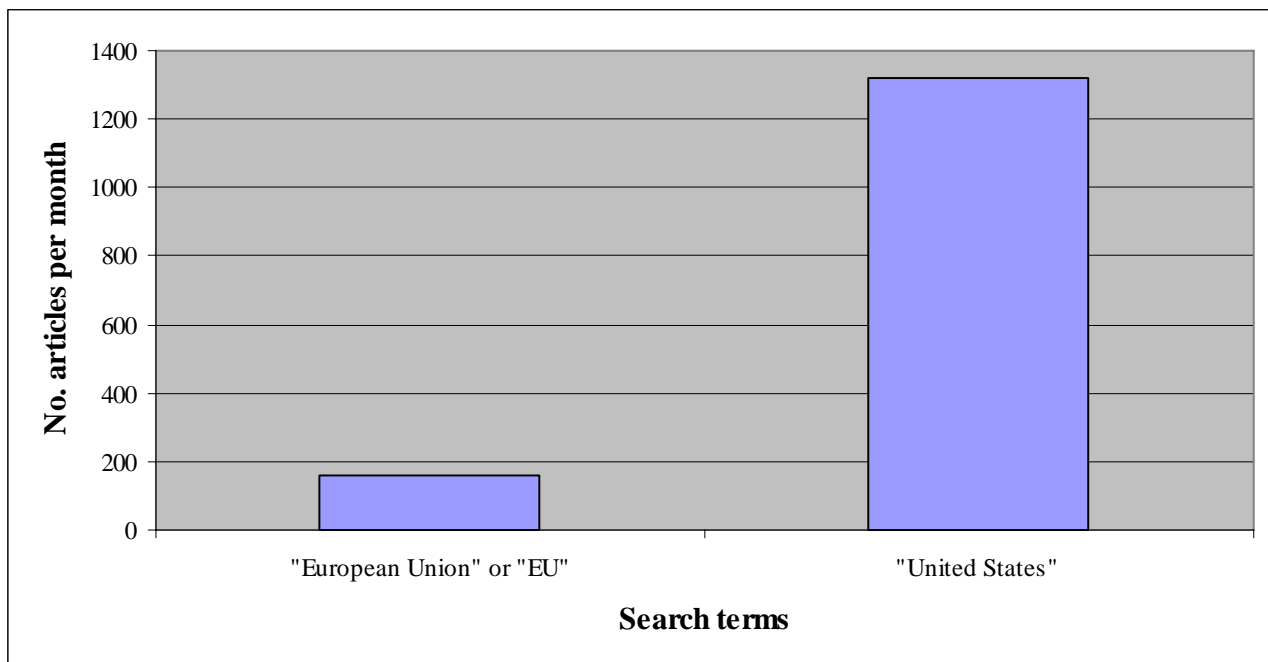
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<sup>4</sup> Up to three countries prominent in each international news article could be identified and ranked by the coders as the ‘most important country’ of the news story, ‘second country’ or ‘third country’ in terms of their relative prominence.

<sup>5</sup> Putnis *et al.* did not distinguish between Europe and the European Union in their study which suggests that even these meagre figures may be inflated as an estimate of the EU’s prominence at this time. A number of EU member states, however, fared much better: the UK was ranked third and France fourth overall, accounting for 8.2 per cent and 5.8 per cent of the international news respectively. Germany (ranked 17th), Spain (22<sup>nd</sup>) and Italy (23<sup>rd</sup>) were all ranked more highly than Europe. Western Europe (including stories featuring Europe and its individual nation states) was, however, more prominent than North America when tallied as a region, accounting for 26.6 per cent of the total volume of articles compared to 25 per cent for North America.



comparing the monthly average number of EU articles (158) with the monthly average number of articles containing the search term “United States” based on a search of the same five papers in the first three months of the period of analysis, which produced an average of 1,323 articles per month (Stats, 2004). This basic comparison suggests that, relative to other comparable international actors, the EU is severely underrepresented in the Australian press. In the broadcast media, the EU was virtually invisible, featuring an average of just 1.8 items per month. The vast majority (83 per cent) of these news items were broadcast by the national public broadcaster, the ABC, rather than the more popular commercial broadcaster.



**Figure 16: Comparative visibility of EU and US in five Australian daily papers**

The two national papers, News Limited’s *The Australian* and the Fairfax-owned *Australian Financial Review* carried the greatest volume of EU news (44 per cent and 23 per cent respectively). The capital city dailies carried substantially less: 14 per cent in the case of the *Sydney Morning Herald* which services Australia’s largest city, 10 per cent in the country’s capital city daily, the *Canberra Times*, and just 9 per cent in Australia’s most widely read paper, the *Herald Sun* (Stats, 2006).

#### 4.2. Degree of Centrality

The search included all articles that contained any reference to the EU regardless of how central the EU was to the news item. In order to more accurately assess the visibility of the EU, each news item was thus categorised according to the degree of centrality, that is, whether it was the major, secondary or merely a minor focus of the article. As Figure 17 shows, the EU was more likely to be a minor or secondary focus of newspaper articles. Although the overall volume of television news items was dramatically lower than the print sample, when the EU was mentioned it was nearly always the major focus of television news, suggesting a threshold of significance that EU news must meet in order to make it to the screen. (On account of this threshold effect and the extremely small sample size it produced, the broadcast news is disqualified from further analysis.)

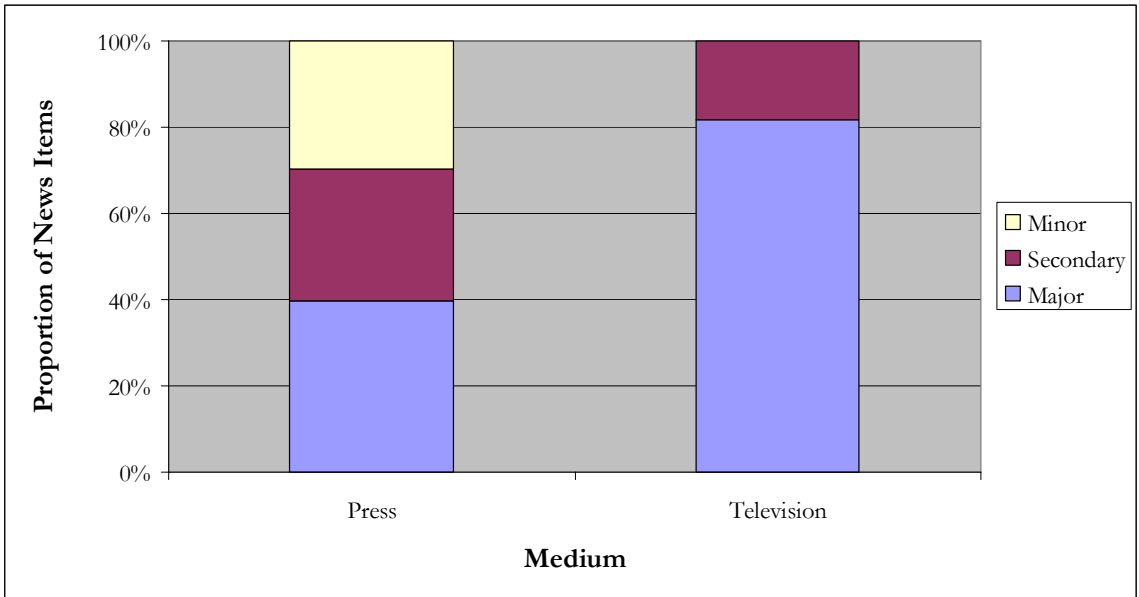


Figure 17: Degree of Centrality of the EU by Medium

### 4.3. Focus of Domesticity

As a measure of how *relevant* EU news was considered to be to Australia, the focus of domesticity of each article was classified as either 'local' (based in Australia), 'EU' (based in the EU) or 'other' (based in a third country). It was found that the EU was most frequently reported in the context of a third country. When the focus of domesticity was examined in relation to the degree of centrality, it was found that the EU was almost exclusively the major focus of the reports based in the EU, but when reported in the national context, it was rarely the major focus of the article (see Figure 18). The degree of centrality was more evenly distributed in the case of articles that reported the EU in the context of other countries (neither Australia nor the EU).

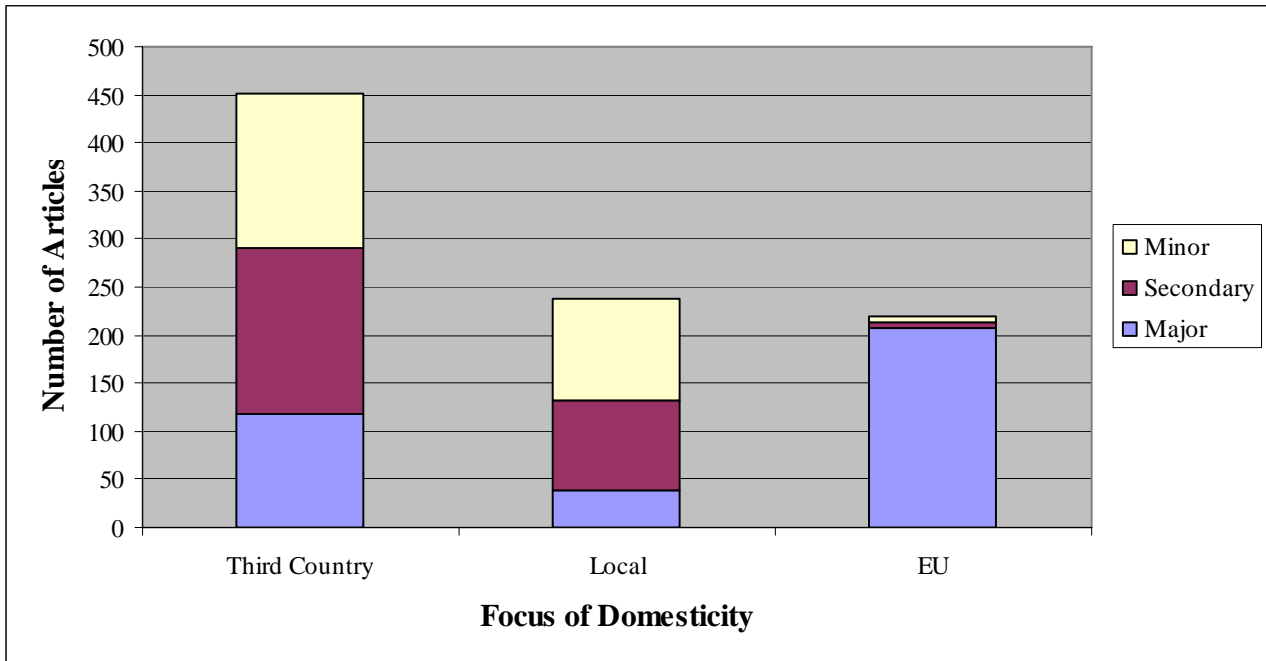


Figure 18: Focus of Domesticity as a Function of Degree of Centrality (Press)

#### 4.4. News Frames

Based on the content of the articles, the news items were classified as belonging to one (or, in some cases, more) of three primary frames: economic news, political coverage, and social affairs. As Figure 19 shows, the political frame was, somewhat surprisingly given the EU's reputation as an economic giant and political dwarf, the largest of the three accounting for nearly half of the total coverage. 36 per cent of the news items were classified as economic while only 16 per cent belonged to the social frame.

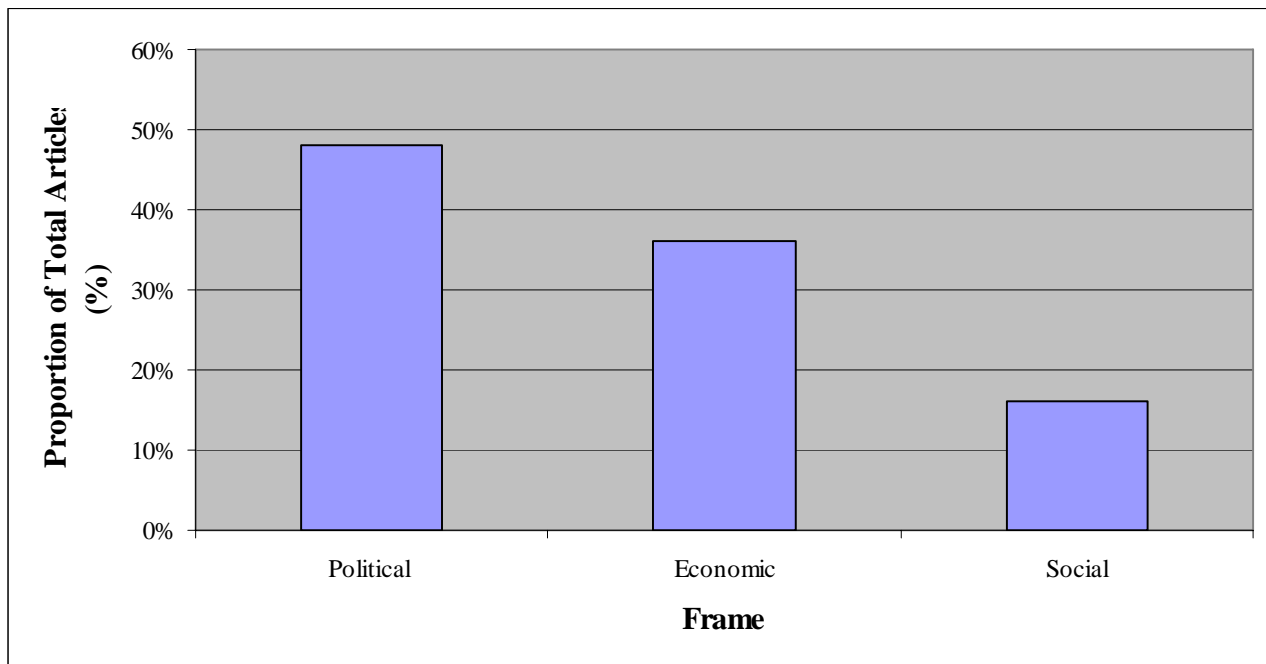


Figure 19: Distribution of EU Articles across Primary Frames

Within these three primary frames, a variety of sub-frames (topics clustered around a central theme) emerged. The most prominent of these sub-frames overall was *EU enlargement*; the political, economic and social aspects of the fifth enlargement, as well as potential future enlargements (particularly the fraught question of Turkish membership), combined formed 12.1 per cent of the total coverage (see Table 7).

Within the political frame, other prominent sub-frames included *international conflict resolution*, in particular, in Israel, Cyprus, Iraq, the Balkans, Sudan and Congo (9.15 per cent of the total coverage), *international relations*, especially with the US, Australia, Russia, China, Burma, India, Iran, Libya and Serbia (8.9 per cent) and local and global *terrorism* (4.6 per cent). Two internal events, namely, the *European Parliament elections* and the *EU constitutional treaty* also received considerable attention (4.35 and 3.8 per cent respectively). The political aspects of *environmental issues* accounted for 3.6 per cent of the overall coverage and when combined with those articles belonging to the social frame, this was one of the most prominent sub-frames.

Within the economic frame, the Australian media paid close attention to the EU's role in a number of *international competition disputes* (4.4 per cent of the total coverage), its actions in the context of the *WTO* (3.8 per cent), a forum in which Australia often finds itself in conflict with the EU, its contentious *agricultural subsidies* (3.5 per cent), a historical point of tension between Australia and the EU, and its *international trade* (3.4 per cent).

The social affairs frame received the least amount of coverage but included the sub-frames of *travel and tourism* (2.4 per cent), a variety of *social legislation* (2.1 per cent), *arts, culture and*

entertainment (1.4 per cent), immigration (1.3 per cent) and the social aspects of environmental issues (1.1 per cent).

Table 7: Most Prominent Topics of EU Articles in the Australian Press

PRIMARY FRAME	SUB-FRAME	NO. ARTICLES	% OF TOTAL EU NEWS
(Political + economic + social)	EU enlargement (political + economic = social aspects)	115	12.1%
Political	International conflict resolution	90	9.5%
Political	International relations	84	8.9%
Political	EU enlargement (political aspects)	79	8.3%
(Political + social)	Environment (political + social aspects)	44	4.6%
Political	Terrorism	44	4.6%
Economic	Competition regulation/anti-trust legislation	42	4.4%
Political	EP elections	41	4.3%
Economic	WTO	36	3.8%
Political	EU Constitution	36	3.8%
Political	Environment (political aspects)	34	3.6%
Economic	Agricultural subsidies	33	3.5%
Economic	International trade	32	3.4%
Economic	Information technology	31	3.3%
Economic	Aviation	23	2.4%
Social	Travel and tourism	23	2.4%
Economic	EU enlargement (economic aspects)	20	2.1%
Social	Social legislation	20	2.1%
Economic	New accounting regulations	16	1.7%
Social	Enlargement (social aspects)	16	1.7%
Economic	Asian bird flu	13	1.4%
Social	Arts, Culture and Entertainment	13	1.4%
Economic	Australian US Free Trade Agreement	12	1.3%
Social	Immigration	12	1.3%
Economic	Euro	11	1.2%
Political	Aid	11	1.2%
Political	Human rights	11	1.2%
Political/Economic	Sanctions	10	1.1%
Economic	Genetic modification debate	10	1.1%
Social	Environment (social aspects)	10	1.1%

An additional observation to be made here is that, with the exception of enlargement, the EU's external affairs were more commonly reported in the Australian media than its internal affairs.

#### 4.5. Actors

Finally, an analysis of the most common actors featuring in the EU news items revealed that three member states - the United Kingdom, France and Germany - were each mentioned far more frequently than any of the EU institutions. Even Italy was more prominent than the European Central Bank, the Council of Ministers, or the European Court of Justice (see Figure 20).

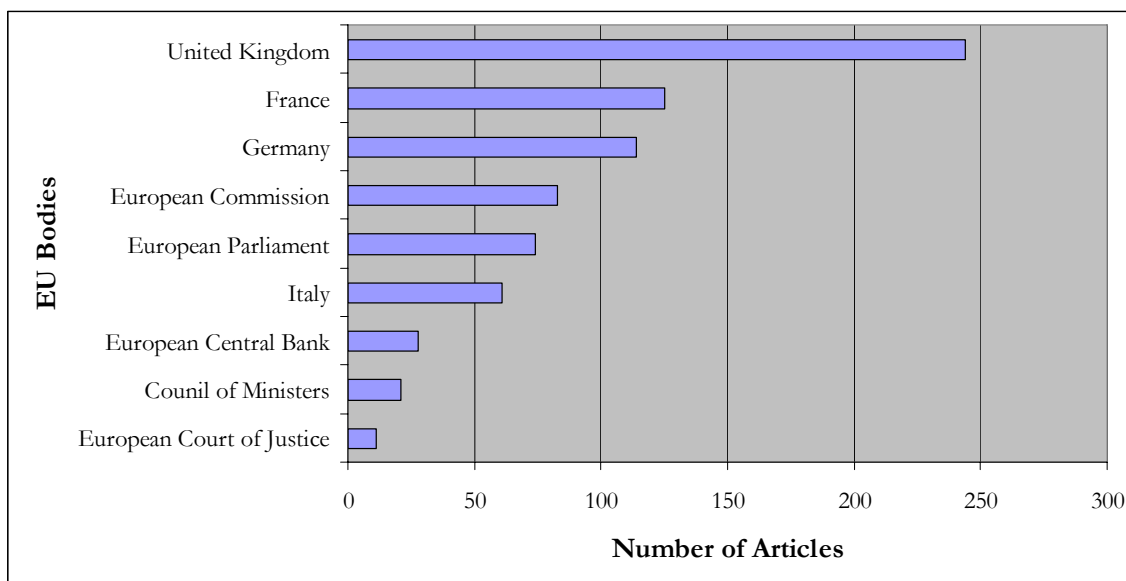


Figure 20: EU Institutions & Member States Prominent in the Australian EU Press Coverage

Moreover, it was found that the EU was more likely to be represented by prominent member state leaders such as UK Prime Minister Tony Blair, French President Jacques Chirac, and German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder than its own leaders such as Commission President, Romano Prodi or foreign policy chief, Javier Solana (Stats, 2006).

#### 4.6. Discussion

Several studies have demonstrated that the size of a nation in terms of its GDP, population and physical size are the most influential determinants of the level of news coverage it receives in third countries (Wu, 1995; Dupree, 1971; Ahern Jr., 1984). Based on these studies, one might reasonably predict that the EU would be one of the most prominent third parties to receive coverage in the domestic media discourse. This was not found to be the case in Australia. Rather, the findings reported here suggest that the EU is not accorded coverage commensurate to its size and significance for Australia and the rest of the international community. Press coverage of the EU was found to be substantially lower than the amount devoted to its superpower rival, the US. Since exposure conveys a subject's importance to the audience, it is fair to assume that the media's lack of interest conveys the same to the Australian public. Perhaps more worrying is the EU's virtual absence from Australian television news broadcasts, for as Italy's former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi well understood, "if something does not appear on television, it does not exist" (Stille, 2003: 25). However, while the EU rarely featured on television, when it did it was nearly always the major focus of the news item. In the monitored newspapers, on the other hand, it was most commonly just a fleeting mention or the secondary focus of the articles. It was most frequently reported in the context of a third country and when reported in the national context, it was rarely the major focus of the article. It might be argued that this type of exposure reinforces the view that the EU is distant and irrelevant to Australian audiences.

Further, it might be argued that the prominence of member states, particularly the Big Three who so resonated with the public and political elites - the United Kingdom, France and Germany - and their leaders reaffirms the government's insistence that Australia's interests are best served by dealing with the individual member states on a bilateral rather than multilateral basis.

Perhaps the most surprising result of the media analysis was the dominant framing of the EU through a political, as opposed to economic (or social), lens. This might, however, be an anomaly accounted for, at least in part, by the convergence of an unusually high number of newsworthy political events in the time frame selected for analysis – a significant terrorist attack within the EU’s borders (the Madrid bombing) in March, the EU enlargement in May (only the fifth in nearly 50 years of integration), the five-yearly European Parliament elections and the drafting of the European constitutional treaty debate, both in June. Indeed, each of these events were included in the ten most prominent sub-frames with enlargement (political, economic and social aspects combined) the most prominent topic overall. Nevertheless, the EU was also prominently framed in the Australian press as an actor in international conflict resolution and international relations as well as in environmental matters (political and social aspects combined).

## **5. CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS**

This section assesses the extent to which the EU is used as a point of reference by Australian civil society organisations. More specifically, it reviews three major Australian non-governmental organisations (NGOs) acting in areas where Australia and the EU’s interests overlap, namely organised labour (the Australian Council of Trade Unions), the environment (the Australian Conservation Foundation) and international aid (CARE Australia).

### **5.1 Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU)**

The Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU), formed in 1927, is a council of 46 unions representing two million Australian workers, which makes it the nation’s peak body. The ACTU has been particularly visible in recent years because of its active opposition to a series of radical industrial relations reforms introduced by the current government.

The EU is an infrequent point of reference for the ACTU and no official statements outlining the ACTU’s position on European integration were located on its website. This is perhaps understandable, given the domestic specificity of industrial issues in contemporary society. Nevertheless, there were calls for closer cooperation between the International Confederation of Trade Unions (ICTU), to which the ACTU is affiliated, and its European counterpart, the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) (Ryder, 2002). The ETUC is based in Brussels and recognised by the EU as the only European level cross-sectoral trade union organisation. It was established in response to European integration and the changing setting in which trade unions found themselves operating and seeks to represent its members in the EU institutions. However, the ETUC is not exclusive to the EU member states but rather represents 60 million workers from 36 different European countries.

The few scattered references to the EU that were located in the ACTU’s online archives were typically positive and emphasised the EU’s role as a normative leader. A European Commission Communication on ‘decent work’, for example, was an initiative that was welcomed and commended by the ACTU, who declared that it was “very positive that the European Commission wants to start promoting decent work” (ACTU, 2006b). However, the EU was also pushed to “put words into action” and “to improve working conditions in Europe” (ACTU, 2006b). The EU was encouraged to refocus its development cooperation and trade policy and “to reconsider some of the demands it is making on developing countries in the WTO’s NAMA negotiations” (*Ibid.*) Several documents made reference to the EU’s exemplary approach to the protection of workers from hazardous chemicals and materials in the workplace. The EU’s response to work-related

asbestos exposure (banned in EU-15 with the newer member states soon to follow suit) was reported as having halved global asbestos production since the 1970s in the context of working towards a global ban on the use and production of asbestos (ACTU, 2006c). In a speech at the 2005 Hazmat Conference in Sydney, ACTU Assistant Secretary Richard Marles suggested that Australia needed “to look at the work which is being done in Europe on this issue about trying to spread regulation and increase the information that is available about chemicals in the workplace” (Marles, 2005) and commended the work of the European Environmental Bureau and the European Consumers Organisation on this issue.

There was one reference to the EU’s peacekeeping activities in an article which described the presence of European peace-keepers in Aceh as crucial to rebuilding and development efforts in the troubled area (ACTU, 2005).

Two references that might be classified as negative were located. In the first, the ACTU, under the umbrella of the ICFTU and in conjunction with the ETUC, expressed its concern about the inadequacy of the EU’s measures against the Burmese junta. In a letter to EU External Relations’ Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner, labour leaders urged the EU to “take stronger measures against the Burmese military regime”. However, the resistance of individual EU member states to the strengthening of sanctions against Burma were acknowledged as constraining the EU’s position (ICFTU, 2005). In the second case, the EU was mentioned in the context of a global report on the worldwide suppression of workers rights that was reported on the ACTU’s website. However, it was individual member states, rather than the EU, that were implicated in the “interference in and surveillance of trade unions” that the article reported (ACTU, 2006a).

## **5.2 Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF)**

The Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF) is the leading not-for-profit organisation devoted to research, education and advocacy of environmental issues in Australia. It was formed in 1966 and operates primarily on funding sourced from members and supporters as well as a small amount of sponsorship from selected companies and government grants. ACF works towards the protection of the marine environment, the sustainability of urban and rural areas and environmental security in the Asia Pacific region. They campaign on issues such as the nuclear debate, climate change and water management, as well as encouraging responsible domestic and lifestyle changes and corporate environmental responsibility. In November 2006, representatives of ACF participated in an Open Forum organised by the EU on the issue of international environmental governance held in Sydney.

In media releases, expert reports and government submissions prepared by ACF, the EU is regularly depicted as an active and leading environmental agent. While references to the EU were typically brief and lacking in detail, this might be considered evidence of a tacit acceptance of the EU’s leading international role in environmental issues by other environmental organisations and actors. References were characteristically (though not exclusively) positive in nature.

For example, the EU was frequently held up as a model for Australia to follow in terms of environmental tax reform (Hamilton, *et al.*, 2000), and “environmentally-related employment” (Krockenberger, *et al.*, 2000: 4). The report, *A Blueprint for a Sustainable Australia*, refers to the EU as a model both in terms of research into climate change and emissions reduction and practice, and advocates that Australia should sign the Kyoto Protocol (Krockenberger, *et al.*, 2000: 63). In a submission to the Productivity Commission Inquiry into the economic and environment potential offered by energy efficiency, ACF urges the Australian government to “join the EU in committing

to ensuring that global temperatures do not exceed” levels anticipated to have catastrophic environmental effects (ACF, 2004b).

In other cases, the EU experience was held up as a model of what *not* to do. A media brief on emissions trading, for example, cautioned that “[i]nitial over-allocation of permits that provides windfall gains to the most polluting plants, depresses the value of the permit and increases costs of meeting economy wide targets (as occurred with the EU scheme)” (ACF, 2006). In their analysis of the Australia-United States Free Trade Agreement, ACF referred to the EU as being in conflict with the US, as Australia may potentially find itself as a result of the agreement, signed in 2004 (ACF, 2004a).

The EU was also the measure against which Australia’s actions or inactions, as the case may be, on environmental issues were critiqued against. On a national radio program in 2002, an ACF spokesperson criticised the Australian government’s rejection of the EU’s proposal that 15 per cent of the world’s energy should come from renewable sources by the year 2020, describing the EU’s proposal as “one of the real positive ways that we can really tackle climate change” and wondering “how seriously the Australian government is taking the issue of climate change when it’s behaving in this way in international forums” (Earthbeat, 2002). In a more recent article, it was reported that the “European Commission (EC) has shown up Australia’s appalling lack of greenhouse pollution controls by proposing a reduction target of 20 per cent below 1990 levels by 2020, while Australia expects significant rises in its levels of pollution” (ACF, 2007).

It is worth noting that the ACF has also voiced strong criticism of EU agricultural subsidies, claiming that the EU “has subsidised excess food production until there have been milk and wine lakes and butter and beef mountains” (ACF, 1998). ACF was also one of the many NGOs who signed a joint statement urging the EU to address the issue of illegally sourced timber and the environmental impact of both legal and illegal logging (Joint NGO Statement, 2004).

### **5.3 CARE Australia**

CARE Australia is a non-political and non-religious body that was formed in 1987 and has grown to become Australia’s largest aid organisation. CARE Australia runs programmes and projects in the Asia Pacific, Africa and the Middle East, where its operations intersect with the EU’s aid and development priorities in these regions. The EU is the world’s biggest donor of aid and is an important partner to Australia in terms of development, particularly in the Asia Pacific region where Australia plays a leading role. As well as providing substantial aid to the region, the EU has played a vital role in brokering peace in local conflicts such as in Aceh and overseeing democratic elections in places such as Fiji. According to DFAT, development cooperation between Australia and the European Union in the Pacific region is strong and growing (DFAT, 2007). Both the EU and the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO) are listed as multilateral funding partners of Care Australia (see CARE Australia website).

But despite these joint interests and strong links in the administration of aid and development work, the EU is not mentioned, except as a funding partner, on the CARE Australia website. Only one incidental reference to the European Commission (as a co-sponsor of the Beijing donors’ conference in January 2006) was found in a search of CARE Australia’s online media releases, reports and opinion pieces.



## 5.4 Summary

A review of three representative local non-governmental organisations suggests that the EU is not, in general, a point of reference for Australian civil society. Despite shared interests in the delivery of aid and development, especially in the Asia Pacific, and the fact that the EU is an important funding partner of CARE Australia, Australia's largest aid organisation does not appear to engage in active dialogue with the EU. In the area of organised labour, the EU was an infrequent point of reference for the nation's peak trade union body. Significantly, however, especially since European integration is argued to challenge the efficacy of trade union bodies in Europe (see Marks and McAdams, 1996), when the EU was mentioned, it was in typically positive terms, as a normative leader on issues such as 'decent work' and protection of workers from hazardous chemicals and materials in the workplace. Likewise, references to the EU tended to be positive – and were considerably more common – in the case of Australia's largest environmental organisation. The regular, if cursory, mentions of the EU in this domain arguably reinforce the image of the EU as a leading international environmental actor.

## 6. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The growing size and stature of the European Union make it an influential economic actor and a potent political player for third countries such as Australia to comprehend, communicate and critically evaluate. However, what emerges from this report on Australian perceptions of the EU is a curious paradox: despite the fact that the EU is Australia's most significant trading partner, an important ally in terms of regional aid and development, a prominent environmental actor and a growing international political power, it appears to occupy only a marginal position in Australian society.

As this survey has revealed, the EU is consistently underrated in terms of its domestic importance and overlooked in favour of the US and Asia (China and Japan in particular) by the current government and other political elites, as well as by the general public. In addition to this gap between the reality of the EU's importance for Australia and its *perceived* importance, another gap was identified between the perceived importance and the *desired* importance of the EU amongst the public and non-government (opposition) political elites. Despite the consensus on the EU's current significance for Australia, this was a point of difference between the government and the other cohorts examined in this study. According to the public surveys that were examined in Section 2, Australians have largely positive feelings about Europe/the EU, especially in comparison to the US, and would like to see its international influence increase. This perhaps reflects a natural affinity between Australia and Europe based on the historical closeness and strong people-to-people links described in Section 1. It might also signify the Australian public's growing concern about the US's post-Cold War dominance of international politics. The EU's potential to counterbalance US hegemony was welcomed also by non-government political elites who, like the public, typically described the EU in positive terms and as a global force for good.

The task at hand, it would then appear, is to resolve these gaps between the actual, perceived and desired state of EU-Australia relations. Misapprehensions about the EU and its significance for Australia are costing the country in a multitude of ways. A representative of the European Australian Business Council (EABC) has argued, for example, that the perception of barriers, rather than actual barriers, to trade inhibits the success of Australian businesses in Europe (Anonymous, 2005). Better understandings of the EU are also demanded by the fact that it provides the most advanced model of regional engagement in a world, according to Chris Patten, "that desperately needs new paradigms for the management of its affairs" (Patten, 2002).

However, this task is complicated by the fact that the EU, quite simply, is not a foreign policy priority of the Australian government. As noted in Section 3, the Australian government has been reluctant to recognise and engage with the EU as a unitary actor, preferring to shore up its bilateral relations with individual member states instead and privileging relations with the US over the EU. Unlike the other cohorts in this study, representatives of the government conceived of the EU in predominantly negative terms. Such perceptions, it might be argued, act to minimise the abovementioned gap between the perceived and desired importance of the EU for Australia and hence justify the government's apparent indifference towards the increasingly integrated and cohesive European entity.

In trying to explain why the EU is perceived in this negative manner and not accorded a higher priority by the government, it is important to consider the realities of Australia's geopolitical position. The EU's preference for dealing with other actors as a unitary body encourages third parties to engage with the EU from a regional position in order to enhance their collective leverage. In this way, European integration is driving macro-regionalisation elsewhere in the world and changing the global geopolitical configuration in the process. This poses a specific challenge for Australia, which might best be described as 'geographically-challenged'. A Western state located in South East Asia, Australia is culturally distant from its nearest neighbours (with the exception of New Zealand) and physically distant from both its colonial parent, the United Kingdom, and its closest ally, the United States. Australia is locked out of key regional forums such as ASEAN and ASEM and suggestions of forging a Pacific alliance have been quickly and determinedly rejected (Forbes, 2003). Australia therefore lacks both experience of, and viable opportunities for, regional integration, which arguably causes it to be both suspicious of, and resistant to, the new mode of international relations that the EU is promoting.

Nevertheless, increasing integration in Europe and elsewhere is a political reality that Australia can no longer afford to ignore. Events such as the 2003 Bali bombings, the Asian bird flu scare, the constant flow of asylum seekers to Australian shores, as well as the outbreaks of violent conflict in the Asia Pacific region (in East Timor and Fiji, for example) have, according to former ABC Europe correspondent Majella Annings (2004), taught us "the hard way that [Australia] can never again hope to remain aloof from world events" and "must now be more engaged than ever". And indeed, as noted in Section 3, the government has shown recent signs of willingness to revise its approach to Europe and pursue deeper, more meaningful cooperation. But is this enough?

An underlying assumption of a functioning democracy is that it is the *demos* or the people who determine political priorities and dictate political decisions, which is, in turn, based on the assumption that the citizenry is an informed one. Since the general public has limited access to people, places and events outside their realm of direct experience, they rely heavily on the news media (among other sources) for information. For this reason, it has been suggested that the news media possess a "new and autonomous capacity to influence the formulation and conduct of foreign policy" (Buckley, 1998). Section 4 demonstrated that the EU is comparatively invisible in the Australian print media when compared to the visibility of the US and is virtually absent from television news broadcasts all together. If, as Barr observes, "what we regard as important issues in society depends in part on how the media choose to represent them" (Barr, 2000: 16), this would appear to, at least in part, explain why the EU is, as argued, undervalued in Australian society.

In contemporary democracies, civil society play a vital role in the political system too, activating public participation, lobbying government and keeping a watchful eye on the exercise political power and the allocation of resources. Section 5 revealed that there was no evidence of direct dialogue between the domestic civil society organisations reviewed and the EU. It was an

occasional point of reference as an environmental actor and in the area of organised labour but appeared to be a silent (funding) partner to Australia in the delivery of international aid, despite shared interests and strong links in this area.

Thus, it is important that this official change of heart towards the EU is supported by the concurrent reprioritisation of EU-Australia relations at all levels of Australian society – amongst political elites, civil society and the general public and, perhaps most importantly, in the media. Australian news organisations need to increase their coverage of the EU to reflect its national and international significance. This would be facilitated by the expansion of Australia’s media presence in Europe. At present, Australia has no accredited journalists based in Brussels, the EU’s institutional capital, and its few European correspondents are typically based in London and expected to cover vast and varied areas of the continent. As Annings pointedly asks, “Would we think it acceptable to have not even one Australian reporter in Washington to report on the US administration?” (2004: 4). The Australian government, for its part, must support its recent rhetorical change of heart by abandoning its “[cherished] European prejudices” (Kelly, 2006:12). It needs to stop qualifying references to the EU in ways that undermine the significance of the relationship and review its anachronistic policy of privileging bilateral over multilateral relations. Recognising that EU is not a less, but, in fact, *more* important economic partner for Australia than the US it must pursue the relationship with equal, if not greater vigour.

The adoption of such recommendations would undoubtedly help to remedy the identified “shallowness of the [Australia-EU] relationship at the leadership level, an associated lack of interest in Europe by many Australian business leaders and a lack of Australian media coverage of EU affairs” (Kitney, 2004a: 13), reducing the gap between the actual, perceived and desired state of EU-Australia relations and opening the way for more fruitful engagement between these “natural political, economic and social partners” (EC Delegation, 2004).

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FORUM ON THE PROBLEMS OF PEACE AND WAR  
GARNET - Jointly Executed Research Project 5.2.1

**THE EXTERNAL IMAGE OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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**REPORT ON  
*BRAZIL***

**Arlo Poletti**



The survey *The External Image of the European Union* has been conducted in the Framework of the Jointly Executive Research Project 5.2.1. (*Normative issues*) of the Network of Excellence *Global Governance, Regionalisation and Regulation: the Role of the EU* - GARNET (Contract No. 513330); (EU 6<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme 2005-2010; Call Identifier: FP6-2002-Citizens-3). We are grateful to Garnet and to the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for their financial contribution to the project.

## ABSTRACT

Relations between the EU and Brazil have developed dynamically since the beginning of the 1990s. In this period, both parties have come to realise that the commercial, economic and political synergies that they can bring together offer vast opportunities for cooperation that are worth exploring. Europeans increasingly perceive Brazil as a global player whose aspiration to turn its new international status into regional and global clout needs to be fully supported. From Brazil's viewpoint, the growing international assertiveness of the European Union is seen as something to be welcomed and encouraged and, potentially, as a positive factor on the path towards the achievement of the country's strategic goals. The wide array of institutional settings within which relations between the EU and Brazil take place provides evidence of the new quality of this partnership. Although important problems still need addressing, it is difficult to foresee that mutual political relations will suffer any serious setback.

Building on this background, this country survey investigates how the EU is perceived in Brazil. The underlying assumption is that in the case of a political identity in-the-making like the EU, its external image is an important component of the overall process of the EU's identification process. By providing an outline of how the EU's image is perceived by Brazil's political elite, public opinion and is represented in the media, therefore, this research contributes by casting light on a crucial aspect of the EU's international identity conceptualisation and carrying forward the intellectual conversation on the development of a better understanding on the role of the EU in two ways. On the one hand, it confirms that some of the elements of the self and academic representation of the Union as an international actor have produced similar representations with external actors. On the other hand, it shows that other themes are not, at least in the context of this study, as important in shaping EU's image as part of the literature on EU identity often claims.

The most important component of the image the EU has shaped for itself is that of a relevant economic and trading player in world affairs. In this context, the EU is regarded both as an opportunity and a challenge. The identification of the EU as a protectionist power goes hand in hand with the recognition of its importance as a market for exports, as a provider of investment, and more importantly as a potential ally in the path towards the forging of a "fairer globalisation". In the political sphere, the EU's image is perceived in positive terms. The EU's potential contribution to a more balanced global distribution of power, in fostering multilateralism, and in making the international system more solidaristic, are all elements that shape a perception of an existing broad convergence with Brazilian long-term interests. The analysis also points to the existing perception of the EU as model of regional integrative efforts in the continent. In this context, the Mercosur represents a driving force in determining future Brazil-EU relations and, accordingly, mutual perceptions. Surprisingly, those elements of European identity associated to the social/solidaristic dimensions, both internal and external, have been found to be largely absent from Brazilian public discourse. These findings indicate that the relevance of social themes in shaping the EU's representation with external actors may be overestimated. Broadly speaking, this research shows that the substantial convergence between how Brazilians perceive the EU and how the EU perceives itself might offer a solid basis upon which a relationship of constructive engagement can be further developed.

## 1. INTRODUCTION\*

Since the early 1990s, relations between Brazil and the European Union have experienced a qualitative jump. In this period, both parties have come to realise that the commercial, economic and political synergies that can be produced offer vast opportunities for cooperation that are worth exploring. As it has been noted, a number of factors in the last fifteen years have pushed for a *rapprochement* between the EU and Brazil and reversed the US-centric focus that characterised Brazilian foreign policy throughout the twentieth century (Ribeiro Hoffman 2002). From a European perspective, Brazil is increasingly perceived as a global player whose aspiration to turn its new international status into regional and global clout needs to be fully supported (Ferrero Waldner 2005). From Brazil's viewpoint, the growing international assertiveness of the European Union is seen as something to be welcomed and encouraged and, potentially, as a positive factor on the path towards the achievement of the country's strategic goals (Biato 2004). There is a substantial continuity in Brazil's foreign policy approach towards the EU following the election of Lula da Silva as President of Brazil in 2002 (Vaz 2004, Almeida 2003), which is testament to the solidity of the ties between the two actors. In fact, such continuity should be read not only as the proof of the shift of Lula and his party toward the social-democratic centre of the political spectrum (Klom 2003), but also, as some have suggested, as a sign that "from a geostrategic perspective the preferential relationship with the EU fulfils Brazilian objectives in building alliances that support its international ambitions" (Klom 2003: 356).

The economic side of the relationship should not be underestimated either. The EU is Brazil's main trading partner, receiving over a quarter of Brazil's external trade, and Brazil is the EU's main trading partner in Latin America. Moreover, Brazil represents an important destination for European investment.<sup>1</sup> Both actors, therefore, share a strong interest in maintaining and furthering economic ties. It seems fair to argue, however, that relations between Brazil and the EU have today acquired a new strategic depth that goes beyond the realm of pure economics. The wide array of institutional settings within which relations between the EU and Brazil take place provides an evidence of the new quality of this partnership. EU-Brazil relations today are structured on three levels: bilateral, interregional and intercontinental. At the bilateral level, the EU's present relations with Brazil are based on the 1992 EC-Brazil Framework cooperation Agreement. The agreement established a Joint Committee composed of both Brazilian and EC government representatives where policy dialogue has developed on issues such as bilateral cooperation, trade, environment, science and technology, information society issues, social issues, air transport, maritime transport, nuclear cooperation and development cooperation (European Commission 2005a).

The EU's political dialogue with Brazil, however, mainly takes place at the interregional level through EU-Mercosur mechanisms. Created in 1991 by Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay, with the ambitious goal of developing a common market between the participating countries, and reinforced in 1994 with the Treaty of Ouro Preto, Mercosur has brought new dynamism to the commercial ties and the political dialogue between its member states and the EU. The EU-Mercosur

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<sup>1</sup>The EU is Brazil's biggest trade, investment and cooperation partner, with total bilateral trade of around EUR35 bn in 2004, absorbing around a quarter of Brazil's exports. Brazil is an important destination of EU investment, whose total stock in the country is close to EUR80 bn. See European Commission, *The EU's Relations with Brazil*, November 2005, at <[ec.europa.eu/comm/external\\_relations/brazil/intro/index.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/comm/external_relations/brazil/intro/index.htm)>.

Interregional Framework Cooperation Agreement signed on 15 December 1995, which constitutes the framework upon which relations between the EU and Mercosur are based, consists of three main elements: political dialogue, cooperation and trade matters. In this context, the most contended issue concerns the negotiation of an Interregional Association Agreement that should lead to the largest free trade area in the world between the EU and Mercosur. The negotiations started in June 1999 and, although at an advanced stage, have not yet been concluded as a result of disagreements on the content and the timing of trade liberalisation (European Commission 2005b). Specifically, the failure to reach an agreement reflects the difficulties of the EU in agricultural issues and the problems within Mercosur to reach a consensus in industrial goods market access (da Motta Veiga 2002, Chaire Mercosur 2006, Valladao et.al. 2005).

Finally, at the broadest level, the EU has established and built links with Latin American countries through two main forums for political dialogue: the EU-Rio Group dialogue and the EU-Latin America and the Caribbean Summits. Both frameworks are meant to provide key vehicles for the fortification of the EU-Latin American relationship and for facilitating the discussion of topics of common interest (European Commission 2005).

Despite the high degree of strategic convergence and the existence of a set of consolidated multi-level institutional ties between the two actors, important problems still need to be addressed. On the economic side of the relationship, for instance, disagreements have often emerged. Not surprisingly, the interests of an internationally recognised emergent economic power as Brazil and those of an entity, the EU, accounting for more than a fifth of global trade, have often clashed. The failure to reach an agreement on the establishment of a free trade area between EU and Mercosur by October 2004 as planned, recent trade disputes between EU and Brazil within the World Trade Organisation and the resulting suspension of the Doha round, are just but some examples of these conflicting interests and problems that remain on the agenda. The strict link between the multilateral and bi-regional processes and emerging divergences within Mercosur itself certainly does not help in creating a favourable negotiating environment and creates even more difficulties in an already complex strategic environment (Maag 2005, Chaire Mercosur 2006). In this context, the EU's agricultural policy certainly represents the single major obstacle in shaping the path of future mutual relations (Chaire Mercosur 2006).

In light of recent trends in Brazilian foreign policy, however, it is difficult to foresee that mutual political relations will suffer any serious setback. It is certainly true that the emphasis put by President Lula on the strategic relevance of both the partnership with the EU and EU-Mercosul biregional relations as means to counterbalancing US influence in the Latin American context (De Almeida 2004), seems to suggest that the broad convergence of perceptions on display as to how to confront global challenges will prevail over occasional frictions concerning the economic and commercial spheres.

Building on this background, this survey aims to investigate how the EU is perceived in Brazil. In line with the overall approach of the project, this survey follows the key theme that in the case of a political identity in-the-making like the EU, its external image is an important component of the overall process of the EU's *identification process*.<sup>2</sup> By providing an outline of how the EU's image is perceived in Brazil, therefore, this research aims at contributing to a crucial aspect of the EU's international identity conceptualisation and to carry forward the intellectual conversation on the development of a better understanding of the role of the EU with respect to particularly sensitive issues such as the fight against poverty, conflict prevention, the promotion of democracy and human rights, and international trade.

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<sup>2</sup> The term is used by so-called identification theory, see W. Bloom, *Personal Identity, National Identity and International Relations*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990.

The results will be presented as follows. The first section will present an analysis of those public opinion polls conducted in Brazil providing a general outline of the public perception of the EU in the country. The second section will be devoted to the assessment of how the EU is viewed by the Brazilian political elite. In the third part, research will focus on the investigation of the main Brazilian newspapers in an attempt to extrapolate additional information as to how Europe is perceived in the country. In the concluding remarks, the findings will be summarised and presented in a coherent fashion.

## 2. PUBLIC OPINION

In spite of the wide range of authoritative Brazilian sources devoted to opinion polling and public opinion research, material aimed at investigating the EU's image within Latin American countries and how people perceive bilateral and interregional relations between the EU and Latin America is relatively scarce. In most cases, the public's perception of the EU could not be inferred but indirectly by taking into consideration opinion polls regarding other international actors (United States) or how people perceive the country's trends and perspectives in the future. The analysis of this material could not offer an organic and integrated outline of the public perception of the EU but can provide a general overview of the public perception and some indications on what is available and what should be further investigated.

To the researcher's knowledge, only one public opinion research, *Latinobarometro*<sup>3</sup>, includes information that provide a comprehensive and wide ranging picture of how the role the EU plays both at the global and regional level is perceived in Latin America and within individual countries. For the purpose of this survey, two studies collecting dataset and information from the yearly publications of *Latinobarometro* have proved of great relevance. The first integrates in a single framework data concerning different questions on the EU included in the *Latinobarometro* questionnaires in the 1995-2004 period (Lagos 2005). The second collects systematically the information gathered from the *Latinobarometro* 2004 questionnaire that is relevant in providing a view of the EU's image (Lagos 2005). The sources upon which these studies draw, however, do not represent the result of a research effort directly aimed at offering an outline of the EU's external image in Latin America. Questions and research objectives differed across time and the results reflect this lack of consistency in the line of investigation.

Nonetheless, the two studies together allow the researcher to draw some very interesting conclusions with regards to the EU's external image. The aggregated data (Latin America as a whole) are always presented together with data concerning individual countries, thus, allowing for a comparison between Brazilian and continental trends on perceptions. Furthermore, in some cases data concerning the Mercosur region (aggregated data from the Mercosur member states) are also included, thus, offering the opportunity for a broader comparison between continental, regional and country-level trends.

The first set of questions (Table 1) is investigating the extent to which the European Union is known by Latin American people in the period between 1995 and 2000.<sup>4</sup> The idea is that people's level of knowledge of the EU might be related to its image. Measuring the level of knowledge, therefore, is considered a useful starting point for further analysis.

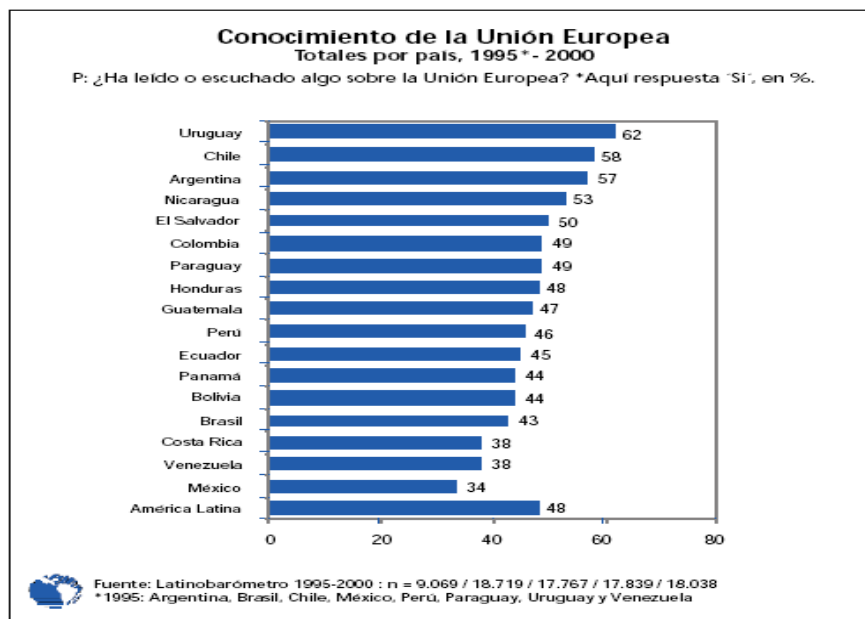
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<sup>3</sup> *Latinobarometro* is published yearly since 1995 by Corporaciòn *Latinobarometro*, a non-profit organisation which works in partnership with the organisation *Corporaciòn Justicia y Democracia*. Specifically, cooperation takes place within the context of a Programme, *Focus Eurolatino*, financed by the European Commission. *Latinobarometro* collects data concerning opinion polls conducted in 18 Latin American countries. The organisation is chaired by Marta Lagos ([www.latinobarometro.org](http://www.latinobarometro.org))

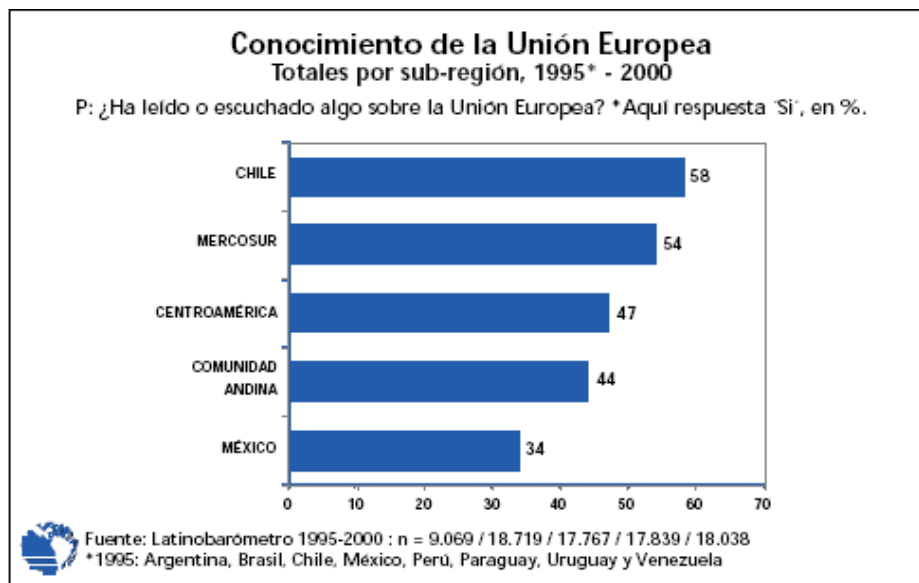
<sup>4</sup> The "level of knowledge of the EU" is measured by asking individuals whether they have heard or read something about the EC/EU.

As far as Latin America as a whole is concerned, the findings show that 48% of those interviewed answered positively when asked whether they had read or heard something about the EU. At country level, we note that Brazilians know the EU slightly less than Latin Americans do. In Brazil, the EU is known by 43% of those interviewed. Interestingly, the data available allow for a further level of analysis. In fact, levels of knowledge have also been measured by taking as a point of reference Latin American sub-regional pacts (see Table 2). The results clearly illustrate that not only levels of knowledge of the EU within the Mercosur region (54%) are higher than those within other regional blocks but also that such levels stand well above those observed at continental and Brazilian levels. This can be explained by considering that two Mercosur member countries, Argentina and Uruguay, stand among the highest ranking countries with respectively 57% and 62%.

**Table 1**

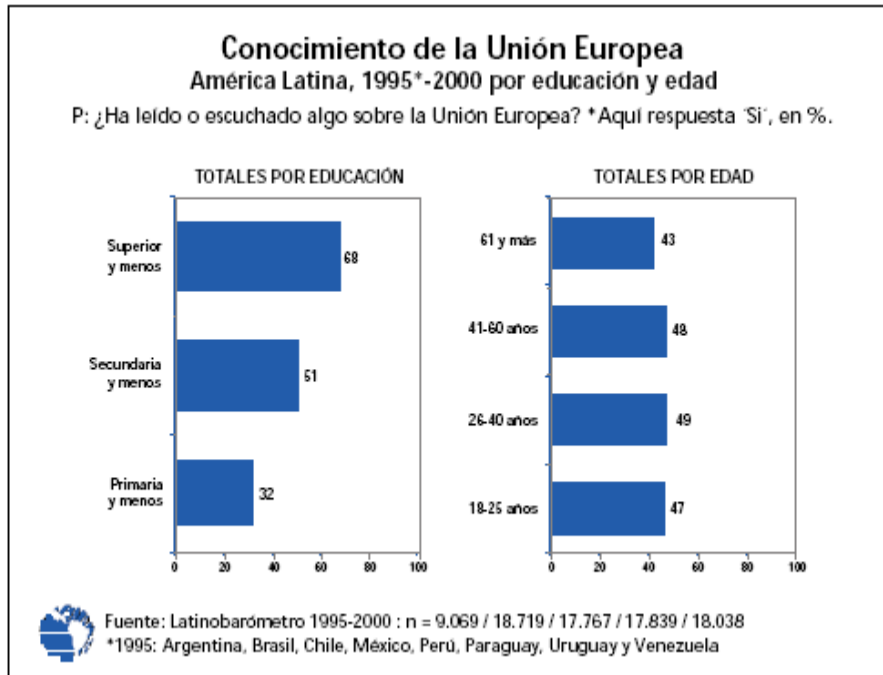


**Table 2**



Similar patterns at continental and Brazilian level can be observed when levels of knowledge are considered in relation to education and age (Table 3). Specifically, levels of knowledge of the EU are clearly positively correlated to educational levels and decrease dramatically in the group of people aged 65 or more.

Table 3



These data, however, do not tell much by themselves. Only through a comparative analysis is it possible to substantiate the results and evaluate whether the levels of knowledge observed should be considered as relatively high or low. In the studies mentioned above, individuals were also asked to answer the same question (“have heard or read something about...”) in relation to other international organisations and sub-regional pacts.

Table 4





**Table 5**

Name of the opinion poll Latinobarometro (1995-2000)	Question asked: Have you read or heard about international organisations or trade agreements?	UN	Nafta	EU	WTO
Brazil		70%	34%	43%	36%
Mercosur		69%	45%	54%	37%
Latin America		68%	51%	48%	32%

Considering tables 4 and 5, the following conclusions can be drawn. In Latin America, the United Nations stands as the international organisation that people know the most (68%). The same can be said for the Mercosur region (69%) and Brazil (70%). Different patterns, however, emerge when the second and third best known are taken into consideration. At continental level (Latin America), Nafta stands as the second most known international pact (51%) followed by the EU (48%). The situation changes substantially when the focus shifts to the sub-regional (Mercosur) and country (Brazil) levels. As far as Mercosur is concerned, we note that the positions are reversed with the EU ranking second (54%) and Nafta third (45%). The picture changes even more considering Brazil alone. In this case, Mercosur ranks as the second most known institutional arrangement (60%), the EU as the third (43%), and Nafta well behind with just 34% (in fact, individual country data show that Brazil is the Latin American country where Nafta is least known).

The findings concerning the assessment of the level of knowledge show that the EU is a relatively well known institution in Latin America. While Brazilians are slightly less informed than Latin Americans about the EU, a simple comparative exercise shows that, relatively to other international institution or trade pacts, such levels of knowledge are higher in Brazil than at continental level. In general, higher levels of knowledge concentrate, from a socio-demographic perspective, among people with higher educational backgrounds.

The second set of questions aims at going beyond a neutral assessment of the degree of knowledge. In this case, the data offer an outline of what Latin Americans think about the EU (Table 6). Once again, a comparative exercise has been undertaken in order to allow for a better understanding of the data concerning the EU. Latin Americans were asked to express their opinion (“very good/good/bad/very bad”) about the EU and other international actors - US and Japan (Table 7).

**Table 6**

PAISES	1996-1998	2000- 2004
Argentina	44	54
Bolivia	39	49
Brasil	42	55
Chile	42	66
Colombia	47	53
Costa Rica	43	52
Ecuador	46	60
El Salvador	61	57
Guatemala	50	57
Honduras	48	57
México	31	64
Nicaragua	59	62
Panamá	36	54
Paraguay	45	66
Perú	35	56
Uruguay	49	59
Venezuela	38	59
Rep. Dominicana	-	73
<b>A. Latina</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>58</b>

**Table 7**

Name of the opinion poll Latinobarometro	Question asked: Do you have a very good/ good/ bad/ very bad opinion about the European Community/ European Union?	European Union		United States		Japan	
		1996/1998 (good/ very good)	2000/2004	1996/1998	2000/2004	1996/1998	2000/2004
Brazil		42%	55%	50%	56%	54%	59%
Latin America		44%	58%	48%	67%	60%	64%

As table 6 and 7 above show, these questions were included only in the 1996/1998 and 2000/2004 period and, therefore, the data represent the average results for each period.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, the table allows for a comparison between aggregated/continental data and Brazilian. In general, the results seem to confirm the hypothesis previously mentioned: higher levels of knowledge are related to higher percentages of positive opinion. A comparison between table 1 and 6 signals that opinions about the EU tend to be more positive in those countries where the levels of knowledge are higher. Moreover, it clearly emerges that public opinion has changed substantially over time. Data show that in the 2000/2004 period Latin Americans, included Brazilians, had a far better opinion about relevant international actors than they had in the 1996/1998 period. As the editor points out, methodological differences in the opinion polling processes in two periods can largely explain this result.<sup>6</sup> Other conjunctural factors, however, could also have played a role.

More specifically, we note that at continental level, the European Union remains at the bottom of the ranking with 58% of citizens with a very good/good opinion (US and Japan respectively at 67% and 64%) but improves its image dramatically with respect to the 1996/1998 period (44%). In this context, the most interesting result concerns the difference in Brazilian attitudes in the two periods. While the share of Brazilians answering very good/good increases with respect to all the three actors (EU, US, Japan), we note that such increase is far more marked in the case of the European Union. As the study points out, however, the distance in terms of favourable opinions between the US and the EU should not lead to pessimistic conclusions. Table 8 indicates that roughly three out of ten of those interviewed in Latin America are not able to express any opinion concerning the EU. In the case of the US, the numbers are one out of ten. It seems clear, therefore, that such low levels of negative opinion associated to the EU leave room for improvement. In other words, in light of the positive relation between level of knowledge and positive opinions, it would suffice to increase the levels of knowledge in order to reach US levels of appreciation.

**Table 8**

<sup>5</sup> The same question was also included in Latinobarometro 1995 questionnaires. However, since only 8 countries were polled, the data has not be considered as sufficiently representative of the whole regional public opinion trends and, therefore, not included in the table.

<sup>6</sup> In the 1996-98 period individuals had five possible options for their answers (very good/good/regular/bad/very bad) whereas the number was reduced to four in the 2000-2004 period. Evidence proves that, independently from the nature of the issues, a substantial percentage of people interviewed, if given the opportunity, tend to choose a neutral option. This partly explains the different results in the two periods.

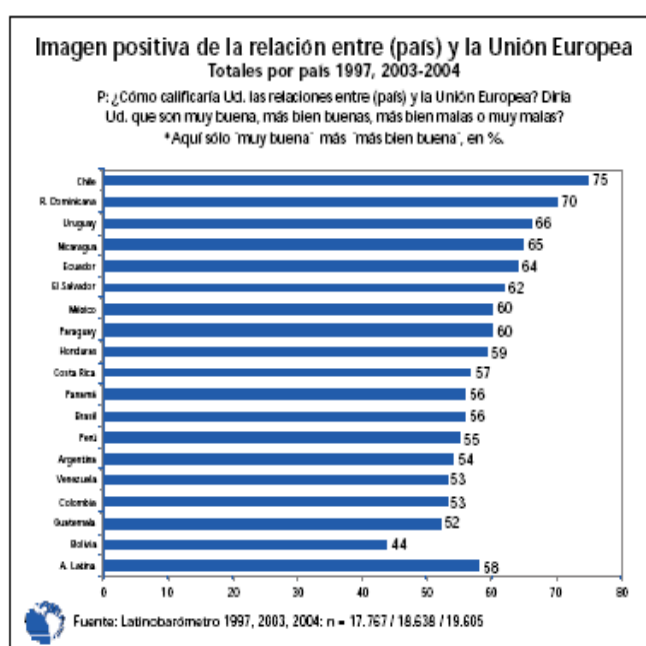
**Opinión sobre las Potencias Mundiales**  
No sabe - No responde  
**Latinoamérica 1997-1998 / 2000-2004**

NS/NR	Unión Europea	Japón	EEUU
1997-1998	34	18	16
2000-2004	32	25	11

Fuente: Latinobarómetro 1997-1998 / 2000-2004

A third set of questions aims at investigating how people perceive relations between their country and the European Union.<sup>7</sup> Once again the comparison between data regarding the EU and other relevant actors (the option “other countries in Latin America” was also included) is used to allow for a meaningful evaluation of results (Tables 9 and 10).

**Table 9**



Interestingly, the evaluation of relations with the EU show patterns very similar to those concerning the opinion of the EU presented above, both in Latin America and Brazil (respectively 58%-58% as regards Latin America and 56%-55% in Brazil). This is important for two reasons. First, the same does not apply to other world powers. Second, if we accept the approach of the study that conceives “opinion” as a general indicator signalling evaluation about culture and people and “evaluation of relations” as a political judgement on the administration (Lagos 2005: 63), it follows that no discrepancy exists between how Latin Americans and Brazilians perceive European culture and the EU government/administration.

When the data is compared with data referring to other world powers (Table 10), we note that in spite of the good results previously shown, the EU still lags behind at the bottom of the preferences. Overall people in the continent and in Brazil evaluate more positively relations with, in order, the US, other Latin American Countries and Japan.

<sup>7</sup> As the table shows, data are available for the years 1997, 2003, 2004. The results are obtained by calculating the average from the three years.

**Table 10**

Name of the opinion poll Latinobarometro (1997, 2003, 2004)	Question asked: How would you define relations between your country and.. (very good/good/bad/very bad)	United States (good/verygood)	Japan (good/very good)	Other countries in Latin America (good/very good)	European Union (good/very good)
Brasil		69%	63%	64%	56%
Latin America		71%	64%	68%	58%

Once again, these results should be interpreted with caution. Consistently with what previously stressed, there are marked differences between the numbers of those who are not able to evaluate relations (“don’t know”, “don’t answer”) with the EU and the US, both at continental and Brazilian levels (Table 11).

**Table 11**

Name of the opinion poll Latinobarometro (1997,2003,2004)	Question asked: How would you define relations between your country and	United States (don’t know/don’t answer)	EU (don’t know/don’t answer)
Brasil		14%	30%
Latin America		10%	29%

By adding the percentages of those who evaluate positively relations and those who don’t express any opinion it emerges that 87% of Latin Americans and 86% of Brazilian don’t judge negatively relations with the EU. As far as the US is concerned, numbers go down to 81% for Latin America and 83% for Brazil. These data clearly cast a different light on the interpretation of the findings concerning the evaluation of relations with the EU and point, once again, to the importance of the low levels of knowledge, rather than to negative perceptions, as major determinants of the gap between the EU and the US in the levels of appreciation.

A fourth set of questions approaches the issue from a different angle. Instead of evaluating how relations between countries are perceived, people are asked to express themselves on what they think about relations with people from other countries (Table 12). By asking to individuals which country they perceive as “best friend in the world”, the opinion poll aims at collecting additional information to measure the perception of “closeness” between countries.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> The results express an average calculated from the data available (years 1998, 2001, 2004).

Table 12

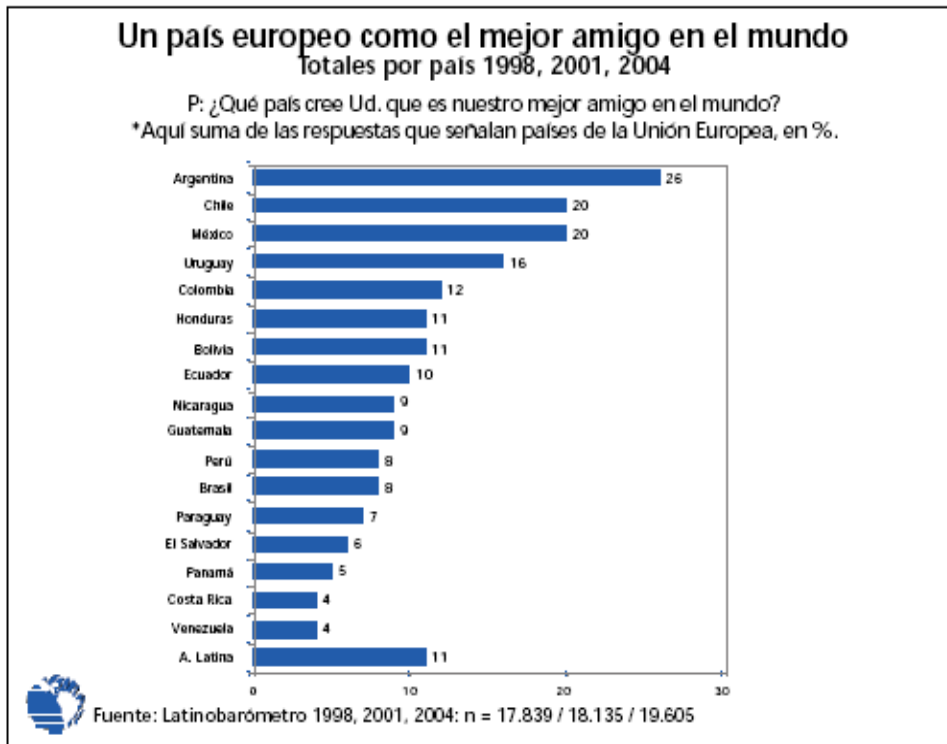


Table 13

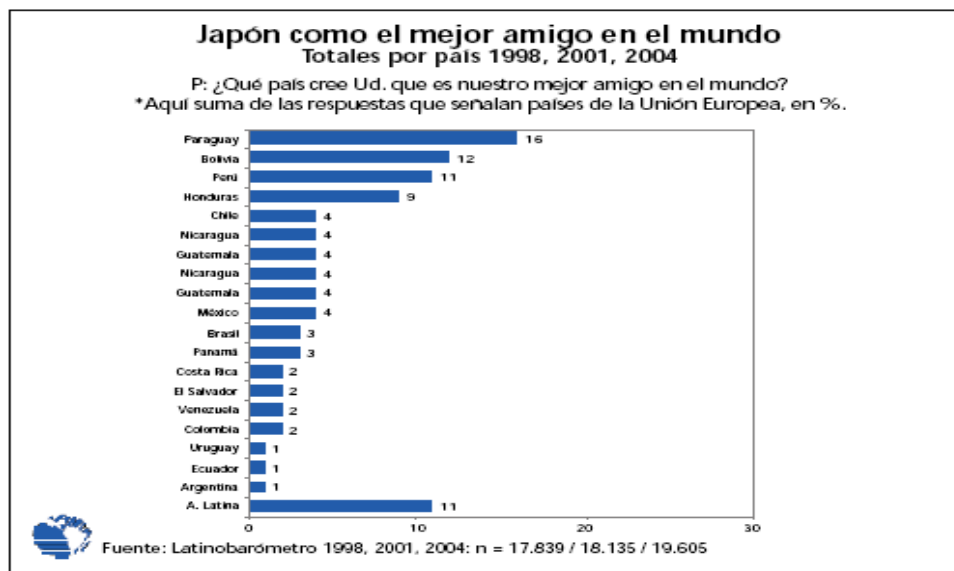


Table 14



Not surprisingly, tables 12, 13 and 14 show that, in a majority of countries, individuals faced with a triple choice, United States, Japan, “a European country”, indicate the United States as “best friend in the world”. The data concerning Brazil, however, shows patterns that are slightly more favourable to the EU. While the US remains the country that obtains most of the preferences (23%), “a European country” ranks clearly as second best choice (8%) before Japan (3%); at continental level, “a European country” and Japan stand both at 11%. Even though the US clearly emerges as the country perceived as “closest” by most Latin Americans (except for Argentina), the most striking element concerns the fact that almost half of those interviewed were not able to indicate any country as “best friend in the world”. As far as Brazil’s relative position is concerned, it could be placed in-between an ideal continuum whose extremes are defined by the EU-closest group of countries (Argentina, Mexico, Chile, Uruguay), on the one hand, and the EU-most distant group (Venezuela, Costa Rica Panama), on the other hand.

Finally, the analysis of some of the data included in the 2004 Latinobarómetro and collected systematically in the second of the studies mentioned at the beginning of the section (Lagos; 2004) will allow for a substantial step further in the investigation by providing interesting insights as to how the EU’s policies and its global role are perceived. In this context, a set of questions that touches upon relative perceptions of EU’s contribution in different international policy realms will be taken into consideration. Specifically, the investigation concerns the perception of EU’s relative contribution with respect to the following policy issues: democracy, free trade, peace and development cooperation (see tables 15, 16, 17 and 18).<sup>9</sup>

Table 15

Name of the opinion poll Latinobarómetro 2004	Question asked: Which power contributes most to democracy?	United States		European Union	
		Population	University only	Population	University only
Brasil		25%	21%	22%	53%
Latin America		37%	33%	27%	46%

<sup>9</sup> The Latinobarómetro questionnaire includes Japan and China as possible choices. Given the relatively little relevance of the frequencies in these two categories, only the data concerning the US and the EU have been presented here.

**Table 16**

Name of the opinion poll Latinobarometro 2004	Question asked: Which power contributes most to free trade?	United States		European Union	
		Population	University only	Population	University only
Brasil		18%	13%	13%	30%
Latin America		43%	44%	14%	24%

**Table 17**

Name of the opinion poll Latinobarometro 2004	Question asked: Which power contributes most to peace in the world?	United States		European Union	
		Population	University only	Population	University only
Brasil		17%	7%	22%	48%
Latin America		36%	28%	24%	43%

**Table 18**

Name of the opinion poll Latinobarometro 2004	Question asked: Which power contributes most to development?	United States		European Union	
		Population	University only	Population	University only
Brasil		17%	15%	12%	29%
Latin America		36%	28%	16%	28%

The aggregate results clearly show that in Latin America the United States is perceived as the power that contributes the most in the four sectors examined. Free trade and development are the realms where differences between the US and the EU are more marked (respectively 29 and 20 points percentage) whereas with regards to democracy and peace, differentials are lower (respectively 10 and 12 points percentage). Public perception of world powers' contribution to peace, democracy, development and free trade in Brazil is slightly more favourable to the EU. Not only Brazilians believe the European Union contributes to peace in the world more than the US does (22% against 17%), but even when they believe the US is a more important actor (democracy, free trade, development) differences between the two actors are far less marked compared to those at continental level (respectively 3, 5, 5 points percentage for Brazil; respectively 10, 29, 20 points percentage in Latin America as a whole).

The most interesting element in this context concerns the education-level dimension. The analysis of the data shows the extent to which public perception shifts in favour of the EU at higher educational levels. When the population with a high educational background (university level) is taken into consideration, the picture changes dramatically. At the Latin American level, the EU emerges as the leader in three (democracy, peace, development) out of four of the policy sectors examined in Latin America. In the Brazilian case, these trends are even more accentuated. Not only is the EU perceived as the most important actor in all four policy fields, but the distance between the US and the EU is higher than in Latin America as a whole (32 points percentage for democracy, 41 points percentage for peace, 14 points percentage for development, 17 points percentage for free trade).

To sum up, the following conclusions can be drawn from the analysis developed above. Almost half of the Latin American population heard or read something about the EU but read or heard more about other international organisations (UN) and subregional pacts (Nafta). In Brazil, the share of the population informed about the EU is slightly smaller (if we exclude Mercosur as a subregional pact). When it comes to opinions, Latin Americans tend to have a generally good opinion about the EU throughout the decade and, more importantly, tend not to dislike it, especially considering that

33% of the interviewed expressed no opinion. The interesting element is the high share of non-negative perceptions. The fact that there are more people viewing positively the US and Japan should not lead to the conclusion that EU is viewed more negatively than two countries aforementioned. This result should be rather read in light of the above consideration: the EU is simply less known and, therefore, less liked (Lagos; 2004).

The interesting element here is that in Brazil's case the EU has improved its image more than others did. The same considerations apply to the evaluation of relations with the EU. In Brazil, as well as in Latin America as a whole, relations with the EU are judged as highly positive. Again, the higher ratings obtained by Japan and the US can be explained by the highest rate of non-opinions related to the EU rather than read as the expression of a more negative attitude towards it (Lagos; 2004).

An analysis of the data concerning the perception of the EU's role on the international stage tells us that in Latin American people's perception of the EU is more important as a political rather than economic actor. Generally speaking, in the region, the US is by far considered the most relevant actor in the international arena but in those fields belonging to the domain of politics, differences between the US and the EU are less marked. Brazil belongs neither in the pro-US group nor in the pro-EU group of countries. In 2004, however, in Brazil there were more people indicating the EU, rather than the US, as a force for peace in the world.

Finally, the studies considered clearly point to a strong positive correlation between levels of education and both levels of knowledge and levels of appreciation of the EU and of its role in global politics.

### **3. POLITICAL ELITES**

Brazilian political elites' perception of the EU's image has not been studied systematically yet. No specific survey devoted to this subject is available. Research on how the EU is perceived by the political elite in the country has thus been conducted by trying to extrapolate information from three different sources: government, political parties,<sup>10</sup> and the main business and labour organisations.<sup>11</sup> A wide array of official documents, speeches, and policy papers concerning foreign policy issues have been collected and analysed from a variety of different sources with the aim to identify relevant material through which government representatives and agencies, political parties and business and labour organisations express, directly or indirectly, an opinion/perception on the European Union or the European integration process as a whole. A few methodological remarks need to be developed before discussing the main findings of this research area. First, since no single governmental information centre exists in Brazil, relevant material has been gathered from the main official governmental sources (websites of Presidency of the Republic, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Industry, Development and External Trade, Ministry of Agriculture and Brazilian Embassies). This may have limited the coverage of the analysis. Second, the very nature of the research objectives compelled for a selection of the information available. Only the material from which the EU's image could be inferred has been taken into consideration. It goes without saying that the boundary between providing and not providing useful information about the EU's image is somehow blurred and, therefore, such exercise largely relied on the researcher's own judgement.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> The analysis of this material will contribute to a wider view on how the EU is perceived within the Brazilian political elite, a view that covers the entire political spectrum and is not limited to the views of those political forces that are presently holding power in the country.

<sup>11</sup> The latter category was included on the basis of the assumption that to a certain extent business and labour organisations both express general political orientations present in the society and have an impact on how foreign policy is actually formulated.

<sup>12</sup> Defining what is actually relevant to the analysis of the perception of the EU's image inevitably leaves room for different interpretations. To the purpose of the research, only those comments, remarks, expressions and positions that



Third, in line with the approach chosen in the previous section, as far as the timespan is concerned, the analysis of political elites' perception of the EU covers the period between 1995 and today. However, since material concerning the pre-2000 period has proven more difficult to collect, an attempt has been made to offer a more complete outline throughout the period by integrating primary sources (official documents and speeches) with relevant literature drawn primarily from the main Brazilian sources (academic institutions and research institutes) concerned with foreign policy, international relations, trade and, in particular, EU-Mercosur relations.

The data have been organised as follows. In table 19, references to the EU's image from each source (government, political parties, business and labour organisations) have been inserted in one or more of the five categories identified, categories that express different potential articulations of how the EU's image is perceived. In addition, within each category a distinction has been made between positive and negative perceptions. This allowed the researcher to draw some conclusions as to the relatively most important fields in which the EU is perceived as a relevant actor and as to whether the image of the EU in each field is associated with a positive or a negative perception. Table 20 provides a clearer picture of the relative importance of each broad category identified.

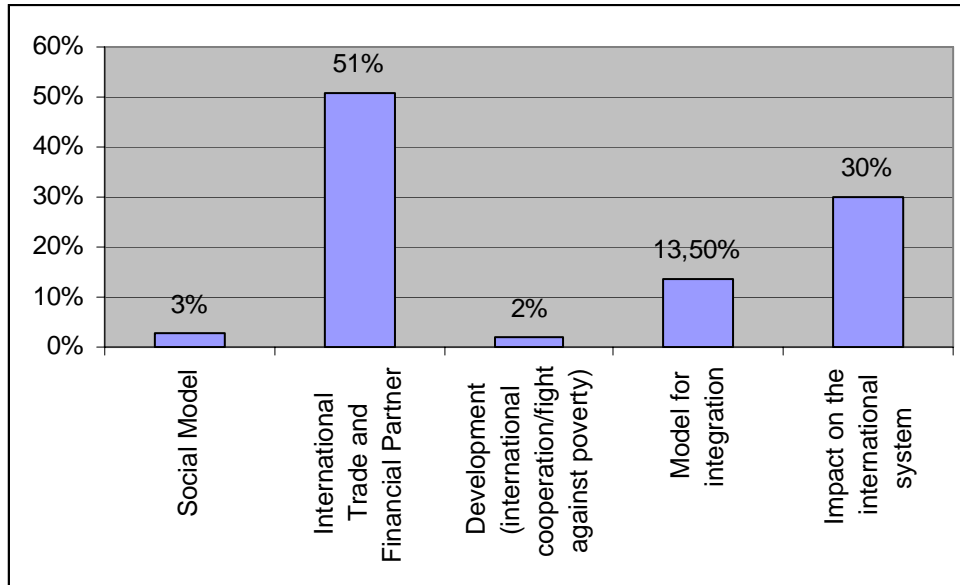
**Table 19**

	Social Model		International Trade and Financial Partner		Development (international cooperation/fight against poverty)		Model for integration		Impact on the international system		Total
	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	
Government			10	15			4		13	1	43
Political parties			2	1		1	4		3	1	12
Business and labour		2	1	1							4
Total		2 (3%)	13 (22%)	17 (29%)		1 (2%)	8 (13.5%)		16 (27%)	2 (3%)	59

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have proved instrumental, directly or indirectly, in determining whether and how the EU is perceived as a political and economic actor have been considered.

Table 20



The first element that comes to the attention of the researcher is the great relevance, in the eyes of the Brazilian political elite, of the EU as a trade and financial partner. In 51% of the cases, the EU's image is perceived as that of a global trade and financial player. This is hardly surprising. As far as the external dimension of the integration process is concerned, it is precisely in the field of external trade where the EU acts consistently as a unitary actor. Furthermore, the EU's share of global trade accounts for more than 25%. In light of these two elements, therefore, we expect political elites to perceive more clearly than public opinion the objective patterns of relative power within the international economy. The argument is strengthened even more if the dynamic growth of the Brazilian economy in the last decade and Brazilian diplomacy's activism to push through a set of reforms of the international trade regime aimed at providing Brazil with a window of opportunity to fully exploit the potentials of global trade are taken into consideration.

In 29% of the cases, the perception of the EU as a global trade and financial partner is associated with a negative image. The common denominator in each reference is the perception of the EU as a great protectionist power that by imposing high tariffs on imports and subsidising its exports distorts the international trading system at the expense of the developing world. In particular, the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is indicated as the main instrument through which the EU maintains a structure of global trade largely skewed in favour of the developed world that hampers the economic growth of those developing countries which largely depend on exports of agricultural commodities for their economic performance. This view is shared by different actors across time. While in the words of the former Minister of Foreign Affairs Lampreia the EU's trade policy "restricts artificially, unjustly, not only the potential exports towards the EU but more importantly the capacity of Brazil and its partners within Mercosur to compete in third markets" (Lampreia 1999a), in President Lula's view "the EU is perceived as a great protectionist agricultural power" (Lula da Silva 2003a). These expressions are common in the language of Brazilian government representatives when issues concerning international trade are at stake. As the table shows, this perception goes beyond the governmental level and is shared by political parties and business organisations. In particular, in a document published by the National Confederation of Industry it is stated that "the EU represented, from the beginning, a dangerous example of violation of free trade" (Confederação Nacional da Indústria 2001).

More articulated, in this context, is the perception associated to the positive image of the EU. First, in spite of the negative perception concerning the elements aforementioned, there is a clear recognition of the importance of the EU both as a market for Brazilian exports and as the main provider of foreign investment in the country. In the words of the former Secretary General for External Relations, Seixas Correias, “the partnership with the EU is of primary importance. Its fifteen members, together, represent the largest market for Brazilian exports and the main source of foreign direct investment in Brazil” (Seixas Correia 1999). Second, the EU is referred to as an actor that is characterised by a positive attitude towards negotiations. President Lula defined the EU as “the only Mercosur’s trade interlocutor that, putting on the table offers in all the relevant areas, signals a positive disposition towards negotiations” (Lula da Silva 2003a). Third, a positive image emerges when the political discussion touches upon the issue of trade negotiations between Mercosur and the EU, on the one hand, and between Mercosur and NAFTA, on the other hand. Generally speaking, both Cardoso’s and Lula’s administration shared the view of an EU that, in itself, is functional to a healthy multipolarity of Brazil’s trade relations with the developed world. The Lula Government approach, however, is marked for a clearer preference for trade relations with the EU as opposed to the project of establishing a Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) between Mercosur and the US-led NAFTA (de Almeida 2004a). The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Celso Amorim, made this clear when he declared “for the Brazilian Government negotiations within WTO are priority number one and negotiations with the EU the number two. The FTAA comes after” (Amorim 2004b). This perception is clearly shared by prominent members of President Lula’s Party (Partido dos Trabalhadores) when they declare “democratic mechanisms, attitudes towards negotiations and respect for pacts proper of the European experience don’t exist in the FTAA” (Partido dos Trabalhadores 2001) and by Lula himself: “we want integration with political, economic and cultural autonomy, in this sense the FTAA cannot be considered a project for integration. The process developed with the European Union, on the contrary, should be considered as an example” (Partido dos Trabalhadores 2001a).

The second element of the EU’s image in terms of importance is that of an actor that has the potential to exert substantial influence on the international system in terms of both distribution of power and mechanisms of global governance. In 32% of the cases considered, the EU is referred to as an actor with substantial impact on the international system. In just 3% of the cases, this perception is associated with a negative image. Coherently with an interpretation somehow consolidated in the region, the arguments represented in this group of references go as follows: the EU represents an imperialist/capitalist force interested in maintaining an international system where developing countries are forced in a relationship of dependence with the developed world and, therefore, should not be considered as qualitatively different from the US. The President of Lula’s Party, Jose Genoio, expressed this approach when declared “it is necessary to define an alternative to a subordinated foreign policy [...] characterised by the acceptance of the paradigms proposed by the great blocks of power – the US and the European Union” (Genoio 2004). In the vast majority of references (27%), however, the EU is perceived as a positive factor in the shaping of a new and more balanced international system. Again, this positive perception is articulated in different positions. First, common to different administrations is the view of the EU as a force instrumental to the achievement of a more balanced global distribution of power. While for former President Cardoso the relationship between Mercosur and the EU could contribute to “an articulation in the Atlantic space [...] based on balance, based on a logic of equality and multipolarity that is necessary to build a more just architecture of international relations” (Cardoso 2001), in the words of present Minister of Foreign Affairs, Amorim, “on a political level, dialogue with the European Union and its member countries is important in view of the strengthening of the elements of multipolarity of the international system” (Amorim 2003). Interestingly, this perception is shared across the political spectrum. In the programme of one of the main opposition parties, *Partido do Movimento Democrático Brasileiro* (PMDB), member of the coalition supporting the candidate Serra defeated by President Lula, it is stated “the creation of the European Union [...] will be

conducive to the creation of a multipolar order” (PMBD 2005). Second, the EU’s image is associated to the promotion of multilateralism and, more generally, to its positive contribution in the shaping of global governance. The definitions of Europe as a partner “with which we share the will to defend an international order based upon the strengthening of multilateralism as a way to oppose tendencies towards unilateralism”, and that “can contribute to make the international system more solidaristic, more representative and, thus, more legitimate and efficient” (Seixas Correia 200b) are commonly used by Brazilian government representatives. Again, this perception seems to be widely shared by different political parties. In the 2002 election programme for government of the extreme left presidential candidate, Ciro, it is stressed the need “to build an alliance to promote multilateralism with big continental powers, such as the European Community” (Frente Trabalhista 2002).

The third relevant element is the image of the EU as a model of integration (13.5%). Interestingly, no negative perception is associated with this image. The traditional importance of the Mercosur project for the Brazilian diplomacy and the centrality that such a project has come to acquire in Lula’s government foreign policy agenda as well as successful Brazilian diplomatic efforts for the creation of the South American Community of Nations bringing into a cooperative framework Mercosur and the Andean Community in December 2004 (de Almeida 2004a, Guedes de Oliveira 2006, Maag 2005), are certainly among the driving factors to explain this attention to the European integration process at both government and party level. The EU, in fact, is both admired as a model of coexistence and seen as an example for integration efforts within Mercosur. While for President Lula “the EU is not just a partner but a source of inspiration of which we admire the determination to shape a new pole of development and civilisation” (Lula da Silva 2003b), the Minister of Foreign Affairs Amorim declared “in many respects Europe represents a model and an inspiration for our own integration efforts within Mercosul and South America” (Amorim 2003b). Recently, President Lula declared that “the vision of the future that European leaders held even in the most difficult moments serves as an inspirations for both Mercosur and the South American Community of Nations” (Lula da Silva 2006). Once again, as table 19 shows, these kind of comments are put forward also at party level.

Surprisingly, the table indicates that two of the elements that most contribute to the self-representation of the European political identity, internally and externally - the European social model and the European development policy - are largely neglected, if not negatively perceived, by the political elite in Brazil. Not only no mention could be found in official documents, speeches, articles by government representatives about these issues but in the few cases where they could be found (trade unions and political parties) the perception was associated to a somehow negative image. For instance, in an official documents of the main trade union of the country, Central Unica dos Trabalhadores (CUT), the so-called European social model is referred to as being largely in crisis since the mid-1970s and not as a term to be used to define the substance of today’s reality in Europe (CUT 2003), and in the words of the Secretary for External Relations of Lula’s party, Delgado, “in Europe remains unchanged the model and vision of peace, development and democracy of those international organisations that judge and decide upon issues concerning poor and developing countries” (Delgado 2004).

In sum, the European Union’s image within the Brazilian political elite is mostly associated with a positive perception. These findings confirm some of the arguments developed in the already large and growing literature on the history of Brazil and its relations with the EU. In the last decade, Brazil’s foreign policy has continued to focus on changing the international status quo in areas critical to achieving the country’s development goals (Biato 2004). In particular, a reform of the international trade and finance regime was and still is considered as a condition to continue the ongoing process of Brazil’s positive insertion in the international economy and a redefinition of global collective security arrangements is perceived as a *conditio sine qua non* for the evolution

towards a more balanced and multipolar distribution of power at global level (Biato 2004). The generally positive opinion on the European Union, therefore, signals that the Brazilian political elite perceives it as an opportunity, rather than an obstacle, for the country to achieve its main foreign policy objectives. The relatively high level of attention paid to the EU as a financial and trade partner, with both negative and positive perceptions associated to it, reflects the importance that Brazil, an “emergent” economic power, attaches to relations with one of the main trading blocks on the global scene and political elite’s awareness that the shape of such relations largely influences the country’s own capacity to achieve its development goals.

Interestingly, the negative perception of the EU as a protectionist power, is not coupled with a negative evaluation about its role in the international system both in terms of governance and distribution of power. The EU’s role in fostering multilateralism, its potential in shaping a new multipolar global order as well as its perceived willingness to shape new “security paradigms”, are all elements that contribute to consolidate a perception of the EU as “a fairer global actor” that overshadow contingent divergence and negative perceptions concerning international trade issues. Finally, in light of the strategic prominence that the Mercosur integration process has come to acquire under Lula’s presidency (de Almeida 2004), the importance of the EU as a model of regional integration in determining positive trends of perceptions in the country should not be neglected.

#### **4. PRINT MEDIA REVIEW**

This section looks at the media’s role in informing understandings of the European Union in Brazil by assessing representations of the EU in national print. The purpose of this investigation is clearly of great relevance to the overall objectives of this country survey. Since the media often represents the principal source of information on foreign policy issues and plays a crucial role in informing public opinion, its power to direct both elite and public perceptions cannot be neglected. It goes without saying that TV represents the other major and probably most important source of information for the public. Due to time and material constraints, the present research will focus only on print media. Nonetheless, we acknowledge that in order to offer a complete picture of how the EU is perceived in Brazilian media further research specifically focused on EU representations in national main TV broadcasts will have to be carried out.

As a second preliminary remark, it ought to be stressed that this analysis has largely benefited and borrowed, in terms of methodology, concepts and structure, from the few existing systematic studies of the others’ image of the EU where such an assessment has been carried out.<sup>13</sup> The presentation of the findings from the print media analysis, thus, will be organised by mainly taking into consideration one issue: the content and the characteristics of current EU representations in national print media. In order to do this, the following approach has been chosen. The content of news has been systematically assessed and the news containing references to the EU have been identified and treated as propositions to be located in three different clusters of propositions: the EU as a political power, the EU as an economic power, the EU as an actor in the field of social affairs. In this context, therefore, information inputs are the only elements that have been taken into consideration. Other indicators such as those aimed at assessing how EU issues are grounded in the domestic discourse (focus of “domesticity”) or analysing the nature of visibility and the intensity of

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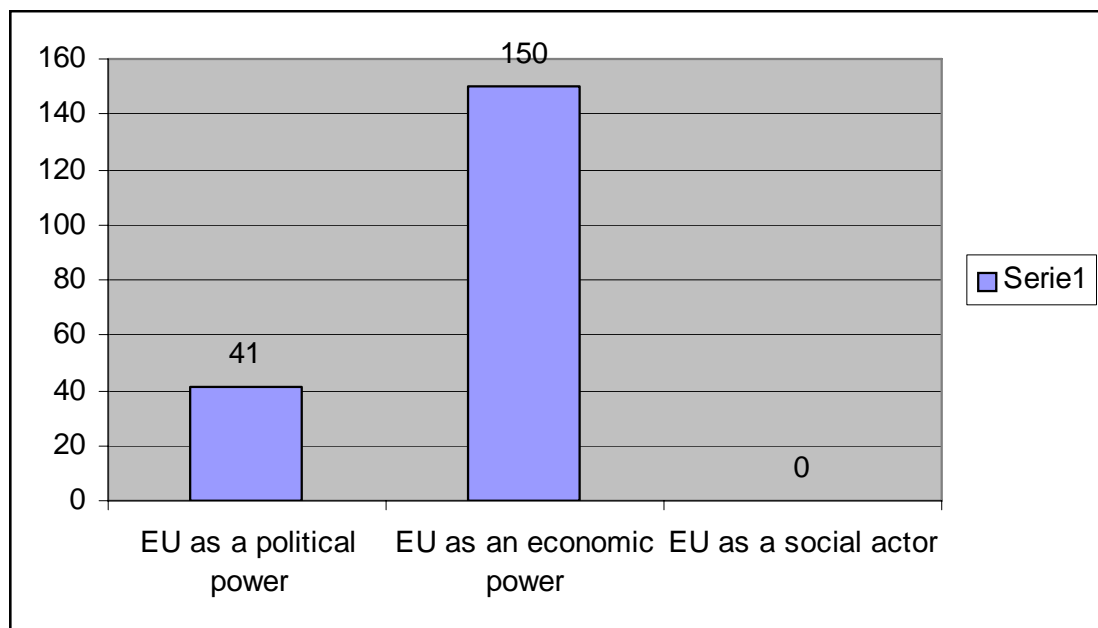
<sup>13</sup> Research on the perceptions of the EU in the Asia-Pacific Region conducted by Prof. Martin Holland at the National Centre for Research on Europe (University of Canterbury) was taken by the researcher as the main reference and source of inspiration for methodological purposes. In particular, this section largely borrows from the analytical approach used in the following publication “The EU Through the Eyes of the Asia-Pacific: public perceptions and media representations”, Edited by Natalia Chaban and Martin Holland, NCRE Research Series No.4 ([http://www.europe.canterbury.ac.nz/appp/project\\_description/](http://www.europe.canterbury.ac.nz/appp/project_description/)).

representation in the media (degree of “centrality”) will be left aside and subject, eventually, to further investigation.<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, in order in order to conduct effective research in this field, a selection of the vast amount of the sources available proved necessary. An analysis of the four major Brazilian newspapers, however, (*O Globo*, *Jornal do Brasil*, *O Estado de Sao Paulo* and *Folha de Sao Paulo*), may reasonably be considered as a fair compromise between the need to select sources and the necessity to offer an outline of press representations of the EU that is broad in coverage and sufficiently representative of the different Brazilian media political orientations.

As far as the timespan is concerned, this analysis of Brazilian print media covers the period between May 2004 and February 2006. The choice stems from the consideration that, in light of the vast amount of material available, such a shorter time-span for the review can, nonetheless, allow the researcher to identify relevant patterns of EU representations.

Results concerning “information inputs” are summarised in Table 21.

Table 21



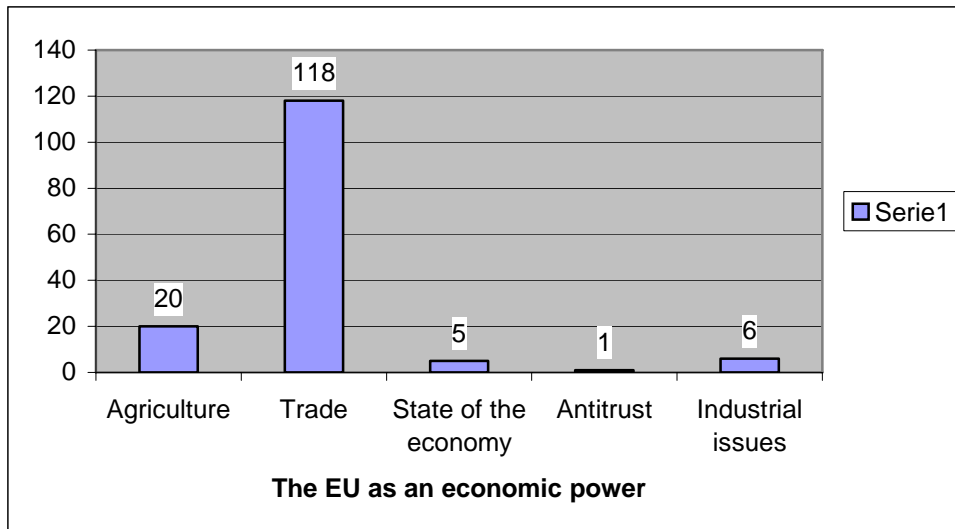
From these preliminary findings some interesting elements can already be identified. First, the representation of the EU as an economic power led the EU coverage in Brazilian newspapers. An overwhelming majority of references identified – 150 representing the 79% of the total - refer to an image of the EU that is associated to any of the multiple categories defining its economic dimension. Second, no reference was found with respect to representations of the EU as an actor in the field of social affairs. Third, propositions representing the theme the EU as a political actor - 21% of the total – account for an important share of EU newspaper coverage but are still relatively limited. Interestingly, these patterns are largely, although not completely, consistent with those identified at the political elite level. In both cases, the EU as an actor in social affairs, contrary to what most of the literature focused on European identity would predict, is absent from Brazilian dominant discourse on the EU while the EU’s image as an economic power (EU as a trade and financial partner in the case of political elite) is largely dominant. Again, in both cases, the political dimension is positioned in-between the two extremes.

The picture is even more interesting when we look inside each category. Assessing the category “the EU as an economic power”, Table 22 clearly shows that newspapers in Brazil paid

<sup>14</sup> These concepts, for instance, have been used in the context of the research mentioned in note 13.

overwhelming attention to such topics as EU engagement in international trade (118 references representing 79% of the category and 62% of the total). Agriculture issues stand well below in second place (20 references representing 13% of the category and 10% of the total) while attention to other topics (state of the economy, antitrust and industrial issues) is clearly marginal.

**Table 22**



If EU engagement in international trade is the topic that most interests Brazilian newspapers, we note that, within this group of references, the most relevant representation concerns two specific areas: EU-Mercosur trade relations and EU-WTO related issues (see table 23). Together references concerning these areas account for 92% of the “trade” topic. Given the relative relevance of trade representations within the category “EU as an economic actor”, the importance attributed by Brazilian print media to EU-Mercosur and EU-WTO is an element that needs to be stressed. In fact, such references account for 72% of those concerning “the EU as an economic power” and for 57% of the total. This means that more than half of Brazilian press coverage of the EU concentrates on these two specific issues.

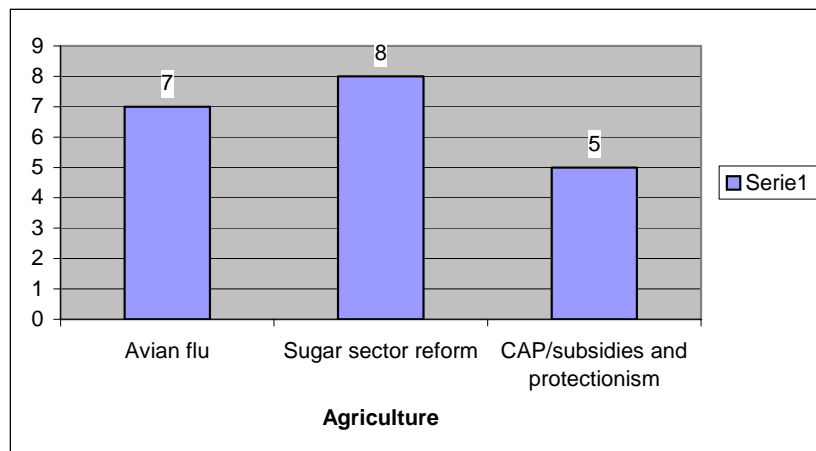
**Table 23**



The analysis of the topics concerning the EU and agriculture related issues covered by Brazilian press confirms the above considerations even more strongly (Table 24). Although topics such as avian flu, the EU sugar sector reform, and EU CAP dynamics (subsidies and protectionism) have all been considered as belonging to the group of EU pure agricultural issues, they clearly concern, at least indirectly, matters that have an impact on the international trading system, in general, and to

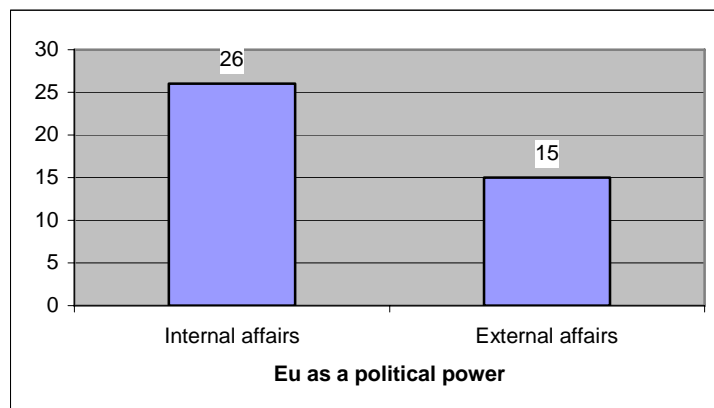
Brazilian trade interests, in particular. In other words, the focus of press coverage is largely skewed in favour of those agriculture-related issues that are strictly connected to trade matters.

**Table 24**



As far as the category “EU as a political power” is concerned, the following elements need to be highlighted (Table 25). In the overall context characterised by a relatively low attention paid by Brazilian press media to issues concerning the political dimension of the EU image, topics concerning the EU’s internal affairs prevail over those referring to its external dimension.

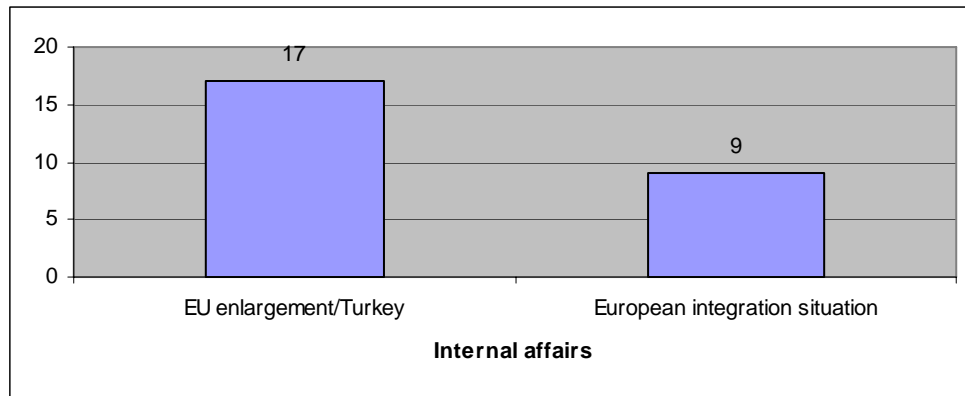
**Table 25**



In the first group (Table 26), the majority of references concern the process of EU enlargement and, specifically, concentrate on the problems, political debates, and public opinion dynamics surrounding the EU’s decision to formally open accession negotiations with Turkey. Other references regard, more generally, the European integration process and present comments and analysis on a number of topics such as the EU Constitutional Treaty ratification crisis, and the European budget adoption.

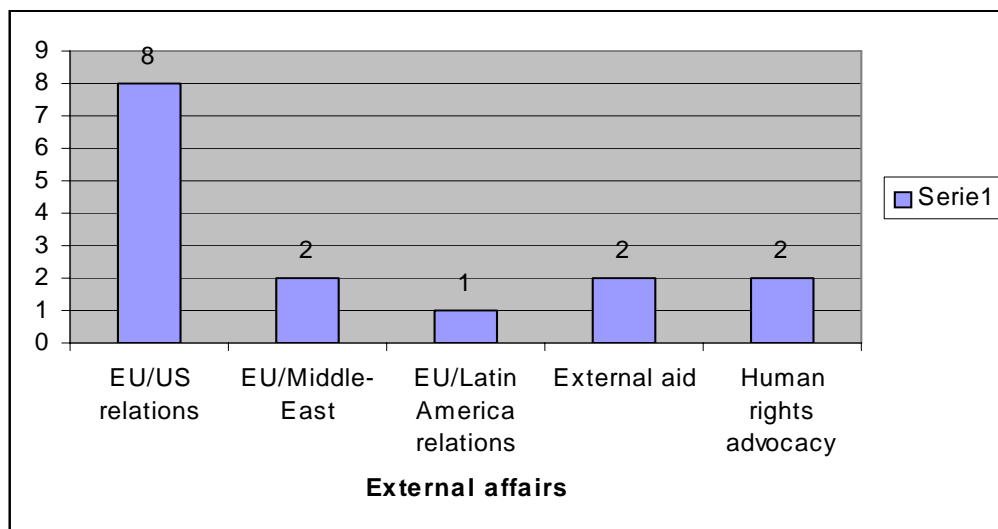


**Table 26**



In the second group (Table 27), the press focus mainly on EU/US relations, taking into consideration, specifically, European reactions to President Bush's re-election and CIA anti-terrorism activities in EU member states and following EU reactions.

**Table 27**



To conclude this section, the monitored print media in Brazil prioritised representations of the EU in terms of its economic activities. EU's engagement in international trade, in particular its trade negotiations with Mercosur and its positions within WTO, were the most visible "economic" themes seen in the country's press. Even when other economic topics are at stake, agriculture for instance, they tend to be related to issues influencing the country's relative position in the international trading system. Surprisingly, representations of the EU as an actor in social affairs are completely absent in the material analysed. This suggests, in line with the findings concerning the country's political elite perceptions of the EU, that "social" themes are not, at least in Brazil, determinant, as some commentators have often suggested, in shaping the external image of the EU. The "EU as a political actor", certainly constitutes an important represented input category but relatively, is much less relevant than the "economic" one.

## **5. CONCLUDING REMARKS**

Relations between the EU and Brazil have developed dynamically since the beginning of the 1990s. The variety of institutional ties and economic exchanges emerged in this period reflect the growing importance that mutual relations have come to acquire in respective external relations agendas. Brazil, therefore, certainly represents an interesting case-study for the overall purpose of this survey project. The analysis developed has, in fact, provided interesting insights and contributed to casting

a light on key aspects of the EU's international identity conceptualisation in two ways. On the one hand, it has confirmed that some of the crucial elements of the self and academic representation of the Union as an international actor have produced similar representations with external actors. On the other hand, the research has shown that other themes are not, at least in the context of this country study, as determinant in shaping the EU's image as part of the literature on EU identity has often claimed.

Unsurprisingly, the most important component of the image the EU has shaped for itself is that of a relevant economic and trading player in world affairs. In light of Brazil's status as an emergent economy in the wider international economic system, the centrality of the economic dimension in the perceptions of the EU's image was something that could reasonably be expected. The findings concerning public opinion partly contradict this argument. Consistently with what was argued in that section, however, the generally low levels of knowledge of the EU can certainly help in explaining the little salience of EU-related trade and economic matters in the eyes of the public opinion. Moreover, as the press analysis showed, news coverage of the EU largely concentrates on complex and technical issues - EU-Mercosur-WTO negotiations - which are likely to be of little appeal to the mass public.

In this context, the perception of the EU seems to suggest that the EU is regarded both as an opportunity and a challenge. The identification of the EU as a protectionist power goes hand in hand with the recognition of its importance as a market for exports, as a provider of investment, and more importantly as a potential ally in the path towards the forging of a "fairer globalisation".

The evaluation of the EU's role in the international system both in terms of global governance and distribution of power, suggests that the "opportunity" side of EU perceptions is more structurally grounded in the country's public discourse than the "challenge" one. The EU's impact on the international system is, by far, perceived as a positive. The EU's potential contribution to a more balanced global distribution of power, in fostering multilateralism, and in making the international system more solidaristic, are all elements that shape a perception of an existing broad convergence with Brazilian long-term interests.

The analysis also corroborates another element of the Union's self-representation as a unique international actor by pointing to the existing perception of its image as a model of regional integration for the Mercosur regional framework. Indeed, it ought to be stressed that the Mercosur project plays a crucial role in shaping EU-Brazil relations. The findings seem to point to the fact that Mercosur will represent a driving force in determining future Brazil-EU relations and, accordingly, mutual perceptions. As Klom puts it, "although Brazilian foreign policy was geared towards the US for most of the twentieth century, and only occasionally towards Europe, the Mercosur project has in effect pushed Brazil in the opposite direction; US difficulties with Mercosur and Mercosur's strong relations with the EU have been crucial factors in inclining Brazil's foreign policy towards the EU" (Klom 2003: 356). The insistence on the EU's role as a model for integration, President Lula's emphasis on Mercosur's strategic importance and his preference for EU-Mercosul over Mercosur-Nafta negotiations, are all elements that seem to suggest that the European option is perceived today as something more than, as some commentators have termed it, a simple strategic "card" to be played in the context of "truly important" foreign policy issues such as Brazil-US bargaining (Guilhon Albuquerque 2002).

Surprisingly, those elements of European identity associated to the social/solidaristic dimensions have been found to be largely absent from Brazilian public discourse. As far as the internal dimension of the European integration process is concerned, the research found that, in the period considered, the EU as an actor in the field of social affairs was a theme almost completely ignored by both press and political representatives. The same applies to the external dimension. The EU's

role in the field of international cooperation, fight against poverty, promotion of sustainable development, and protection of human rights is largely neglected if not associated with a negative image. These findings seem to indicate that the relevance of social themes in shaping the EU's representation with external actors may be overestimated.

A final remark needs to be put forward concerning perception trends at the public opinion level. The comprehensive studies analysed point to two very interesting issues. First, although generally less liked than the US, the EU ranks very high in levels of non-negative perceptions. Since differences between the EU and the US are mostly due to gaps in levels of knowledge, it seems fair to argue that there is still large room for improvement in this area. Secondly, data show that levels of appreciation increase dramatically at higher educational levels. Highly educated Brazilians see the EU more favourably than the average Brazilian does and, within this population, the EU is considered the most important international actor in all relevant international policy fields.

Whether relations between the EU and Brazil, an actor defined as the natural leader of the Latin American region (Klom 2003), will take the shape of an alliance of "civilian powers acting for the international governance [...] that cannot possibly be interpreted with purely realistic *Westphalian* and *Realpolitik* concepts" (Telò 2000: 29), remains to be seen. This research has shown that, broadly speaking, the substantial convergence between how Brazilians perceive the EU and how the EU perceives itself might offer a solid basis upon which a relationship of constructive engagement can be further developed. More plausibly, therefore, the Brazil-EU relationship could be described as one between actors sharing a *grotian* conception of world politics and attaching great importance to both political and economic *soft power* and consensual processes of integration in contemporary world (Lafer 2000).

## **6. PROSPECTS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

### ***Literature overview***

The literature on the history of Brazil and its relations with the EU is abundant. The growing expertise on Latin America within Europe reflects the increasing importance that biregional relations between the two continents have acquired at the political, economic and cultural level. The same can be said about research on European-related issues within Latin America. Both academic institutions and research institutes in Latin America are increasingly devoting attention to the European integration process and to the multiple dimensions of the relationship between the two regional blocks (EU—Mercosur). Much of the literature concentrates on the economics of EU-Brazil relations. However, as explicitly mentioned in the study, in light of the growing importance of the EU-Mercosur partnership and of the interest that the present Brazilian government has shown towards Europe (as opposed to a worsened relationship with the US), research is starting to pay greater attention to the EU from a strategic and global perspective and as a model for integration efforts within Mercosur. Monitoring closely this literature is essential for further research in this area.

### ***Public opinion***

As far as public opinion is concerned, the material accessed could offer a comprehensive and detailed picture of how the European Union is perceived in the country studied. In the researcher's view, the sources accessed added value to the study in at least three ways. First, by providing an outline of the public's perception of the EU in general, but also of EU's specific contribution to different policy areas. Second, by allowing for a comparison between national and continental trends. Third, by offering a broad view of public perception of different international actors. Altogether these elements enabled the researcher to elaborate very much in detail on some interesting elements of the EU's image representation in the country studies and to put such

elements in a wider context for comparative evaluation. For these reasons, Latinobarometro represents an extremely useful source of information for further research with similar objectives. All yearly questionnaires include specific questions concerning the EU and how it is perceived. Furthermore, as the two publications quoted in the study clearly demonstrate, Corporación Latinobarometro, the non-profit organization responsible for carrying out Latinobarometro surveys, has an explicit orientation towards developing systematic and comprehensive studies concerning public perception of the EU. Obviously, other sources will have to be monitored closely. So far, however, the variety of other Brazilian research institutions and organisations devoted to opinion polling and public opinion could not offer an organic and integrated outline of the public perception of the EU, or at least not to the same extent and accuracy as in the case of Latinobarometro surveys.

### ***Political elite***

As mentioned in the study, research on Brazilian political elites' perception of EU has been conducted by taking into consideration three different levels of analysis: government, political parties, and the main business and labour organisations. Government sources have been the easiest to access. In the researcher's view, although certainly incomplete, the material gathered was sufficient enough to offer an outline of how the EU is perceived within the Brazilian political community at the governmental level. In particular, the relatively abundant material collected referring to two different administrations (Cardoso and Lula) was useful to the extent that it allowed stressing both elements of continuity (I would argue "structural") and elements of divergence across time.

Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for the other two levels of analysis. As far as political parties and labour and business organisations are concerned, it was very difficult to carry out systematic research. The material accessible via the web was scarce and inconsistent. Further research will need to overcome this problem either by identifying research institutions specifically devoted to the collection of this material or by conducting field work.

### ***Media review***

As clearly indicated in the print media review section, there are two important elements that have not been investigated and upon which, therefore, further research will have to be focused. First, for reasons of time and material constraints, TV broadcasting has not been taken into consideration (TV news). Given the centrality of TV media in shaping public perceptions, ideas and opinions, this certainly represents the single major weakness of the study. Further research will have to fill this gap by identifying relevant sources of information. Second, research on print media itself needs to be improved by broadening the scope of the analysis and by including an assessment of whether EU representations are associated with negative or positive images. As mentioned in the study, the presentation of the key findings from the print media analysis has been organised by taking into consideration only one issue: the content and the characteristics of current EU representations in national print media. Other indicators such as those aimed at assessing how EU issues are grounded in the domestic discourse (focus of "domesticity") or analysing the nature of visibility and the intensity of representation in the media (degree of "centrality") have been left aside. This is due to a systematic bias deriving from the very nature of the sources accessed. Again, for material constraints due to the difficulty encountered in accessing relevant material, the researcher had to rely on a collection of Brazilian newspapers articles concerning the EU made available by the EC Delegation in Brazil. On the one hand this offered an advantage to the extent that it was possible to select material from a wide range of sources. On the other hand, such material was only relevant for content analysis and not for the other indicators mentioned above.

### ***Civil society***

A preliminary analysis showed that Brazilian organised civil society is very much active and present throughout the country. Recent research tells us that in Brazil's territory there are 22.000

non profit organisations, aggregating about 10 million volunteers and offering services to almost 40 million people. Unfortunately it proved extremely difficult to access via the web material that could be of any relevance for the objectives of this study. In my opinion, field work is necessary in order to conduct a comprehensive and meaningful assessment of how the EU is perceived within Brazilian organised civil society.

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- [Lamy vem ao Brasil falar com Amorim - O Estado de São Paulo](#)  
(10/9/2004)
- [País espera ter US\\$ 300 mi com decisão da UE - Folha de S. Paulo.](#)  
(15/07/2004)
- [França fará referendo sobre a Carta da UE - O Estado de S. Paulo.](#)  
(15/07/2004)
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(15/07/2004)
- [Plano da UE pode beneficiar açúcar brasileiro - O Estado de S. Paulo.](#)  
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(15/07/2004)
- [Europa deve cortar subsídio do açúcar e ajudar Brasil - folha de S. Paulo.](#)  
(14/07/2004)
- [UE doa dez vezes mais do que EUA - O Globo.](#)  
(14/07/2004)
- [Mercosul espera que UE melhore proposta agrícola - O Estado de S. Paulo.](#)  
(14/07/2004)
- [Empresários querem Mercosul-UE 'ambicioso' - O Estado de S. Paulo.](#)  
(27/05/2004)
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(01/05/2004)



## GARNET - Jointly Executed Research Project 5.2.1

### **THE EXTERNAL IMAGE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION** *A preliminary survey on the existing sources*

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### **REPORT ON** *Canada*

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## **Introduction**

This article analyses Canadian perceptions of the European Union (EU). The first part gives an historical review of the evolution of the relationship between Canada and the EU from the formation of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) to today. This historical review provides the background against which current perceptions must be viewed. The second part looks at Canadian governmental perceptions through an analysis of parliamentary debates, reports of House of Commons and Senate Committees, official papers released by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) and the most recent election platforms of five federal political parties. It will also include findings from a recent survey of parliamentary and bureaucratic elites about their evaluations of EU importance in addressing various security threats. The third part will examine the perceptions of the non-governmental sector. This will include an analysis of the content of two national newspapers and a third serving Toronto, Canada's largest city. This section will also examine commercial and academic public opinion polls as well as documents and press releases from Canada's principal business and labour organisations, and the research archives of non-partisan think tanks. The conclusions will offer a brief summary of the findings.

### **1. Historical background of Canadian-EU relations**

Relatively little academic attention has been devoted to Canada-EU relations. There are a few journal articles devoted to single episodes but very few monographs analysing the relationship over time (Muirhead 1992; Rempel 1996; Potter 1999). This section outlines, in a rather synthetic fashion, three phases in the history of Canadian- EU relations: that of indifference, that of interest and advances and that of tensions and renewed interest.

#### ***Indifference***

Since the beginning of the process of European integration in the early 1950s and until the development of what came to be known as the 'third option' (or 'option Europe') in the early 1970s, Canada maintained, both at the level of the political and economic elite and at that of the general

public, an attitude later described as wavering between 'indifference and selective attention with a phase of concern, if not outright irritation' (Soldatos 1989: 275). A poll taken in 1961 showed that less than half of Canadians (40%) had heard of the European 'common market'. In 1976, i.e. fifteen years later, barely a majority of Canadians (57%) had encountered the term in newspapers or magazines while 70 percent had heard it on television. Knowledge of what was then known as European Community (EC) remained nevertheless rather superficial. Only 2 percent of Canadians, for instance, could identify Ireland and Denmark as members of the EC. This is not surprising if one considers that an analysis of the index of the Canadian press reveals that the Community received the most attention - and it amounted only to about sixty articles - at the time of the first application for entry by the United Kingdom (UK) (Mahant 1981).

During this phase, the only major interaction between Canada and the EC was to negotiate the compensatory measures to which Canada as a member of General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) had a right following the decision of the six to form a customs union. In 1959, Canada also signed an agreement to supply uranium to EURATOM. It should be pointed out, however, that the Canadian government showed some unease with the process of European integration from its very beginnings. The reason was that Canada favoured a North-Atlantic-wide free trade area which would have given some tangible meaning to article 2 of the NATO treaty which called for increased economic and political collaboration between its members. The creation of a common market limitedly to some European members could instead create fissures in the Alliance and would surely increase, and thus also entrench, Canada's growing economic dependence on the United States (US) market. Indeed, it should be pointed out that Canada's attitudes towards the EU are best understood when seen against the background of its evolving relationship with the US. Not surprisingly Canadian unease vis-à-vis the EC increased when the UK, at the time Canada's biggest trading partner in Europe, decided to join it. Unease turned into irritation when the EC launched its common, and protectionist, agricultural policy (CAP). Indeed, the Canadian government viewed these events as a kind of 'betrayal'. Canada in other words, did not feel it received a 'commensurate commercial return' for its 'heavy commitment to European security through NATO' (Potter 1999: 23).

### *Interest and advances*

One of the central concerns of Canadian foreign policy in the 1970s was dealing with the country's growing economic dependence on the US. In 1948, the UK still absorbed 22 percent of Canadian exports while the US received 38 percent. By the early 1970s, however, Canada's position in international trade had become more vulnerable. Over 70 percent of its exports went to the US while only 7 percent went to the UK and another 6 percent to the six countries then forming the EC. During the same period, moreover, US direct investments in Canada had grown to be five times greater than those coming from the UK and the rest of Europe (Lasok 1976; Pentland 1983). These trends led some Canadian nationalists to voice concern about the future of the country's independence (Grant 1965; Levitt 1970). The government, however, seemed not to worry too much, since Canada was after all supposed to enjoy a 'special relationship' with the US.

When on 15 August 1971, as part of a larger strategy to deal with its increasingly larger capital and trade deficits, the US government put an end to the convertibility of the dollar and raised existing tariffs by 10 percent, Ottawa requested an exemption on the basis of the 'special relationship'. When the US refused, the Canadian government began looking for ways to deal with Canada's trade dependence (Crocchi 1999). The Trudeau government had launched a review of Canadian foreign policy soon after coming to power in 1968. The report was published in a series of booklets each of one devoted to a different area or issue: Europe, the Pacific, Latin America, the United Nations (UN), and international development. Curiously, there was no booklet devoted to Canada's most important relationship, that with the US. It was only after the August 1971 crisis that such a study was commissioned. It appeared not as a booklet but as an article in DFAIT semi-official journal (Sharp 1972). Three options were identified. The first was to live with dependence and resigning to a slow process of economic integration with the US (what Canadians call 'continentalism'). The second option was to embrace 'continentalism', that is to seek economic integration with the US in order to make Canada less vulnerable to US recurring protectionist impulses. The third option identified the EC as a source of trade diversification and hence as a potential counterweight to the US, a role once played by the UK and the Commonwealth.

This new Canadian interest in the EC led to a number of developments. In 1972, Canada and the EC began semi-annual high-level consultation on bilateral and multilateral issues and two years later Canadian and European parliamentarians held the first of what would become annual meetings. In 1973 the Canadian government also accredited an ambassador exclusively to the EC. Until then it was the ambassador to Belgium who acted also as ambassador to the EC. Finally, in 1976, after some lengthy negotiations, Canada and the EC signed a framework agreement, known as 'contractual link', which called for the development of commercial relations, suggested instruments for economic and industrial cooperation, and created a joint committee charged with supervising and promoting the relationship. The term 'contractual link', which was a 'juridical novelty' (it was after all the first time the EC signed a commercial agreement with a developed country) suggested that the agreement was more than a simple reaffirmation of GATT principles but less than the establishment of a system of preferential exchanges. It should be noted that the EC was at first lukewarm about the Canadian proposal. To get its attention, the Canadian government abandoned its intention of reducing the size of Canadian military forces in Europe and its contribution to NATO and promised giving the EC better access to Canadian raw materials and energy resources (Grenon 1978; Pentland 1977).

Although much was expected of it, this 'entrepreneurship challenge', as it was defined, had a rather modest outcome. In market economies, after all, international trade and investment is primarily conducted by private entrepreneurs, hence the Canadian government could provide some incentives to Canadian traders to look at the European market(s) and alert European investors to opportunities in Canada but could not force them to do anything they did not perceive worth their while. Thus, the value of Canada-EC trade increased but as a percentage of total Canadian trade it continued to decrease while trade with the US continued to increase on both counts. Thus, it is not surprising that only a decade later the Canadian government decided to embrace 'continentalism' (the second option). In 1988 it signed a free trade agreement with the US (FTA) which, with the accession of Mexico in 1993, became the North-American Free Trade Agreement or NAFTA.

### *Tensions and renewed interest*



The CAP has been a continuous source of tension between Canada and the EU. What Canada and other countries reproach the EU is not so much protectionism, of which they too, after all, are guilty to different degrees, but the way the CAP works, and more precisely the fact that it leads to surpluses which the EU then sells on the world market thereby putting a downward pressure on world prices. Uranium and sealing have also been sources of tensions. In 1974, following the testing of a nuclear bomb by India, the Canadian government asked buyer countries to provide new guarantees besides those agreed upon in the original contract. When in 1977, the Canadian government went as far as temporarily stopping the export of uranium, the Europeans denounced the adoption of this measure as an effort on the part of the Canadian government 'to increase its leverage' in the renegotiation of the 1959 sale agreement between Canada and Euratom (Galbraith 1981: 72; Boardman 1981). The EC has imposed import bans on Canadian products such as seal skins, furs, and beef in opposition to controversial practices associated with the seal-hunt, the use of leg-hold traps, and hormones. Canada has responded to these moves by imposing a 100 percent tariff on selected EC export products (Barry 2005; Jhappan 1994; Potter 1999: 238-245; DFAIT 1999).

More recently, the major source of tension has concerned the North-Atlantic fisheries. In 1981, Canada and the EC signed an agreement whereby Canada gave the EC access to some species of fish within its territorial waters in exchange for privileged access to the European market limitedly to certain types of fish products and acknowledgement that Canada had a special interest in the management of the so-called 'straddling stocks', that is species of fish that move in and out of Canadian territorial waters. The fact that some EC member states seemed to disregard Canadian stocks management measures led the Canadian government to suspend on three occasions the access of European fishing boats to its territorial waters (Barry 1985, Rowe 1993). The most serious clash occurred in 1995. The Canadian government seized the Spanish fishing vessel Estai in international waters and accused it of ignoring stock management measures for a species known as 'turbot' in Canada and 'Greenland halibut' in the EU, utilizing illicit fishing nets, and tampering with catch records (Crocì 1995). A similar incident occurred again in May 2004 when the Canadian coast guard boarded two Portuguese vessels and gathered evidence of their illegal fishing. The Portuguese government, however, considered the

evidence gathered by Canada insufficient and did not take legal action against the two vessels (*Globe and Mail* 8 May and 2 August 2004).

Notwithstanding these occasional but recurring tensions in trade relations, during the last two decades Canada has been looking with interest at the economic and political setup of the EU. Since the beginning of the 1980s, in fact, Canadians have been engaged in a divisive debate concerning their constitutional architecture and federal-provincial relations in particular. As a consequence some academics as well as politicians have been looking at EU institutions and political practices in the hope of learning lessons applicable to Canada or to a new Canada-Quebec economic and political association (Cameron 1981; Doern 1991; Christensen 1995; Leslie 1995). Finally towards the end of the 1990s, Canadian economists used the example of the Euro to argue for and against the idea of creating a common North American currency which, according to some of them, would solve the problems underlying the growing gap between Canadian and US real GDP per capita (Bowles, Croci and MacLean 2004).

In the late 1980s a combination of factors (e.g. attempts by the US to develop closer relations with the EC, the collapse of the Soviet Union and consequent reshaping of the international system, and the Single Market project which was perceived in Canada as the emergence of 'Fortress Europe') led Canadian decision-makers to take a new look at the relationship with the EC (Pitts 1990). The Canadian instinct was to re-launch the idea of a North-Atlantic free trade area or, failing that, creating one between Canada and the EC. In the end, however, what emerged was the much more modest 'Canada-EC Declaration on Transatlantic Relations' (TAD) which was issued in Rome on 22 November 1990, one day before the US and EC released a similar document in Brussels. The TAD aimed at increasing policy consultation and coordination and to this end, besides listing common goals, it also established an institutional framework for such a process, namely it provided for 'regular' meetings between the Canadian Prime Minister and the President of the European Council and the President of the Commission, 'bi-annual' meetings between the Secretary of State for External Affairs and the President of the Council and the Commissioner for External Relations and Trade Policy as well as for 'annual consultation' between the Commission and the Canadian

government and 'briefings' by the Presidency to Canadian representatives following EPC meetings (TAD 1990). Canadian officials had no illusions that the TAD would open a new chapter in Canada-EU relations but hoped that it would 'bring about some marginal improvements to reinforce a sense of solidarity in the face of [the magnitude of change in the international system] (Edwards 1993: 18).

The Canadian government broached again the idea of a multilateral (i.e. including the US) or bilateral free trade agreement with the EU following the creation of NAFTA and the completion of the Single Market. The idea, however, had to be shelved because neither the EU nor the US showed much interest. Again the Canadian government had to settle for something less ambitious, namely the 'Joint Political Declaration on Canada-EU Relations' and the 'Joint Canada-EU Action Plan' which were unveiled on 17 December 1996, one year after the EU and the US has released the 'New Transatlantic Agenda'. Both documents were designed to strengthen bilateral relations as well as enhance cooperation on a number of economic, security and trans-national issues. The second also urged the establishment of a Canada-EU business dialogue to provide advice on trade and investment matters (JPD and Action Plan 1996). As a result, in 1999, the Canada-Europe Round Table for Business (CERT) was set up. Since the signing of the 'Joint Action Plan' Canada-EU cooperation has expanded beyond the commercial realm and has come to include a host of other issues ranging from security and law enforcement to health, education, and training to name just a few. Canadian attention has however remained on the trade issue and the Canadian government has periodically re-launched the idea of 'free trade'. In 2001, it even tried to demonstrate that free trade would lead to substantial gains for both partners. A study commissioned by DFAIT estimated that a transatlantic free trade area would lead to an increase in Canadian trade with the EU of between 11.2 and 15.6 percent annually (corresponding to between C\$ 2.4 and 3.4 billion), depending on whether agriculture and processed food stuff were included. EU exports to Canada would grow by about 34 percent (or C\$ 7 billion) with or without the inclusion of agri-food products (Cameron and Loukine 2001). The EU, however, limited itself to commit to work towards a 'Trade and Investment Enhancement Agreement' (TIEA) which would go beyond traditional market access

issues by promoting mutual recognition of national standards, professional qualifications and assessment procedures (Barry 2004).

**2. Canadian governmental perceptions of the EU**

*House of Commons and Senate Debates*

The following analysis is based on a search for the term ‘European Union’ in the House of Commons Debates from October 2004 to March 2007 and the Senate debates from April 2006 to March 2007 (Hansard House n.d.; Hansard Senate n.d.). For the House of Commons, this period covers the 38<sup>th</sup> (October 2004 to November 2005) and 39<sup>th</sup> Parliaments (April 2006 to March 2007), whereas for the Senate it covers only the 39<sup>th</sup> Parliament. We counted only the instances in which the EU was mentioned in a value-laden context and ignored those in which it was used only in a descriptive, factual, manner (e.g. Poland is a member of the European Union). We then used a simple matrix to catalogue each mention according to whether it related to a domestic or international dimension and whether the context was positive (e.g. the EU is a model to imitate) or negative (a model to avoid). The results for the House of Commons are summarised in Table 1.

**Table 1**  
Number of times the EU is mentioned in House of Commons Debates

	Domestic Dimension		International Dimension		Total
	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	<i>Positive</i>	<i>Negative</i>	
38 <sup>th</sup> Parl.	12	1	9	29	51
39 <sup>th</sup> Parl.	46	0	8	27	81
Total	58	1	17	56	132

In the House of Commons Debates, the EU has been mentioned in a value-laden context 132 times, slightly more often with reference to one of its international, as opposed to domestic, dimensions (73 vs. 59). Positive references to the EU, however, occurred predominantly on the domestic dimension. The EU alleged success in tackling various environmental challenges received 28 mentions corresponding to 48% of all positive mentions on the domestic dimension. Almost all the

remaining positive mentions concerned various aspects of social policy as well as education and research. The references to the successes of the EU in the environmental field could arguably be seen as belonging to the international dimension. We chose however to list them on the domestic dimension because the EU was almost always mentioned as a positive example by member of the oppositions criticizing the current Conservative government for not doing enough in this field.

The negative mentions concerned almost exclusively the EU international dimension - the only negative mention on the domestic dimension concerned the 'tough' regime the EU allegedly has for foodstuff, which makes it difficult for EU sport fishermen to bring back sport fish caught in Canada. Almost all of them, moreover, (53 corresponding to 93% of the total) concerned various aspects of EU trade distorting practices and the CAP in particular (the other three negative mentions concerned: the EU delay in approving the merger between the European branches of Falconbridge and Inco; disagreeing with Canadian sovereign claims in the Arctic; and anti-Americanism). The positive mentions in this category referred for the most part to EU political-diplomatic initiatives such as its role in mediating the Darfur crisis, its ability to find a mechanism to continue providing humanitarian aid to the Palestinians notwithstanding the coming to power of Hamas, and its willingness to speak up on human rights.

Two aspects of the role of the EU in the House of Commons Debates should be underlined. The first is that mentions of the EU occur obviously within the context of a debate about Canadian politics. Thus, notwithstanding the fact that almost all negative mentions of the EU concern its trade distorting policies and the CAP in particular, the EU has also received positive mentions for taking care of its farmers (the implication being that the Canadian government does not or does not do it to the same extent) and for protecting its textile and garment industry by taking advantage (unlike the Canadian government) of the available World Trade Organization (WTO) safeguards to limit Chinese imports. One member of the separatist Bloc Québécois party had positive remarks about the very limited ability of the EU to infringe of the sovereign choices of its member states without the consent of the latter, the implication being of course that things are different in Canada. The second is that the positive mentions of the EU on the domestic dimension have been almost 4 times

more numerous in the 39<sup>th</sup> Parliament than they were in the 38<sup>th</sup> (46 against 12). The reason has probably to do with the fact that in the 39<sup>th</sup> Parliament the Liberal party – which has a strong reformist wing - is in opposition and therefore uses examples of what the EU has in its view achieved in the environmental and social policy spheres to underline the poor performance of the current Conservative (that is classic liberal, ideologically speaking) government. In the 38<sup>th</sup> Parliament instead the roles were reversed and therefore the EU was less likely to be held up as a model by the Conservative opposition.

Even accounting for the shorter period of time examined, the EU is mentioned much less in the Senate Debates. There were only six mentions of the EU in the 39<sup>th</sup> Parliament. The pattern, however, was the same as that in the House of Commons: three positive mentions for social policies and three negative ones for trade distorting practices, two of which concerned the CAP.

#### *House of Commons and Senate Committees*

Since the 1970s, numerous reports from committees from both the House of Commons and the Senate have recommended that the government put efforts in developing the Canada-EU relationship, especially its economic side and trade in particular. A 2001 report of the House of Commons' Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade asked the government to assign 'considerably higher priority to Europe' and tackle the challenge of updating the somewhat 'outdated image of the EU [held by Canadian business] as Fortress Europe'. To this end it recommended 'an increase in the federal government's trade and investment promotion budget in Europe' and 'greater expenditure of resources at home to prepare small- and medium-sized enterprises for the demanding EU market'. The Committee, however, did not seem to believe that such measures would meet with much success because it concluded that only the signing of a 'free trade agreement with the EU ... would be a tangible way of altering the psychology of Canadian businesses to get them to look across the Atlantic for business opportunities'. Hence it also recommended the 'rapid development of a Canadian business case for a free trade agreement with the EU'. Conscious, however, that the conclusion of a free trade agreement with the EU was a

difficult objective, the Committee also urged the government to conclude ‘a free trade deal with the European Free Trade Association’, ‘an acceleration of Canadian efforts to find the necessary WTO consensus to launch a new round of multilateral trade liberalization’ and finally a ‘redoubling of efforts to broaden the official Canada-EU bilateral relationship’ (House of Commons Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade 2001) . Similarly, a 2003 report of the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and International trade recommended that while ‘engaging in regulatory cooperation with the EU within the proposed Canada-EU Trade and Investment Enhancement Initiative, the federal government retain as a goal the successful negotiation of a comprehensive Transatlantic Free Trade Agreement’ (Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade 2003).

On the fisheries issues, the EU is portrayed as a key interlocutor and not as a villain, as is often the case in the public rhetoric. Thus, in a 2003 report, the House Committee on Fisheries and Oceans recognized that the EU had difficulties with some member states, notably Spain and Portugal, concerning the measures it proposed to reduce both quotas and the size of fishing fleets in European waters, the implication being that therefore it was not surprising that the EU should have difficulties enforcing measures in the Northwest Atlantic. Hence, the Committee viewed the European Commission as an ally ‘willing to look at alternatives to the status quo’ (House of Commons Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans 2003). More recently (February 2007), the Standing Senate Committee on Fisheries and Oceans recommended ‘that the Department of Fisheries and Oceans hold discussions with the EU with the aim of concluding a bilateral agreement on rebuilding fish stocks in the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (NAFO) Regulatory Area’ and that ‘Canada should indicate to the EU its willingness to make a sizeable investment in research to rebuild those stocks if the EU agrees to match Canada’s contribution in this effort’ (Senate Standing Committee on Fisheries and Oceans, 2007).

The EU is occasionally mentioned also in the reports of other committees. The pattern of perceptions that emerges from these mentions is much the same as that described with respect to the Parliamentary Debates. Thus in 2004, for instance, the Senate Standing Committee on Energy, the

Environment and Natural Resources recommended that the government imitate the EU and ‘introduce Renewable Energy Portfolio Standards for all federal operations’ (Senate Standing Committee on Energy, the Environment and Natural Resources 2004). The House Committee on the Environment and Sustainable Development, in a 2003 report, lamented that ‘little progress [was] being made in assessing the environmental impact of [government] proposed policies, programs and plans’ and that in this respect Canada lagged behind ‘many countries, particularly in the EU’ (House of Commons Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development 2003). One also finds the usual criticism of the CAP and concern that a WTO agreement which may lead to ‘lower farm subsidies in the US and the EU and [hence] increased market access for Canadian exporters’ would come at the price of having to change the Canadian supply-managed agricultural commodities system (Senate Standing Committee on Agriculture and Forestry 2006).

The EU as a model to avoid is mentioned in a June 2005 Report of the Senate Committee on National Security and Defence which, while giving a mild endorsement to the idea of establishing a ‘continental security perimeter’ (i.e. harmonizing Canadian security measures, especially those regulating borders crossing, with those of the US), warns against ‘moving beyond that to a European-style customs union’ that ‘would virtually eliminate the U.S.-Canada border’ because this would mean, as has been the case in the EU since the introduction of Schengen Agreement, that ‘the security of all of [the countries involved] is no stronger than that of its weakest country’ (Senate Standing Committee on National Security and Defence 2005).

#### *The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade*

The International Policy Statement entitled ‘A Role of Pride and Influence in the World’ which DFAIT released in 2005 offers a rather comprehensive image of the EU as perceived in Ottawa. The document defines the EU, not surprisingly, as ‘an economic superpower now tied with the US as the world’s biggest economy’ but also as ‘a major global player on other fronts, such as development and security’. This, the document points out, has policy implications for Canada since ‘while bilateral relations with EU member states (particularly those in the G8) remain important in



their own right, Canada's approach to them must take into account their role within the EU'. Canada and the EU, the document also argues, are 'natural allies' because of their 'historical, political, cultural and economic ties' and hence 'the EU is a strategic partner for Canada'. The relationship with the EU is of key importance not only to 'Canadian prosperity' (a reference to the trade and investment side of it) but also to Canadian success in advancing foreign policy objectives around the world especially the 'responsibility to protect civilians from violent conflict and to control Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD).' These are of course also US foreign policy objectives; hence the fact that only the EU is mentioned seems to imply that Canada and the EU, besides sharing these principles, also agree on the methods most appropriate to pursue them. In this context the document also points out that 'while NATO remains the cornerstone of transatlantic defence and security relations', Canada 'also supports the EU's development of a European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) to strengthen its role in crisis management in Europe and beyond, where NATO is not engaged'. ESDP's defence capabilities, however, must be complementary to and not duplicate those of NATO. Canada is willing to cooperate in EU missions as showed by its participation in the EU very first security mission, that in Bosnia. The document also identifies the protection of the 'global environment' including 'over-fishing and the management of ocean resources' as 'a shared concern' (DFAIT 2005).

### *Political Parties*

Despite their declining membership rolls, political parties remain the main linkage institutions between state and society in Canada. We have examined the most recent electoral platforms and policy statements of the five largest political parties to review party perceptions of the EU. Four of these parties currently have parliamentary representation: the Conservative Party, the Liberal Party, the New Democratic Party (NDP), and the Bloc Québécois. The fifth, the Green Party, does not have parliamentary representation, but its recent growth in public opinion polls indicates that it is likely to be an important player in the next federal election.

A review of the parties' most important documents - their 2006 campaign platforms, current policies and issue statements, and leadership statements and speeches - reveals that few or no references have been made to the EU or Europe. Documents posted on the website of the governing Conservative Party do not refer to either entity in the 2006 federal election campaign platform (Conservative Party of Canada 2006). Europe is briefly mentioned in the party's 2005 Policy Declaration, which supports an increase in the defence budget base at levels comparable to NATO's European allies (Conservative Party of Canada 2005).

The opposition parties pay marginally more attention to Europe. The Liberal Party's 2006 campaign platform included references to a united Europe and efficient market of 450 million people as a potential source of trade diversification, alongside China, India, and Latin America. The trade theme is emphasized again when NAFTA is mentioned as an important cornerstone of competitiveness in a world of 'super-regions' like Europe and Asia (Liberal Party of Canada 2006). The NDP election and convention platforms did not refer to Europe or the EU, while the Green Party platform referred to European countries as sources of good public policy. Comparatively low child poverty rates in Denmark, Finland and Norway, the progress that most European countries have made toward meeting the Kyoto targets and reducing water consumption were some of the policies and issues mentioned in the Green party platform (Green Party of Canada 2006). Finally, the Bloc Québécois has lamented that the support (meaning subsidies) the Canadian government provides to Canadian farmers is considerably lower than that provided by the EU to its own farmers. Somewhat surprisingly, considering the difficulties that the federal government has in this respect, the Bloc Québécois has affirmed that 'a sovereign Quebec could sign a free trade agreement with the EU' (Bloc Québécois 2006).

### *Survey of security elite*

To gauge Canadian perceptions of the EU as a political actor we report here a brief summary of the results of a Canadian survey we conducted as part of a larger research project exploring security elite threat perceptions in the G-8 countries plus China. The survey relied on a web and mail-based

questionnaire which was administered to more than 1,200 members of Canada's parliamentary, bureaucratic, and academic elites in May (web) and November (mail) 2006. Parliamentary elites included elected Members of the House of Commons and appointed Senators with committee responsibilities in the fields of national defence, foreign affairs, public security, justice, health, citizenship and immigration, and transportation. Bureaucratic elites included mid-level and senior civil servants in the departments and agencies with public security, defence and international affairs responsibilities (i.e. DFAIT, Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, National Defence, Health Canada, Environment Canada, Citizenship and Immigration, Justice, Fisheries and Oceans, Canadian Security Intelligence Service, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Canadian Transportation Agency, the Canadian Nuclear Safety Agency, and the National Energy Board). Since the survey was designed to tap into the attitudes of actors in this policy field, the sampling strategy was purposive in design and is not therefore representative of the Canadian population or of the occupational sectors they represent. Although the overall estimated response rate of 7.5 percent (94 responses) is too low to be considered representative of elites in the targeted policy field, and the parliamentary responses are primarily drawn from representatives of one political party, the results can be considered a plausible reflection of elite knowledge about the EU role in security and defence and of its capabilities.

The survey included a series of questions about the respondents' perceptions of EU importance in addressing thirteen different security threats. Table 2 presents data on elite perceptions of EU importance in addressing various security threats. On a 0-5 scale where 0 = not important at all and 5 = absolutely essential, respondents judged the EU to be of moderate importance, with average responses for each issue area ranging from lows of 2.62 and 2.68 for conventional war and nuclear/radiological attacks to highs of 3.59 for macroeconomic instability and 3.43 for migratory pressures. Although each issue area drew a wide range of responses on the 0-5 scale, the standard deviations were not large, suggesting there is an elite consensus that EU involvement was of some importance, but not absolutely essential. The relatively higher score for the ability of the EU to deal

with macroeconomic instability most likely reflects the fact that in Canada the EU is perceived primarily as a large market and an economic actor.

**Table 2**  
Mean Importance of the European Union in Addressing Various Threats

Type of threat	Civil Servant	Parliamentarian	Security Expert	Overall
Biological/chemical attack	2.67(1.40)	3.38 (1.54)	2.52(1.23)	2.74(1.39)
Conventional war	2.76(1.38)	2.71(1.80)	2.33(1.40)	2.62(1.45)
Criminalisation of economy	3.26(1.16)	3.58(.90)	3.12(1.31)	3.27(1.17)
Cyber attack	2.74(1.29)	3.31(1.23)	3.17(1.49)	2.96(1.35)
Ethnic conflict	2.94(1.39)	3.53(1.35)	3.04(1.43)	3.07(1.40)
Macroeconomic instability	3.48(1.02)	3.38(1.15)	3.90(1.30)	3.59(1.13)
Man-made environmental	2.16(1.13)	3.54(1.45)	3.52(1.30)	3.33(1.24)
Migratory pressures	3.33(1.07)	3.58(1.38)	3.52(1.18)	3.43(1.15)
Narcotics trafficking	3.03(1.32)	3.73(1.27)	3.29(1.16)	3.23(1.28)
Natural disaster/pandemics	2.86(1.23)	3.11(1.66)	3.12(1.21)	2.98(1.30)
Nuclear/radiological attacks	2.72(1.45)	2.96(1.51)	2.46(1.29)	2.68(1.41)
Terrorism: critical infrastructure**	3.02(1.41)	3.67(1.37)	2.35(1.41)	2.92(1.45)
Terrorism: state or society**	3.08(1.40)	3.58(1.62)	2.40(1.38)	2.95(1.47)
Base n (varies by question)	42-44	12-13	24	79-81

Notes: \*\* Inter-group differences significant at .05; standard deviations in parentheses

Civil servants and security experts expressed the most faith in EU capacity to deal with macroeconomic instability and migratory pressures, while the parliamentarians felt that the EU was best equipped to address narcotics trafficking and terrorism against critical infrastructure. Both forms of terrorist attacks were the only security challenges that resulted in a significant difference of opinion between elite groups. In both cases, civil servants and parliamentarians felt the EU was of moderate importance in addressing these threats, while the security experts felt that its capacity was closer to being nonessential. This might come as a surprise to EU specialists who have followed closely the development of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) and concluded that the EU has gone rather far in this new direction. Although this is undoubtedly true,

for Canadian security specialists - who by and large still subscribe to the view that security in the West, Europe included, is the business of NATO - from an operational point of view the EU has still limited competences in the security field, its hard power is at best only symbolic of its intention to become a significant actor in this field while its much-touted soft power does not yet seem to be very significant in countering terrorism.

**3. Canadian non-governmental perceptions of the EU**

*Newspapers*

This section is an analysis of the content of two national newspapers (*National Post* and *Globe and Mail*) and a third newspaper serving Canada’s largest city (*Toronto Star*). These three papers cover the Canadian ideological spectrum from liberal right to liberal left. The analysis is conducted through a *Factiva* search of articles printed between 1 January 2000 and 31 March 2007 and having the words European Union (or EU) in the headline. We use the same type of matrix used to analyse the Parliamentary debates except that instead for checking whether the mention under the domestic and international dimensions is positive or negative (newspapers after all have a more factual approach) we check to see whether it concerns a political or economic issue. The results are summarised in Table 3.

**Table 3**  
Number of times the EU is mentioned in top Canadian dailies

	Domestic Dimension		International Dimension		Total
	<i>Political</i>	<i>Economic</i>	<i>Political</i>	<i>Economic</i>	
<i>National Post</i>	5	3	10	7	25
<i>Globe and Mail</i>	3	4	1	15	23
<i>Toronto Star</i>	2	0	6	10	18
Total	10	7	17	32	66

The first element that emerges from the table is that Canadian dailies devote little attention to the EU, on average less than four articles per year and in the case of the *Toronto Star* less than three.

When the dailies pay attention to the EU, they tend to focus on its international dimension (74.2

percent of all articles), and the economic one in particular (48.5 per cent of all articles). The international issues, both political and economic, most frequently addressed were WTO- or trade-related stories (11 articles) and stories having to do with the pre- or post-EU enlargement to Central and Eastern Europe and access negotiations with Turkey (19 articles). Five articles dealt with Canada and the EU, namely the desirability of a free trade agreement and the fact that European integration cannot be a model for North-American integration. On the political side, the articles are about primarily about the promotion of human rights, the EU position and activities on the Middle-East conflict, and the Iraqi question.

On the domestic economic dimension, there is a difference between the articles in the *National Post* and the *Globe and Mail*, which reflects the ideological tendencies of the two papers: classic liberal the first and reform liberal the second. Thus, the articles in the *National Post* tend to portray the EU as too interventionist and the economic problems that result from it, whereas those in the *Globe and Mail* tend to underline the benefits. On the domestic political side the articles in the *Globe and Mail* and the *Toronto Star* mostly reports about developments in the EU (e.g. the debate on the Constitution, the celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary) whereas those in the *National Post* tend to concentrate on national experiences in the EU (the Netherlands, Ireland, Austria and the rise right-wing, anti-EU movements across Europe). There is also a colour article on the peculiar use of money by the EU, namely the funding a school for TV game show hostesses in Italy.

### *Opinions polls*

Canadian-based opinion polls about perceptions of the EU (or Europe) are scarce. In line with the history of the Canada-EU relationship, Canadians tend to conceive of the EU as an alternate source of trade and investment, rather than as a political entity with its own governing institutions. Cross-national surveys such as the World Values Survey (WVS) and the International Social Science Program (ISSP) which ask Canadians about international affairs have focused on perceptions about NAFTA, NATO, the UN, or on Canada's military involvement in conflicts in Bosnia and Afghanistan. A growing number of polls are tapping into Canadians' views about China and India,

most likely because business interests and the previous government have identified these countries as priorities for increased trade and investment.

A pretty clear picture of how Canadians assess their global trade and investment options emerges from a 1995 Gallup Canada poll which, it should be pointed out, was conducted on the heels of a highly visible government-sponsored trade mission to the Asia-Pacific region. When Gallup asked which of five world geographic regions should be the main priority for increased trade and investment, 33 percent felt that North America, where the vast majority of Canada's exports are shipped, should be the primary focus. Twenty-three percent felt that the Asia-Pacific region should be the focus and just 16 percent felt it should be Europe. Geographic proximity to Europe coupled perhaps with trade history, appeared to influence responses. Respondents in Atlantic Canada and Quebec, in fact, ranked Europe second behind the North American region, whereas residents in the Prairies and British Columbia ranked it a distant third behind North America and the Asia-Pacific (Gallup Canada 1995). Priorities had not changed much in 2004, when Compas Inc. interviewed five pairs of focus groups across Canada to gauge public awareness and attitudes about international trade policy. The research found that a 'utilitarian majority' supported trade diversification away from the US, with China emerging in the top spot as an alternate market, Latin America and Eastern Europe in the second spot, and India and Western Europe in the third spot (Compas Inc. 2004).

When the question however is not about on which region to focus efforts but with which region to sign a free trade agreement, the priorities change. A 2003 DFAIT- commissioned survey of 1,211 Canadians about international trade showed that 86 percent of respondents felt that Canada should develop other markets besides the US for its goods and services. Sixty-seven percent felt that since the US is so large and powerful it gets the better of Canada in trade agreements and disputes. When asked about whether there should be free trade agreements with other world regions, Europe was preferred by most respondents (76 percent) while developing nations in regions such as Africa by the fewest (57 percent) (EKOS 2003). A 2002 survey of Canadian business views on trade and investment relations with the EU commission by DFAIT revealed that 87 percent of respondents were in favour of pursuing a free trade agreement with the EU. Under a free trade regime, 62

percent of respondents expected their exports to increase, 53 percent said they would increase their marketing efforts in Europe, and finally 35 percent said they would be likely to establish a permanent presence there (Ipsos-Reid 2002).

The few cross-national surveys that have asked Canadians about Europe have usually juxtaposed it with the US. A 2005 survey of more than 23,000 people in 23 countries found that citizens in 20 states would see it as mainly positive if Europe became more influential than the US in world affairs. Sixty-three percent of Canadians agreed with this statement - a percentage higher than the world average (58%) although not as high as that in some other countries (Globescan/Pipa 2005). Although government officials and politicians would be reticent, to say the least, about making this type of statement, the response seems to reveal that Canadians do indeed feel closer to Europeans than to Americans in political values and hence also for what concerns how to deal with international political issues. Hence, a more influential Europe, or a Europe that can speak at a par with the US, would indirectly raise the Canadian profile not only internationally but also within the transatlantic alliance.

### *Business and Labour*

CERT is the business group which is most active in promoting increased trade and investment ties with Europe. This is not surprising of course since CERT was set up to promote an effective Canada-Europe business dialogue. Indeed CERT could be considered a government-sponsored pressure group whose task is to keep pushing the idea of a transatlantic free trade area. Its publications are readily available on its website (CERT n.d.). Apart from CERT, however, we have found no recent publications from Canada's largest business lobby organizations focusing on the EU. We examined the websites of Canada's principal business and labour organisations namely the Canadian Chamber of Commerce (170,000 members from chambers of commerce, boards of trade, business associations, and businesses of all sizes and from all sectors), the Canadian Federation of Independent Business (105,000 members from small firms across Canada), the Canadian Labour Congress (an umbrella organisation for national and international associations), the Canadian Auto



Workers (Canada's largest private sector union), the Canadian Federation of Agriculture (grouping two-thirds of all Canadian farmers) and the Fisheries Council of Canada . When the EU is mentioned in documents, the references are typically positive in tone and economic in content. Examples of EU mentions include urging the Canadian government: to explore ways to maximise investment opportunities and trade in services and goods while waiting for the TIEA; to maintain a consultation process while negotiating the TIEA; to engage the EU in putting pressure on the US to resolve the softwood lumber dispute; to adopt the EU model which allows immigrant 'workers with five years of service to stay on a permanent basis without having to leave and return'; to imitate the EU in allowing the patenting for non-human higher life forms<sup>T</sup> (Canadian Chamber of Commerce 2006, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c, 2004); and finally, to adopt a Charter for Small Business Enterprises similar to that of the EU (Canadian Federation of Independent Businesses 2004).

Much like those economists which have used the example of the Euro to argue against North-American monetary integration, the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) has argued against the idea of setting up a 'continental security perimeter' because it would mean that Canada - like EU member states at the WTO - would lose its ability to articulate its own policy objectives, without at the same time enjoying the benefits deriving from a common governance institution as is the case in Europe (Jackson 2003). The underlining assumption in both arguments is that because of the asymmetrical power relationship between the US and Canada, the former would never agree to pool its sovereignty with Canada as EU member states have instead done.

### *Research Institutes*

The Conference Board of Canada (an organisation specialised in studying economic trends, as well as organisational performance and public policy issues) has published various reports suggesting ways to strengthen Canadian-EU business relations (Hall et al. 1997; Lemaire 2005; Lemaire and Cai 2006). A review of the archives of research and publications generated by three of Canada's most prominent think tanks - the C.D. Howe Institute, the Fraser Institute, and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA) – uncovered, however, just three publications that refer to the EU.

Two deal with economic subjects and the third with security issues. A commentary produced for the C.D. Howe Institute evaluates what Canada stands to gain from joining the US and other countries in filing a case with a WTO dispute settlement tribunal against the EU *de facto* moratorium on approving new genetically modified foods. They argue that both sides should avoid protracted litigation, partly because it would exacerbate tensions in the transatlantic relationship stemming from the fallout of other trade disputes and the Iraqi issue (Busch and Howse 2003). Contrary to the view expressed by other observers and in public opinion polls, moreover, a recent policy paper released by the same Institute took a much less robust position on the need to look to other world regions, including Europe, for trade diversification away from the US (Goldfarb 2006). Finally, in 2005, a CCPA press release referred an article from the *Financial Times* referring to the architecture of a new world order being drawn in Europe and China, in which economic as opposed to military might is used as the main foreign policy instrument. The press release then quoted approvingly a *Newsweek* description of the EU eastern enlargement as the single most important contribution to western peace and security (Ismi, 2005).

## **Conclusions**

The picture that emerges from this review is that, in Canadian eyes, the EU is primarily an important international economic actor and large and attractive markets of which Canadian companies have yet to take full advantage. Since the release of the 'third option', the Canadian government has tried to spur Canadian business to look at Europe by signing a number of agreements with the EU and pursuing an elusive multilateral or bilateral free trade deal which would help diversify Canadian international trade and hence reduce its overwhelming reliance on the US which is a source of both vulnerability and unease. Such a strategy, however, has met with limited success because of EU (and, so far at least, US) lack of interest in a transatlantic free trade area and the unsystematic and somewhat timid marketing forays of Canadian businesses in Europe. The prevailing image of the EU in Canada is that of an elusive white knight that is supposed to alleviate the life of the Canadian damsel having a ménage with a southern neighbour who is a good

provider but does not hesitate, from time to time, to use brusque manners. The white knight, however, has a few faults of his own, such as his excessive use of trade distorting measures (e.g. agricultural subsidies), his tendency to over-fish in international waters and his dislike for genetically modified foods, seal products, and furs, to name a few.

EU economic, environmental, and political practices are occasionally mentioned as a model to imitate, especially by the reform liberals sympathetic to the idea of some well-aimed state interventions in the economy. Less often, the same practices are criticised by classic liberals as an impediment to growth. Our survey, however, does not show that the EU is perceived as social model from which Canada has much to learn. The EU is also perceived as a model of regional integration that could not possibly be replicated in the North-American context. EU institutions, on the other hand, have been examined with some attention, as a possible source of clues to cure the malaise affecting the Canadian federation.

Canadians also seem to believe that Canadian and European values and interests are more akin than those between Canada and the US and Europe and the US. Yet, the EU does not occupy a large place in Canadian minds outside the issue of trade expansion. The EU as such receives relatively scarce attention as an international political actor and even our survey of Canadian security elites clearly shows that they do not believe the EU to have a significant capacity to meet most of the current threats the only partial exception being represented by macro-economic instability and migratory pressures. Thus, Canadian cooperation with the EU in the political field, with the exception of NATO, remains underdeveloped whereas that with the US continues to grow. Ménages based on convenience after all sometimes work as well, if not better, than ménages based on professed love. It is very interesting and not surprising, for instance, that apart from what expressed in an opinion poll and an indirect remark in a CLC press release, we found no mention whatsoever of the EU as a potential international political counterweight to the US. The tendency, instead, is to mention at the same time both the US and the EU as indispensable allies. In this respect, Canada seems to be one of the few original founders still believing in the Atlantic alliance project.

Canadian governments supported, even if only with moderate enthusiasm, by the business

community will of course continue to press for a transatlantic multilateral or bilateral free trade area. As recently as March 29, 2007, for instance, the Hon. Hugh Segal gave notice to his colleagues that he would soon be introducing a motion ‘that the Senate call upon the Government of Canada to engage in negotiations with the EU towards a free trade agreement, in order to encourage investment and free movement of people and capital’. Of course the Hon. Hugh Segal, will not be able to have free movement of people since that is not a standard provision of a free trade agreement and comes only with the establishment of a common market. He might have meant to say, ‘free movement of goods and capital’. If a transatlantic free trade deal fails to materialise, it is very likely that the already relatively sporadic and mild interest that Canada expresses vis-à-vis the EU will wane. The fact that a growing proportion of the Canadian population comes from non-Europe, primarily Asia, and that the policy of multiculturalism is slowly but surely re-defining Canadian identity, it is likely that in the future Canada, while continuing to solidify its ménage with the US, will begin looking for a dream lover West across the Pacific and slowly forget about its object of desire across the Atlantic by whom it feels to have been spurned for too long.

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FORUM ON THE PROBLEMS OF PEACE AND WAR  
GARNET - Jointly Executed Research Project 5.2.1

**THE EXTERNAL IMAGE OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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**REPORT ON  
*CHINA***

**Roberto Peruzzi, Arlo Poletti, Shuangquan Zhang**



The survey *The External Image of the European Union* has been conducted in the Framework of the Jointly Executive Research Project 5.2.1. (*Normative issues*) of the Network of Excellence *Global Governance, Regionalisation and Regulation: the Role of the EU* - GARNET (Contract No. 513330); (EU 6<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme 2005-2010; Call Identifier: FP6-2002-Citizens-3). We are grateful to Garnet and to the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for their financial contribution to the project.



## ABSTRACT

Most analysis of contemporary EU-China affairs seems to suggest that what has long been described as a “secondary relationship” has today acquired a new quality and depth. In fact, the dramatic growth in ties between China and Europe has been referred to as one of the most important developments in world affairs in recent years and as the new axis in world affairs. These interpretations notwithstanding, it is difficult to deny that relations between the two powers have increasingly deepened and taken the shape of what is today officially defined by both sides a “strategic partnership”. Two of the potentially emerging global powers in the post-Cold war era find themselves engaged in a process of solid and deepening cooperation (political, economic and cultural) with no perceived “strategic or systemic conflict of interests” among them. These developments have been subject to growing attention from academic and research institutions. EU-China affairs, however, have been mainly approached from a historical viewpoint or with a normative perspective at a political, strategic, and economic level. So far, no systematic study has been carried out with the specific aim of providing an outline of how the EU is perceived in China. Much attention has been paid to the European side of the relationship and very few attempts to understand and investigate systematically the other side of the perceptual dyad have been made. This survey’s primary objective is to start filling this gap by offering a general outline of how the EU is perceived in this specific country through survey of the data available at the level of public opinion, political elites, civil society and the media. The assumption is that understanding how others see us is a crucial pre-condition in better understanding ourselves and how we frame our own identity.

At a general level, the study shows that the European growing interest in China is mirrored by an equally strong interest by Chinese politicians, scholars and commentators on the EU and its internal and external developments. At the level of political elites, there is a clear and consistent articulation across time of how Chinese political leaders perceive different dimensions of the European integration process. Paramount is the attention to the EU as a “pole” that shares many fundamental principles with regards to the future architecture of global governance. Few obstacles remain to be addressed but they are highly unlikely to cause major setbacks in a relationship characterised by the absence of any “hard security conflict”. The analysis of China’s Europe’s watchers assessments of the EU and its relations with their homeland, provided a richer picture of how Europe projects its image in the country. The EU’s image, again, is perceived mainly positively with few criticisms concerning very specific aspects. The more interesting element here concerns the extent to which attention to the EU is put in a wider context including the US and its relations with both the EU and China. The focus on dynamics concerning the China-EU-US strategic triangle is particularly relevant in this context. The US remains an extremely important external parameter to understand EU-China dynamics. The media analysis section provides a rich and comprehensive overview of the most outstanding trends of Chinese media representations.

The survey concludes that the depth and dynamism with which China and the EU approach each other is a clear signal that both sides see each other as potential allies in a variety of contexts. The absence of security conflicts is the most important facilitating factor of this process of convergence. In this sense, it is appropriate to think of China and the EU as two actors experiencing a more mature relationship in a changed systemic environment.

## 1. INTRODUCTION\*

“More broadly, changing official Chinese views of Europe throw a distinctive light on Chinese official images of their own country’s international identity and on their view of international politics” (Yahuda 1998).

Most analysis of contemporary EU-China affairs seems to suggest that what has for long been described as a “secondary relationship” (Yahuda 1998) has today acquired a new quality and depth. In fact, the dramatic growth in ties between China and Europe has been referred to as “one of the most important [...] developments in world affairs in recent years” and as “the new axis in world affairs” (Shambaugh 2004: 243). Other analysis, however, partly downplay these claims and stress that while from a quantitative perspective relations between the two powers have certainly intensified, such intensification has not resulted in a corresponding upgrading of the relationship’s “quality” (Moller 2002).

Different interpretations notwithstanding, it is difficult to deny that both the EU’s increasing coherence and economic weight and China’s political and economic rise represent, along with US unparalleled influence, some of the key elements in the shaping of a new global order (Shambaugh 2005). It is also difficult to deny that since the mid-1990s, in a context of uncertainty where both China and the EU have clearly come under pressure to redefine their respective roles under conditions of accelerated globalisation (Moller, 2002), relations between the two powers have increasingly deepened and taken the shape of what is today officially defined by both sides a “strategic partnership”. In other words, two of the potentially emerging global powers in the post-Cold war era find themselves engaged in a process of solid and deepening cooperation (political, economic and cultural) with no perceived “strategic or systemic conflict of interests” among them.

Without pretending to support any of the views the debate previously mentioned, it seems worth stressing that two important elements distinguish the current status of EU-China relations from the pre-1990s one. First, as Shambaugh very clearly points out, “prior to the 1990s Europe’s relations with China, and vice-versa, were largely derivative of each side’s relationships with Washington and Moscow [...] thus the relationship never developed its own independent dynamic but was reactive to changes in US-Soviet relations” (Shambaugh 2004: 245). Indeed, although China-Western Europe relations have gone through different phases in the pre-1990s period (Yahuda, 1998), they shared the common feature of being developed under the shadow and within the constraints of the Cold-war bipolar confrontation. Second, during the Cold War both China and the EC lacked truly global perspectives and remained important but nonetheless regional players. These conditions, today, have either changed or disappeared. The Cold War with its systemic constraints is not there anymore and both the EU and China have become economic superpowers and have acquired a more assertive political role on the world scene.

This is not to argue that mutual relations have been completely freed from the influence of “the third actor”. As Crossick et. al. stress, even in the present international context “any assessment of EU-China relations must take into account its effect on other relationships, the most significant for both parties being that with the US” (Crossick et. al. 2005:16). A variety of factors, however, seem to suggest that China-Europe relations will continue to grow and develop at a steady pace.

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At a broad strategic level, both actors share fundamental interests about the future of global structure of power. First, Europe and China find a common cause in supporting a multipolar world and share the view that US superpower should be counterbalanced (Wang; Shambaugh 2004; Shambaugh 2005; de la Batie 2003; Moller 2002). Second, and closely related to the first, both actors aim at fostering multilateralism by strengthening and democratising global institutions, particularly the United Nations, both as further checks on US hegemony and as necessary means to address the multiple challenges of global governance (Wang; Shambaugh 2005; Moller 2002). The lack of potentially irritant issues (that have indeed caused much strain on Sino-US relations), such as the “Taiwan factor”, or of other serious European military or strategic interest in East Asia cannot but reinforce the ongoing perception of existing complementary perspective on world affairs. The fact that the two sides are highly complementary in economic terms should not be underestimated either (Shambaugh 2004; Moller 2002). In fact, it has been stressed that the backdrop of intense investment and trade relations as well as of technological cooperation makes the economic relation between China and Europe somehow unique (Klenner 2005)

The growing institutionalisation of cooperation between the two clearly bears witness to this new dynamism. The European Union, in fact, has been keen to foster a rapid development of Sino-European relations since the mid-1990s and to keep a strong momentum in the relationship by setting up a strategic framework for cooperation at multiple levels. The European Commission first set out its strategy for EU-China relations in the 1995 Communication ‘A Long Term Policy for China-Europe Relations’ (European Commission 1995) and ever since, relations have been pursued under three main headings: political dialogue (including a specific dialogue on human rights); economic and trade relations and lastly, the EU-China cooperation programme. Formally, current EU policy towards China is based on the October 2006 Commission strategy: ‘EU-China: Closer Partners, Growing Responsibilities’ (European Commission 2006). The previous strategy was based on the paper issued in October 2003 by the Commission entitled ‘A Maturing Partnership: Shared Interests and Challenges in EU-China Relations’ (European Commission 1998), which updated the 1998 Communication, ‘Building a Comprehensive Partnership with China’ and the 2001 Communication, ‘EU Strategy towards China: Implementation of the 1998 Communication and Future Steps for a More Effective EU Policy’ (European Commission 2001).

Interestingly, China responded in October 2003 by issuing its first document setting out the official strategy for developing its relations with the EU (MFA-PRC 2003). Finally, the long-standing Chinese diplomacy attitude based on the preference to deal “with Europe (bilateral relations) rather than with the EU” (Moller 2002) seems to have been replaced by a growing recognition of the EU as a partner with which to structure mutual relations (de la Batie 2003). In sum, during the last decade both sides have been ready and willing to promote an intensification of mutual relations at different levels that signals a positive attitude and that may be instrumental in achieving ever increasing mutual trust and awareness. This is not to argue that China-EU relations are free from frictions and obstacles. In fact, some substantial issues have caused and still cause strain, in particular on the Chinese side. The arms embargo imposed by the EU following the 1989 Tiananmen repression, the EU’s human rights policy towards China, and the EU’s unwillingness to recognise China’s market-economy status within the WTO system, are just but a few examples of the obstacles that still remain on the agenda. Given the lack of systemic or strategic conflict of interest, however, it is fair to argue that these problems, although substantial, are not likely to cause any serious setback to the positive development of the future EU-China relationship.

These developments have been subject to growing attention from academic and research institutions. The literature on EU-China relations is increasing and, while expertise on China is certainly more developed within the US (Shambaugh 2005), Europeans are gradually catching up and devoting resources and know-how. EU-China affairs, however, have been mainly approached from a historical viewpoint or with a normative perspective at political, strategic, and economic

level. So far, however, no systematic study has been carried out with the specific aim of providing an outline of how the EU is perceived in China. This country-survey's primary objective is to start filling this gap. Through a general survey of the data available at the level of public opinion, political elites, organised civil society and the media, this research aims at analysing if and how the EU is perceived in this specific country.

Assuming that the EU's external image is an important component of the overall process of EU's *identification process*<sup>1</sup>, we believe that such an effort will contribute to highlight important elements for a better understanding of the EU's international identity.

## 2. PUBLIC OPINION

The first way to assess the European Union's image within the Chinese society is by looking at public opinion polls available with information regarding the EU. As a preliminary remark, however, it ought to be stressed that it proved very difficult to identify relevant sources to accomplish the task. No single, comprehensive survey could be found regarding how public opinion in China perceives the EU, its policies and its relations with China. In fact, the relatively scarce material gathered was found by analysing international sources and no Chinese-led investigation could be either accessed or identified. The findings presented in this section are drawn from three sources: *World Values Survey* data,<sup>2</sup> the international polling organisation *GlobeScan* together with the Program on International Policy Attitudes (*PIPA*)<sup>3</sup>, and a report conducted by the Empirical Social Research Project Division of TNS Emnid.<sup>4</sup>

As far as the first source is concerned, the two most recent waves of the study that included relevant information concerning the EU's image in China were the 1990 and 2001 ones. Unfortunately, the surveys did not allow for an in-depth investigation of Chinese public opinion image of the EU. Since neither perceptions on mutual relations nor opinions on substantive EU policies were surveyed, it was not possible to go beyond a general assessment of the degree of "confidence" towards the EU. Fortunately, on the other hand, the surveys include sufficient information to undertake both a comparison between the EU and other international organisations and to evaluate the results on the basis of age and levels of education of respondents. It is important to note, however (Table 1), that given the very small size of the respondent population (and the even smaller size of the valid cases within it), the findings of this surveys should be interpreted with caution and their capacity to represent real trends of public perceptions not overestimated.

The first element to stress is that while in both years the majority of respondents declared to have few or no confidence in the EU – 70.5% in 1990 and 60.6% in 2001 – that share decreased substantially, although not dramatically, during the period considered (Table 2 and Figure 1).

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<sup>1</sup> The term is used by so-called identification theory, see W. Bloom, *Personal Identity, National Identity and International Relations*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990.

<sup>2</sup> The World Values Survey is organised as a network of social scientists coordinated by a central body, the World Values Survey Association ([www.worldvaluessurvey.org](http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org))

<sup>3</sup> The 23-nation fieldwork was coordinated by Globescan and completed during December 2004 in most countries. The poll included some questions that were fielded for the BBC World Service

<sup>4</sup> The report entitled "World Powers in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Europe's Global Responsibility" is based on a nine-country survey commissioned by the Bertelsmann Stiftung presented in January 2006.

**Table 1**

	China [1990]		China [2001]	
	n	(%)	n	(%)
<b>BASE=3500</b>				
Weight [with split ups]				
A great deal	18	1,8	10	1,0
Quite a lot	154	15,4	82	8,2
Not very much	287	28,7	100	10,0
None at all	122	12,2	42	4,2
Don't know	0	0,0	766	76,6
Not asked in survey	0	0,0	0	0,0
System Missing	419	41,9	0	0,0
<b>Total</b>	<b>1000</b>	<b>(100%)</b>	<b>1000</b>	<b>(100%)</b>

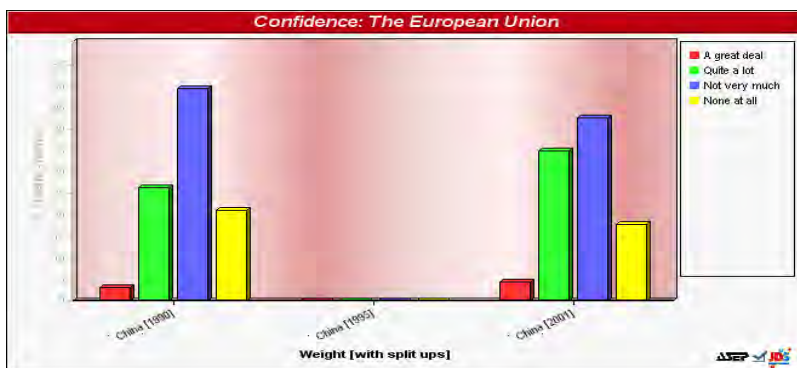
**Table 2**

China [1990]	
<b>BASE=3500</b>	<b>Total</b>
Weight [with split ups]	
A great deal	3,1
Quite a lot	26,4
Not very much	49,4
None at all	21,1
<b>Total</b>	<b>579 (100%)</b>

China [2001]	
<b>BASE=3500</b>	<b>Total</b>
Weight [with split ups]	
A great deal	4,3
Quite a lot	35,0
Not very much	42,7
None at all	17,9
<b>Total</b>	<b>234 (100%)</b>

**Figure 1**



Analysed by age of respondents (Table 3), the findings show further differences between the two periods. In 1990, it was possible to identify a clear negative correlation between age and levels of confidence in the EU. Confidence in the EU decreases when the age of respondents increases – 40.1% in the 15-29 group, 25.5% in the 30-49 group and 20.9% in the 5 and more group declared to have “a great deal” or “quite a lot” of confidence in the EU. The picture changes in 2001 where the peak of levels of confidence is reached in the middle group (44.8%) while the two side groups show lower, and similar levels (32,8% and 30,6% respectively).

Table 3

China [1990]				
BASE=3500 Weight [with split ups]	Total	15-29	30-49	50 and more
A great deal	3,1	4,5	1,6	4,0
Quite a lot	26,5	35,6	23,9	16,9
Not very much	49,4	43,6	54,1	49,2
None at all	21,0	16,3	20,4	29,8
<b>Total</b>	<b>581 (100%)</b>	<b>202 (100%)</b>	<b>255 (100%)</b>	<b>124 (100%)</b>
China [2001]				
BASE=3500 Weight [with split ups]	Total	15-29	30-49	50 and more
A great deal	4,3	4,7	5,2	0,0
Quite a lot	35,0	28,1	39,6	30,6
Not very much	42,7	54,7	38,1	38,9
None at all	17,9	12,5	17,2	30,6
<b>Total</b>	<b>234 (100%)</b>	<b>64 (100%)</b>	<b>134 (100%)</b>	<b>36 (100%)</b>

Surprisingly, and differently from other countries,<sup>5</sup> once again it is possible to identify a negative correlation between levels of confidence in the EU and level of education of the population (Table 4): the higher the level of education of respondents, the lower the level of confidence in the European Union. Actually, no respondent with upper educational level declared to have “a great deal of confidence” in the EU. Unfortunately, since the variable “level of education” was not included in the 1990 wave, it is not possible to verify whether there have been changes in such trends throughout time.

Table 4

Lower	
BASE=3500	China [2001]
A great deal	2,7
Quite a lot	40,5
Not very much	29,7
None at all	27,0
<b>Total</b>	<b>37 (100%)</b>
Middle	
BASE=3500	China [2001]
A great deal	5,3
Quite a lot	34,1
Not very much	44,1
None at all	16,5
<b>Total</b>	<b>170 (100%)</b>
Upper	
BASE=3500	China [2001]
Quite a lot	33,3
Not very much	51,9
None at all	14,8
<b>Total</b>	<b>27 (100%)</b>

<sup>5</sup> See, for instance, the chapter on public opinion in Brazil's country survey.

It is interesting to compare the findings aforementioned with data concerning other international organisations such as NATO and the United Nations. In the first case, it is possible to compare information gathered in both waves. In the second, however, the only wave with information available on the EU was the 2001 one. Chinese people's confidence in NATO remains below that in the EU in both years considered (Table 5). While in the case of NATO the level of confidence also increases from 1990 to 2001, (22.1% and 26.1% respectively), such an increase is less marked than in the EU case thus widening, in terms of level of confidence, the gap between the two international organisations. It is worth noting that a similar trend between the two organisations emerges when levels of education are taken into consideration. In NATO's case, as in the EU's one, levels of confidence decrease when levels of education increase (only 11.5% of respondents with upper level education declared to have at least a measure of confidence in NATO).

**Table 5 Confidence in NATO**

**China [1990]**

	Total
A great deal	2,2
Quite a lot	19,9
Not very much	52,5
None at all	25,4
Total	558 (100%)

**China [2001]**

	Total
A great deal	4,5
Quite a lot	21,6
Not very much	39,6
None at all	34,2
Total	222 (100%)

	Total	Lower	Middle	Upper
A great deal	4,5	5,9	4,3	3,8
Quite a lot	21,6	23,5	23,5	7,7
Not very much	39,6	26,5	43,8	30,8
None at all	34,2	44,1	28,4	57,7
Total	222 (100%)	34 (100%)	162 (100%)	26 (100%)

Interestingly, the UN is the international organisation that by far enjoys the highest level of confidence among Chinese public opinion (Table 6). In 2001 (as previously indicated, the 1990 wave questions concerning the UN were not included), 69.3% of respondents declared to have at least a measure of confidence in the UN. While in this kind of surveys is not surprising to find the UN ranking as the international organisation to which people attach most confidence, less common is the gap between the UN and other organisations. Moreover, in line with previous cases, levels of confidence in the UN tend to decrease at higher educational levels.

**Table 6 - Confidence in the UN**

China [2001]	
	Total
A great deal	9,3
Quite a lot	60,0
Not very much	25,8
None at all	4,9
Total	535 (100%)

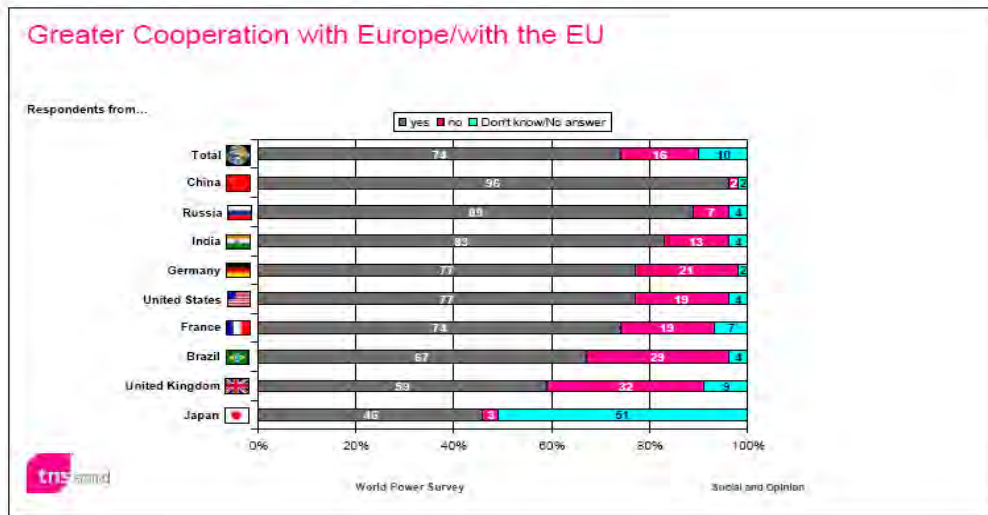
China [2001]				
	Total	Lower	Middle	Upper
A great deal	9,3	14,1	6,9	12,1
Quite a lot	60,0	64,7	59,5	42,4
Not very much	25,8	17,9	28,3	36,4
None at all	4,9	3,2	5,2	9,1
Total	535 (100%)	156 (100%)	346 (100%)	33 (100%)

The data from *GlobeScan* and *PIPA* are somehow complementary to those just presented. The poll, conducted in 2004, allows for a more specific evaluation of the European identity in the world stage and takes “Europe” rather than the EU as the object of public perceptions. With regards to the second point, the poll investigates how people in different countries perceive Europe’s influence in the world. Interestingly and surprisingly, an overwhelming majority of Chinese people interviewed view Europe’s influence in the world as mainly positive (77% against 7% responding “mainly negative”). This is partly in contradiction with *World Values Survey* data concerning levels of confidence in the EU. Although difficult to interpret, these findings seem to suggest that there has been a dramatic improvement of Europe’s image among Chinese people in the last few years. In this regard, moreover, Europe ranks well above the United States. Only 40% of respondents view the United States as having a mainly positive influence in world affairs while 42% as mainly negative. Finally, the poll included questions aimed at evaluating possible future trends in world affairs. Asked to express themselves on how they judged the possibility of Europe becoming more influential than the United States in world affairs, 66% of Chinese respondents viewed it as a mainly positive development and only 16% as a mainly negative one.

The third survey, although touching upon issues from different perspectives, partly downplays the positive results just mentioned. Broadly speaking, Chinese people view favourably the prospect of a strengthened cooperation between China and the EU (96% of respondents answered “yes” when asked whether China should strengthen cooperation with the EU – Table 7).

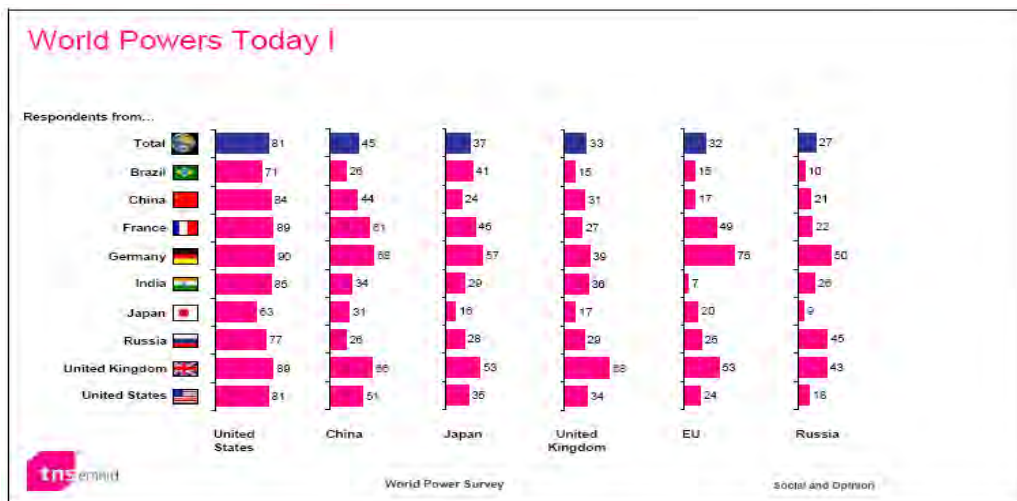


Table 7



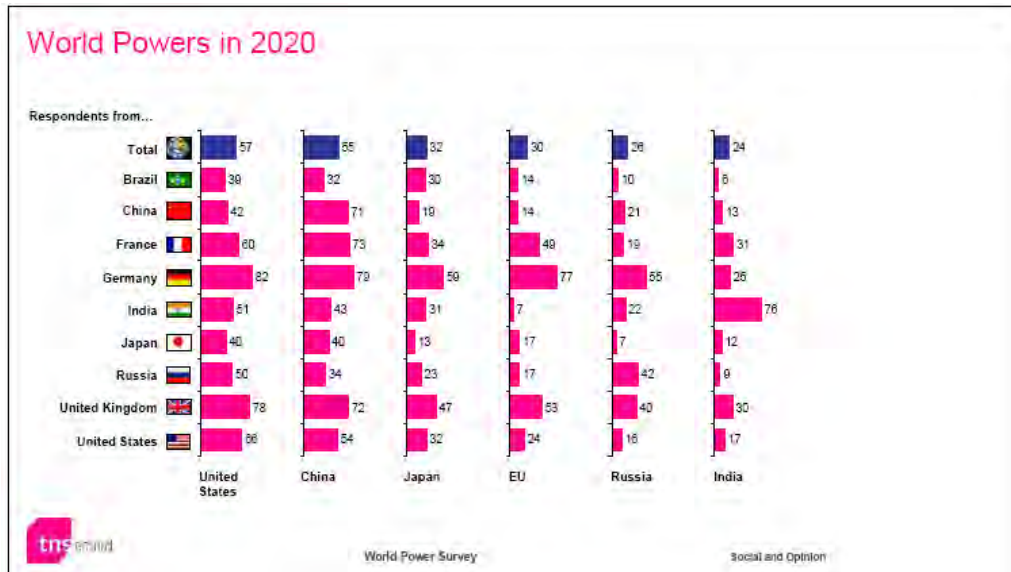
Few Chinese, however, believe the EU presently holds the status of “world power” (only 17% of respondents believe the EU is a “world power”). In fact, not only is the US unquestionably perceived to hold such status (84% of respondents), but the portion of Chinese population convinced that China is a world power is higher than that perceiving the EU as a power (44% against 17% - Table 8).

Table 8



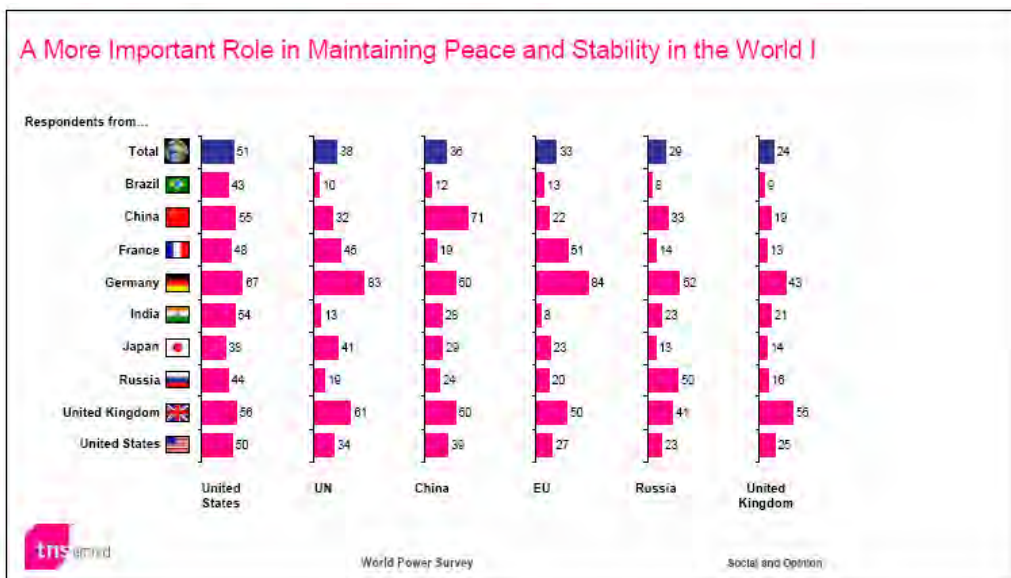
Interestingly, and somehow in contradiction with previous findings, Chinese people are pessimist as to whether the EU will increase its power in the future (Table 9). The envisaged role of the EU, in fact, remains basically unchanged (only 22% of respondents believed the EU will become a world power in 2020). On the contrary, Chinese people expect the US to lose its current position as undisputed leading world power and China to become an equal partner.

Table 9



On the same tone are evaluations concerning the need for the EU to acquire a more important role in maintaining peace and stability in the world (Table 10). While only a small fraction of respondents (22%) believe the EU should move in this direction, a huge majority perceive China should contribute more in this field.

Table 10



In sum, the first set of data suggests that while the level of confidence in the EU has improved compared to 1990, the majority of Chinese people still view the EU with suspicion. Nonetheless, the EU ranks above NATO. Surprisingly, the level of confidence in the EU is not positively, but rather negatively, correlated to the level of education of respondents. The UN clearly emerges as the international organisation Chinese people are most confident about. Polled, four years later, more specifically on how they perceive Europe’s influence in world affairs, Chinese people not only view Europe’s influence more positively than that of the United States’ but are keen to see such influence increase at the expense of the United States. From another perspective however, the EU is not perceived as a world power and there is little confidence on its capacity to become one in the future.

### 3. POLITICAL ELITE

A proper understanding of how Chinese political elites perceive the EU cannot be acquired without considering the wider framework within which Chinese foreign policy is conceived. While it is obvious to state that a country's view of other international actors is a function of its broad beliefs and preferences with regards to the global system, this is particularly true in the Chinese case. In fact, one of the key features of Chinese foreign policy is to be traditionally long-term oriented. As Shambaugh very clearly points out, the starting point for every assessment of how Chinese officials interpret and conceive Europe's role and political status in international politics is to understand that such analyses share a strong *cognitively dissonant* character (Shambaugh et.al: 3).<sup>6</sup> According to this argument, Chinese officials and to a certain extent Chinese scholars, hold both uniform views of the macro trends in the world and certain preferences for the evolution of the international order that serve as a set of broader beliefs through which Europe's role and actions come to be interpreted. In view of that, he states "many Chinese observations about Europe's role in the world derive from broader Chinese hopes for developing an international order based on non-hegemony, dispersion of power and regional multipolarity, political equanimity, cultural diversity, and economic interdependence" (Shambaugh et.al.:4). In this context, the label of "pragmatism" frequently attached to Chinese foreign policy orientation has to be interpreted in light of this characteristic.

This said, before analysing the content of this investigation, it is important to clarify a few methodological issues. First, it was not possible to rely on previous research on this topic. No comprehensive and systematic study on Chinese elite attitude and perception of the EU and the European integration process has been carried out yet. Research on Chinese political elites' perception of the EU, thus, was based on a careful analysis of speeches, official documents and policy papers from government representatives and agencies. A wide array of official documents has been collected from the main official governmental sources.<sup>7</sup> Moreover, the research has also benefited from other international sources such as the EU, the ASEM framework, and the China-EU Business Summit forum. The original idea was to take also into consideration material from the ruling party (Communist Party of China)<sup>8</sup> not to provide, as it is the case with surveys on democratic countries, a broader view on different political positions within the whole political spectrum, but rather to analyse whether different policy frameworks (government and party) are functional to the elite to articulate different policy orientations. Unfortunately, the limited accessibility of party documents on the web did not allow for a proper investigation in this field.

Second, almost no document concerning the pre-2000 period is accessible from the sources analysed. In fact, it has been possible to collect information concerning Chinese foreign policy attitudes and perceptions towards the EU before 2000 only through secondary literature specifically aimed at offering an historical overview of Chinese foreign policy. At this stage of the research, therefore, an attempt has been made to offer a wider historical perspective by integrating primary sources and secondary literature.

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<sup>6</sup> Shambaugh borrows this concept from the classic work of Leo Festinger *Theory of cognitive dissonance* (Stanford University Press, 1957). He defines cognitive dissonance as the natural proclivity to selectively look for confirmation of their pre-existing beliefs and to reject evidence that contradicts these beliefs.

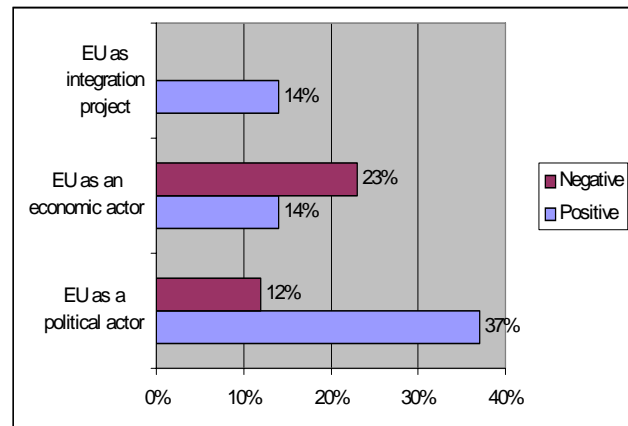
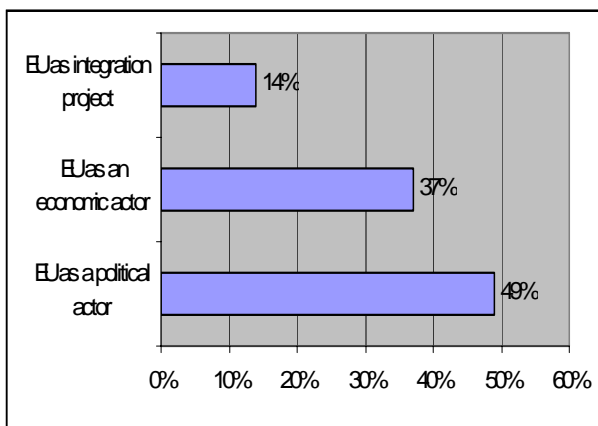
<sup>7</sup> In particular, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs ([www.fmprc.gov.cn](http://www.fmprc.gov.cn)) and the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Cooperation ([www.moftec.gov.cn](http://www.moftec.gov.cn)). Chinese embassies and diplomatic missions abroad also proved very useful as a source of information on speeches and official documents. In particular: the Mission of the PRC to the European Communities ([www.chinamission.be](http://www.chinamission.be)), the Permanent Mission to the UN and other international organisations ([www.chinesemission-vienna.at](http://www.chinesemission-vienna.at)), the Chinese Embassy in the UK ([www.chinese-embassy.org.uk](http://www.chinese-embassy.org.uk)), and the Chinese Embassy in the US ([www.china-embassy.org](http://www.china-embassy.org)).

<sup>8</sup> The only source available in English is the website of the 16<sup>th</sup> Congress of the CPC; ([www.china.org.cn/english/features/44506.htm](http://www.china.org.cn/english/features/44506.htm))

The content of the analysis will be presented as follows. In Table 11, references to the EU's image have been inserted in one of the different categories identified, intended to characterize different articulations of the EU's external image within China's political elite. The aim is not to propose an exhaustive and rigorous quantitative analysis of EU's external representations. Rather, more modestly, the idea is to sketch out the main trends of EU image representation within the Chinese political elite's official discourse and to draw some conclusions as to what are the relatively most important fields in which the EU is perceived as a relevant actor. In addition, within each category a distinction has been made between positive and negative perceptions in order to assess whether the image of the EU in each field is associated with a positive or a negative perception. A more detailed qualitative analysis of the references, furthermore, will provide a clearer picture of different articulations within each category.

**Table 11**

	EU as a Political Actor		EU as an Economic Actor		EU as Integration Project		Total
	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative	
Government	16	5	6	10	6		43
	37%	12%	14%	23%	14%		100%
Total	49%		37%		14%		



As the figures show, the most recurrent image of the EU within the Chinese political elite is that of an increasingly relevant political actor on the world scene. The recognition of the EU's role as a political actor, goes hand in hand with a perception of its role that is mainly positive. Not only because in 37%, against 12%, of the references identified a positive view of EU's role is expressed, but mainly because, as the following analysis will show, the negative perceptions are associated to non- structural issues. The positive perception is associated to a wide range of issues where the EU is seen as playing a constructive role which is in line with China's long-term interests. This general positive perception of EU is expressed by the former Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji when he declares "There is no conflict of fundamental interests between Asia and Europe [...] in fact they hold identical or similar views on many international issues" (MFA-PRC 2001c) and by the widespread perception within Chinese diplomacy that "the establishment and development of constructive partnership between China and EU serves the shared long term interests of the two sides and is also conducive to world peace and stability" (MFA-PRC 2000c). More specifically, the evaluation of the EU's role in world affairs is articulated on different levels. The most common reference, consistent across time, in Chinese political discourse concerns the EU's contribution towards multipolarity. Just to present a few examples, in 2000, Jiang Zemin defined the EU's growth as "conducive to

pushing forward the multipolarity and the establishment of a new international political and economic order” (MFA-PRC 2000) while in 2001 the former Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan affirmed that “politically, Asia and Europe are major forces in the trend of mutipolarization” and defined Asia-Europe cooperation “of far reaching importance [...] for the trend of political multipolarization” (Tang 2001).

Another key feature of the EU’s image within the Chinese political community is that of a power inclined towards a multilateral management of international affairs and as a potential ally in the struggle to shape a more balanced and democratic system of global governance. Once again, this perception is consistent across time and at different governmental levels. For instance, on different occasions Premier Wen Jiabao expressed this idea very clearly defining “China and the EU as important forces for world peace and stability committed to multilateralism and to the promotion of democracy and the rule of law in international relations” (Wen 2004) and stating that “Asia and Europe foster a favourable international security environment [...] maintaining that regional and global issues should be addressed through multilateral cooperation and international relations be democratised” (MFA-PRC 2004d). On another occasion, Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing pointed out that “both China and the EU advocate multilateralism, stress the enhancement of the role of the United Nation and peaceful settle of international disputes” (MFA-PRC 2005f).

Interestingly, the EU is also perceived as a development-friendly actor. In 2003 China’s EU Policy Paper, it is stated that “both China and the EU [...] are committed to combating international terrorism and promoting sustainable development through poverty elimination and environmental protection endeavours” (Chinese Government 2003). Similarly, Jiang Zemin described Europe as a force that “pay close attention to the interests and demands of the vast number of developing countries” (MFA-PRC 2001) and the former Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs Wang Guangya referred to China and the EU as “major forces in international affairs that contribute [...] to the sound and balanced development of globalization and narrowing of the North-South gap” (MFA-PRC 2002).

As previously indicated, these elements point to the existence of a perception, at least on the Chinese side, of a broad and structural convergence of interests between the two sides. It is, obviously, difficult to distinguish between rhetoric and substance. What emerges behind the lines, however, is that there is another element that needs to be taken into consideration to fully understand what substantiates Chinese views of Europe as a political actor. Not only is the EU seen as sharing similar views about the management and the structure of international relations but, and maybe more importantly, the Chinese political elite perceives that there are no structural and foreseeable obstacles to develop such a partnership. As the Chinese government bluntly puts it “there is no fundamental conflict of interest between China and the EU and neither side poses a threat to the other” (Chinese Government 2003). The EU’s strategy to avoid taking a confrontational stance on the Taiwan issue is just an example of the absence of any serious “hard security” conflict of interest between the two sides and this, in turn, certainly favours the strengthening a positive perception of the EU’s image on the Chinese side. As the Chinese government explicitly recognises, “the proper handling of the Taiwan question is essential for a steady growth of China EU relations. China appreciates the EU and its members’ commitment to the one-China principle and hopes that the EU will continue to respect China’s major concerns over the Taiwan question” (Chinese government 2003).

The analysis of the references that have been labelled as “negative perceptions” of the EU as a political actor, seem to confirm this interpretation. As previously stated, negative evaluations of the EU in this category refer to issues which are unlikely to become sources of “fundamental conflict of interests” between the two sides. The most frequently mentioned issue concerns the EU’s stance on

human rights situation in China. On the occasion of the adoption of a critical resolution on China's human rights situation by the European Parliament in January 2000, the Chinese government reacted promptly issuing a note in which it expressed great dissatisfaction and the opposition to a move that in its view "went so far as to openly enter into confrontation with the Chinese people" and "seriously interfered the development momentum of the relations between the two sides and run counter to the overall situation of China EU relations" (MFA-PRC 2000a). Despite these rhetorical declarations, it is clear that following the less confrontational European approach on China's human rights abuses adopted in the last years, the issue has been relegated to the status of a marginal problem. The tone of the declarations where the matter is mentioned witnesses of this development. In China's EU Policy Paper, the government states that "there are both consensus and disagreements between china and the EU on the question of human rights. The Chinese side [...] stands ready to continue dialogue, exchange and cooperation on human rights with the EU on the basis of equality and mutual respect" (Chinese government 2003).

The second category in which most references are concentrated is the "EU as an economic power". In this case, negative perceptions seem to outweigh positive ones. A detailed analysis of the different ways in which such perceptions are articulated shows, however, that negative perceptions concentrate on very specific issues while positive ones refer to a more general evaluation of the EU's role and influence as an international economic actor. In the former case, Chinese government officials often mention the EU's arm sales embargo against China and the problem of recognition of China's full market economy status within the WTO system as the main problems on the agenda. In December 2004, for instance, Premier Wen defined the arm sales embargo as "a legacy of the Cold Was that does not conform to reality" (MFA-PRC 2004e). More often, Chinese leaders use softer formulas such "expressing the hope that the EU can proceed from the overall perspective to lift the ban over weapons embargo to China and recognize China's full market economy status" (MFA-PRC 2005c) or "hoping that the EU could be practical and realistic to recognize China's full market economy status as soon as possible" (MOFCOM 2005a).

More generally, Chinese elites perceive the EU as an actor that, in economic terms, offers vast opportunities both as a source of foreign direct investment and as a partner for technological cooperation. "Complementarity" is the word that is most often used to define relations between Chinese and European economies. Once again, from the Chinese perspective there is no serious reason to perceive the EU as a threat or as a possible obstacle on the path towards the achievement of the country's primary development objectives. Not only are Chinese representatives keen to recognise that "both China and the EU have strong economic complementarities" and that "to deepen and expand cooperation will bring benefits to both sides" (MFA-PRC 2005a) but more specifically stress how "thanks to their respective advantages, namely, the EU has advanced technologies and strong financial resources, while China boasts a huge market, increasingly deepened cooperation brought mutual benefits and win-win achievements" (MFA-PRC 2004c) and that "the EU is the biggest technology supplier and the fourth biggest source of accumulative actual investment of China" (MOFCOM 2005).

Finally, the research has shown that the whole European integration project is perceived positively by Chinese leaders and that, interestingly, positive evaluations touch upon different dimensions of the project. In 2001, for instance, former Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan praised the successful conclusion of the Nice Summit by arguing that it enabled the EU "to open the way for the enlargement [...] and to develop the European Defence and Security Policy, thus giving the EU the means to play its full role on the international stage" (MFA-PRC 2001a). Similarly, Chinese authorities greeted the launch of the Euro declaring "we believe that the birth of the Euro will help advance the process of European integration and establish a more balanced international financial and monetary system" (MFA-PRC 1999). More recently, on the occasion of the formal signing of the Treaty establishing a Constitution for Europe, the Chinese government vigorously restated its

positive perception defining the Treaty as “a new milestone in the process of EU integration” and expressing the will “to see the EU make greater achievements in its political integration and continue to play a positive and constructive role in European and international affairs [...] convinced that a European Union which strives for its own prosperity through integration will provide fresh opportunities for deepening China-EU relations” (MFA-PRC 2004). Interestingly, is also viewed positively as model for integrative efforts in other areas of the world. As expressed by the former Chinese Ambassador to Germany, Mei Zhaorong, “the path taken and experience gained by EU to date have great significance of reference for different regions in the world to realize co-existence and prosperity by conducting regional cooperation [...] with a view to acquiring through unity benefits that could not be achieved by individual nations” (Mei 2004).

#### **4. CHINA’S “EUROPE WATCHERS”**

As argued in the previous section, the very nature of the Chinese political system does not allow for an investigation of complex and different articulations of perceptions through political elite discourse analysis. Obviously, this problem was largely foreseen. Homogeneity, uniformity and conformity in Chinese perceptions of Europe and Sino-European relations at the political level were to be expected. Although useful in highlighting the main elements of official political representations concerning the EU, such an analysis cannot account for the whole spectrum of existing views within the country.

One way to overcome, or at least to limit, the problem is to look at the internal discourse on Europe as it is developed by, to use David Shambaugh’s expression, China’s Europe Watchers, namely the group of people involved in research institutes, universities and, more broadly, “academic circles” dealing and working actively to monitor progress and setbacks of the EU, its relations with China and its standing on the international arena (Shambaugh et.al. 2007). We are not arguing that such an investigation will provide a truly objective outline of EU’s image perceptions, one that is free from constraints. On the contrary, we acknowledge that censorship and political control are still major elements to be taken into consideration even when we move beyond political elite to a wider circle of commentators and experts. Nonetheless, we believe a closer look within this community will add quality to the overall analysis for a number of reasons.

First, although the spectrum of views is still very limited, a narrow spectrum is better than no spectrum at all. This is particularly relevant in light of the fact that “following the rising influence of think tanks in the decision making process in China, the major journals that are consulted by the Chinese leaders have become important references to understand Chinese policy making” (Men 2006:791). Second, in an overall context characterised by a lack of systematic research on Chinese perceptions of the EU, clearly a signal of the strong Eurocentric bias of Western scholarship on China-Europe relations (Shambaugh et.al. 2007), efforts are starting to be carried out to fill this gap and “illuminate the other side of the perceptual dyad” (Shambaugh et.al. 2007:2). In particular, recent efforts to review research on the European Union in Chinese academic journals and publications specialised in international relations (Men 2006; Shambaugh 2007, Zhu 2007), bear witness to the growing awareness of the need to take into consideration the broad range of writings on the EU and, more generally, that Chinese scholars demonstrate a stronger interest than ever in their study of Europe and EU-China relations (Men 2006). Some authors even argue that the breadth and depth of Chinese research and understanding of Europe is perhaps even greater than vice-versa (Shambaugh et.al. 2007:31). Third, the different studies considered all recognise that within the field of international relations, European studies, unlike American studies, present a comparatively objective and non-ideological image of the EU to the Chinese people. Mainly because the strategic relationship between the two sides is perceived as posing no fundamental security threats and because Europe is generally perceived positively, research on Europe is characterised by a pragmatic approach largely free from ideological obsessions (Men 2006).



Altogether, we believe these elements make a strong case for developing an accurate overview of the main findings of recent research in this field.

As a preliminary remark, it is worth stressing that quantitative analyses support the argument that attention to the EU and to its relations with China is growing among Chinese scholars. A recent survey based on the analysis of articles covering China's foreign policy and external relations published in one of key CCP's journals (Qishi – Seeking Truth) between 2001 and 2004, confirms that the EU is acquiring increasing relevance in the context of Chinese foreign policy discourse, in particular if compared with other international actors (Men 2006). In addition, and very interestingly, all studies that have been taken into consideration for this investigation converge in recognising that Chinese Europe Watchers representations of the EU can be organised in three main categories: EU's role as a political power (both internally and externally), EU-US relations, and EU-China relations. This clearly points to the fact that EU developments and EU-China relations' assessments are not disentangled from an accurate analysis of what happens between the two sides of the Atlantic. In other words, it is important to acknowledge that research among China's Europeanists is characterised by a paramount concern/interest for the perceived emergence of a new Sino-European-American triangle. What this may imply in terms of how EU-China relations are perceived will be dealt with in the conclusions of the study. Suffice to say here that this seems to suggest that although the independent dynamics of such relationship have certainly been reinforced in recent years, they still have to be conceived as largely derivative from broader developments involving both EU-US and Sino-US relations.

Turning to the content of the EU's image among Chinese scholars, the first element to be considered is the body of literature assessing the EU as a political project. As mentioned, the issue is approached with an attempt to catch both its internal and external aspects. Internally, two issues have attracted considerable attention. First, a variety of commentators have analysed the enlargement process trying to assess the underlying factors that conducted to its successful completion as well as its potential impact for future developments within the broader framework of integrative efforts. As to the motivations, according to Chinese scholars, the political considerations outweighed the economic ones in the EU's enlargement (Men 2006). While for some, through expansion, West European states sought to enhance their security, others interpreted the enlargement through the prism of political competition with NATO for the political influence in these countries. In the first case, promotion and consolidation of economic and political transitions responded to the imperatives of stabilising Europe's neighbourhood. In the second, the two eastward expansions are interpreted as an evidence of the "intense scramble for strategic influence between the EU and the US" (Shambaugh et.al 2007:12) following the political vacuum that had been left in Central Europe since the collapse of communism in the former Soviet Union.

Men's review of the literature also highlights different viewpoints on the impact of Eastern enlargement. Among optimistic assessments, the potential of enlargement in stimulating the EU's economic development as well as its capacity to increase the attractiveness of the EU to its neighbouring countries are all mentioned as positive elements to be taken into consideration. In contrast, others stressed the inherent difficulties brought by such a process. Economic problems related to the challenge of "digesting integration" of a new group of countries with huge gaps in terms of economic development, concerns of new waves of immigration from the east to the west, the difficulties in coordinating the interests between the old and new member and the subsequent change in the balance of power and balance of interest within the EU as a whole are just a few examples of the arguments put forward by those who look at eastern enlargement from a pessimist perspective (Men 2006, Shambaugh et.al. 2007). In this context, it is interesting to stress that this focus on enlargement signals a strong continuity of attention on the Chinese side with regards to the political developments involving the central and eastern European countries. While traditionally in the early 1990s, the Chinese were primarily interested in monitoring the process of regime change



and internal reform taking place in the former socialist-communist camp, today Chinese scholars devote much attention to the area as part of broader developments within the European integration process in particular for what concerns the possible implications for the international system of the EU enlargement process.

Another interesting element to be considered is the analysis of different Chinese attempts to seek explanations for the development of supranational institutions. Some authors point to “cultural variables”. Xupens Zhang, for instance, argues that the existence of a common cultural heritage in Europe made it possible for the European to build a supranational idea upon which laid the foundation for the development of supranational institutions (Men 2006:796). In other assessments, the transfer of sovereignty to supranational institutions is rather explained either as a result of the bloody history and the desire to bring stability and peace through mutual equality and coexistence or as a consequence of deepening economic integration and strengthened political cooperation among European nation-states.

As to the future of European integration, again commentators are divided in two fields with some, on the one hand, expressing a pessimist view on the capacity of Member states to reconcile their differences and move towards further integration and others, on the other hand, arguing that despite hard bargaining integration will keep its momentum as it conforms to the overall interests of the Member states.

The largest part of this literature, however, is devoted to the EU’s stance in the international system. In this field, particularly, the different reviews taken into consideration seem to confirm that most Chinese Europe watchers analyses tend to share what we have previously defined as a strong cognitively dissonant character. A first group of contributions deal with the issue of whether the EU qualifies as a “pole” in the international arena. As noted in the previous section, political elites tend to emphasise the EU’s role as a promoter of multipolarity in international relations, and more generally, assign paramount importance to the dispersion of the global distribution of power. Not surprisingly, therefore, when exploring European issues, Chinese scholarly research devotes much attention to this external aspect of European integration. While there is a general optimism about the future capacity of the EU to become a strong and independent power, there is no consensus as to whether the EU presently holds such status. A group of optimists believe that “Western Europe is fully qualified to be a pole thanks to its developed economy, advanced technology and great political influence” (Zhu 2007:4). According to this view, the EU has already become an independent power in the international system and as such plays an important role in the interplay between great powers and serves as an indispensable actor in the balance of power in world politics (Men 2006). Those who share this perspective articulate their arguments on different levels. A realist branch of the literature looks at the EU as a pole through the lenses of competition with the US. As Shambaugh argues, some Chinese scholars explicitly equate Europe’s role as a potential instrument for countering US hegemony (Shambaugh et.al. 2007) and put forward the idea that the EU’s position in international economy and politics represents a challenge to US status. Some of them (and not the least important) have come to the point of interpreting the broad range of European actions and initiatives characterised by a growing degree of independence as “countering hegemony” actions *tout court* (Shambaugh et.al. 2007:7). Other interpretations tend to look at the EU external posture from a more constructivist angle. The increasing use of notions such “normative power”, “civilian power” and “European model” among Chinese Europe watchers is a signal that in EU studies, researchers are moving away from a perspective of power politics and towards an approach that shows eagerness to learn from the European experience in integration and governance (Zhu 2007). Multilateralism and promotion of regional integration, for instance, are considered by some as examples of Europe’s post-modern foreign policy orientation or as expressions of its normative orientation based on the attempt to set worldwide criteria with its own norms. Chinese scholars recognise that the EU seeks security through regional security community

building with emphasis on common security rather than absolute security, and that it sticks to principles such as rule of law, good governance, dialogue, cooperation and persuasion. All these elements, according to these readings, stand in contrast to the realist approach of international relations and signal a “diversity” of the so-called European model. Zhu points out, for instance, the extent to which the EU-China human rights dialogue is perceived by some commentators as an example of how Europeans promote human rights through a more multilateral approach characterised by dialogue which is less tough and provocative than that promoted by the US (Zhu 2007:11). Other interpretations come to the same conclusion from a liberal-institutionalist perspective. Multilateralism, international cooperation and promotion of regional integration, and more generally the European approach to security policy are seen as the result of Europe’s acceptance of interdependence as the central feature of international relations and of the belief that mutual dependence is the best means to assure mutual security (Shambaugh et.al. 2007).

Many others, however, expressed doubts as to whether the EU represents an influential pole in international relations. These interpretations identify a number of shortcomings. Some views stress that the influence of the EU is limited to the economic field and is marginal in traditional “hard security” sectors. From a realist viewpoint, therefore, an entity such as the EU is lacking many of the traditional instruments normally associated to the status of great power, both politically and militarily, can only exert an inconspicuous influence on major international issues (Zhu 2007). Some, instead, approach the issue from a perspective focused particularly on second-pillar decision making processes pointing to the fact that the EU’s limited role results from the inherent weaknesses embodied in a framework that remains purely intergovernmental. These authors specifically analysed in detail the EU foreign policy process and the various structural and systemic impediments to formulating and implementing a coherent CFSP as the main variables for understanding its inability to speak with one voice on the international stage. In this vein, Feng Zhongping, Director of the Europe Institute of the China Institute of Contemporary International Relations (CICR), described the EU as an “incomplete or unbalanced pole” (Shambaugh et.al. 2007:9).

The studies considered, however, argue that even these pessimist interpretations of the EU’s actual status as global player do not necessarily imply a gloomy view about its future role. The general tendency is to see future prospects positively. While they recognise that serious obstacles and challenges remain to be addressed, they also implicitly assume that the acquisition of a more assertive and influential role is just a matter of time. According to these arguments, the EU will have a tortuous road to follow before becoming a pole in world politics but the irreversible dynamics that characterise the European integration process will nonetheless result in a stronger inclination of independence in international affairs (Zhu 2007, Shambaugh et.al. 2007).

Turning from a general evaluation of the EU as such to more specific issues, it is important to investigate how Chinese Europe watchers judge the overall relationship between China and Europe and the “strategic partnership” such relationship builds upon. Generally speaking, assessments of Sino-EU relations are almost unanimously positive. As Shambaugh points out, different Chinese commentators clearly recognise the considerable degree of congruence between the guiding principles of China’s foreign policy and Europe’s standing on the international arena. Mei Zhaorong, President of the Chinese Institute of Foreign Affairs, states that “both sides stand for the establishment of a just and rational new international political and economic order, advocate multilateralism and democratisation of international relations, oppose unilateralism and militarism, are committed to resolving international disputes through diplomatic and political means, and hope to strengthen the authority of the UN” (Shambaugh et.al. 2007:10). More specifically, Zhu quotes as turning points in the history of EU-China relations the 1995 “A long term Policy for China-Europe Relations” European Commission’s document, and the end of the so-called European ‘human rights diplomacy’ *versus* the PRC, in 1998. In 2005, for instance, on the occasion of the 30<sup>th</sup>

anniversary of the establishment of China-EU relations, Mei Zhaorong<sup>9</sup>, the former Chinese Ambassador in Germany confirmed the latter point by arguing that the new perspectives for the development of the partnership found their root in the European recognition of the failure of post 1989 politics toward China. In addition, other chronological steps have to be noted for their importance in the building of a positive Chinese attitude towards the deepening of the China-EU strategic partnership. Specifically, the 1999 US bombing of the Chinese Embassy in Belgrade in 1999, 9/11 and the resulting US invasion of Iraq in 2003 altogether contributed to a widely shared perception of a more dangerous US foreign policy attitude targeted, at least indirectly, towards China and making, in turn, more appealing the reinforcement of the partnership with the EU.

Broadly speaking, therefore, there is a widespread perception that respective views of the world fit comfortably with each other and that such political convergence is reinforced both by the absence of serious security and geopolitical conflicts on the mutual agenda and by strong economic and trade complementarities. Following Zhu's line of argumentation, however, it has to be noted that beyond the recognition of this "congenital condition" that characterises Sino-EU relations, it is possible to identify two approaches to the evaluations of such relationship. The first, termed the realist approach, looks at strategic complementarities between the two sides arguing that the convergence of interests in promoting multipolarity (again with a particular attention to contain US power) and multilateralism represents the main driving force of such relationship. The second, defined the constructive approach by the author, refers to the branch of the literature that criticises the realist approach for its lack of historical profundity and concentrates on respective internal changes after the end of the Cold-War as the cause of increasing interest of both sides (Zhu 2007). The focus here is on values rather than on interests. Admiration for European experiences in the process of integration, the European way advocating tolerance and sustainable socio-economic development are considered as crucial elements for a correct interpretation of Europe and for the strong foundation of Sino-EU relations. Obviously, part of the literature concentrates also on the problem areas and the challenges facing Sino-EU relations. Interestingly, scholarly analyses touch upon issues which are both inside and outside the political elites' discourse. As for the sources of criticism that are also treated at the political level, comments concentrate on human rights issues, the so called "market economy status" issue, and the arms embargo problem. Some Europe watchers express concerns about a perceived attempt to Westernise China on the issue of human rights protection that somehow, in their view, derives from a feeling of cultural superiority. On "market economy status", complaints centre on the perceived discrimination because the EU has granted such status to Russia, arguably less marketised than China (Shambaugh et.al. 2007). On the arms embargo issue, analyses point to the fact that it represents a test for the EU with regards to the quality of the China-EU strategic partnership, the EU's independence from the US, and the EU's stance on a potential crisis in the Taiwan strait. In addition, Zhu's review takes into consideration other issues developed in the literature. In analysing the possible differences between the two actors, some interpretations suggest that the relationship is characterised by an asymmetry in security goals (Zhu 2007). More specifically, it is argued, while the EU has gone beyond traditional security, the core of China's security goals remain political and military, thus creating disagreements on issues such as humanitarian intervention. Other scholars stress different ideologies and values to point to the fact that while that global strategy and economic interests are more important than ideology in defining the EU's approach to China, there is still a tendency to encourage China to accept western ideology. In short, the EU is criticised for not having completely abandoned its scheme to westernise China. Others, instead, suggest that the complexity of EU policy-making with its dual structure may constrain EU members in the implementation of Sino-EU foreign and security cooperation (Zhu 2007). As emerged in the political elites' section, however, the general impression is that the structural elements of convergence are in the perception of Chinese Europe Watchers strong enough to outweigh the causes of friction between the two sides. Predominant is the idea that "the goal of China's modernisation and that of European integration are

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<sup>9</sup> President of the Chinese People's Institute of Foreign Affairs.

both consistent with the development trend of multipolarisation” and that the existing historical and social differences that still exist can be overcome by a peaceful confrontation.

The last part of this review concerns how Chinese scholars followed and interpreted the evolution of transatlantic relations and how they viewed its broad impact on international relations. The reason for such an interest in EU-US developments needs to be understood in light of the widespread perception that the interactions within the Sino-European-American triangle will play an increasingly important role in international relations and the world’s strategic architecture (Shambaugh et.al. 2007). Chinese analysts recognise that both EU-US and Sino-EU relations have their own independent dynamics and that the latter is becoming more mature and not merely derivative. Nonetheless, they are aware that “the US is the uppermost external parameter in the relationship between China and Europe, keeping them from developing a completely independent relationship [...] it is both stimulation and constriction, making the most important external parameter to have an impact on the Sino-EU relationship” (Zhu 2007:20). Clearly, therefore, scholarly analyses show a great interest in transatlantic developments.

Again, it is possible to identify both pessimist and optimist assessments of EU-US relations. The former camp point to a number of factors which, in their view, are deemed to further the transatlantic divide. Different interpretations of the concept of “war on terror”, diverging views on the invasion and occupation of Iraq are just a few examples of issues on which these assessments have concentrated. The explanations vary between realist and ideational perspectives. Different policy preferences of the two sides – soft power versus hard power, multilateralism versus unilateralism – are explained with reference to either the loss of strategic relevance of Europe for the US following the end of the cold war or the growing gap in military capabilities, in the former case, and focusing on different economic, political, strategic and social cultures, in the latter. Shambaugh points out that perhaps, Chinese commentators have been too quick in pointing to a supposed longstanding European desire to be independent of the US as an important reason for growing transatlantic differences (Shambaugh et.al. 2007:26). In fact, as the optimist camp stresses, there are good reasons to expect that the two will remain close partners. Different authors recognise that despite European attempts to develop a coherent foreign policy which is somehow based on a different approach, there is no fundamental conflict of interest between the two and, more importantly, they share a common set of fundamental values – democracy, market economy – which brings them to share a wide interest in the economic, political and security fields.

## **5. IMAGES OF THE EU IN THE CHINESE NEWS MEDIA**

Chinese media serves a huge population – according to the National Bureau of Statistics of China, since January 6, 2005, the population of Mainland China has exceeded 1.3 billion.<sup>10</sup> Unsurprisingly, the news media background features a great number of print outlets and television and radio channels. At the end of 2004, there were 2,137 newspapers with a circulation of 93.5 million copies per day, 9,029 magazines, 2,389 TV channels, and 2,264 Radio channels in China.<sup>11</sup> In addition, the Internet as a source of news is presently accessed by a vast number of users. By the end of 2005, the number of Internet users in China has been over 111 million.<sup>12</sup>

Studies assessing the Chinese media environment are numerous both in China and outside its borders. Yet, studies attempting to investigate the images of Europe and the EU in China are still infrequent even though there are more than 20 centres for European Studies all over China in

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<sup>10</sup> National Bureau of Statistics of China (<http://www.stats.gov.cn/>). Hereafter, ‘China’ stands for ‘Mainland China’ and does not include Hong Kong, Macao, and Taiwan.

<sup>11</sup> State Administration for Industry and Commerce (SAIC) in China; China Statistical Yearbook (2005)

<sup>12</sup> The 17<sup>th</sup> Internet Development Report in China, China Internet Network Information Center, 17 Jan 2006.

addition to individual academics and departments that study modern Europe and the EU.<sup>13</sup> The analysis of media representations of the EU in this survey originated from a pioneering on-going transnational research project “*The EU through the Eyes of Asia*” as a part of the ASEF sponsored initiative “*European Studies in Asia*”.<sup>14</sup> The study involved six Asian partners -- Japan, South Korea, Mainland China, Hong Kong, Singapore, and Thailand. A tripartite research design features firstly an analysis of EU imagery created by the national news media; secondly, a public opinion survey assessing general public attitudes and awareness of the EU; and thirdly, an elite opinion survey identifying national political, business and media attitudes towards the EU.

With a comparative principle serving as a major organising principle of the project, the content analysis of the media production in that study has to involve a limited sample in order to guarantee a realistic execution (Mohammadi et. al. 1985). As a result, three leading newspapers and one television newscast have been chosen for the study. The choice of the newspapers was led by a consideration of the targeted readership, namely, a *popular* newspaper (the one which is intended to be read by a wide audience and is distributed nationally); a *business* newspaper (the one which is used by representatives of business community as a source of reliable current information), and an *English-language* newspaper (the one which is read by the educated and cosmopolitan group of locals in order to improve their English language skills as well as by foreigners learning about the internal matters from the outside).<sup>15</sup> The choice of the television newscast was ruled by its reputable status and national outreach. Respectively, China’s media sample featured the *People’s Daily*, the most important official newspaper in China; the *International Finance News*, one of the most popular business newspapers in China, and the *China Daily*, China’s first<sup>16</sup> and most popular English newspaper. China Central Television (CCTV-1) (and specifically its prime-time news bulletin) was chosen due to the fact that this channel has the largest outreach in the country, featuring an audience of 1.18 billion people.<sup>17</sup>

This survey will present preliminary results of the media monitoring of the four chosen media outlets, more specifically, a six-month analysis of the daily coverage of the EU from 1 January to 30 June 2006.<sup>18</sup> This section will present the clearest trends in media representations of the EU in terms of the volume of EU coverage, the focus on EU images’ domestication, the intensity of the EU media representations, assigned evaluations, and the leading topics in the framing of EU images.

## 5.1 The key findings from the media analysis

### *Volume of Coverage*

The volume of news reporting the EU differed between the two media – newspapers and television. Even though the volume of the daily coverage of the EU fluctuated in the six months across the three newspapers, the newspapers presented on average more news stories on the EU than television did (Table 12). China’s *popular* newspaper, *People’s Daily*, came up with 61 news stories referencing the EU on average per month. Two other newspapers also presented rather high

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<sup>13</sup> An attempt has been undertaken recently to study the representations of the EU in the leading Chinese journals. See e.g., Men Jing, ‘Chinese Perceptions of the European Union: A Review of Leading Chinese Journals’, *European Law Journal*, Vol. 12, No. 6, November 2006, pp. 788–806.

<sup>14</sup> For more information on the project and other ESIA initiatives please see <http://esia.asef.org/>. Both Natalia Chaban and Zhang Shuangquan are involved in this project – Natalia is a research consultant in that project, and Zhang Shuangquan is a researcher responsible for the Chinese section of the project.

<sup>15</sup> See also the Japan section of this survey. A similar media sample was considered in that case study.

<sup>16</sup> Established on 1 June 1981.

<sup>17</sup> Statistics Information of the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television. (<http://gdtj.chinasarft.gov.cn/>).

<sup>18</sup> The ESIA project will feature an analysis of a 12-month monitoring period. Full results will be discussed within the framework of the ESIA study in articles and a book due to be published in 2008.

numbers in the volume of the EU coverage – 54 news stories per month on average in the case of an *English-language* newspaper and 47 in a *business* newspaper case. In contrast, television prime time bulletins featured more modest numbers of news stories when reporting the EU, specifically, 12 new items on average per month.

**Table 12: Number of EU news in the Chinese news media (2006.1-2006.6)**

Media	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Total
People's Daily	77	68	48	47	67	59	366
Int'l Finance News	50	51	81	44	36	24	286
China Daily	48	48	56	45	68	59	324
CCTV-1	17	14	12	8	11	10	72

### *Focus of Domesticity*

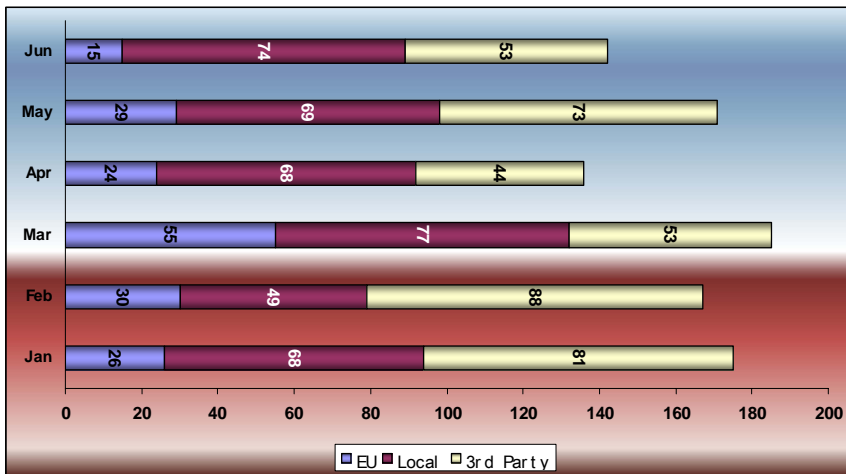
The contextualisation of the images of the EU was also addressed in this study. To assess the ways the Union's representations were grounded in the internal and external Chinese discourses, the study considered the 'focus of domesticity' of news (Peter et.al. 2003, Vreese 2003, Schulz 2001).<sup>19</sup> The focus of domesticity was identified in triple terms. Firstly, an '*EU focused*' angle meant that the news focused solely on the events in and actions of the EU without any involvement of China. Secondly, a '*local*' angle stood for domestic news items that were characterised by the inclusion of some information on the EU. Finally, the category '*3rd party*' referred to EU news reporting the Union within the context of a third party (neither the EU, nor China).

Even though the number of news in various media outlets fluctuated from month to month, the distribution of the foci of domesticity in the EU representations remained fairly proportional (Figures 1 and 2). Again, two media displayed two different patterns in the EU representations. In the case of the three newspapers, two leading framings of the EU surfaced – firstly, the EU being 'localised' in the domestic discourses and, secondly, the EU being presented as an actor whose actions are the most visible in the discourses of a 'third' party (42% and 40% of news stories respectively). In the case of the television coverage of the EU, one angle dominated the reporting, namely, the EU was extensively framed as an actor acting in the context of the 'third' party (almost 67% of all television news items). The '*EU focused*' news were second in visibility with 19% of the total coverage, and the news where the EU was 'localised' in a Chinese context were the least noticeable – 14% of the total coverage.

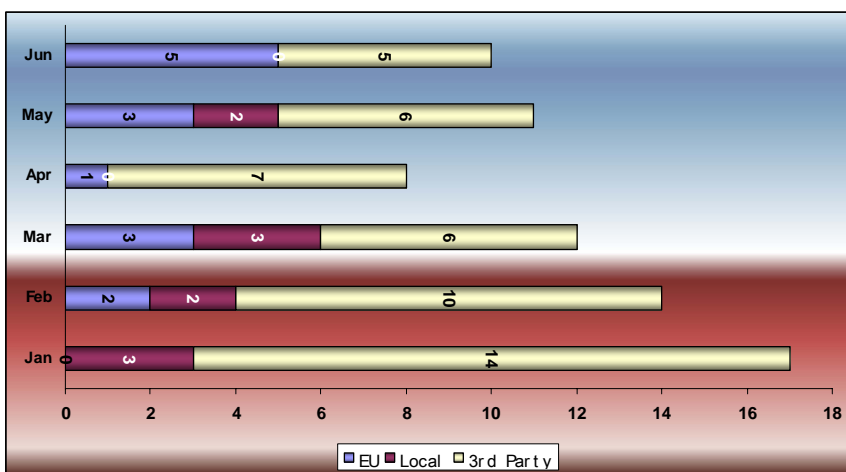
Arguably, a peculiar grounding of the EU representations in the newspapers discourses -- more specifically, highlighting the '*local*' angle of domestication -- provided their audiences with a particular framing of the EU. This type of framing may indicate to the readership that the EU and its actions have immediate consequences to the local developments, thus turning the EU happenings into "zones of relevancy" (Schulz 1964) in the readers' minds. In contrast, the television representations of the EU were dominated by the framing that positioned the EU in the 'outside' context. It argued that this representation is partially 'alienating' the EU from the local context and interests of local audiences. The EU was depicted by television media as an actor existing 'out there' -- an agent active on the international arena, yet, mostly seen as being involved with numerous 'third' parties.

<sup>19</sup> The three types of framing building two angles of foreign news reporting are conceptually close to the foci of domesticity in international news reporting as a notion brought into attention by Sreberny-Mohammadi *et al.* (1985) in the comparative UNESCO study of international news media. The *focus of domesticity* of news used in this paper is also similar to the "concept of domesticity of EU stories" used by Peter et. al. (2003) and the "domestic or European" focus used by de Vreese (2003). See also Schulz (2001).

**Figure 1: Focus of Reporting the EU in newspapers**



**Figure 2: Focus of Reporting EU on television**



***Degree of Centrality***

In order to assess the nature of visibility and the intensity of representation of EU issues in Chinese news, this study assessed the ‘degree of centrality’ of the EU. In this assessment, category ‘*main*’ meant a news story which was focused solely on the EU, its events and peoples. The next category, ‘*secondary*’, was used to classify a news story which presented the EU and its actors acting *on par* with other international actors. Final category of ‘*minor*’ representations was used to show that the EU was alluded to in a news report *in passé*. Even though the distribution of the degree of centrality differ from month to month (Figures 3 and 4), in both media, the *main* degree of centrality was the least visible (18.3% in three newspapers and 19.4% in television news). A *minor* focus dominated newspaper reporting (with 44%). In contrast, *secondary* focus led in television reports (44%). Arguably, a low number of news stories which focused on the EU with a *main* degree of intensity indicated that most of the information on the EU in the Chinese media has not been featuring very detailed reports on the EU, preferring instead to reference the EU either in a fleeting manner (in newspapers) or equally dividing media attention between the EU and other international partners (on television).



Figure 3: Centrality of the EU in newspapers

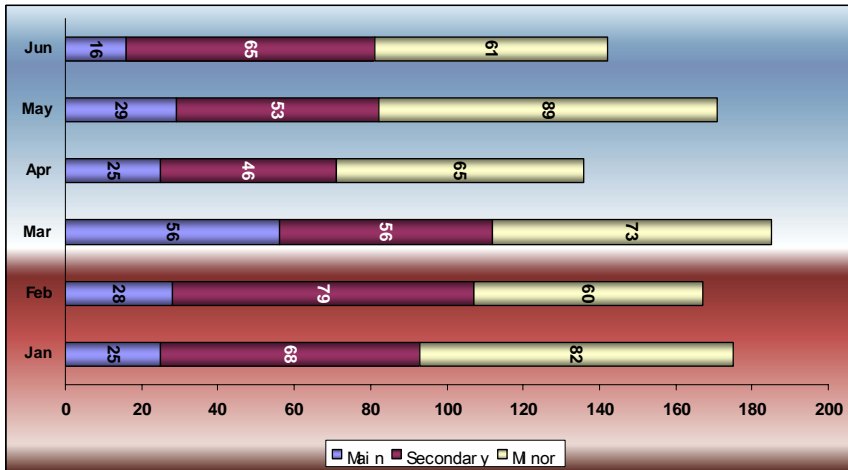
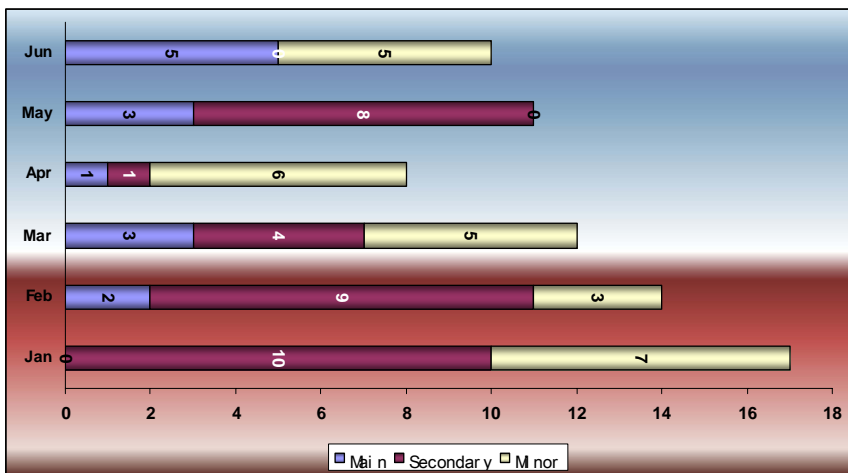


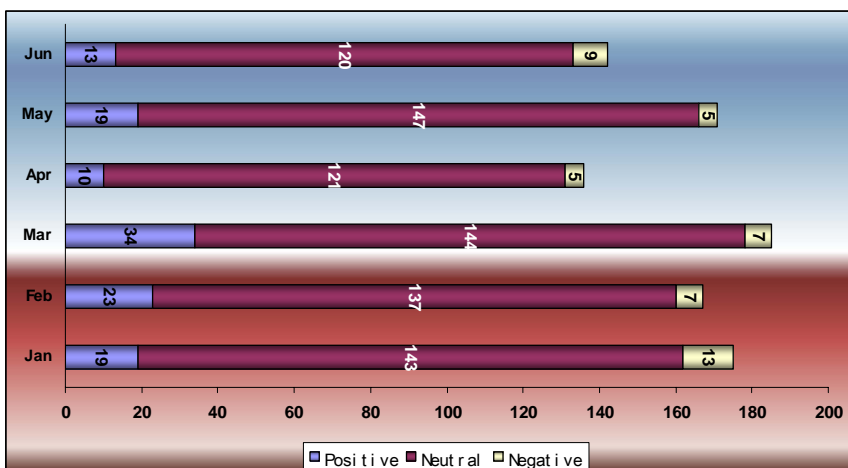
Figure 4: Centrality of EU on television



**Evaluations**

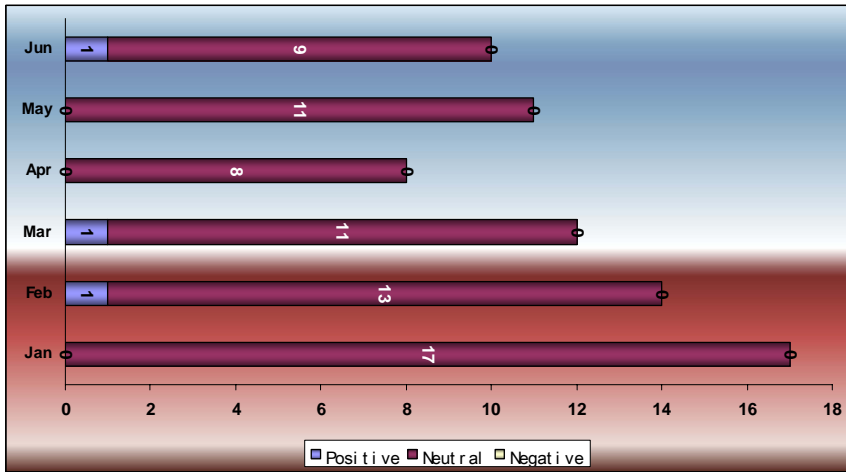
This study used three indexes for the evaluations of EU news, namely *positive*, *neutral*, and *negative*. The results showed that two selected media used predominantly *neutral* evaluations of the EU, with 83.2% in newspapers and 95.8% on television (Figures 5 and 6). There were no negative assessments found in the EU news on television.

Figure 5: Evaluation of EU news in newspapers





**Figure 6: Evaluation of EU news on television**



### **Information Inputs**

The study investigated the content of the news stories in terms of the leading themes in the EU coverage. Three leading clusters of themes were respectively identified, namely, “*the EU as a political power*”; “*the EU as an economic power*”; and “*the EU as an actor in the field of social affairs*”.

Two media were seen to put differing accents in the framing of the EU in terms of the leading themes (Figures 7 and 8). In their joint performance, the print media outlets divided their equal attention between presenting the EU as an *economic* and as a *political power* (41% for each theme respectively). The theme of the EU being a *social affairs actor* was the least represented in the newspapers (18% of the news). The representations of the EU as a *political power* led in television reporting of the EU (58% of all news stories), and images of the EU as an *economic power* and *social affairs actor* were much less visible (21% news for each theme).

**Figure 7: Information Inputs, Newspapers**

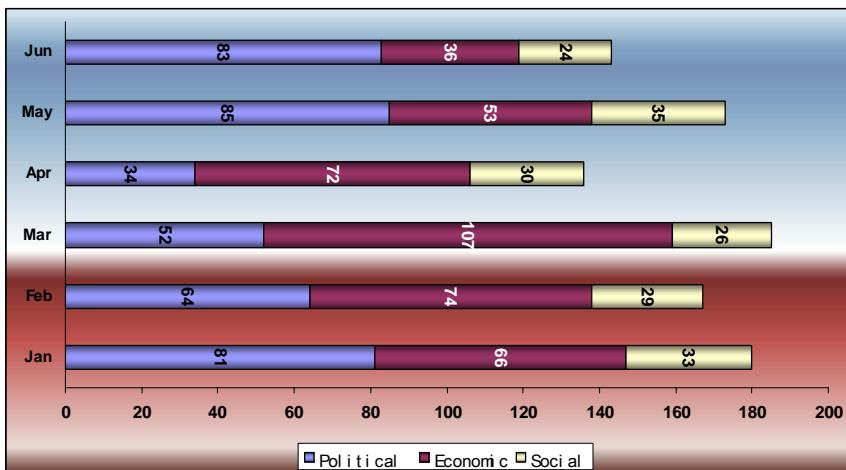
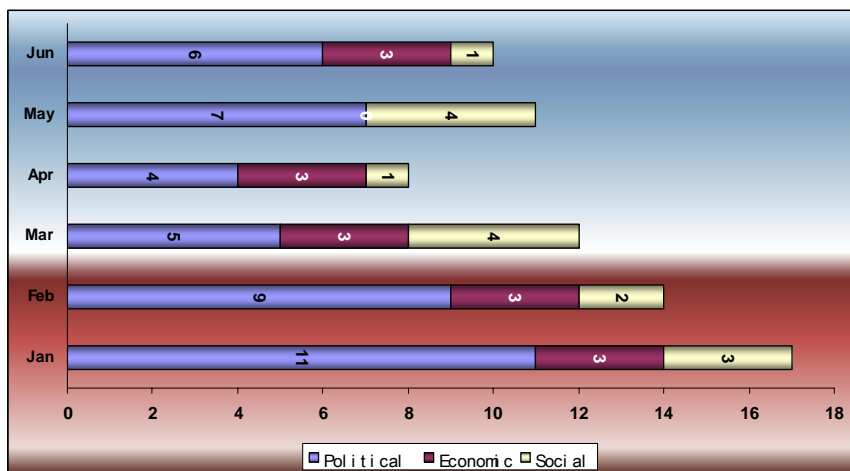


Figure 8: Information Inputs, Television



With respect to “the EU as a political power”, both monitored media concentrated their attention on representing the EU as an audible voice in the international arena, rather than focusing its reporting on the EU’s internal developments. In the first six months of 2006, 86% of the newspapers news stories presented the EU as an actor of external politics. Television news presented an even higher share of news with such a framing – 90.5%. The two most visible themes were the EU negotiations around an anti-nuclear deal with Iran and updates on the EU-China dialogue. Arguably, this particular media framing shapes the image of the EU being an active international agent preferring negotiating techniques, as well as an important and respected interlocutor for China in a dialogue which is also known as the “comprehensive strategic partnership”.<sup>20</sup> It is suggested that complex developments on the EU’s internal political landscape are too complicated and multilayered to be presented in greater detail and volume for the international news consumer. Thus, the news representing such developments is given a reduced visibility by local news makers.

In the frame “the EU as an economic power”, the most visible images of the EU in newspaper reports were the actions of the EU as a trade power (49% of all newspaper news), followed by the reports on the EU’s actions in the field of industry, business and finance (21% for each theme). These three themes were the most prominent on television too. *Trade* and *industry* themes led with 40% each, and *business/finance* topics occupied 20% of news space. In this frame, the most frequently reported events were the ones around the EU-China trading relations, as well as around EU acting in the field of energy production. The priority given to the former theme is not a surprise -- trade and economic co-operation are a fundamental part of the relationship between the two parties. In 2004, the enlarged EU became China’s biggest trading partner, and China is now the EU’s second largest trading partner just behind the US.<sup>21</sup>

In the frame “the EU as a social affairs actor” (the least visible one out of the three in both monitored media), the most evident themes were the ones touching on the EU’s health care and health concerns (more specifically, the EU’s reaction to the Avian Flu epidemic). Those were followed by news on the EU’s dealings with education and research enterprises, developments in the EU social legislation, and EU environmental policies. Other themes (e.g. EU dealings on migration, welfare, multiculturalism, crime, as well as entertainment and sports reports) were significantly less visible.

To sum up, three Chinese reputable and highly circulated newspapers and a popular prime time television bulletin were chosen for this analysis. This study does not claim that the analysis of these

<sup>20</sup> [http://www.delchn.cec.eu.int/en/eu\\_and\\_china/EU\\_China.htm](http://www.delchn.cec.eu.int/en/eu_and_china/EU_China.htm)

<sup>21</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/comm/external\\_relations/china/intro/index.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/comm/external_relations/china/intro/index.htm)

outlets presents a fully comprehensive picture of how the EU is represented in China's national leading news media. Yet, this preliminary systematic study of a daily coverage of the EU across two most reputable media across six months in 2006 gives a rather detailed picture of how the Chinese leading news media frame the images of the EU and suggests how those frames may potentially influence the general public opinion on the Union.

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

The primary aim of this survey was to start filling what we perceived as a vacuum in the context of the growing scholarly production concerning Sino-European relations. Much attention is being paid to the European side of the relationship and very few attempts to understand and investigate systematically the other side of the coin. The assumption was that understanding how others see us is a crucial pre-condition to better understand ourselves and how we frame our own identity.

One important result of the study, we believe, has been to show that a community of researchers interested in this specific aspect of EU-China affairs is emerging and growing. The studies quoted in this survey certainly represent interesting works that signal the extent to which efforts to build up a body of knowledge and research on this neglected aspect of such a crucial phenomenon are actually taking place. In addition, we have discovered that the European growing interest in China is mirrored by an equally strong interest by Chinese politicians, scholars and commentators on the EU and its internal and external developments.

As expected, we have found very few sources on how Chinese people perceive the EU. At this level, it is difficult to make any conclusive assessments. If anything can be said in this context, there are no signs of any widespread negative perception of the EU. Despite some incongruence resulting from contradicting findings concerning the level of importance attached to the EU's relevance as an actor in international politics, the studies considered point to a generally positive evaluation of the EU.

At the level of political elites, there is a clear and consistent articulation across time of how Chinese political leaders perceive different dimensions of the European integration process. The EU is seen as an opportunity to the extent that its development is considered consistent with its own view of global politics. It is interesting to note that many of the concerns expressed by European commentators are not shared by the Chinese. There are no threats coming from Europe: not in the security and military fields, nor in the economic sphere. What remains, therefore, is an attention to a "pole" that shares many fundamental principles with regards to the future architecture of global governance and conduct of foreign policy in this context. As we have argued, a few obstacles remain to be addressed but they are highly unlikely to cause major setbacks in a relationship characterised by the absence of any "hard security conflict". As some suggest, however, one should be cautious in interpreting too optimistically the Chinese official rhetoric (Shambaugh et.al. 2007) on the existence of shared worldviews. While both sides claim to pursue multipolarity and multilateralism, the degree to which these claims imply similar preferences and result from similar underlying logics is questionable. Shambaugh warns us that "given China's centuries old realist perspective on interstate affairs, one should not read into China's vigorous endorsement of European multilateralism a similarly firm commitment on Beijing's part" (Shambaugh et.al. 2007:32). In this sense, it seem appropriate to take into consideration the arguments of those who suggest that *cognitive dissonance* is a useful concept for a proper understanding of Chinese approaches to other international actors.

The analysis of China's Europe's Watchers' assessments of the EU and its relations with their homeland provided a richer picture of how Europe projects its image in the country. In contrast to

official political discourses, EU representations in these circles are better articulated and offer a wider spectrum of views. However, the EU's image remains mainly positive with only a few criticisms concerning very specific aspects (i.e. human rights) of European policies towards China or expressing a moderate scepticism as to Europe's capacity to play a relevant role in international politics. The more interesting element here concerns the extent to which attention to the EU is put in a wider context including the US and its relations with both the EU and China. As we have argued, the dynamics of the China-EU-US strategic triangle are particularly important. The intersection between respective bilateral relations and, more importantly, the absolute relevance that the US has for both sides, make it almost impossible to understand EU-China dynamics without bringing into the picture this fundamental external parameter (the "arms embargo issue" is a clear example of this problem). The media analysis section provided a rich and comprehensive overview of the most outstanding trends of Chinese media representations showing that while the relevance of EU news in both newspapers and television is somehow marginal, the theme "the EU as a political power" was given more attention in television coverage.

We argued in the introduction of this survey that an assessment of whether "a new emerging axis" is a proper expression for describing EU-China relations was beyond our ambitions. A few remarks in this regards can, nonetheless, be put forward. The depth and dynamism with which China and the EU approach each other is a clear signal that both sides see each other as potential allies in a variety of contexts. The absence of security conflicts is the most important facilitating factor of this process of convergence. In this sense, it is appropriate to think of China and the EU as two actors experiencing a more mature relationship in a changed systemic environment. To think of this relationship as one with its own independent dynamics altogether is another question. While their relative weight in respective foreign policy agendas has certainly increased, there is still some time to go before Europe will acquire the status of number one priority for China and, conversely, before China could replace the US as the EU's number one strategic ally.

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FORUM ON THE PROBLEMS OF PEACE AND WAR  
GARNET - Jointly Executed Research Project 5.2.1

**THE EXTERNAL IMAGE OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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**REPORT ON  
*Egypt***

**Soha Bayoumi**



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## **ABSTRACT**

This report attempts to identify the main sources of information regarding perceptions of the European Union in Egypt, chiefly through the analysis of existing opinion polls, governmental declarations, political party releases and opinions, the image of the EU in the press as well as the stance of organised civil society towards the EU. However, due to the lack of opinion polls, the scarcity of clear sources on the attitude of political elites and the lack of a coherent perception by the Egyptian civil society of the European Union, more emphasis has been placed on the perception of the EU in the press which acts, in general, as a public forum where various opinions can be depicted.

It is clear, through this report, that the Egyptian government views the European Union primarily in economic terms, due to its already “well-established” political ties with the United States which is seen as its main political ally and guide in regional and international politics. It is, however, also clear that the Egyptian government does not have prior long-term strategies in its relations with the European Union, nor a clear vision of methods and policies in its relations with the Union. The same goes to the political parties which appear content with insisting on the importance of strengthening relations with the European Union as a strategic partner and ally.

As far as organised civil society is concerned, civil society organisations have not yet developed a comprehensive or outspoken strategy towards foreign relations in general and towards the EU in particular. The overwhelming majority of these civil society organisations are Muslim-Brotherhood established and run organisations for charity works. The remaining are mainly human rights organisations that rely on European funding sources, usually official. Thus, these groups usually are more careful about expressing opinions on the EU openly, whether positive or negative, though they might criticise some aspects of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership or some official tendencies of the EU towards the region in general.

## OVERVIEW OF EGYPT-EU RELATIONS\*

Relations between the European Union and Egypt are governed by an Association Agreement. Negotiations between the EU and Egypt for the conclusion of an Association Agreement started in 1995 and lasted four and a half years. Following its signature in June 2001, the Association Agreement was ratified by the Egyptian People's Assembly and all the EU Member States. The Agreement entered into force on 1 June 2004.

Egypt and the European Community first established diplomatic relations in 1966. From 1977 to mid-2004, EU-Egypt bilateral relations were governed by a Co-operation Agreement. In agriculture, following the 1987 Protocol, Egypt enjoys preferential treatment on access to the EU market by means of tariff quotas and export calendars for its traditional flows. EU exports of agricultural products take place under MFN treatment. In the framework of the economic co-operation under the Co-operation Agreement, four financial Protocols have provided EC funding for programmes and projects in Egypt until the mid 1990s. Egypt and the European Union have also had considerable relations in the framework of the Barcelona Process since 1995 and the several Euro-Mediterranean cooperation projects before that. In addition, Egypt is one of the four signatories of the Agadir Free Trade Agreement with Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia which is open to accession by other countries. Egypt is one of the main beneficiaries of community assistance among Mediterranean partners. The EU (Community, Member States, EIB) is the second largest donor in Egypt. Community and macroeconomic assistance (MEDA I and MEDA II), in € million, are shown in the following table (Commission of the European Communities, 2005):

	2000		2001		2002		2003		2004	
Committed/Paid	C	P	C	P	C	P	C	P	C	P
<b>Total</b>	13	64	0	63	78	26	104	57	159	151

It is worth-mentioning that EU-Egypt negotiations on the European Neighborhood Policy Plan of Action started in September 2005 in Cairo, and several follow-up rounds have been held in Brussels and in Cairo.

This report attempts to assemble the main sources of information regarding how the European Union is perceived in Egypt, chiefly through the analysis of existing opinion polls, governmental declarations and attitudes, political party releases and opinions, the image of the EU in the press as well as the approach of organised civil society towards the EU.

It is to be noted that when it comes to public opinion, the available information is very limited. This is due to several reasons, among which, we could note, most importantly, the lack of emphasis placed on opinion polls in general and on their documentation and archiving. Some casual polls are very rarely conducted by some newspapers, the Al-Ahram Newspaper for instance. In this case, there is only one relevant question, few online responses, and polls are subsequently not adequately documented. Another reason for the lack of opinion polls is, in our opinion, the relatively low level of politicisation of the population, especially when it comes to foreign actors. As for the opinions of

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the political elite, both the government and political parties, the sources used have been mainly official declarations and governmental and party newspapers. Analysis of the press has involved reviewing various newspapers (independent, government-leaning, opposition) and magazines. Sources on civil society depended mainly on communications, declarations and press releases made by NGOs and other civil society organisations. Some academic, research and documentation centers were of considerable value to this report, namely the Al-Ahram Foundation, the Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, the Cairo University Center for European Studies, the CEDEJ (Centre d'Etudes et de Documentation Economiques, Juridiques et Sociales in Cairo), the Delegation of the European Commission in Cairo and Al-Mahrousa Center for Documentation. However, one should stress that the range of existing sources about the image of the EU in Egypt is still quite limited; this is largely due to the relatively narrow space occupied so far by the European Union in Egyptian politics, compared to that of the United States, for instance, as an extremely influential foreign actor on the Egyptian political scene. According to Amr El-Shobaki, expert in the Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, the general lack of Egyptian interest in partnership and cooperation with the European Union is largely due to the concentrated attention paid to the American initiatives in the Middle East at the expense of any other initiatives (Nahdet Misr Newspaper, 13 December 2005).

## 1. PUBLIC OPINION

There is clear shortage in public opinion polls regarding the EU. In our opinion, this is due to the lack of information, amongst the public in general, about the EU and its role in the international arena, the lack of transparency about Egypt's relations with the EU and, particularly, the details of the EU-Egypt Association agreement. The Egyptians population, a third of which is illiterate<sup>1</sup>, seems rather uninterested in following events in the international arena. Thus, Egyptians are generally considered not politicized enough, especially on issues relating to international politics, to have clear attitudes and perceptions of the EU. As Hanaa Ebeid puts it, with reference to the partnership with the EU: "levels of public awareness [of the partnership] are moderate and largely confined to officials, the media, research centers, universities, political elite, and the business class. Regular and comprehensive opinion polls are very rare and fail to provide adequate benchmarks to analyze the Egyptian view of the partnership and its evolution" (Hanaa Ebeid, 2004, p. 5)

One opinion poll and one internet survey were identified for the purposes of this survey. They were not directly related, however, to the Egyptians' view of the EU. One was conducted by the Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies in 2000 and asked about Egyptians' opinions on Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, as opposed to other forms of possible cooperation in the Middle East. The internet survey (a single question answered online) was conducted in 2005 and sought to identify Egyptian expectations from the EU in their mutual relations.

When asked about their opinion about Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, more than 60% of the examined sample of Egyptians<sup>2</sup> affirmed their belief in the efficiency of EU-Egypt cooperation (a

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<sup>1</sup> Like other statistical data, there is a lot of conflicting data on literacy rates in Egypt. According to the last report of the Egyptian Government's Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS) in 2006 ([www.capmas.gov.eg](http://www.capmas.gov.eg)), the global illiteracy rate in Egypt amounts to only 15.3%. Although adopting the same definition of literacy as the latter (age 15 and over can read and write), the CIA World Factbook and UNICEF give very different accounts of literacy in Egypt (generally believed to be more realistic). The CIA Factbook, in its last update on 7 September 2006, states a 42.3% global illiteracy rate in Egypt (<https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/eg.html#People>), while UNICEF affirms a 45.5% rate ([http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/egypt\\_statistics.html#15](http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/egypt_statistics.html#15)).

<sup>2</sup> The sample was divided into a national and a sectoral sample. Sectoral samples were subdivided to cover press figures, academics and business figures in the fields of agriculture, tourism, industry and communications. The demographic profile of the national sample is as follows: 51% male and 49% female. The education profile of the

yes-or-no choice). However only 12.5% believed that the European partnership was the best regional cooperation framework for the Arab countries, in general, and Egypt in particular (compared to 17.8% in favour of integration with Mashreq countries, 19.8% of the Arab Free Market, 25.6% of integration with Arab and Muslim countries, 10.8% of integration with Turkey and Iran) (questionnaire conducted by the Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, 2000).

In 2005, when asked about the most important expectations from Egypt's relations with the EU, the answers put forward the following issues in particular:

- A more efficient and impartial role in the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict (it is still largely remembered by Egyptians that Europeans are mainly responsible for the origins of this conflict through the English 1917 Balfour Declaration, promising to create a Jewish national home in Palestine).
- A supportive role of the EU in Egypt's attempts to develop its political and mobilisation capacities at the national and regional levels.
- Better understanding of the Egyptian and Arab aspirations to further Arab unity and effective presence in the regional and international arena.
- EU support in solving the various regional questions: the war in Iraq, potential wars on Iran and Syria, etc<sup>3</sup>.

Despite the lack of sufficient opinion polls on this question, we believe that other experiences and initiatives should be noted. One development in particular, imEU testifies of the growing interest shown by Egyptian youth, particularly university students, in the EU, its institutions and relations with the Middle East and Egypt in particular. In 1998-99, a group of students in the Cairo University Faculty of Economics and Political Science, a prestigious Cairo faculty forming a considerable share of Egypt's political and intellectual elite, started a small student extra-curricular activity, called FEPS Model European Union. The idea was that three or four students, who are particularly interested in the EU and have very good knowledge of its institutions, mainly because of their academic interests, form a simulation of three EU institutions, giving training sessions to other students on the EU institutions, negotiations, and different hot topics on the EU agenda, during a few months. The project was presented to the French Department of the Faculty that supported it fully. The French Embassy officially sponsored the initiative, as well as the German Embassy and the Delegation of the European Commission in Cairo. The International Model European Union (imEU) was held for the first time in 2002. It achieved considerable success, touching over 2000 students every year. It has played an important role in raising public awareness among young people about the EU. It has been widely publicised in the mass media as a pioneering experience.

## **2. POLITICAL ELITES**

The Egyptian government has welcomed the relatively recent European Neighborhood policy as a means of deepening Euro-Mediterranean partnership and as a way to foster the benefits the Egyptian government can achieve from this partnership, noting that this policy should be considered an enhancement of the Barcelona process and not a replacement. The Egyptian government has also insisted on the necessity of elaborating working methods on a basis of bilateral negotiations between the EU and Egypt and multilateral negotiations involving all the Euro-Mediterranean partners and establishing common follow-up procedures. The aim has been to establish peer-to-peer

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interviewees corresponds to the national proportions of literacy, basic education, higher education and graduate degree holders.

<sup>3</sup> These were some of the comments by the participants in the Al-Ahram online survey conducted in 2005 and thus summarised by a journalist.

relationships instead of a surveillance process by the EU over the achievements of the South Mediterranean countries. However, in the various recent rounds of negotiations on the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) Plan of Action, the Egyptian government has been highly inflexible on many political issues, under the pretext that they do not lie directly under the political competence of the Action Plan, such as the independence of the media and human rights issues (Shaheera El-Rafiei, 10 October 2005). The Egyptian government has expressed its belief that the last European enlargement will create more opportunities to increase the amount of trade between Egypt and the EU, since the EU is the first trade partner for Egypt and the biggest common market in the world. It is to be noted, in this context, that the Egyptian government perceives the EU primarily as a trade and economic partner.

Many governmental sources believe that the European policy towards Southern Mediterranean countries has been crystallised thanks to the efforts exerted by several Arab parties, especially Egypt, and in response to their calls. In fact, the Egyptian government has exerted considerable effort to develop the Euro-Mediterranean framework of cooperation, after seeing the developments that took place in the relations of the EU with Central and Eastern European countries after the fall of the USSR, but also particularly after it was worried about the possibility of Egypt's marginalisation because of the potential development of the 5+5 formula of cooperation between the European Northern Mediterranean countries and the Western North African countries, as a result of the potential elaboration of a European-North African framework of cooperation. Thus, the Egyptian government feels responsible for the maintenance and the development of its relations with the EU (See Mohamed El-Sayed Selim, 2005).

Some of the Egyptian official criticisms of the EU's role in the Middle East and in the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean cooperation can be summarised as follows:

- The EU's incentive in the Barcelona process is mainly that of trying to reduce sources of instability, i.e. working to eliminate the negative consequences on the EU of the deterioration of the situation in the Southern Mediterranean. Thus, the incentives are those of "preventing the negative consequences" and not those of "reaping the fruits of cooperation".
- The dominance of security and political goals in the EU's vision while dealing with the Southern Mediterranean countries, also follows in the logic of avoiding "crises and problems coming from the south". The allusion here is made directly to certain questions like those of immigration or terrorism. The aim of the EU, in this respect, is seen not as attempting to help the Southern Mediterranean countries to solve their problems, but rather to help them manage them within their borders and avoid exporting them to their Northern Mediterranean neighbours (Emad Gad, 2001a, p. 116).

In his speech to the Euro-Mediterranean Summit celebrating the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Barcelona Process (1995-2005), delivered by Dr. Ahmed Nazif, Prime Minister of Egypt, President Mubarak insisted that "there are some who attribute the limited progress in the political and security chapter of the Barcelona Process to the link [Egypt maintains] between progress in this chapter and progress in the peace process". He underlined that "[Egypt's] insistence on such linkage is accompanied by a similar persistence in pushing the Peace Process forward on all tracks, together with parallel determination to reinforce Euro-Mediterranean cooperation in this chapter, as well as in the other chapters of the Barcelona Process". As for the "Neighborhood Policy", President Mubarak confirmed Egypt's aspiration to "enhanced cooperation in the framework of the European Neighborhood Policy" and insisted on the need for "clarifications on what it offers by way of additional incentives and new horizons, especially regarding the four freedoms for movement of goods, services, capital and individuals". An important mistake, however, in the President's address was to mention a speech given to the European Parliament in 1997 "four years before the launching of the Barcelona Process". It is hardly believable that President Mubarak's speech, delivered by the Egyptian prime minister, confused the launching of the Barcelona Process in 1995 with the

signature of the Association Agreement between Egypt and the EU in 2001! The recent EU enlargement to Eastern and Central European countries has been seen generally as a challenge to the EU's commitment to cooperation with Southern Mediterranean countries, since the EU would be more concerned with accommodating these new Member States.

Very few sources are available on the different political parties' perception of the EU. A few references can be found in parliamentary electoral programmes that generally concern very general issues regarding the EU and are usually related to the most global aspects of EU-Egypt relations. However, tracing the major trends shows an inclination of the different parties to support strengthening Egyptian relations with the EU as a counterbalance to the American hegemony in the region. This was mainly visible in the programmes of the various party leaders during the first presidential elections campaign in the summer of 2005, as well as in a limited number of articles in party newspapers, such as *Al-Wafd*, *Al-Ahaly* and *Al-Araby*, belonging respectively to *Al-Wafd* party (right wing, liberal), *Al-Tagammu* party (Left wing) and the Nasserist party.

### **3. PRESS**

The Egyptian Press' interest in the EU is not as prominent as that in the activities of other international actors. Foreign and International Affairs pages in the Egyptian written press (newspapers and magazines) show a rather limited interest in the European Union as a foreign actor, compared notably to the United States. Apart from the minimal news, about EU summits, the rotation of the Presidency of the Council of the European Union, common statements on international affairs, analysis and comment on the actions of the EU and its relations with Egypt are quite rare. Recently however, more interest has been shown by the press into discussions of some "technical details" of the negotiations of the European Neighborhood Policy Plan of Action. Nevertheless, we quite agree with Hanaa Ebeid's view of the press as "the most comprehensive channel of views, if not the most accurate". In her study of the Egyptian press discourse on the Euro-Mediterranean partnership, she estimated the press to be "the main key to understanding Egyptian views of the partnership, as it reflects various strands of opinion through news coverage, editorials, and published official and non-official statements. The views of various think tanks, civil society associations, and the academic and business classes usually find their way into the press, either through news coverage, reports, Op-Eds, or paid advertisements. The press acts as a surrogate public opinion forum, which substitutes for the absence of public opinion polls and civil society positions" (Hanaa Ebeid, 2004, p. 5).

Analysing the press entails the analysis of various newspapers and magazines (independent, government-leaning, opposition), which led us to a quasi-exclusive examination of the Egyptian press on the question, for the period from 1995 to 2006, using the internet archive of *Al-Ahram* newspaper, the English-speaking *Al-Ahram Weekly*, the French-speaking *Al-Ahram Hebdo*, *Al-Ahram Center for Strategic studies* publications, as well as all the available archives of other independent and party newspapers. Some European embassies have rather poor press dossiers regarding the Egyptian discourse on the EU. Usage was made of the French and Italian embassies press dossiers, as well as those of the Delegation of the European Commission in Cairo and the Cairo University Center for European Studies.

Relations between the EU and southern Mediterranean countries, especially Arab countries, are generally considered by the Egyptian press to be in a critical and significant phase, since the EU is developing its process of integration and has, relatively, successfully achieved its hugest wave of integration, and progressed in developing its Common Foreign and Security Policy, a significant step towards the consolidation of its common stance in the international arena, while Arab countries, on the other hand, are considered to be currently witnessing an opposite movement of accelerated

division and the recoil of the possibilities of common Arab action, because of the stagnation of the peace process for a lengthy period of time, as well as the stumbling of political and economic development of these countries in general, besides other factors of instability in Iraq and Syria.

The experience of European integration is generally seen by the press in Egypt, as an exemplary experience of integration and as the most reasonable and realistic alternative to the failing pan-Arab projects. The idea of building an integration process among nations based on economic and commercial interests seems more viable and more likely to succeed than building it on culturalist and essentialist factors, such as “common” language, history or culture. It seems obvious to many Egyptian intellectuals, especially as Egypt has been for a long period of time, mainly under the Nasser regime, the leader of the pan-Arabist project, that the Arab world can draw many lessons from the European integration experience among nations devastated by war.

However, it seems that a dominant impression in the Egyptian press regarding EU-Egypt relations is that of a lack of real mutual understanding. The EU is seen to be dealing with Egypt, and the rest of the Arab countries, as economically developing and politically undemocratic. Thus, it seems that the Egyptian press is taking the EU visions regarding solutions for Egyptian and Arab problems as a political, economic and social “European recipe” that Egypt is supposed to follow closely if it wishes to achieve any worthy success. The EU is seen to be presenting to the Arab world, in general, a “ready-made model” for economic and political development to be taken or left altogether. Thus, the cooperation formula is considered to be twisted into “preaching” and the “partnership and dialogue one” are seen as “patronizing” (Emad Gad, 2001b, pp. 7-8).

Recently, the press was particularly interested in covering the process of ratification of the Treaty establishing a European Constitution, considered by the press and by the Egyptian intelligentsia as an important step not only in the history of the European continent, but also in the history of international politics. The failure to ratify the European Constitution in France and in the Netherlands was seen in Egypt as threatening to slow down the process of European integration. This was a source of controversy in the Egyptian press and among the Egyptian intelligentsia: some believe that this will delay the emergence of the EU as a counterbalance to the US, thus reducing the chances of Egypt to benefit from its existence as such; others believe, on the contrary, that Egypt has nothing to regret, since they are convinced that the stronger and the more unified the EU becomes, the readier it seems to pressurise the Arab world and the more willing it becomes to reconcile its Middle East policies with those of the US. As for the EU’s role in the resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict, it is also widely thought in the Egyptian press that there are several “objective factors” that hinder the enlargement of the EU’s policies towards the Middle East in general, especially in the political and security dimension. The “American factor” is one of the most important; successive American administrations have almost monopolised the management of the Arab-Israeli conflict, thus marginalising, sometimes deliberately, the European role (Hanaa Ebeid, 2001, p. 41).

The European policy in the Mediterranean is certainly seen in the context of the EU’s Common Foreign and Security Policy, which is still characterised by the relative weakness of its institutional structures and the lack of coherent strategic visions covering the various geographical areas surrounding the EU, despite the elaboration of certain initiatives, such as Neighborhood policies. Therefore, the EU is usually seen as incapable of and, often unwilling, to deal effectively with crises and complex problems on the international scene. The European “Foreign policy” is also seen as a “reaction” policy that develops mainly on the basis of gradual conditioning, on the one hand, and according to the pressures and the varying visions of the Member States and of the EU institutions, on the other. Thus the EU’s foreign policy is seen as not developing according to prior strategic plans, but according to the interaction amongst several immediate variables, on the one hand, and on European internal interactions and contradictions, on the other (Gamal Abdel-Gawwad, 2001b, p. 94).

As for the Egyptian press evaluation of the EU's foreign policy in general, there has been some insistence on the failures of the EU in achieving security in the European continent, the light has been particularly shed on the limits of the European role in the resolution of the Yugoslav conflict. However, the press is usually objective enough to cite some "successes" of the EU, without which the Continent could have been radically altered. The most important success on which the press focuses has been the continuing consolidation of the European integration process, despite the various obstacles and pressures and even despite some relatively minor failures. Other achievements of the EU, according to the Egyptian press, whose effect on European stability and security cannot be ignored, include the success of the European Commission in putting an end to the dispute between Hungary and Slovakia over the Gabčíkovo dam, as well as the EU's success in 1996, after five years of negotiations, in inciting both Romania and Hungary to sign a bilateral treaty in which the nature and extent of minority protection that Bucharest should grant to Hungarian citizens have been defined and in which Hungary dropped its demands for "autonomy" for the Hungarian minority in Romania. A further success story of the EU is that of preventing a huge national ethnic and religious conflict in Macedonia and avoiding a Serbian aggression aiming at deterring the small republic from gaining independence.

However, one of the most positive points, in this regard, according to the Egyptian press, is the realisation by the EU that focusing on preventing armed conflicts in the continent does not cancel out the need for military preparation that could be needed to intervene in case of necessity. This need has been reconfirmed due to the European failure in preventing armed ethnic conflicts in the Former Republic of Yugoslavia (Gamal Abdel Gawwad, 2001b, pp. 138-140). As for the role of the EU in the international arena as an international actor, many believe that the end of the bipolar world system is leading to the emergence of more contradictions and potentially, to new polarisation in the world system, leading, perhaps, to the creation of a multipolar system, composed mainly of the United States, the EU, Japan and, potentially, China. However, a minority is still skeptic towards this possibility and particularly towards the EU's capacity of emerging as a world power. They believe that the end of the Cold War presents more opportunities to develop deeper relations between the United States and the EU, whose ultimate interests are not contradicting, and who share many common cultural, social and economic factors, such as Christianity, liberalism and a market economy.<sup>4</sup> The same poll conducted by the Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies consecrated a special part to "journalists and media actors" with the same question on whether they consider the European partnership as the best regional cooperation framework for the Arab world. Almost 28 % of journalists and media actors answered yes to this question.

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<sup>4</sup> Abundant literature is available on this subject : See for example: هانى خلاف وأحمد نافع. "تطور العلاقات الأوروبية-الأمريكية وانعكاساتها على المصالح المصرية والعربية". هانى خلاف وأحمد نافع. نحن وأوروبا: شواغل الحاضر وأفاق المستقبل. القاهرة: مركز الأهرام للدراسات السياسية والاستراتيجية، 1997، ص ص 240-247. (The development of European-American relations and their reflections on Egyptian and Arab interests)

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From an economic point of view, however, EU-Egypt relations and the Association Agreement draw considerable criticism. According to many, the economic elements of the agreement and the Euro-Mediterranean partnership represent a net loss to the Egyptian fragile economy. The liberalisation of trade in industrial products between Egypt and the EU will seriously harm Egyptian industries, especially infant ones that will not be capable of competing with European industrial products even within the Egyptian market itself. The effects and costs of lifting customs barriers, which represent a good source of income to the state budget, are also seen as severe, especially as the EU is Egypt's first trading partner (Ossama Gheith, 2000a). There is also criticism addressed to the agricultural component of the Association Agreement and the lack of liberalisation of agricultural goods and products which deprives Egypt from the benefits of a comparative advantage it enjoys in the agricultural sector. The economic side of the agreement is often seen as unjust, seeing that it demands the liberalisation of trade in industrial products, in which the EU enjoys a comparative advantage, while applying a restrictive quota system on trade in agricultural good and products, in which Egypt enjoys a comparative advantage (Ossama Gheith, 2000b).

From a political point of view, it is widely considered in the Egyptian press that the European Union has trimmed down the important issues relevant to the Arab world into two main policies: anti-terrorism policy and illegal immigration policy, aside from the increasing security obsession after 9/11, ignoring other aspects pertaining to peaceful and just resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict, sustainable development, and the increasing scientific and technological gap between the North and the South of the Mediterranean. (Mahmoud Bassiouny, 11 December 2005).

As for the current rounds of negotiation on the European Neighborhood Policy Plan of Action, especially the deadlock on key human rights issues, some written media sources, especially in government-leaning newspapers and magazines, echoed the demands of the Egyptian government and urged the European partner, to the discontentment of the majority of Egyptian human rights activists and NGOs, to understand the specificities of the customs and traditions of each society and to accept the idea that each society should live according to its own convictions without any external pressures, alluding to the European pressure on the Egyptian government to guarantee respect for religious liberties and freedom of sexual orientation. The press tried, in this regard, to echo the governmental claims, according to which, these issues would not help the Europeans reach the stability they are seeking in the Southern Mediterranean countries and would not guarantee the required popular support in those countries, let alone the fact that "they are relatively irrelevant to the future relations between Egypt and the EU" (Shaheera El-Rafiei, 10 October 2005).

#### **4. ORGANIZED CIVIL SOCIETY**

The European Union is considered by certain liberal and leftist political opposition tendencies as a potential partner in the process of democratizing the Egyptian political scene, mainly strengthening civil society independence in the face of governmental pressures. Many civil society organisations see the EU as an important potential financier, seeing that they depend mainly for their funding on foreign financial sources.

Some criticise the Barcelona process as being too official a formula lacking positive participation from civil society actors from both sides of the Mediterranean, which might be due to the popular sensitivity in Egypt towards foreign factors, in light of its colonial experience. Several civil society actors believe that Egypt, and the Southern Mediterranean countries in general, are way down the EU agenda and list of interests, compared evidently to the EU's internal affairs and to its other deeper and more significant foreign affairs both in political and economic terms. They also believe that there is no sufficient awareness, let alone enthusiasm, among European public opinion and civil society towards the EU's Mediterranean policy, which means a lack of a supportive base and

internal pressure within European societies to push forwards the EU's Mediterranean policy. Accordingly, the potential cost that might be taken by the European political elites in case of failures of their Mediterranean policies is negligible (Gamal Abdel-Gawwad, 2001a, p. 93). Civil society organisations have called upon the EU and the Egyptian government to consult with civil society in the current bilateral negotiations on the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) Plan of Action. They assert that the Plan of Action should include concrete obligations on the government with regard to political reform, respect for human rights and civil society's monitoring of the implementation of the Plan.

These demands were expressed in a seminar organised jointly by the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS) and the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN) on "The European Neighborhood Policy: Human Rights in the European-Egyptian Relations" in Cairo, 26-27 January 2006. Several other important NGOs participated in this seminar, namely the Arab Network for Human Rights Information, the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights, the Egyptian Association for Social Participation, the Egyptian Organisation for Human Rights, the Habi Center for Environmental Rights, the Egyptian Association for the Strengthening of Democratic Development, the Egyptian Center for Women's Rights, the Human Rights Association for the Assistance of Prisoners, the Center for Trade Union and Workers' Services, the Land Center for Human Rights, the Hisham Mubarak Law Center, the The Arab Organization for Penal Reform, the Ibn Khaldun center for development studies, Andalus Institute for Tolerance and Anti-Violence Studies, the Egyptian civil platform, the Karma center for development, the Egyptian women issues' center and the Sons of land institution. In this framework, participants have called on the Arab governments not to be inspired by the Israeli model and to learn instead from the Ukrainian experience in dealing with civil society before and after the adoption of the ENP Plan of Action. During negotiations, the Ukrainian government undertook intensified discussions with civil society on human rights in the Plan of Action. Following the adoption of the Plan, the government worked with civil society on setting a roadmap to implement the human rights and democracy obligations laid down in the Plan. Participants objected to the Egyptian government use of "national sovereignty" or "non-interference in the country's internal affairs" as pretexts during negotiations with the European party considering such pretexts on the part of the government's persistent attempts to abort political reform and promotion of human rights requested for years and in vain by Egyptians. In addition, the government itself does not resort to these pretexts during negotiations for economic aid, or for accession to any security or military cooperation scheme with European or Western countries. Participants asserted that the Plan of Action should necessarily include a number of priorities in the special chapter on human rights and democracy. These should include taking all measures to end the widely spread systematic practice of torture in detention places; adopting necessary policies to hold perpetrators of torture accountable and putting an end to impunity and Emergency Laws, which provide the Executive with almost absolute jurisdictions to infringe on public freedoms and rights. They also refuse reference to national legislation with regard to issues of human rights and democracy, and assert the necessity for reference to universal principles of human rights, which are absent from and even undermined in national legislation. The Plan of Action should also, according to the different participating NGOs, explicitly provide for enacting new legislation to free civil society associations, political parties and trade unions from arbitrary legislative restrictions and the interference by security and government bodies, amending media-regulating legislation to safeguard the freedom of establishing newspapers, TV and radio channels and to restructure state-owned media institutions in order to safeguard their independence from the ruling party. On the other hand, participants warned against human rights violations as a result of anti-terror legislation in some Arab and European countries. They assert that the proper approach to confront problems of security and terrorism is conditional upon the EU's ability to provide a comprehensive perspective toward development, promotion of human rights and democracy and activation of the role of the civil society. The EU should refrain from supporting authoritarian regimes in the Arab world. This used to take place for such regimes to protect the European gates

against terrorism and immigration with methods that do not serve peoples' interests and nourish terrorism. They added that the EU's capacity to activate the ENP, and make up for the failure of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership since the launching of the Barcelona Process in 1995, is conditional upon placing human rights and political reform priorities on top of the EU-Arab agenda. It is also conditional upon involving civil society in monitoring negotiations and implementation of the suggested Plans of Actions with neighbouring countries (Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network).

The Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS) and the Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights (EIRP), in collaboration with the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network (EMHRN), organised a joint mission to a number of EU institutions in Brussels from 20-22 March 2006. The delegation emphasised the need for the inclusion of concrete, measurable and time-bound commitments in the human rights chapter of the EU-Egypt Action Plan. The delegation urged the EU and the Egyptian government to include in the Action Plan the creation of a specific Sub-Committee on Human Rights within the framework of the EU-Egypt Association Agreement and to establish an efficient monitoring mechanism of the Action Plan once adopted. The delegation also asked for a strong and systematic involvement of civil society organisations in the implementation and monitoring phases (Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies, 26 March 2006). The resolution, adopted by the European Parliament on 6 April, reiterates the main demands of civil society associations in Egypt, which were first submitted to both the Egyptian and European parties in September 2005, and have been followed by subsequent detailed memoranda.

From the economic point of view, several civil society organisations complained that the Egyptian harvest of the last ten years of Euro-Mediterranean partnership was very poor, compared, for example, to Israel's share of profits from this partnership, according to Hafez Abou Seada, Secretary-General of the Egyptian Organization for Human Rights (Mahmoud Bassiouny, 11 December 2005). From the political point of view, many believe that the Euro-Mediterranean partnership has not been a real success, though the EU has long been considered a mediating partner in the Middle East peace process. They reckon that the EU has never adopted a positive and firm position towards the extreme human rights violation of the Palestinian people, besides its reluctance to impose sanctions on Israel for its lack of observance of international legitimacy and international human rights norms (ibid). A kind of general disappointment was also expressed towards the EU's contribution to increasing pressure on and exclusion of Syria (Al-Ahrar, 2 January 2006).

The Muslim Brothers (MBs) represent another dimension of Egyptian civil society's perception of the EU. On 23 May 2006, a delegation of the "banned but tolerated" MB members of parliament met with Mr. Oliver Nette, Counsellor in the Delegation of the European Commission in Egypt. During the meeting, the MBs asserted that if the EU respects democracy and the opinions of the people, it is not expected to adopt its current stance towards the Hamas government (there are obvious ideological links between the MBs in Egypt and Hamas) since it is the government chosen by the Palestinian people through democratic elections. They stressed that that exclusion and siege imposed on Hamas are actually imposed on Palestinian democracy. They also criticised the EU's position towards the Palestinian issue in general. As for the EU's pressure for democratising the region, the MBs expressed their discontentment with foreign interference in the internal affairs of the southern countries and requested it to leave the peoples deal, in their own way, with the ruling regimes (The Muslim Brotherhood website, 24 May 2006).

## CONCLUSIONS

The general aim of this survey was to review the main sources of information with regards to how the European Union is perceived in Egypt and to analyse the data available with the aim of supporting further research concerned with the analysis of the external image of the European

Union. Regarding public opinion, it is to be noted that there are insufficient opinion polls and questionnaires on this subject that could enable us to depict precisely the Egyptian opinion trends on the EU. As for the political elites, it is clear that the Egyptian government views the European Union primarily in economic terms, due to its already “well-established” political ties with the United States, which it considers to be the main political ally and guide in regional and international politics. It is, however, clear as well that the Egyptian government does not have prior long-term strategies in its relations with the European Union, nor a clear vision of methods and policies in its relations with the Union. The same goes to the political parties that are simply content with insisting on the importance of strengthening relations with the European Union as a strategic partner and ally. The press has been widely used in this context. The European Union does not seem to be underrepresented or under portrayed in the Egyptian press or mass media. Thus, sufficient press sources have been found and used in this research. As far as organised civil society is concerned, it is clear that civil society organisations have not yet developed a comprehensive or outspoken strategy towards foreign relations in general and towards the EU in particular. According to official sources, Egypt has over 17,000 civil society organisations. The overwhelming majority of these CSOs are Muslim-Brotherhood established and run organizations for charity works. The rest are mainly human rights organisations that often depend on European funding sources. Thus, they often hesitate to express opinions, though they might criticise some aspects of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership or some official tendencies of the EU towards the region in general. The Muslim Brotherhood, the most important opposition group in Egypt, largely tolerated by the Egyptian government, though still banned to establish a political party, has established its own talks with the European Union (especially after winning 88 of the Egyptian Parliament’s 454 seats in the last Parliamentary elections in November 2005). The European Commission had several talks and meetings with representatives of the Brotherhood. It seems that the Brotherhood, with its usual prudence, is not very willing to talk about its “perception” of the EU, but instead offers some general observations about the EU’s attitude towards the region, and the EU’s stance towards the Hamas government which they use as an indicator for the former’s stance towards their potential attainment of power in Egypt.

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FORUM ON THE PROBLEMS OF PEACE AND WAR  
GARNET - Jointly Executed Research Project 5.2.1

**THE EXTERNAL IMAGE OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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**REPORT ON  
*INDIA***

**Lorenzo Fioramonti**



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## **ABSTRACT**

Most analysts see India (already the world's 4th largest economy) moving rapidly ahead and overtaking Japan in third position, on the basis of its huge and very young population (expected to overtake China and reach around 1.5 billion people in the coming decades), with the largest pool of engineers in the world, already showing fast-growing progress in the IT and services sectors, and attracting ever larger amounts of foreign investment. At the same time, India's new global role has been acknowledged by all major powers and seen in strategic partnerships with the USA and Russia and the upswing in relations with China.

In terms of cultural values, there are few major countries with which the EU has more in common in terms of fundamental values, from democracy to free press, to the respect for human rights or the firm belief in religious, ethnic and social tolerance. In spite of this, Indian society does not seem to be particularly interested in the EU and this makes it very difficult to discern how the EU is perceived in this country. This lack of interest for the EU has been recognised by EU officials too. As remarked by Neena Gill, British MEP in the European Parliament, "A vast majority of the people [in India] is not aware of EU or its activities. The political classes and the media in India have to become more aware. We have to realise India and the EU are natural partners. We both believe in a multi-polar world".

### ***Public opinion***

There is no available data on the attitude and opinions of Indian citizens regarding the EU and its global role. The survey reports the results of the Pew Global Attitudes opinion polls which show that Indian citizens hold a rather positive opinion of the US (the best, after American citizens themselves). This data is important for an analysis of the EU's image in India because it shows that public perceptions in India are deeply influenced by the US.

### ***Political and economic elites***

The Indian government sees the EU as a major role-player in international politics as far as development and trade are concerned. Some relevance is also given to international security issues (mostly the fight against terrorism). Whereas the tone is cordial when government refers to bilateral negotiations, when it comes to multilateral meetings the EU is associated with the rest of the so-called First World (particularly, the US), which enjoys privileges and keeps supporting legislation that perpetuate injustices (especially on around trade issues). Whereas analysts stress that the Indian government looks at the EU as a counter power to the US, when it comes to the political discourse in multilateral venues the EU and the US are seen as two faces of the same coin. In this regard, it is worth noting that the statements reported in the survey show a degree of ambiguity: whereas the US remains the leading power for India, there seems to be an appreciation for the EU as a potential counterpower to the US hegemony, at least in so far as this rivalry might offer opportunities for India's geopolitical aspirations in a multipolar world.

It is important to note that Indian politicians see the EU primarily in strategic terms. The discourse around the EU is quite superficial, as many divergences remain between the Indian government and the EU, particularly regarding issues around trade barriers and disarmament. The limited depth of the discourse, and its inherent rhetorical dimensions, reveals that, behind the political jargon, the EU is generally not viewed as a different global player. Similarly, the private sector sees the EU as an opportunity but also as an economy in decline, vis-à-vis the US and emerging regional powers in the South.

### ***Civil society organisations***

The EU is hardly an issue of debate in Indian society and this is obviously reflected in the debate within civil society. Despite the lack of systematic data and the absence of some key organisations

(e.g. trade unions) in the survey, some patterns can be detected. First and foremost, it must be underlined that some of the key topics raised by Indian academics and civil society activists concern the very same issues that are being raised elsewhere in the world when it comes to the discourse around the EU, specifically the distortions in the international trade caused by the EU agricultural subsidies and non-tariff barriers. To most Indian civil society activists, these EU policies represent a new form of commercial exploitation of the Indian society and that of other developing countries. Interestingly, some activists look at the EU as a valuable opponent of the US when it comes to environmental policies and food security issues, especially the commoditisation of agrarian knowledge through GM products. In this respect the EU, at least in 2004, was seen as a beacon by Indian ecological groups. Finally, an element that should be underscored is how the EU's global role in high politics is perceived. In this case, the EU is seen as a toothless player, which struggles to have his voice heard when it comes to traditional diplomacy. In this respect, despite criticism, Indian academics still believe that future reforms might equip the EU with more effective instruments to make a difference in international 'power' politics.

### *The press*

Due to a wider spectrum of data, the analysis of the press has provided further insights, while confirming the findings of the previous sections. The newspapers' articles that employ positive tones to describe the EU are slightly more numerous than those espousing a negative attitude (79 and 53 respectively). In line with previous research findings, the most discussed themes are 'trade', 'agriculture', 'human rights' and 'foreign policy', with a specific focus on recent political events that have seen a significant involvement by the EU (such as the democratic breakthrough in Nepal or the war in Lebanon). Interestingly, a number of articles discuss at length the challenges posed by the French and Dutch referendum to the future of the EU and its aspirations to play a unitary role in foreign policy.

The EU's position with regard to the Indian nuclear strategy also features prominently in the press, which mainly records the negative view of India's government officials. Interestingly, when it comes to Iran and North Korea, the Indian newspapers analysed in this survey praise the EU's strategy that privileges diplomatic avenues and criticise the US' resort to military threats. Although limited in numbers (if compared to the visibility the US enjoys in the Indian press), the EU's presence in the newspapers and magazines reviewed in this survey is significant. Moreover, the themes covered by the press broadly mirror those covered in the analysis of the elites and civil society organisations. Within the methodological limitations of the research, this cross-sectoral consistency of the themes associated with the EU confirms that the Indian discourse around the EU shares certain key similarities and privileges the economic (trade policies, investment, etc.) aspects rather than the more political ones. When the EU's role as a global political actor is discussed in the press, it is mainly viewed in terms of humanitarian support and aid policies.

## 1. INTRODUCTION\*

What is the European Union (EU) for India? What is the perception that political elites have of the EU and its role in world politics? How do civil society organisations view the EU? And what is the media coverage of the EU in Indian newspapers? This report attempts to answer those questions by drawing from a collection of qualitative data.

Based on the limited information available, it was decided to look at documents in the period from the mid-1990s until now. Since the author of the survey did not have access to first-hand data, documents discussed in this report have been accessed through the internet.

The analysis is organised as follows:

- The general background sets the stage for the analysis of how Indian society perceives the role of the EU. In this initial section, relationship between European institutions/countries and India is discussed.
- Due to the lack of available data, the analysis of public opinion is missing. Nevertheless, the results of the Pew Global Attitude 2005 are briefly discussed so as to corroborate the observation that Indian public opinion is significantly influenced by the US (which according to a number of analysts is a key factor in explaining how India views the EU).
- The analysis of political and economic elites focuses on some press releases and public speeches given by politicians, most of which belong to the Indian National Congress (which is the party in office), but also includes documents of the BJP party and business organisations.
- The analysis of civil society organisations is limited to those few groups that have published something about the EU in their websites. Newspaper articles were also used to gather additional information.
- Finally, the media review draws from all articles regarding the EU that are available online. Moreover, a thorough analysis of all articles published in *The Hindustan Times* and *The New Statesman* since 2005 was conducted.

A number of Indian newspapers were used as the main source of information. The analysis is mainly based on selected publications and a thorough screening of all articles published in the *Hindustan Times* and the *New Statesman* since January 2005, as well as an online research of documents and articles available from other newspapers and websites. In this regard, due to this methodological limitation, the findings of the present survey might enjoy a different degree of validity than those discussed in the other surveys of this project. Similarly, all generalisations should take into account the limited data available.

## 2. GENERAL BACKGROUND: SETTING THE STAGE

Most analysts see India (already the world's 4th largest economy) moving rapidly ahead and overtaking Japan in third position, on the basis of its huge and very young population (expected to

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overtake China and reach around 1.5 billion people in the coming decades), with the largest pool of engineers in the world, already showing fast-growing progress in the IT and services sectors, and attracting ever larger amounts of foreign investment. At the same time, India's new global role has been acknowledged by all major powers and embodied in strategic partnerships with the USA and Russia and the upswing in relations with China.

At the international level, India has recently asserted itself as a significant player, at least in two respects. On the one hand, India has played a crucial role in international trade negotiations as one of the founding countries of the G20. On the other hand, India has exerted pressure on the international community to obtain a permanent seat in the UN Security Council. This latter point, of course, created some acrimony with key EU member states (e.g. Germany), which have been bidding for the same position. In terms of foreign policy, India has in the past few years entered a new era, making a decisive break with its tradition of *moralpolitik*, based on the non-alignment doctrine, and seeking quite overtly the status of a great power.

In terms of cultural values, there are few major countries with which the EU has more in common in terms of fundamental values, from democracy to free press, to the respect for human rights or the firm belief in religious, ethnic and social tolerance. With India's growing role in the scientific world, scientific cooperation is perhaps one of the most promising avenues for India-EU relations, hence, the importance of New Delhi's commitment to team up with the EU in the implementation of the Galileo project, a satellite network which offers an alternative to the American global positioning system (GPS). The combination of untapped potential and shared values was the principal rationale behind the EU-India Strategic Partnership launched at the 5th Summit in The Hague in November 2004 (the strategic partnership with India is the sixth for the EU, after US, Canada, Russia, China and Japan).

Currently, the EU is India's main trading partner. Some recent statistics are as follows. In 2005, bilateral trade between India and the EU grew by 20%. The EU is India's largest trading partner in goods, while India ranks as the EU's 12th trading partner. In 2004, EU imports from India (e.g. textiles, agricultural products and chemicals) totalled around €16 billion, while EU exports to India (mainly machinery and chemical products) accounted for about €17 billion. Bilateral trade in services has also grown in recent years: in 2003, EU services exports to India amounted to more than €2.5 billion and, in 2004, they reached €3.3 billion. In the past few years, India has also been the second largest beneficiary of the EU's Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) scheme.

Political dialogue, economic cooperation and engagement of civil society have developed steadily. The Strategic Partnership and the decision to implement its dimensions through the adoption of a comprehensive *joint action plan*, agreed at the Summit in Delhi on 7 September 2005, have provided the momentum to make a decisive step forward, both in content and ambition.

SP's *political* chapter emphasises areas where the EU wants to deepen political dialogue and join forces on the international stage to address global challenges. A firm commitment to pursuing dialogue on human rights, strengthened cooperation in the UN including peacekeeping, joining forces in the fight against terrorism, strengthened dialogue on migration and consular issues and reinforced parliamentary exchanges are such examples.

Its *cultural* and *academic* chapter includes several actions aimed at improving mutual understanding and civil society dialogue through increased academic exchanges and setting up of EU studies centres in India and vice-versa. Boosting the cultural dimension of relations through cultural weeks, festivals and dialogue between our audio-visual industries, on the basis of the recent Cultural Declaration, are other such steps forward.

The *economic* policy area's objective is to put the EU and its economic operators at the heart of India's ongoing reforms, also with a view to encouraging good governance. Many new activities have been materialising in this area, including: strengthened cooperation in science and technology; strengthened cooperation in the field of environmental protection, with a joint initiative on 'climate change'; the establishment of an EU-India Energy Panel, making information and communication technologies a priority area; the adoption of a maritime transport and civil aviation agreement; enhanced cooperation in space technology (in particular through India's participation in Galileo) and new emphasis on biotechnologies; a business 'round table' to strengthen business cooperation, a development partnership in order to achieve progress with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Finally, the *trade* and *investment* chapter aims at launching a new era of bilateral trade relations. The Action Plan provides for the establishment of a High Level Trade Group which would look at means to enhance two-way bilateral trade and investment flows between India and the EU. It also launches a dialogue on a number of areas, such as public procurement and public-private partnerships.

In this context, it appears that EU co-operation with India is undergoing a transition from a development focus to a new approach that gives growing importance to economic reforms, good governance and policy dialogue with the EU in sectors such as energy, transport and the environment where India is bound to become a key partner for the EU and globally. In other words, the EU and India are increasingly viewed as equal partners, enabling both to jointly face global challenges.

The former EU Commissioner for External Relations, Chris Patten, captured this move in his inaugural speech given during a workshop that took place in Brussels in 2001 and that was aimed at intensifying the interactions between Indian and EU think-tanks:

"I think the decision last year to raise the level of dialogue between India and the EU and to institute regular summits was a recognition of a profound reality. Not just a recognition of our historical and cultural ties, not just a recognition of closer economic, trade and investment relations but, above all, a reflection of the values that we share, and of the values that we try to represent in international meetings and international fora."

However, as will be showed in this report, while official declarations and speeches insist on the importance of the EU-India partnership on the basis of common values and goals in a multipolar world, some analysts have argued that India (particularly, Indian elites) view the EU as a weak global actor characterised by a fragmented foreign policy and declining political clout in world politics, especially vis-à-vis the US and emerging regional hegemonic nations such as China and India itself (Lisbonne-de Vergeron, 2006).

There are a number of issues on which both India and EU diverge — nuclear and missile weapons, transfer of dual-use technologies as well as some issues related to the WTO. Although some EU member states (such as Great Britain and France) have revised their position with respect to India's nuclear power status and have been influenced by India's security concerns, the official position of the EU in this area has not officially changed. In this regard, US president George W. Bush's visit to New Delhi in March 2006 (which culminated in the adoption of a 'nuclear deal' that includes Indian access to US nuclear technology for civilian purposes) has significantly contributed to improving the image of the US for Indian political elites (for instance, by ending to India's pariah international status due to its nuclear weapons capabilities) at the expense of the EU's image (*The Hindustan Times*, 9 October 2006). Nevertheless, some Indian observers believe that the continuation of bilateral strategic dialogues with several West European countries as well as regular

consultations on security issues with the EU should further contribute to the narrowing down of differences on these issues (Jain 2001).<sup>1</sup>

In general, it is not easy to discern how the EU is perceived by Indian society at large. As P.M. Kamath wrote in Asian Times in June 2002,

“it is exceedingly difficult to discern EU perceptions as though the EU were a fully and well-integrated regional organization or a federal state of Europe. It is yet to have a single foreign or defence policy, though it has partially achieved the goal of a single currency”.

At the same time, Indian media is not particularly interested in the EU. As Malcolm Subham, Vice-Chair of the European Institute for Asian Studies, asked rhetorically in the Indian Express in May 2005, “Why is it that India so seldom makes it to the front pages of newspapers in the 25-nation EU? And why is it that the EU is seldom reported in the pages of Indian newspapers?”. As Rajendra K. Jain noted in 2001,

“there is an enormous information deficit about the European Union in India and about India in the European Union. For too long, have Indian perceptions of Europe been viewed through the prism of the Anglo-Saxon media. There is a considerable divide between reality and an individual's perception of it. This is particularly true of the image that Europeans have of India and vice versa. The average Indian has considerable difficulty in understanding what kind of political and economic animal the European Union is. To him, the EC stands for the "Election Commission". And if the EC Delegation is said to be an embassy, the usual query is for which country does it issue visas for” (Jain 2001).

According to the research conducted by Lisbonne-de Vergeron in 2006, Europe does not appeal to India's leading students, in spite of the EU's attempt to facilitate EU-Indian connections through the Erasmus programme, as formulated in its strategic partnership. Most Indian post-graduate students still choose the US. In 2006 there were more than 80,000 Indian students in the US, compared with under 25,000 in the EU (Lisbonne-de Vergeron 2006).

More generally, East Asia is to be seen as the key area of influence for India (the so-called look east policy). ‘The East’, in this context, is obviously understood to be primarily, and overwhelmingly, China, but it also includes Japan. Despite frictions and regional rivalries on specific issues, Indian elites increasingly feel that India and China are no longer competitors, but rather complimentary forces. According to Jairam Ramesh, Minister of State for Commerce, the so-called ‘Chindia’ phenomenon is the key to comprehending the way forward for their country, namely that twenty years from now it will be ‘the deep mutual interaction’ of the two Asian giants which will drive world growth. Similarly, according to Kamal Nath, Minister for Commerce and Industry, “Southeast Asia will be an important trade bridge between China and India to create an economic powerhouse” (both statements are quoted in Lisbonne-de Vergeron 2006).<sup>2</sup>

In terms of geo-political strategies, Europe therefore remains of tertiary importance to Indian interests, clearly lagging behind the US and East Asia. Interestingly, in his address on India's Independence Day in, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh did not mention the EU in the list of its key strategic counter parties.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> In Indian diplomatic circles, there is a growing feeling that the EU has chosen to favour China over India, whereas the US is seen as better cooperating with India in strategic areas while more effectively opposing China. This closeness to the US is also reinforced by the strong Indian diaspora in this country (Lisbonne-de Vergeron 2006).

<sup>2</sup> Areas of tension do persist, however. There was some media criticism of Beijing still ‘preferring Pakistan to India’ when Chinese interests recently undertook to fund part of the new port facilities at Karachi. More seriously, there is some alarm in Delhi over Beijing's longer-term ambitions in Burma and Bangladesh.

<sup>3</sup> Indian Prime Minister Independence Day address, <http://pmindia.nic.in/speeches.htm>.

This lack of interest for the EU has been recognised by EU officials too. As remarked by Neena Gill, British MP in the European Parliament, “a vast majority of the people [in India] is not aware of EU or its activities. The political classes and the media in India have to become more aware. We have to realise India and the EU are natural partners. We both believe in a multi-polar world” (*The Hindustan Times*, 13 August 2006).

### 3. PUBLIC OPINION

To the knowledge of the author of this survey, there is no opinion poll that provides information on how Indian citizens view the EU. It might be interesting to mention that according to the 2005 Pew Global Attitudes survey, 71% of Indians hold a favourable view of the US in spite of the war on Iraq. Of all countries polled in this survey, only US citizens themselves have a more favourable opinion of their own country. What is interesting for this survey is that the US is perceived by Indians as the leading and hegemonic power.

### 4. POLITICAL ELITES

Collecting information regarding political elites turned out to be particularly difficult as information is very limited and press releases or political documents are not accessible on the main parties’ websites. The little information discussed here stems from quotations in newspaper articles. The following table presents a summary of the main topics touched by political elites’ interventions and distinguish them into ‘negative’, ‘positive’, and ‘neutral’ statements.

	Negative	Neutral	Positive
<i>Documents</i>	8	1	14

- EU non-tariff trade barriers (6 negative)
- Common values and natural partners (6 positive)
- Dialogue at business level (3 positive)
- Fight against terrorism and security (1 positive and 1 negative)
- EU in a multipolar world (3 positive)
- Foreign direct investment to India (1 positive)
- EU global role and power politics (1 negative)
- EU’s history and culture (1 neutral)

#### 4.1. Some excerpts from the most significant speeches analysed in this survey

##### ***The Government of India (and Indian National Congress)***

Since the inception of the new Congress-led executive, the government’s public statements on the EU have touched upon the potential of the new Strategic Partnership with the EU. The tone of most of the statements denotes some degree of ‘pride’ in the Indian government’s rhetoric, underlying the conviction that the EU has proposed a strategic partnership to India because Indian is a growing economy with a crucial international status. The Indian government often mentions the role played by the Indian diaspora in the EU, especially Indian business, as a facilitator of the EU-India relationship.

Here are reported the most interesting excerpts from the statements released in various occasions, after the adoption of the Strategic Partnership in 2004:



- Prime minister, Manmohan Singh: “As tariff barriers disintegrate, non-tariff barriers suddenly come up.” In this statement, the Prime Minister pointed out that although India had comparative advantage in the production of a number of agricultural commodities, many of them find still some form of discrimination and trade protection in the EU market. This aspect was of serious concern for the Indian government and many other developing nations in the world.

Source: <http://www.saag.org/%5Cpapers16%5Cpaper1536.html>

- Kamal Math, Indian Trade Minister: “While tariffs may be low [in the EU], markets are becoming increasingly difficult to penetrate due to mounting stringency of standards, cumbersome and complex rules and procedures and frequent use of trade defence instruments”... “There has to be a significant increase in market access on agricultural and non-agricultural products, as well as the key area of services”.

Source: <http://www.saag.org/%5Cpapers16%5Cpaper1536.html>

- Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister, pointed out that: “India-EU business summit has evolved as an effective forum for dialogue and exchange of views which can play a constructive role in strengthening the strategic partnership”.

Source: <http://www.saag.org/%5Cpapers16%5Cpaper1536.html>

- Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister: “The EU is emerging as a politically influential, economically powerful and demographical diverse regional entity in the world. It is not only India's largest trading partner, but also our largest source of foreign direct investment. Our relations are based on shared values -- democracy, pluralism, rule of law, free press and independent judiciary. Our partnership has evolved over the years from economic development and cooperation to broad-based engagement on a wide range of issues -- globalisation, terrorism, proliferation, energy and environment.” [...] “[the EU] is an important source of technology and home to a large and influential Indian Diaspora”.

Source: <http://www.saag.org/papers12/paper1163.html>

<http://www.hindu.com/2004/11/08/stories/2004110806810100.htm>

- Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh: “The EU-India partnership builds on the common values and beliefs that India and the EU share as the world's two largest democracies, the values that make us natural partners”.

Source: <http://www.number-10.gov.uk/output/Page8145.asp>

- Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh: “It is a struggle for the minds of the people and whatever we can do I think to promote respect for tolerance, respect for diversity that ... justifies recourse to terrorism, directed particularly against innocent men and women and children, plus also cooperation between the European Union countries and India in the intelligence gathering, in the intelligence sharing, and also ensuring that the means of financing terrorism are effectively I think checked. These are various approaches which are listed in the joint action plan”.

Source: <http://www.number-10.gov.uk/output/Page8145.asp>

- Shyam Saran, Foreign Secretary: “The EU represents a very important pole in a multipolar world.” [...] “If we are looking at a more multipolar world order, we have to look at a more multilateral approach to global challenges, whether terrorism, environment or the question of how to strengthen the UN”.

Source: <http://www.hindu.com/2004/11/06/stories/2004110602721100.htm>

- The Secretary for Europe at the Ministry for External Affairs in Delhi: “India and the EU are the two foremost examples we have in the world today of multiculturalism, something that countries elsewhere must learn to embrace as an inevitable aspect of globalization”.

Source: *Address to the seminar on ‘The European Union – Why it matters to India?’*, 6 December 2005.

#### Agricultural subsidies and international trade:

- Kamal Math, Indian Trade Minister: “Export subsidies are the most trade distortive measure, yet we have difficulty in defining the end date. Let the US and EU say that export subsidies will be eliminated in a certain number of years. We have not come to Hong Kong to perpetuate the inequalities. We need to correct this”. This comment was made during a meeting the minister participated in upon invitation by international NGOs.

Source: <http://www.twinside.org.sg/title2/twninfo323.htm>

- Kamal Math, Indian Trade Minister: “I do not care what formula is used, whether Swiss or German, I want to see how much the tariffs will be cut. If the EU cuts its tariff by only 24% while India has to cut by 77%, then where is the development content?”

Source: <http://www.twinside.org.sg/title2/twninfo323.htm>

- Kamal Math, Indian Trade Minister: “The ongoing World Trade Organisation (WTO) negotiations are headed for failure, unless developed countries, primarily the European Union (EU) and the US, show an entirely new mindset and put new offers on the table”.

Source. *New mindset needed from EU, US: Kamal Nath The Hindustan Times. New Delhi: Jun 5, 2006.*

#### India and EU as natural partners:

- Manmohan Singh: “We hope that the European Union will be in a position to support forward looking approaches to enhance international cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. This will enable countries like India to expand the share of nuclear energy in their national energy baskets.” Singh is also reported as saying that the EU and India are “indispensable pillars of a multipolar world”.

Source: *Achieving energy security, a common concern for India and EU: PM The Hindustan Times. New Delhi: Oct 13, 2006.*

(NB: The whole rhetoric of ‘natural partners’ permeates Singh’s statements at the 7th India-EU summit. So does the whole issue about a multi-lateral global order. This is often picked up on by The Hindustan Times).

#### EU foreign direct investment to India:

- Kamal Math, minister of trade: “While in 2005 the FDI inflows from EU reduced to US \$ 375 million, in the last sixteen years the cumulative FDI from EU to India has been US \$ 8.16 billion, which is 21% of the total FDI received by India. We can say that EU is one of the most important source and now destination for India for FDI. But look at the fraction of FDI from EU. (EU is the number one investor in the world. In 2004 alone, it invested US \$ 280 billion outside the EU). We have a long way to go. How do we make India more attractive to the EU business community? We need to address this issue quickly”.

Source: *EU INDIA'S LARGEST TRADING PARTNER: KAMAL NATH The Hindustan Times. New Delhi: Oct 12, 2006.*

#### **Main opposition party (BJP)**

- BRAJESH MISHRA National Security Advisor and Principal Secretary to Prime Minister of India: “The Indian perspective is, therefore, not dissimilar from the European perspective

because it is rooted in sustaining plurality through engagement. In India, we are seeking a society built upon allegiance to constitutional and republican principles for only such a society can celebrate the multi-religious, multi-ethnic, multi-lingual idea that India represents. There is a parallel in this with European efforts to build a new set of European institutions. In both ventures, we are redefining the system of nation-state that was consecrated on this continent in 1648 with its notions of absolute sovereignty but people forget that this concept originated in an era when democracy did not exist. Democratic pluralism requires the shift from narrow territorial or ethnic nationalisms to a broader civic nationalism. The threat to such an exercise, whether in India or in Europe, comes from one source - intolerance and extremism; whether fired by racism or religious fundamentalism. In our neighbourhood, we have seen it take its toll on democracy and human security in Pakistan; in your backyard, you have witnessed the tragic disintegration of Yugoslavia. These phenomenon run counter to the systemic of globalisation; they seek to divide while globalisation seeks to join”.

Source: <http://mea.gov.in/disarmament/dm13apr00.htm>

Note: this comment was given by a senior advisor to the previous BJP-led government.

- Former Prime Minister Vajpayee comment on the US denigration of Indian claims regarding Pakistani support of terrorism in India, which was echoed by many analysts as a warning to the EU to choose a different approach: “When terrorism hits America, you go halfway across the world and make war in Afghanistan. But when we suffer terrorism, you ask us to be restrained. Is an Indian right less precious than an American right?”

Source: "Remarks by the US President Bush and Prime Minister Vajpayee at the White House", November 9, 2001, *Strategic Digest*, vol. XXXI, no 12, December 2001, pg 1639.

- Former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Omar Farooq Abdullah, received in Brussels by former EU Commissioner Patten in 2001:
  - “The Indian experience and the EU experience have been unique in the last fifty years. Despite cultural, religious and linguistic diversity, India is one of the few developing countries which has stayed secular and democratic since independence. In Europe, on the other hand, without any history of confederalism, centuries of conflict have given way towards a progressive pooling of sovereignty which is now going well beyond economic cooperation. For the past fifty years two distinct trends, which often seem contradictory, are evident.
  - We are keenly watching the emerging debate on the new security architecture. Will the new structures be based on cooperation or confrontation? Will the old military structures be expanded further? What is the EU's response to the problem of disarmament? India, as a nuclear weapon power is conscious of its responsibilities. Our policy of maintaining a credible minimum deterrent flows from our security environment. We are committed to discuss non-proliferation and disarmament in a global, non-discriminatory frame-work. We welcome the EU's evolving role in security and defence areas. The EU and India can work together to provide stability in a multi-polar world.

Source: *Indian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Omar Farooq Abdullah, Key Note Address given at the EU-India Think-Tank seminar, Brussels 15-16 October 2001.*

### ***Some views from the private sector***

- R. Seshasayee, the President of the Confederation of Indian Industry, expressed satisfaction at the fact that both Indian and European CEOs have decided that the negotiations should be completed within one year, if possible.

Source: *CEOS welcome new India-EU trade and investment pact The Hindustan Times. New Delhi: Oct 12, 2006.*

- Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce (*press release*): “India is keenly looking for cooperation with and investments from the EU to beef up its infrastructure and energy sectors as it considers creation of essential infrastructure such as roads, ports, railways and airports and meeting its energy needs as critical not only to boost economic growth but also for enhancing competitiveness in the global market.”

*Source: EU HELP IN MEETING INDIA'S CORE SECTOR, ENERGY NEEDS VITAL: FICCI The Hindustan Times. New Delhi: Oct 12, 2006.*

- Confederation of Indian Industry: “India and the EU also need to tackle non-trade barriers that exist in each other's markets.”

*Source: India, EU should have trade and investment pact: CII The Hindustan Times. New Delhi: Oct 12, 2006.*

According to the study conducted by Lisbonne-de Vergeron (2006):

“There is a growing pessimism, tinged sometimes even with contempt, in many Indian views of Europe’s economic prospects. Europe is seen as ‘in economic decline’ and ‘too small, divided, and backward- looking’ to be more than a ‘niche player providing luxury goods and services’ in the future – ‘the world’s boutique’ and ‘perhaps not even that’. Britain, which is sometimes seen as standing apart from the incapacity to rise to the challenges of globalization that seems to characterize overall Indian assessments of the EU economy, is not really spared. There is much more criticism of Brussels than of Washington for blocking progress towards the more free trade world that Indians generally proclaim best suits their own long-term interests, especially in the WTO arena.<sup>28</sup> As in the political field, however, Indians at the same time frequently express the hope that Europe might change, highlighting, for example, the High Level Trade Group set up in the wake of the EU–India strategic partnership as a possible opportunity to try to find closer cooperation, almost regardless of the outcome of the Doha Round negotiations. [...] ‘Some of the mechanisms Europeans have used to create their internal economic area and shape the relationship between political and economic government are very relevant for us.’ In particular, there is considerable official interest in EU competition law and the management of structural funds. Again, Europe’s achievement in using economic integration as the means to overcome political animosities and insecurities (as would be relevant to the dispute with Pakistan over Kashmir or the tensions over the Tamils in Sri Lanka) is much admired and cited. India has mainly approached this sort of model through the South Asia Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA), though it has concluded a Free Trade Agreement with Sri Lanka in April 2000”.

### ***EU-US competition viewed by Indian elites***

According to Lisbonne-de Vergeron (2006):

“There is sympathy for Europe as a ‘potential alternative’ to the US. Several officials agreed that ‘India would benefit from a tilt of the balance of power from the US towards the EU’, for this would ensure ‘more stable multipolar geopolitics in the future’. For example, Delhi was very keen to support the European negotiating effort with Iran over the Tehran government’s nuclear policy, and ‘will seek to remain alongside Britain, France and Germany, notwithstanding our new working relationship with Washington”.

## **5. CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS**

Trade unions, including the Indian National Trade Union (which is the largest trade union federation in the country) were not included in this survey, as their websites do not present any information, publication or document of interest to this research.

As far as the academic community is concerned, it is astounding that in a nation of over one billion people, there has not been any worthwhile effort, even after fifty years of independence, to develop 'centres' of European Studies universities in eastern, southern and western India. According to academic observers, the lack of a critical mass of researchers in European studies impedes the development of a healthy research environment and the enlargement of the community of catalytic agents who can make significant contributions to the promotion of European studies (Jain 2001). The first and only Centre for European Studies in India was established in July 2005 at the School of International Studies of the Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi.

Due to scarce information and limited access to resources, this section presents only those views and comments that Indian associations and organisations of different kinds have made public on their internet websites. Additional data is derived from opinions published in newspaper articles.

	Negative	Neutral	Positive
<i>Documents</i>	8	2	4

- Historical ties; EU and India in the international arena (1 positive, 1 negative)
- Agricultural subsidies (5 negative)
- International trade (1 negative, 1 neutral)
- Food security and GMs (3 positive, 1 neutral, 1 negative)
- Environment and sustainable development (1 negative)
- Social justice, human rights and development (1 positive)

### **5.1. Some excerpts from the most significant speeches analysed in this survey (this section is organised by issue)**

#### ***Historical ties; EU and India in the international arena***

- “In its search for new markets, sources of collaborative ventures, investment, and technology India has increasingly turned to Western Europe. This was accompanied by a recognition that "Europe collectively is and will be a power centre in the multipolar world which India wishes to restructure in the post-Cold War era". The Lisbon Joint Declaration is a visionary document providing "an action plan" for upgrading this to "a qualitatively higher level". It resolved that in the 21st century, the European Union and India shall build "a new strategic partnership founded on shared values and aspirations characterized by enhanced and multi-faceted cooperation". It also reaffirmed "our commitment to the strengthening and deepening of our consultations and enhancing our bilateral, regional and multilateral issues of common concern". It recognized the "need to build a coalition of interests in order to meet the challenges of the 21st century" and acknowledged that India and the European Union are "important partners" in shaping the emerging multipolar world”.

*Source: RAJENDRA K. JAIN, Professor of European Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, speech given at the EU-India Think-Tank Seminar, 15-16 October 2001.*

- “In the post-Cold War era, India has emerged as a far more pragmatic power, more willing to serve its fundamental economic and trading interests, less engaged in sanctimonious moralizing. In multilateral trade negotiations, India has shed its tendency to play high politics and concentrates on economic diplomacy which is more unambiguously inspired by clearly defined national interests" than the requirements of leadership of the developing world. India is now more willing to evolve a more proactive agenda and more actively pursue a strategy of forging sectorial and issue-based coalitions with other countries”.

Source: RAJENDRA K. JAIN, Professor of European Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, speech given at the EU-India Think-Tank Seminar, 15-16 October 2001.

*NB: this comment was given in comparison with the EU's (allegedly) moral stand in international politics and the tone was obviously derogatory against the EU.*

### *Agricultural subsidies*

- “The European Union, which is not far behind in subsidizing agriculture, has used 'multi-functionality' of agriculture to justify its support, much of it by way of direct payments. 'Multi-functionality' is a camouflage for agriculture subsidies under the garb of protecting rural landscape and lifestyle, as well as the welfare of livestock, even if they are not efficient. EU has been desperately seeking India's backing for its 'multi-functional' agriculture”.

*Devinder Sharma is a food and trade policy analyst. He also chairs the New Delhi-based Forum for Biotechnology & Food Security.*

<http://www.indiatogether.org/2003/feb/dsh-zero1r.htm>

- EU Stop agricultural dumping in India

Source: <http://www.globalpolicy.org/soecon/trade/subsidies/2002/10stopdumping.pdf>

- “Every European cow is getting a \$ 3 a day subsidy whereas 40 per cent of Africans live on less than \$1 a day. [...] Knowing well that the anger against the multilateral trade regime is building up, the developed countries are trying not to provoke a reaction from the developing world to the injustice that is being done to them. The European Union, for instance, has already announced that it will not be pushing any new issues. [...] In the recent years, the new system of direct payments to farmers (since 1992) in the European Union has stipulated increase in consumption of cereals from 134.8 million tonnes in 1993 to 178.2 million tonnes in 2000, largely through increased use of EU produced cereals for animal feed. Even though the feeding of cereals to animals and then their subsequent slaughter for human consumption requires six times more grains than what would be needed for the average dietary intake, there is no regret”.

*Devinder Sharma is a food and trade policy analyst. He also chairs the New Delhi-based Forum for Biotechnology & Food Security.*

<http://www.indiatogether.org/2003/aug/dsh-mancow.htm>

- “Subsidies under all boxes – green box, amber box and blue box – need to be first abolished before any more commitments are made. Agriculture negotiations should only be confined to the timeframe under which these subsidies can be removed. ‘Peace Clause’ that allows the European Union the privilege to increase subsidies, needs to be culminated when it ends in Dec 2003. Along with farm subsidies, the monumental subsidies provided for freight also need to be disciplined”.

*Devinder Sharma is a food and trade policy analyst. He also chairs the New Delhi-based Forum for Biotechnology & Food Security.*

<http://www.indiatogether.org/2003/jul/dsh-abandon.htm>

“With the United States, China and European Union refusing to reduce their subsidies to cotton growers, there is no possibility for Indian farmers to find a footing in the international market. [...] European agriculture will continue to be subsidised to the tune of Euro 43 billion for another decade, and that amount will increase further when the new members join in. Like a magician, both the US and EU have managed to juggle the farm support from one box to another without making any significant commitments. The magical trick is now being



used to create an illusion of sincerity of the rich towards 'free' trade, using it as a bargaining block for seeking more market access from the poor countries”.

*Devinder Sharma is a food and trade policy analyst. He also chairs the New Delhi-based Forum for Biotechnology & Food Security.*

<http://www.indiatogether.org/2003/oct/dsh-riggedbt.htm>

### **International trade**

- “Both India and the European Union share common objectives in the development of a fair, open, and rule-based global trading system in which barriers to trade should be minimal and be gradually removed in a non-discriminatory manner. The European Union’s call for a “comprehensive” round in the belief that the wider the agenda, greater the prospects of everyone getting something and get any package deal done. However, India opposes a new round and attempts to bring new issues on the agenda, when not enough has been achieved in spirit in overcoming the “implementation deficit” of agreement reached in the Uruguay Round. India has been urging that the new round”.

*Source: RAJENDRA K. JAIN, Professor of European Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, speech given at the EU-India Think-Tank Seminar, 15-16 October 2001.*

- “There is considerable divergence in Indian and European attitudes and policy responses to many fundamental issues on the new Millennium Round. European insistence to include non-trade issues like investment, competition policy, social clause and environment on the Doha Ministerial Meeting (November 2001) would create additional hindrances for Indian exports, which already experience major hurdles in gaining market access to EU markets. On non-trade issues, the European Union continues to emphasize the linkages between sustainable agriculture, food safety, and maintenance of landscape and environment”.

*Source: RAJENDRA K. JAIN, Professor of European Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, speech given at the EU-India Think-Tank Seminar, 15-16 October 2001.*

### **Food security**

- “Legally permissible limits as defined by the Indian Prevention of Food Adulteration Act (PFA), 1954 are regularly crossed, whilst these norms are less strict than international food safety norms like Codex Alimentarius or European Union standards. There is no regular testing of heavy metals in vegetables by the designated authorities in India”.

*Fiona Marshall is with Imperial College, London. Ravi Agarwal is with Toxics Link ([www.toxicslink.org](http://www.toxicslink.org)), New Delhi 110014. This report is an adapted from the executive summary of the technical report of March 2003. The research was funded by the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) and conducted as a multi-partner collaborative study carried over three years in both Delhi and Varanasi. Click here to download the executive summary.*

<http://www.indiatogether.org/2003/apr/hlt-vegcontam.htm>

- “In 1994 I find a claim, in a biotechnology journal, to invention on the use of neem for pesticide and fungicide. So we sued. We started a campaign and collected signatures. We went to the European Court and even came to the U.S. Patent Office. They said we couldn’t really challenge the claim because we were not establishing a commercial hurt. If we had public hurt, hurt of the public interest, it’s not good enough. But the European challenge was admitted. We made that challenge jointly with the International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements and the Greens in Europe. We won that case. It was a very important victory”.

*Vandana Shiva is an environmental activist. She is director of the Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Ecology in New Delhi. She has pioneered research on biodiversity and indigenous ethnoscience.*

<http://www.indiatogether.org/2003/apr/ivw-vandana.htm>

- “The American administration fired the first missile by formally launching in May a complaint with the WTO against the European Union for its five-year ban on approving new biotech crops, setting the stage for an international showdown over an increasingly controversial issue”.

*Devinder Sharma is a food and trade policy analyst. He also chairs the New Delhi-based Forum for Biotechnology & Food Security.*

<http://www.indiatogether.org/2003/jun/agr-gmhungry.htm>

- “The move to expand the scope of GI is supported by the European Union since it has a number of processed foods of its own, like cheese, ham and other dairy and processed foods for which it seeks exclusive rights under GI”.

*The author is president of Gene Campaign, a New Delhi based research and advocacy organisation working on the issues of bio-resources, intellectual property rights, indigenous knowledge, farmers rights and community rights.*

<http://www.indiatogether.org/2003/aug/agr-cancuntrp.htm>

- “And as European Union Environment Commissioner, Margot Wallstrom, said: "They tried to lie to people, they tried to force it upon people ...So I hope they have definitely learned a lesson from it and especially when they now try to argue that this will try to solve the problems of starvation in the world. It will solve starvation among shareholders, but not the developing world unfortunately”.

*Devinder Sharma is a food and trade policy analyst. He also chairs the New Delhi-based Forum for Biotechnology & Food Security.*

<http://www.indiatogether.org/2003/dec/dsh-hunger.htm>

### ***Environment and sustainable development***

- “By sweeping the human and environmental safety concerns away from public glare, the scientific community is doing a great disservice to mankind. Its failure to stand up and question the validity of claims being made by the biotechnology industry and the cover-up provided by regulatory authorities in USA, European Union, China, Argentina and now in India, awaits a human disaster. It will then be too late”.

*Devinder Sharma is a food and trade policy analyst. He also chairs the New Delhi-based Forum for Biotechnology & Food Security.*

<http://www.indiatogether.org/2003/feb/dsh-supcritic.htm>

### ***Social justice, human rights and development***

- (Against MONSANTO) The demands of the campaign towards the European Union and its member states are:

Create a coherent policy on the elimination of child labour linked to the provision of full-time, formal education for all children up to 14 years of age.

Ensure that the European members work together to allocate at least 8% of Overseas Development Aid to formal primary education, including strategies to integrate all out-of-school children into the education system.



Make provisions in development aid to ensure that girls and young children from vulnerable groups (including those living in absolute poverty) are integrated into the formal school system.

*The India Committee of the Netherlands (ICN) is an independent NGO which informs the public in the Netherlands about India and how social, economic and political developments in the West influence the daily lives of millions of Indians. ICN's website is at <http://www.indianet.nl> The latest report is based on research by Dr. D. Venkateswarlu for the ICN.*

<http://www.indiatogether.org/2003/may/chi-cropped.htm>

## 6. THE EU AND THE INDIAN PRESS

Before delving into detail, it must be underlined that the EU as an 'issue' is rarely mentioned in the Indian media. The European media has generally tended to display a tendency to reinforce traditional, stereotype images and the old clichés of India. EU-specific or internal EU developments are only marginally covered in the national and regional, especially vernacular, press in India partly because of meagre readership demand on EU-related topics and the intense competition for limited space. Correspondents are more interested in doing stories on international trade, international business, European companies, or individual European countries than the EU except where is an Indian link or angle. Most of the stories about Europe appear with a London dateline. Out of approximately 900 journalists based in Brussels in 2001, only three were from India (Jain 2001).

To overcome this problem, a workshop has been organised by the EU to establish networks between European and Indian journalists. It is part of the intended scope of this research to get hold of the proceedings of that workshop in order to understand more about how the EU is perceived by the Indian media.

In general, most op-ed articles in the main Indian newspapers look at the EU as a global player when it comes to trade issues and general cooperation with the Indian government. However, when the analysis moves to issues such as international security and broader foreign policy, Indian media is aware of the fact that a unitary policy with the EU does not yet exist and, therefore, what is relevant is the specific policy of each member state. The following analysis is based on a selection of various newspapers articles available online and a complete review of all articles published in *The Hindustan Times* and *The Statesman* between January 2005 and October 2006.

	Negative	Neutral	Positive
<i>Documents</i>	53	34	79

- Trade, agriculture and economic development:
  - Agricultural subsidies (1 negative)
  - EU's tariffs against China benefit India (3 positive)
  - EU the biggest economic and trade bloc and an opportunity for India (1 positive)
  - Trade negotiations and opportunities (9 positive)
  - Unfair trade practices, EPAs and subsidies (8 negative, one of which quotes OXFAM international and 1 positive vis-à-vis the US)
  - EU and US viewed as one common enemy to the development of the third world and the WTO (9 negative)
  - EU standards hamper Indian export, especially in textiles, fish (2 negative)
  - India to benefit from shortage of skilled labour in the EU (2 positive)
  - India and China economies will leave EU economy behind by 2010 (1 neutral)
- Cultural cooperation
  - EU supporting Indian students who want to study in Europe through it Erasmus Mundus programme (4 positive)

- European culture having lost attractiveness (1 negative)
- Cultural cooperation, EU money to Indian research centres (1 positive)
- EU must open up to Indian professionals (1 negative)
- Peace and security
  - Cooperation in the fight against terrorism in general (6 positive)
  - Illegal measures to fight terrorism (US and EU bashed by Human Rights Watch, 1 negative)
- Multi-polar world and pros and cons of EU foreign policy ( 3 positive, 2 negative)
- EU's diplomacy, human rights and aid:
  - with Russia (Georgia and Chechnya) and Darfur (1 positive)
  - with Iran (7 positive, 10 neutral and 1 negative) and North Korea (1 positive)
  - in Palestine (2 positive and 1 neutral, which focuses on the EU's threat to ban Hamas)
  - EU's position in Jammu and Kashmir (1 neutral)
  - against Pakistani propaganda (1 positive)
  - in Sri Lanka (5 positive and 4 neutral, which describes the EU's criticism against the Tamil Tigers); EU unsuccessful diplomacy in Sri Lanka and LTTE included in the list of terrorist groups (2 negative)
  - in Nepal (11 positive, in which the EU favours the democratic movement)
  - Aid and diplomatic solutions to the Israeli-led war in Lebanon (4 positive)
  - EU aid to India: health-care (1 positive) and humanitarian relief during the floods (2 positive)
  - EU humanitarian support to Pakistani earthquake (1 positive)
  - EU aid too limited for sanitation (only 4%) (1 negative)
  - EU's human rights position vis-à-vis Myanmar (1 positive)
  - EU critical of human rights in Pakistan (4 positive)
  - EU against Guantanamo (1 positive)
  - Critical on EU discussion to abolish arms ban on China (2 negative)
  - Relaxing EU efforts in tsunami-stricken areas (1 negative)
- Indian nuclear plan
  - Reluctance of the EU to support Indian nuclear plan (3 negative, one of which accuses the EU of treating India like Iran)
- Environment
  - European and Asian leaders' joint efforts to combat climate change (1 positive)
  - EU to stop poaching of tiger and leopard skin (1 positive)
  - Coca Cola pesticides within EU standards (1 negative)
  - EU calls for stopping tiger poaching (1 positive, EU praised by animalist groups)
- EU supporting regional integration
  - within the South Asian Association for regional cooperation (1 positive)
  - EU-Turkey (1 neutral)
- EU and the Constitution
  - French and Dutch referenda on the Constitution (5 neutral)
  - EU's internal weaknesses and policy making (3 negative), referendums (10 negative)
- European football
  - General (5 neutral)
  - European football and its influence on Africa (1 positive)
- EU social system
  - EU support to EU citizens that lose jobs due to firms' relocation (1 positive)
  - Workers' day demonstrations across Europe (1 neutral)
- EU values, tolerance etc.
  - On religious intolerance and the Mohammed comics (1 neutral, in which Pakistani politicians criticize the EU)

- EU and Muslim communities (2 neutral)
- Scientific cooperation
  - Galileo facing financial problems (1 negative)
- Health and biotechnologies
  - Stem cell research (1 neutral)
  - Bird flu (1 positive, the EU is praised for having alerted the world)
- EU and US
  - Like Mars and Venus, they need to cooperate (3 negative, with both the EU and US criticized for not cooperating)

**6.1. Some excerpts from the most significant articles analysed in this survey (this section is organised by issue)**

***EU and tolerance***

*INDIA TO ANSWER EU MUSLIM QUESTION? The Statesman (India) July 16, 2005*

Devirupa Mitra in New Delhi July 15. - As Britain grapples with the revelation that all the terrorists behind the London bombings were British-born Muslim citizens, there is an increasing anxiety and worry within the European Union states over the "Muslim question". With Islam being the biggest minority religion in Europe, it has now turned for ideas from the experience of India - the nation with the world's largest Muslim minority. One of the important institutions in the multi-modal dialogue between the EU and India has recently been brainstorming on the relevance of India's "successful integration" of minorities into the national mainstream. The EU-India Roundtable, which was set up in 2001, is part of the institutional mechanism for dialogue between the two partners - this one, at the level of civil society. It is co-chaired by the Centre's special interlocutor on Jammu and Kashmir, Mr NN Vohra, and the president of the European Economic and Social Committee, Ms Anne-Marie Sigmund. There are about 15 European members and 13 Indian members, which include academics and scholars like the Jamia Millia Islamia vice-chancellor, Professor Mushirul Hasan. While the previous roundtable summits have usually focused on improving economic linkages and people-to-people contact, the latest meeting decided to concentrate on the role of Islam in India.

***EU and the Constitution***

*EU AT CRITICAL JUNCTURE The Statesman (India) May 26, 2005*

Supporters of the constitution say streamlined decision-making in Brussels will be the only way to get things done. Euro-sceptics, however, fear a United States of Europe, writes JULIAN COMAN What is the European Union constitution treaty and why does it matter? Depending on who you believe, the proposed constitution is either a manifesto for a monolithic European superstate, or a much-needed route to a more efficient, decisive EU. The 300-page document pulls together and formalises all the successive treaties and agreements that have accumulated over the years, and draws up arrangements for the EU of the 21st century.

There are 460 articles. It's not an easy read. What are the key clauses? If the constitution is adopted, the EU will have a new anthem, (Beethoven's Ode to Joy) a president and a foreign minister. The president would serve a 30-month term, ending the system of a six-month rotating presidency of the Council of Ministers. The appointment of a foreign minister would finally answer the question asked by successive US Presidents - 'Who do I call when I phone Europe?' And a revised voting system with more majority voting and less opportunities for countries to use a veto would be introduced. With 25 members, and more on the way, supporters of the constitution say streamlined decision-making in Brussels will be the only way to get things done. Otherwise, say 'yes' campaigners, we can look forward to years of wrangling and paralysis in Brussels as 25 countries engage in perpetual horse-trading.

The constitution would also enshrine freedom of speech and religion, the right to shelter and education, and give greater power to the hitherto toothless European Parliament. The EU political brand would finally be enshrined in a formal legal document. Who's objecting and why? Anti-federalists see the constitution as a fast track to a much-feared United States of Europe, in which national sovereignties, long safeguarded by the veto system, will be trampled underfoot. Europe, they argue, already has its own currency, free movement within its borders and a raft of harmonised economic legislation. What is the point of going any further? Except to achieve what Euro-sceptics have always warned was being plotted in Brussels: a single European state. Are the suspicions warranted? Yes and no. The powers of the new EU foreign minister, for instance, will be limited by the fact that member-states retain a right to 'opt-out' of his policies. The president will become the recognisable 'face' of the EU but will not have executive powers. So comparisons with the US President are misleading. On tax harmonisation, opt-outs for individual states will still be available. How is the ratification process going? It started at a brisk pace. The Lithuanians were the first to sign off, in November, after a parliamentary vote. Five others - Slovakia, Hungary, Greece, Italy and Slovenia - also ratified after parliamentary debates. Nine more are expected to do the same. But where people, not politicians, are making the decision via referendums, all bets are off. Ten countries agreed to hold a referendum. Some, such as France, out of a misplaced complacency about the result. Some because there was no political alternative - Tony Blair cut away a key Tory policy when he accepted the need for a referendum last year. Of the 10, only Spain has held a vote; 77% backed the constitution in February, though turnout was only 42 per cent. In theory, all 25 members of the EU must endorse the constitution treaty for it to become effective. That seems increasingly unlikely. France may vote against the constitution on Sunday, and the Netherlands may follow suit three days later. If that double whammy takes place, the constitution may die on its feet before a referendum in more traditionally Euro-sceptic countries such as Britain and Denmark can even be held. France and the Netherlands! Why are two founder-members of the European Economic Community wary of signing up? France, and particularly the French left, is having a crisis of faith in the European ideal. Having enthusiastically backed EU integration, many French Socialists now believe a newly empowered Brussels will try to impose 'Anglo-Saxon' working practices on the country - meaning longer hours and less security. They also fear cheap labour from the east is undermining hard-won social protections in western Europe. Many don't like the idea of Turkey in the EU in the near future. And some French voters just want to give a bloody nose to President Jacques Chirac, whose political reputation depends on a 'yes' vote. The Dutch campaign has been dominated by immigration, worries over Turkey's possible accession to the EU, and resentment at the high level of national contributions to the Brussels coffers. For good measure, the newer east European members of the EU, such as the Czech Republic, Estonia and Slovenia, fear the constitution is a charter for the bigger members in the West to impose their will and rig the European market. What happens if the French and Dutch do vote 'no'? There would probably be a formal pause in the ratification process while the EU heads of government pondered their next move. There might need to be a wholesale renegotiation of the treaty, which would mean starting all over again. Mr Blair has vowed to carry on campaigning for the constitution, whatever the results in France and the Netherlands. But if both countries do vote 'no', that is almost certain to be a futile exercise. The EU is entering one of the most critical weeks in its history.

### ***Europe, India and global politics***

As Raja Mohan (*Indian Express*): 'Europe, by contrast, is a satiated power', which tries to define itself 'as being more sophisticated in its understanding of the world' - a conceit that demonstrates only a philosophical incapacity to accommodate any change of the international rules, for fear of admitting its underlying decline. So European 'soft power' simply signifies, in reality, 'supporting the status quo'. For most Indians, it seems, their country's commitment to

succeed morally, as the world's largest democracy, has been 'less rewarding than its decision to become a nuclear power'. Only after that was India 'taken seriously by the world'.

Source: Raja Mohan, in *Crossing the Rubicon: The Shaping New Foreign Policy*, Penguin, London, 2005, quoted in Lisbonne-de Vergeron 2006.

'A permanent seat on the Security Council validates our arrival as a great power. But we know better than most, with regard to Kashmir for example, how little can be expected of the UN. More than the Europeans, we do not put our trust in international institutions, but rather in a global balance of power between several great states, of which India will be one of the greatest.' Leading journalist quoted in Lisbonne-de Vergeron 2006.

### ***Cultural cooperation***

In the field of education, Indian students look to the US as a mecca. The greatest advantage is that of English as a common language. Only one out of 16 goes to the EU. EU countries need to push vigorously for the teaching of European languages in India and also offer fellowships to Indian students to study in Europe.

Source: *Asian Times*, 26 June 2002

Anonymous Indian media executive: "Indians are not interested any more in European history, or art, or society. We want our own history and our own art and to develop our own social models". (Lisbonne-de Vergeron)

### ***Agricultural policies and food safety***

Indian agricultural exports to the European Union suffer because of the 25-nation bloc's stringent insistence on highest standards of quality. The qualitative benchmarks are such that many Indian exporters and also farmers are unable to meet them. [...]The EU's non-trade non-tariff barriers include labelling norms, testing and certification requirements, apart from labour and environment standards. Even individual importers in the EU often formulate strict conditions, inflating the cost of Indian exports. The non-trade barriers imposed by the EU affected developing countries the most. Additionally, there are a large number of quality standards in the EU that apply to developing country agricultural products. [...] The campaign against leather products made from the skin of dead animals in India has also hit exports.

Source: *Why do Indian farm exports to EU suffer? The Hindustan Times. New Delhi: Oct 12, 2006.*

This may sound familiar, but isn't a story from India. Consider this — a handful of large farmers capture a bulk of agricultural subsidies. They are geographically concentrated, have large surpluses and form a powerful lobby that ensures a perpetuation of the hand-outs that distort crop-mix and raise prices and subsidise exports. Sounds familiar! Well that's the story of the US, and it could apply to the European Union as well.

Source: <http://www.globalpolicy.org/socecon/ffd/2002/1211smallfarm.htm> (*Economic Times*, 11 December 2002)

This assumes significance as the EU has fallen in line with the India and Brazil-led G-20 move for cut in farm subsidies up to 75 per cent, while the US was not willing to budge from lifting the 'illogical protective cover' provided to its farmers and distorting world trade. The CECA will further strengthen the bond between India and the EUU while the US gets isolated in the international trade arena.

Source: *India plans alternate strategy with EU, Japan The Hindustan Times. New Delhi: Jul 25, 2006.*

### ***Peace and security***

India not interested in a "US" Europe [...] But what is unique is that the US, as the greatest champion of democracy, has been drawn close to two non-democracies - the military dictatorship of Pakistan and communist China. For India, these new relationships of the US have a direct bearing on its perceptions in world politics, since India sees its security threats emanating only from these two non-democratic countries. [...] To the extent that India is able to perceive an independent EU policy particularly involving India's critical security concerns, India would look to the EU for enhanced levels of cooperation in different fields.

*Source: Asian Times, 26 June 2002*

One immediate benefit of Clinton's change of heart is that other nations who faithfully follow the US lead in international relations, like Britain, Japan and Germany, will follow suit.

*Source: "India-US Relations", The Observer of Business and Politics, May 18, 2000.*

Former US secretary of state Henry Kissinger sees the EU "creating a military force institutionally distinct from NATO" as likely to impair "allied cooperation without enhanced allied military capability". But the EU Council describes the proposed force as "separable but not separate".

*Source: Asian Times, 26 June 2002*

### ***Indian nuclear plan***

The US and India signed a 'nuclear deal' to enable full civil nuclear cooperation between the two countries. This shift runs against the decades-long US policy of not supporting India's nuclear proliferation. In this respect, some EU countries (such as Finland) have not refrained from criticising the deal and the criticism has been picked up by the Indian government. India's civil nuclear programme would come up for discussion although European Union does not have any unanimous stand on the issue.

*Source: EU concerned about non-proliferation: Finnish envoy The Hindustan Times. New Delhi: Oct 9, 2006.*

### ***Multi-polar world and pros and cons of EU foreign policy***

The EU sees itself emerging as one of the centers of power in world politics. The EU as an organization is officially committed to the world evolving into a multipolar one. This is also the commitment of France in particular, as it is also the goal of India to promote a multipolar world. But the US would act as a brake in the evolution of a multipolar world. As a matter of fact, the US lost interest in further integration of the EU after the end of the Cold War in December 1991.

*Source: Asian Times, 26 June 2002*

Recently, Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi pointed out how British Prime Minister Tony Blair, French President Jacques Chirac and German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder went separately to Washington to hold talks with the US president on military cooperation. Berlusconi also followed them subsequently. But he rightly argues that EU leaders ought to have met first to decide their response and then should have sent Secretary General Javier Solana, the official responsible for EU foreign and security policy, to speak on their behalf.

*Source: The Times of India (Mumbai), February 12, 2002.*

Recently, when European Commission president Romano Prodi was in Mumbai he sounded the right chord when he expressed "displeasure over the fact that India and Indians were constantly looking at the US in all major areas of cooperation".

*Source: Asian Times, 26 June 2002*

On the other end, there is France, which has always tried to strike an independent approach in its foreign policy in relation to the US. That independence is also perceived by India on various global issues. Thus, the present French ambassador in India, Bernard de Montferrand, for instance, stated, "We consider India one of our major partners ... we have made a long-term commitment to India."

*Source: The Times of India (Mumbai), February 23, 2002.*

Then British foreign secretary Robin Cook was quick to say that the nuclear tests had not, in fact, helped to enhance Indian security.

*Source: P M Kamath, "Indian Nuclear Strategy: A Perspective for 2020", Strategic Analysis, vol XXII, no 12, March 1999, pp 1933-1953.*

Recently, British Minister for the EU Peter Hain described his country as "a steadfast ally of the USA".

*Source: The Free Press Journal (Mumbai), February 2002.*

[...] in the economic area, where it does not hurt EU members' own national interests, it is more often perceived that the EU follows the US line of action.

*Source: Asian Times, 26 June 2002.*

## **7. CONCLUSION**

### ***Public opinion***

As explained at the beginning of this survey, there is no available data on the attitude and opinions of Indian citizens regarding the EU and its global role. The survey reported the results of the Pew Global Attitudes opinion polls to show that Indian citizens hold a rather positive opinion of the US (the best, after American citizens themselves). This data is important for an analysis of the EU's image in India because it shows that public perceptions in India are deeply influenced by the US.

### ***Political and economic elites***

What emerges from this analysis is that the Indian government sees the EU as a major player in international politics as far as development and trade are concerned. Some relevance is also given to international security issues (such as the fight against terrorism). Whereas the tone is cordial when government refers to bilateral negotiations, when it comes to multilateral meetings the EU is associated with the rest of the so-called First World (particularly, the US), which enjoys privileges and keeps supporting legislation that perpetuate injustices (especially on trade issues). Whereas analysts stress that the Indian government looks at the EU as a counter power to the US, when it comes to the political discourse in multilateral venues the EU and the US are seen as two faces of the same coin. In this regard, it is worth noting that the statements reported in the survey show a degree of ambiguity: whereas the US remains the leading power for India, there seems to be an appreciation for the EU as a potential counterpower to US hegemony, at least in so far as this rivalry might offer opportunities for India's geopolitical aspirations in a multipolar world.

A preliminary analysis of these statements should note that Indian politicians see the EU primarily in strategic terms. The discourse around the EU is quite superficial, as many disagreements remain between the Indian government and the EU, particularly regarding issues around trade barriers and disarmament. The limited depth of the discourse, and its inherent rhetorical dimensions, reveals that, behind the political jargon, the EU is not viewed as a different global player. Similarly, the private sector sees the EU as an opportunity but also as an economy in decline, vis-à-vis the US and emerging regional powers in the South.

### ***Civil society organisations***

As explained in the survey, the EU is hardly an issue of debate in Indian society and this is obviously reflected in the debate within civil society. Despite the lack of systematic data and the absence of some key organisations (e.g. trade unions) in the survey, some patterns can be detected. First and foremost, it must be underlined that some of the key topics raised by Indian academics and civil society activists concern the very same issues that are being raised elsewhere in the world when it comes to the discourse around the EU, specifically the distortions in the international trade caused by EU agricultural subsidies and non-tariff barriers. To most Indian civil society activists, these EU policies represent a new form of commercial exploitation of the Indian society. Interestingly, some activists look at the EU as a valuable opponent of the US when it comes to environmental policies and food security issues, especially the commoditisation of agrarian knowledge through GM products. In this respect the EU, at least in 2004, was seen as a beacon by Indian ecological groups. Finally, an element that should be underscored is how the EU's global role in high politics is perceived. In this case, the EU is seen as a toothless player, which struggles to have its voice heard when it comes to traditional diplomacy. In this respect, despite criticism, Indian academics still believe that future reforms might equip the EU with more effective instruments to make a difference in international 'power' politics.

### ***The Press***

Due to a wider spectrum of data, the analysis of the press has provided further insights, while confirming the findings of the previous sections. Newspaper articles that are rather positive in describing the EU are slightly more numerous than those espousing a negative attitude (79 and 53 respectively). The most common themes are 'trade', 'agriculture', 'human rights' and 'foreign policy', with a specific focus on recent political events that have seen a significant involvement by the EU (such as the democratic breakthrough in Nepal or the war in Lebanon). Interestingly, a number of articles discuss at length the challenges posed by the French and Dutch referendum to the future of the EU and its aspirations to play a unitary role in foreign policy.

The EU's position with regard to the Indian nuclear strategy also features prominently in the press, which mainly records the negative view of India's government officials. Interestingly, when it comes to Iran and North Korea, the Indian newspapers analysed in this survey praise the EU's strategy that privileges diplomatic avenues and criticise the US' resort to military threats. Although limited in numbers (if compared to the visibility the US enjoys in the Indian press), the EU's presence in the newspapers and magazines reviewed in this survey is significant. Moreover, the themes covered by the press broadly mirror those covered in the analysis of the elites and civil society organisations. Within the methodological limitations of the research, this cross-sectoral consistency of the themes associated with the EU confirms that the Indian discourse around the EU shares certain key similarities and privileges the economic (trade policies, investment, etc.) aspects rather than more political ones. When the EU's role as a global political actor is discussed in the press, it is mainly viewed in terms of humanitarian support and aid policies.

## **8. PROSPECTS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

This survey is based on a very small number of documents, due to the lack of data on the perceptions of the EU in India. Future research should try to generate new data, mainly in terms of public opinion polls and elites' surveys. Due to the fact that the EU is a very marginal issue in the Indian social debate, the data available is extremely limited and should not be used as a basis for generalisations. Future studies would definitely benefit from the conduction of primary research in the following sectors:



- Opinion polls dedicated to the image of international organisations in the country that could be funded by international donors or agencies interested in the public perceptions of their activities and programmes in the country.
- Elite surveys focused on the EU's role in India.
- Systematic content and text analysis of the main political documents, especially those that are not available on the internet.
- Analysis of the main parliamentary proceedings, with a specific focus on the relevant parliamentary commissions.
- In-depth interviews with selected stakeholders in government, civil society, the media and EU representatives.
- A systematic media review, including TV and radio.

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FORUM ON THE PROBLEMS OF PEACE AND WAR  
GARNET - Jointly Executed Research Project 5.2.1

**THE EXTERNAL IMAGE OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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**REPORT ON  
JAPAN**

**Marco Kauffmann and Natalia Chaban**



The survey *The External Image of the European Union* has been conducted in the Framework of the Jointly Executed Research Project 5.2.1. (*Normative issues*) of the Network of Excellence *Global Governance, Regionalisation and Regulation: the Role of the EU* - GARNET (EU 6<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme 2005-2010; Call Identifier: FP6-2002-Citizens-3). We are grateful Garnet and to the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for their financial contribution to the project.

## ABSTRACT

While trying to describe the European Union's image in Japan, one is tempted to ask: Does the EU have any particular image among the Japanese public? Do the EU's actions inside and outside its borders raise its profile as an international actor in Asia in general, and in Japan in particular? Does the EU's image keeps 'slipping off the radars' of the government and public attention in Japan? Or is a dialogue between the two economic 'giants' becoming a new priority for Japan's government and public?

Purporting to answer these questions, this report will present a systematic survey of the EU images existing in the Japanese public discourses of reputable news media, of national decision- and policy-makers, of civil society sector, and in the perceptions of the general public. . Firstly, EU images in Japanese news media are traced through the EU coverage in the three leading newspapers over two years (2004 -- 2006). The monitored newspapers are *The Daily Yomiuri*, *The ASAHI Shimbun*, and *The Nikkei Weekly*. Further, EU perceptions among the national elites are investigated through the surveying of the relevant texts produced by Japan's Prime Minister and the five government agencies, as well as by ruling coalition and its current opposition. Among the government agencies under observation, there are Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Japan Defence Agency; Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry; Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries; and the Financial Services Agency. Japan's most influential parties under investigation in this study are a ruling party, the Liberal Democratic Party, its coalition partner, the New Komeito, as well as of the current opposition party, the Democratic Party of Japan. Civil society sector views on the EU are then studied via representations of the EU in the texts produced by Japan's leading business associations, trade unions, and NGOs (namely, RENGO Japanese Trade Union Confederation; the National confederation of Trade Unions; the National Federation of Agricultural Co-Operative Associations; the Green Peace; Japan Business Federation; Japan Association of Corporate Executives; and the Japan Chamber of Commerce & Industry). Finally, the perceptions of Europe and the EU by the Japanese general public are assessed using several public opinion polls administered by various institutions at various times. Among those, there are a longitudinal Japanese Government Poll; the Japanese Public Opinion Database in 1998; and the survey "World Powers in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century – Europe's Global Responsibility" commissioned by a German foundation "Bertelsmann Stiftung" in 2005.

The findings are discussed within the framework of relevant research which provides scholarly insights into Japan—EU relations.

## 1. INTRODUCTION\*

The famous words by Rudyard Kipling “East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet”<sup>1</sup> seems to provide a convenient formula justifying a perception of an invisible wall separating Europe and Asia in the minds and hearts of the international public. Through centuries, starting with the first discoveries of Asia by European explorers, ‘Europeanness’ and ‘Orientalism’ have been consistently perceived and presented as two dramatically different cultural paradigms bound to be eternally different (if not in opposition) to each other. Yet, advocates of a vision which interprets a modern world from a globalizing point of view argue that those two continents – Europe and Asia – are two (out of three) global economic centres that drive the development of the global economy;<sup>2</sup> and in this context, their present day existence is intrinsically and irrevocably intertwined.

The European Union (EU), an inter-government entity with supranational ambitions, is currently seen as an economic leader representing the European continent on the international arena. Its economic might firmly supported by an on-going integration process makes the EU step out onto the international stage not only as an ‘economic muscle’, but also as a maturing political power. In particular, the EU’s political dialogue with Asia is currently going along several prioritized directions. Among those, there are the EU’s interactions with East Asia (the EU plays a continuing role in the crisis solution on the Korean Peninsula and is making significant advances in its relations with China); with South-East Asia (the EU is an important international interlocutor for the ASEAN and an intrinsic part of the ASEM addressing regional political and security issues, economic relations, and cultural exchanges in both forums); and with India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan.

Given that one possible way to understand the conduct of international affairs and the intricacies of foreign policy is through “an understanding of the sociological and social psychological processes which structure the perception of the world situation”,<sup>3</sup> this paper will attempt to provide an insight into the perceptions and images of the EU detected in the public discourses of one Asian country, Japan. Samur, citing other researchers, noted that “international reality is not merely the product of physical forces and material power, whether military and economic, but is a phenomenon socially constructed through discursive power (the power of knowledge, ideas, culture, ideology, and language).”<sup>4</sup> Arguably, an account for the EU imagery existing in Japan’s public discourses could be instrumental in the conduct of the on-going EU—Japan dialogue. Indeed, as Movahedi noted, “international perceptions and attributions operate post hoc as a justificatory mechanism for the rationalization of many foreign policy decisions or actions taken in favor of or against another nation.”<sup>5</sup>

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\* Our research team would like to express our tremendous gratitude to Professor Sonia Lucarelli for inviting us to join the Survey Project, for providing useful and insightful comments on the earlier draft of this report, and for introducing us to a network of talented and driven researchers. Even though neither of us could have attended the team workshop in October 2006, both of us greatly appreciated useful feedback from the survey contributors. We are looking forward to a fruitful cooperation with those researchers in the future. We would like to extend our gratitude to Sayaka Saito and Megumi Iizuka, both graduate students from Waseda University in Tokyo, who spent hours translating the original documents from Japanese into English. Without such dedication, much of the information and many of the nuances would be lost. Finally, we would like to say a big thanks to our spouses – Paul Bealing and Ruth Bossart - for their eternal patience, timely help and never-ending support.

<sup>1</sup> R. Kipling, “The Ballad of East and West” <http://www.online-literature.com/kipling/847/>, 23 November 2006

<sup>2</sup> M. Castells, *The information age – economy, society and culture: the rise of the network society*. Vol.1. (Blackwell, Oxford, 1996). According to Castells, the third global economic centre is North America.

<sup>3</sup> S. Movahedi, ‘The Social Psychology of Foreign Policy and the Politics of International Images’, 8 *Human Affairs* (1985) <[http://www.faculty.umb.edu/siamak\\_movahedi/Library/social\\_psychology\\_of\\_foreign\\_policy.pdf](http://www.faculty.umb.edu/siamak_movahedi/Library/social_psychology_of_foreign_policy.pdf)> 11 August 2006

<sup>4</sup> H. Samur, ‘The power of discourse in the EU playground’, 2 *Journal of European Affairs* (2004), p.31 <<http://www.europeananalysis.com/jea/JEA2-2.pdf>> 23 November 2006.

<sup>5</sup> S. Movahedi, ‘The Social Psychology of Foreign Policy and the Politics of International Images’, 8 *Human Affairs* (1985) <[http://www.faculty.umb.edu/siamak\\_movahedi/Library/social\\_psychology\\_of\\_foreign\\_policy.pdf](http://www.faculty.umb.edu/siamak_movahedi/Library/social_psychology_of_foreign_policy.pdf)> 11 August 2006

Recognizing a multiplicity of discourses available to assess images projected of and by the EU in Japan, this report will present a systematic survey of EU images existing in the Japanese public discourses of reputable news media, of national decision- and policy-makers, of civil society sector, and in the perceptions of the general public. Firstly, EU images in Japanese news media are traced through the EU coverage in three leading newspapers over two years (2004 -- 2006). Further, EU perceptions among the national elites are investigated through the surveying of the relevant texts produced by the five government agencies, and the ruling coalition and its current opposition.<sup>6</sup> Civil society sector views on the EU are then studied via representations of the EU in the texts produced by Japan's leading business associations, trade unions, and non-government organizations. Finally, the perceptions of Europe and the EU by the Japanese general public are assessed using several public opinion polls administered by various institutions at various times. The findings are discussed within the framework of relevant research which provides scholarly insights into Japan—EU relations.

## 2. 'A TALE OF TWO GIANTS'

Introducing the EU and Japan into one picture, one cannot but notice how different these two international entities are from each other. The former one is a growing inter-governmental organization created in 1957. It currently unites 25 current members, with two more candidate countries enlisted to join its ranks in the nearest future. Its population of more than 450 million people features multiple cultures, languages, traditions, religions, values, and political arrangements – from constitutional monarchies to parliamentary republics. The present day EU territory stretches from the Atlantic Ocean to the Carpathian Mountains, and from the Polar Circle to the Mediterranean Sea. The EU's peculiar mode of growth – namely “from crisis to crisis”<sup>7</sup> – makes some observers ask the question if this peaceful unity of European states will ever endure. The latter is an island state existing in the East Asia for nearly a thousand years, a state that managed to stay isolated from foreign influences for more than two centuries in its history. Inhabited with a relatively ethnically and culturally homogenous population of almost 127 million,<sup>8</sup> Japan is a constitutional monarchy. World renown for its carefully preserved unique and ancient traditions, Japan is also carrying a reputation of the land of the latest technological and industrial achievements.

Yet, located on the two continents, separated geographically and culturally, the EU and Japan share some striking commonalities. Both the EU and Japan share the values of freedom, democracy and the rule of law, and are committed to an open international economic system based on market principles. Both were torn and devastated by the World War II. Both had managed to overcome successfully the after-war difficulties and acquire the status of economic ‘giants’ and ‘powerhouses’ of the world. Today, the EU is the world's largest single market, the largest economy,<sup>9</sup> and the biggest aid

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<sup>6</sup> The study of official and civil discourses is based on the study of the texts presented on the official websites. Personal interviews with the elite key informants were not conducted in the course of this study. One of the suggestions for a follow-up research would be a series of interviews (face-to-face or focus group) with the representatives of Japan's government and its CSO sector in order to establish detailed patterns of the EU's perceptions and assess the directions of the major avenues for communication. Those interviews would be instrumental in designing a set of policy recommendations on how to activate the contacts between non-government sectors both in the EU and in Japan.

<sup>7</sup> See e.g. a reference to Jean Monnet in A. Duff, ‘Plan B: How to Rescue the European Constitution’, 52 *Notre Europe: Etudes and Recherchers* <[http://www.andrewduffmep.org.uk/resources/sites/217.160.173.25-406d96d1812cb6.84417533/Plan+B+for+the+European+Constitution+copywrite+Notre+Europe+\(English+Version\).pdf?PHPSESSID=9ce15d29b0be3b093fba4cc18ee75bbc](http://www.andrewduffmep.org.uk/resources/sites/217.160.173.25-406d96d1812cb6.84417533/Plan+B+for+the+European+Constitution+copywrite+Notre+Europe+(English+Version).pdf?PHPSESSID=9ce15d29b0be3b093fba4cc18ee75bbc)> 23 November 2006

<sup>8</sup> Japanese 99%, others 1% (Korean 511,262, Chinese 244,241, Brazilian 182,232, Filipino 89,851, other 237,914) <<https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ja.html#Intro>> 16 November 2006

<sup>9</sup> The EU's overall GDP exceeds that of the United States, however, on a per capita basis, the US GDP still remains higher. <<https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook>> 23 November 2006

donor.<sup>10</sup> Even though Japan's economy experienced a dramatic slowdown starting in the 1990s following three decades of extraordinary growth, Japan still remains a major economic power, both in Asia and globally. Japan is the second most technologically powerful economy in the world after the US and the third-largest economy in the world after the US and China, measured on a purchasing power parity basis.<sup>11</sup> Together, the EU and Japan comprise over 40% of the world's GDP.<sup>12</sup>

The two economic 'giants' have been involved in an on-going economic and trade relationship. The EU is Japan's third largest partner responsible for 14.2% of Japan's trade volume. In 2005, the EU built 11.4% of Japan's imports and 14.7% of the exports.<sup>13</sup> Equally, Japan is a very important market for the EU – it is the EU's fifth largest partner accounting for 5.9% of the Union's trade volume.<sup>14</sup> In 2004, Japan was responsible for 7.2% of the EU's total imports and 4.5% of its total exports. Japan is also a major investor in the EU. In 2002, 2.2% of EU inflows came from Japan. Given that foreign investment to Japan remains very low (if compared with other developed countries -- it is less than 2% of Japan's GDP), the EU is still an important investor in Japan's economy featuring 1.3% of the EU outward investment. Most EU investments are in the recently reformed sectors, namely, in the telecommunications, car manufacturing, retailing, and insurance.<sup>15</sup>

Predictably, interactions of such magnitude are never smooth. For example, some economical tensions currently persist between Brussels and Tokyo, mainly, in the areas of investment barriers to the EU in Japan.<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, the dialogue is no longer overshadowed by trade frictions dominating this interaction in the 1970s and 80s. Twenty years ago, Japan was mainly perceived as a threat to jobs in the EU, namely, a closed-for-outsiders economy which overstocked the European market with cheap goods. Confronted by the rise of the Japanese exports, as well as by the inability of some European industries to compete against those exports (e.g., in the consumer electronics sector), the EU Member States pushed Japan to sign the so-called Voluntary Restraint Agreements. As Drifte<sup>17</sup> points out, Japan, fearing the spread of the EU-wide restrictions on Japanese exports, had to start negotiations. The subsequent agreements were negotiated at the levels of Member States or their industries' sectors. After the Asian economic crisis in the 1990s, Japan embarked on numerous and various economic reforms which, so far, have been positively affecting country's economy. Those reforms resulted in a partial opening of Japan's economy to international competition system, thus creating a more favorable climate for Japan's economic relationship with the EU.<sup>18</sup>

Japan—EU relationship experienced a major advance after the two sides signed the “Joint Declaration on Relations between the European Community and its Member States and Japan”

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<sup>10</sup> EU Commissioner Michel is cited on the website of European Commission, 'Commission proposes concrete measures to deliver EU aid better and faster', <<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/06/256&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>> 23 November 2006

<sup>11</sup> CIA World Factbook, 'Japan' <<https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ja.html#Intro>> 16 November 2006

<sup>12</sup> Delegation of the European Commission to Japan, 'Impact on the world' <[http://jpn.cec.eu.int/relation/showpage\\_en\\_relations.impact.php](http://jpn.cec.eu.int/relation/showpage_en_relations.impact.php)> 23 November 2006

<sup>13</sup> Japan Tariff Association from Japan statistical yearbook 2005 as cited by Delegation of the European Commission to Japan, 'Facts and Figures' <[http://jpn.cec.eu.int/relation/showpage\\_en\\_relations.figures.php](http://jpn.cec.eu.int/relation/showpage_en_relations.figures.php)> 16 November 2006

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Delegation of the European Commission to Japan, 'Economic and trade relations' <[http://jpn.cec.eu.int/relation/showpage\\_en\\_relations.trade.php](http://jpn.cec.eu.int/relation/showpage_en_relations.trade.php)> and 'EU-Japan: The need for investment' <[http://jpn.cec.eu.int/relation/showpage\\_en\\_relations.investment.php](http://jpn.cec.eu.int/relation/showpage_en_relations.investment.php)> 20 November 2006

<sup>16</sup> The European Commission asks Japan, among other issues, to simplify regulations on mergers and acquisition. Under current law foreign companies have to undertake complex triangular schemes involving a subsidiary in Japan when they merge with a Japanese company (mentioned in Jose Manuel Barroso's speech at the Tokyo Chamber of Commerce on 21 April 2006 <[http://jpn.cec.eu.int/home/news\\_en\\_newsobj1645.php](http://jpn.cec.eu.int/home/news_en_newsobj1645.php)> 23 November 2006).

<sup>17</sup> R. Drifte, 'Japan and the European Union', in I. Takashi and P. Jain (eds), *Japanese Foreign Policy Today* (Palgrave, New York, 2000), pp. 197-198.

<sup>18</sup> Delegation of the European Commission to Japan, 'Economic and trade relations' <[http://jpn.cec.eu.int/relation/showpage\\_en\\_relations.trade.php](http://jpn.cec.eu.int/relation/showpage_en_relations.trade.php)> 21 November 2006



(Hague Declaration) in 1991. The negotiations were initiated by a high-ranking Japanese diplomat Hisashi Owada, a former Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs.<sup>19</sup> They resulted in an official document that, for the first time, introduced a political dimension into the Japan—EU partnership. The Hague Declaration provided a framework for cooperation and regular dialogue on various political levels between Brussels and Tokyo<sup>20</sup> and intensified co-operation in a number of fields. Several attempts in establishing a more meaningful interaction between the two partners followed. For example, a joint proposal for a UN register system of conventional arms’ transfer in 1992 was one of the concrete results of this updated dialogue. In March 1995, the European Commission proposed for consideration a balanced and co-operative long term approach “Europe and Japan: The Next Steps”. In April 1999, the Commission issued a working paper on Japan, which suggested a set of initiatives in order to strengthen Japan—EU relations in the new Millennium.<sup>21</sup>

Willingness of the both sides to put a greater focus on concrete measures and concerted actions led to the Action Plan for the EU—Japan Cooperation<sup>22</sup> in 2001. Despite some steps undertaken in political dialogue in the 1990s, the Action Plan prominently highlighted the theme of the “untapped potential” in this relationship. Addressing this challenge, the Plan resulted in several on-going agreements and tangible measures. For example, since 2001, the EU and Japan started having regular meetings on human rights.<sup>23</sup> Following these consultations with Japan, the EU submitted a resolution to the UN Commission on Human Rights.<sup>24</sup> The resolution (adopted in 2003) deals with the abduction of foreign citizens to North Korea (Japanese in particular).<sup>25</sup> Another point of contact outlined by the Action Plan is co-operation between the EU and Japan on Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction.<sup>26</sup> Following this article, a Joint Declaration on Disarmament and Non-Proliferation was released in 2004. This Declaration calls for close co-operation in the area of nuclear safety and ensures that International Atomic Energy Agency regulations are universally applied. Yet, in one of the most pressing current non-proliferation issues, namely, Iran’s nuclear program, not much coordination was observed between Brussels and Tokyo, even though the Joint Press Statement of the recent EU—Japan Summit noted that “Japan appreciated European efforts to find a peaceful and diplomatic solution to the Iranian nuclear issue.”<sup>27</sup>

The need to revive mutual interests between Brussels and Tokyo remains urgent. Current President of the European Commission, Jose Manuel Barroso, spoke of an already familiar concept of the

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<sup>19</sup> T. Ueta, ‘Evolution of Japan-Europe Relations since the End of the Cold War’, in T. Ueta and E. Remacle (eds), *Japan and Enlarged Europe: Partners in Global Governance* (P.I.E.-P. Lang, Brussels, 2005), pp. 27-28.

<sup>20</sup> A framework for high level meetings, of which the annual summit between the President of the European Council, President of the European Commission and the Japanese Prime Minister is the pinnacle. An annual meeting between the Commission and the Japanese Government at Ministerial Level as well as other sectoral high level meetings reinforce that institutional structure. Delegation of the European Commission to Japan, ‘Impact on the world’ <[http://jpn.cec.eu.int/relation/showpage\\_en\\_relations.impact.php](http://jpn.cec.eu.int/relation/showpage_en_relations.impact.php)> 22 November 2006.

<sup>21</sup> Delegation of the European Commission to Japan, ‘Impact on the world’ <[http://jpn.cec.eu.int/relation/showpage\\_en\\_relations.impact.php](http://jpn.cec.eu.int/relation/showpage_en_relations.impact.php)> 22 November 2006.

<sup>22</sup> An Action Plan for EU-Japan Cooperation, ‘Sharing Our Common Future’, 2001 <<http://jpn.cec.eu.int/data/current/actionplan-e.pdf>> 15 July 2006

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p.6.

<sup>24</sup> UN-Commission on Human Rights Resolution ‘Situation of Human rights in the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea’, 2003/10, 16 April 2003 <[http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/E/CHR/resolutions/E-CN\\_4-RES-2003-10.doc](http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/E/CHR/resolutions/E-CN_4-RES-2003-10.doc)> 10 June 2006

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 2. Thirteen Japanese were abducted in the 1970s and 1980s to North Korea. They were supposed to teach North Korean spies Japanese language and customs. This practice was admitted by North Korean leader Kim Jong-il in 2002. Five abductees were allowed to return to Japan. Pyongyang insists that the remaining eight have died. This claim is being disputed by Japan.

<sup>26</sup> An Action Plan for EU-Japan Cooperation, ‘Sharing Our Common Future’, 2001 <<http://jpn.cec.eu.int/data/current/actionplan-e.pdf>> 15 July 2006, p.5.

<sup>27</sup> 15th EU-Japan Summit, Tokyo, Joint Press Statement, 24 April 2006. <<http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/europe/eu/summit/joint0604.html>>



“untapped potential”<sup>28</sup> in the relationship at the recent, 2006, EU—Japan Summit in Tokyo, echoing the sentiments expressed in the Action Plan in 2001. Mentioning that the EU and Japan shared the same core values, Mr. Barroso called for a stronger political dialogue between both sides “whenever possible, achieving convergent positions on international issues.”<sup>29</sup>

### 3. EU IMAGES IN JAPANESE MEDIA DISCOURSES

#### 3.1. General Overview

A leading assumption which guided a systemic survey of the Japanese public discourses in their representations of the EU was that the news plays a unique role in shaping public opinion on the foreign counterparts.<sup>30</sup> In the relevant literature, international news is compared to a ‘window on the world’<sup>31</sup> through which people learn about the world outside their country. In such a case, the media do not constitute a detached observer, but help actively to construct the world.<sup>32</sup> Respectively, this paper focuses firstly on the images of the EU created by the Japanese news media.

In this paper, the ‘news media’ has been operationally defined in terms of the country’s leading and reputable newspapers. Even though the circulation of the newspapers are currently in decline,<sup>33</sup> leading newspapers are believed to be a major source of political information for the general public as well as to provide an important news source for the country’s elite and opinion leaders playing a central role in forming foreign images and influencing the character of international relations.<sup>34</sup> Respectively, Japan’s three leading newspapers were chosen for the monitoring in this study, namely, *The Daily Yomiuri*,<sup>35</sup> *The Asahi Shimbun*,<sup>36</sup> and *The Nikkei Weekly* (for more information on the selected newspapers see Appendix I).

A two-year media monitoring period was chosen for this study -- 1 May 2004 – 31 May 2006. This selected period dealt with the coverage of several key events in the history of the EU, namely, the largest and the most politically controversial fifth EU enlargement in May 2004, European Parliament elections in June 2004, appointment of the new EU Commission in July 2004, opening of accession negotiations with Turkey in October 2004, and the failure of the European constitution in the beginning of 2005. This period also featured the reports of two important events in Japan—EU relations, in particular, two EU—Japan summits (in Brussels in May 2005 and in Tokyo in April 2006).<sup>37</sup> The media visibility of the EU in this period was assumed to be heightened. Following the

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<sup>28</sup> Jose Manuel Barroso’s speech at the Tokyo Chamber of Commerce on 21 April 2006

<[http://jpn.cec.eu.int/home/news\\_en\\_newsobj1645.php](http://jpn.cec.eu.int/home/news_en_newsobj1645.php)> 23 November 2006).

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> See J. Galtung and M. H. Ruge, ‘The Structure of Foreign News’, 2 *Journal of Peace Research* (1965) pp. 64-91.

<sup>31</sup> J. Larson, *Television’s Window on the World: International Affairs Coverage on the U.S. Networks* (Norwood, NJ, Ablex Publishing, 1984).

<sup>32</sup> L.-N. Huang and K. C. McAdam, *Ideological Manipulation Via Newspaper Accounts of Political Conflict: A Cross-National Comparative News Analysis of the 1991 Moscow Coup*. Paper submitted to the Newspaper Division for presentation at the annual conference of the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication, Washington, D. C., August, 1995.

<sup>33</sup> P. J. Anderson and A. Weymouth, *Insulting the Public: The British Press and the European Union* (Longman, New York, 1999), p. 15.

<sup>34</sup> W. Schulz, *Foreign News in Leading Newspapers of Western and Post-Communist Countries*. Paper prepared for presentation at the 51<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference of the International Communication Association, Washington D.C.: USA, May 24-28, 2001 <[http://www.kwpw.wiso.uni-erlangen.de/pdf\\_dateien/ica\\_fn2001.pdf](http://www.kwpw.wiso.uni-erlangen.de/pdf_dateien/ica_fn2001.pdf)> 14 September 14, 2004.

<sup>35</sup> This study used English service of the newspaper.

<sup>36</sup> This study used English service of the newspaper.

<sup>37</sup> At the 15<sup>th</sup> EU-Japan Summit, Tokyo, 24 April 2006 hosted by Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, the EU was represented by the President of the European Council, Wolfgang Schäuble, the President of the European Commission, Jose Manuel Barroso, and the High Representative for the EU’s Common Foreign and Security Policy, Javier Solana

definition of foreign news in the UNESCO report *"Foreign News in the Media"*,<sup>38</sup> for the news items to be included into the sample they have to deal with events or situations in the EU outside the home country, or events in the home country in which EU takes part, or which are presented as having relevance to the EU situations. News on the EU is defined as stories mentioning the EU at least once, even marginally.

### 3.2. Findings of the Content Analysis

The study traced the media framings of the EU in terms of leading patterns and themes employed by the newsmakers to portray the EU for the Japanese news readers. Searching media Lexis/Nexis database<sup>39</sup> with the key words 'EU' or 'European Union' in the period 1 May 2004 – 31 May 2006, this study encountered 371 hits. The *Daily Yomiuri* was the most prolific in reporting the EU in the monitored period – 163 news items (or 44% of the analysed sample). The *Nikkei Weekly* was second with 132 articles referencing the EU (or 36% of the sample). Finally, *Asahi Shimbun*<sup>40</sup> had 76 news stories featuring the EU (or 20% of the sample). Almost all articles of the sample were written by the local journalists working for the three newspapers. High-ranking EU officials, Western academics and opinion leaders have contributed some opening editorials.<sup>41</sup>

Five EU-related themes got most of the Japanese newsmakers' attention, namely, 'the EU's internal affairs', followed by 'the EU in international trade', 'EU's external actions', 'the EU's industrial developments', and 'the EU actions in conflict prevention' (Figure 1).

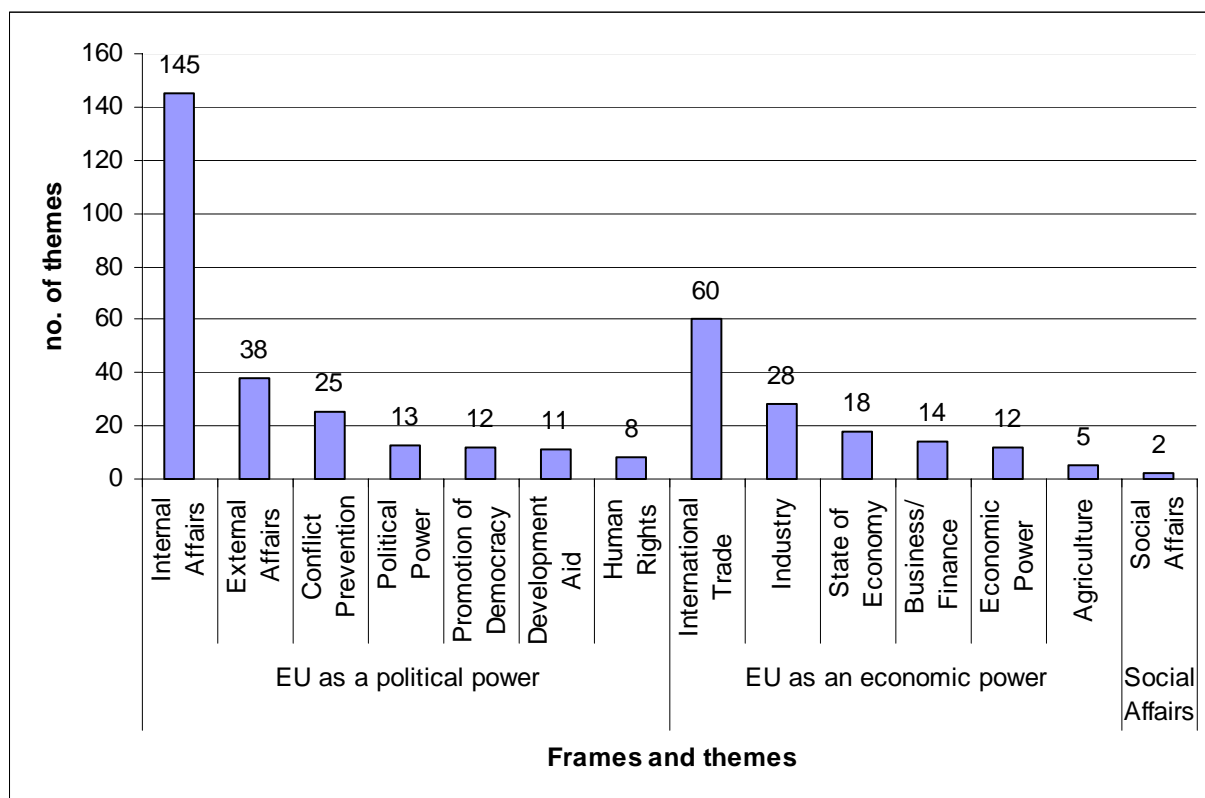


Figure 1: Media frames and themes of the EU coverage in the three Japanese newspapers<sup>42</sup>

<sup>38</sup> A. Sreberny-Mohammadi with K. Nordentreg, R. Stevenson and F. Ugboajah (eds), *Foreign News in Media: International Reporting in 29 Countries* (UNESCO, Paris, 1985), p. 14.

<sup>39</sup> Lexis/Nexis is a news and business information service which provides access to thousands of international newspapers, magazines, legislative records, and data on companies.

<sup>40</sup> Lexis/Nexis temporarily suspended its coverage of the *Asahi Shimbun's* English service on 1 April 2006.

<sup>41</sup> Lexis/Nexis has a separate archive for news wire stories.

<sup>42</sup> In 371 articles in the sample, there were detected 391 themes -- some articles covered more than one topic, e.g., politics and economics.

Numerous themes that appeared in the depiction of the EU by the three newspapers were further grouped in this paper into three clusters – firstly, representations of the EU that framed the EU as a political power; secondly, as an economic power; and thirdly, as an actor in the social affairs (Figure 2). The representations ‘*EU as a political power*’ led the EU coverage in the monitored newspapers (65% of the sample). The theme ‘*EU as an economic power*’ was second in terms of visibility (35% of all news texts). The coverage of the EU as an actor in a field of social affairs was highly marginal and almost non-existent (two articles across three newspaper in two years).<sup>43</sup>

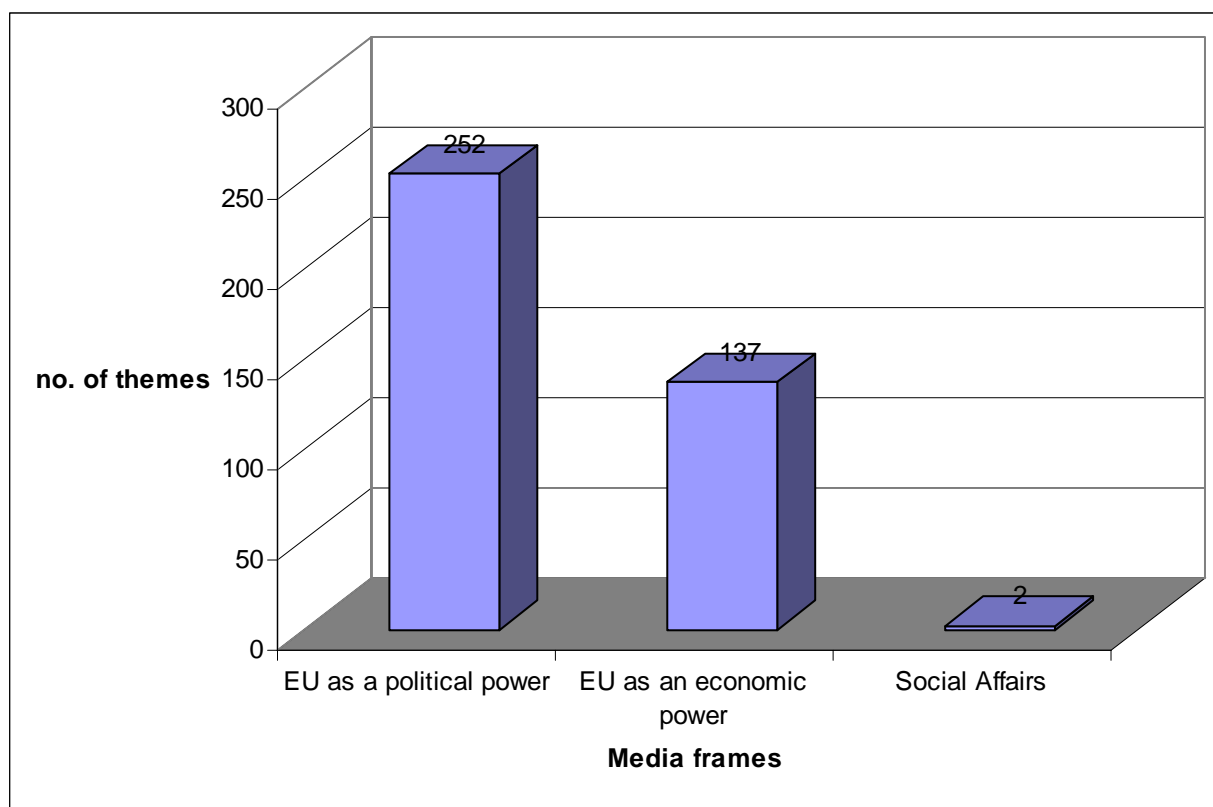


Figure 2: Distribution of articles according to the three media frames in the three Japanese newspapers

### *Images of the EU as a political power*

Within the frame ‘*the EU as a political power*’, the three newspapers paid extensive attention to the representations of the *EU’s internal affairs* (37% of the sampled news texts and 57.5% of all political news). The topic of the last EU enlargement which occurred on 1 May 2004 was the most visible in this category of the EU’s media portrayals. There was clearly a tone of admiration in many news texts reporting EU enlargement -- Japanese authors pointed to the historical context of the European integration and stressed that former enemies now closely cooperate, thereby implying that this would be a wishful scenario for Asia too. However, at the same time it was suggested that Asia was still years away from an ‘EU-like’ integration process.

The sub-frames *EU in Conflict Prevention* and *EU in Promotion of Democracy* featured in 6% and 3% of the sampled texts respectively. This news reported the EU’s engagement with Iraq, and contrasted the EU’s approach towards the situation in Iraq with the approach adopted by the US.

e.g., “Instead of relying on its military power, the United States should opt for dialogues, the way the European Union does, to promote the free movement of people, goods and money over borders.”<sup>44</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Two articles appeared in the *Nikkei Weekly* (22 November 2004) and in the *Daily Yomiuri* (22 September 2005). They presented news about an education program financed by the EU. In this program, Europeans get an opportunity to learn Japanese and later have an internship in a Japanese company.

<sup>44</sup> ‘Excerpts from Participants’ Keynote Speeches’, *Daily Yomiuri* (09 June 2004) *Daily Yomiuri* (09 June 2004)

“Meanwhile, another crisis is deepening in Iraq, where violence is escalating in the run-up to the election scheduled for Jan. 30. Postwar reconstruction efforts there have been hampered by discord between the U.S. and the two leading members of the EU - France and Germany - over Washington's policy toward Iraq”<sup>45</sup>

In this context, some authors reported the EU as a partner to Japan.

e.g., “There is a number of global issues demanding closer cooperation between Europe and Japan, including the reconstruction of Iraq”<sup>46</sup>

Other topics included depictions of the EU's actions in the framework of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, as well as the EU's engagement in the Middle East.<sup>47</sup> Special attention was paid to an EU program to train Lebanese election observers to secure “free and fair elections.”<sup>48</sup> Some reports suggested that the EU, in contrast to Japan, had sufficient weight to be acknowledged as an international actor. This was not presented as a negative development for Japan, but rather as an aim which the government should try to achieve.

Evidently, 3% of the news reports dealt with the EU's representations as a provider of development aid around the world. More frequently, news items covered the EU's participation in numerous conferences of donor countries. The EU was prominently featured sending aid packages to Tsunami-affected countries.<sup>49</sup> The Union was also shown providing aid to North Korea.<sup>50</sup> Many of those reports pointed out that the volume of Japan's development aid is decreasing in comparison to the EU's.<sup>51</sup> There was detected an appreciation for Brussels' more generous stance on development aid.

News framing the EU in the field of human rights protection featured a miniscule 2% of the overall sample. For example, one news story pictured deteriorating relations between the EU and Cuba following the imprisonment of dissidents.<sup>52</sup> Another story described the common values of EU Member States, in particular with regards to freedom and human rights protection.<sup>53</sup>

The EU's dialogue with North Korea on human rights was evaluated in press reports as a positive development. It was noted that the involvement of the EU could lead to an improvement of human rights situation in North Korea -- Brussels' initiative to start a dialogue with North Korea already in 2001 was acknowledged by the Japanese press.<sup>54</sup>

### ***Images of the EU as an economic power***

Representations of the EU as an international trade power were the second most visible in the monitored Japanese newspapers. The frame ***‘the EU as an economic power’*** accounted for 15% of the sample. The most frequent news reported the EU's Free Trade Agreements with Central and

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<sup>45</sup> ‘Disaster response, nation rebuilding call for teamwork’, *Nikkei Weekly* (17 January 2005)

<sup>46</sup> ‘European ties stunted by top-level neglect’, *Nikkei Weekly* (28 June 2004)

<sup>47</sup> ‘World should pay attention to Palestinians’, *Asahi Shimbun* (27 July 2004); ‘IAEA to OK referring Iran to UNSC’, *Daily Yomiuri* (15 January 2006).

<sup>48</sup> ‘Cheney: G-8 a key to Mideast voting’, *Asahi Shimbun* (21 March 2005).

<sup>49</sup> ‘Disaster response, nation rebuilding call for teamwork’, *Nikkei Weekly* (17 January 2005); ‘Tokyo should look at which way the wind is blowing’, (16 October 2004)

<sup>50</sup> ‘KEDO project work to be extended 1 year’, *Daily Yomiuri* (6 September 2004); ‘Nuclear Reactors’, *Asahi Shimbun* (24 November 2004);

<sup>51</sup> ‘Japan marks 50 years of ODA with shift to eco/humanitarian concerns’, *Nikkei Weekly* (18 October 2005); ‘Japan slipping in global ODA rankings’, *Nikkei Weekly* (13 December 2005).

<sup>52</sup> ‘Cuba to strengthen relations with EU’, *Daily Yomiuri* (3 May 2004).

<sup>53</sup> ‘China-led plans for Asia threaten U.S. alliance’, *Daily Yomiuri* (27 March 2005).

<sup>54</sup> ‘Japan, EU eye U.N. motion on North Korea’, *Daily Yomiuri* (30 October 2005), ‘Boost international pressure on North Korea’, *Daily Yomiuri* (6 November 2005).

South American countries, in particular Brazil, Mexico, and Chile.<sup>55</sup> In these reports, some commentators pointed out that Japan has been lagging behind the EU and should consider following the EU's course.

Another major topic was the coverage of the EU's position in the Doha-Round of the WTO. In this context, some articles discussed Japan's subsidies in the field of agriculture and fisheries produce which hampered Japan's trade with the EU Member States.<sup>56</sup> An increasing trade between the EU and China was also extensively reported and analyzed.<sup>57</sup> The fact that the Euro more powerfully challenges the dominance of the US dollar received its share of positive comments.<sup>58</sup>

Other news stories categorized into the economic frame highlighted news about tax treaties between Japan and EU Member States;<sup>59</sup> the EU's direct investment volume to Japan which exceeds a similar US flow;<sup>60</sup> and the EU's timber trade with developing countries<sup>61</sup> which was described as a model to emanate. Other stories covered the Fair Trade Agreement between Japan and the EU.<sup>62</sup> These stories sometimes claimed that the EU did not fully comply to the Agreement.<sup>63</sup> In the coverage on the latest EU—Japan summit,<sup>64</sup> it was mentioned that the EU complained about investment barriers in Japan. These complaints were reported to become a subject to further investigation.

As far as the economic consequences of EU enlargement were concerned, some journalists considered that a larger EU presents an opportunity for Japan to explore new markets,<sup>65</sup> while other countries fear new trade disputes because of EU enlargement.<sup>66</sup> It was mentioned that the new EU members are bound to the same legal framework and that the Japanese companies will profit from this harmonization.

### 3.3. Summary of the section

Anecdotally, it has been believed that media images of the EU in Japanese news media are rather vague in content and limited in volume. The head of the Public Relations at the European Commission Delegation in Japan frankly acknowledged that media images of a popular Bulgarian Sumo-wrestler Kotooshu sponsored by the Delegation had a bigger impact on public awareness of the EU<sup>67</sup> than any political coverage. While Bulgaria's EU membership is still pending, Kotooshu

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<sup>55</sup> 'Japan, Chile plan FTA panel', *Daily Yomiuri* (15 November 2004); 'Mexico FTA to shake up farm sector', *Daily Yomiuri* (20 September 2004); 'EU 'split' may be key to Asian Integration', *Daily Yomiuri* (4 July 2004); 'Japan, Mexico ink landmark accord', *Asahi Shimbun* (20 September 2004); 'Free Trade pact eyed to aid firms in Chile', *Asahi Shimbun* (10 November 2004); 'Lack of leadership handicap in FTA race', *Nikkei Weekly* (27 September 2004); 'ASEAN trade deal key to regional future', *Nikkei Weekly* (18 April 2005); 'Free trade agreement talks expand to more countries', *Nikkei Weekly* (6 March 2006).

<sup>56</sup> 'Lamy: 'Give and take' key in trade talks', *Daily Yomiuri* (22 June 2004); 'WTO should not let events block final accord', *Daily Yomiuri* (2 August 2004); 'To fight subsidy ban at WTO fisheries meeting', *Asahi Shimbun* (23 September 2004).

<sup>57</sup> 'National interests should dictate Tokyo's posture', *Asahi Shimbun* (14 December 2004); 'China replaces United States as Japan's top trade partner', *Asahi Shimbun* (27 January 2005); 'Dispute over China's textile exports flare', *Nikkei Weekly* (20 June 2005); 'China's leading trade partners changing', *Nikkei Weekly* (12 December 2005)

<sup>58</sup> 'Economic coordination is more important than ever', *Asahi Shimbun* (23 September 2005)

<sup>59</sup> 'Japanese-Dutch tax treaty to get major overhaul', *Nikkei Weekly* (7 June 200)

<sup>60</sup> 'European ties stunted by top-level neglect', *Nikkei Weekly* (28 June 200)

<sup>61</sup> 'More work needed to end illegal logging', *Daily Yomiuri* (7 April 200)

<sup>62</sup> 'Fair Trade Commission to export anti-monopoly law expertise', *Nikkei Weekly* (7 March 2005)

<sup>63</sup> 'China tops METI grievance list with trading partners', *Nikkei Weekly* (25 April 2005)

<sup>64</sup> 'Barroso urges closer Japan-EU ties', *Daily Yomiuri* (22 April 2006)

<sup>65</sup> 'Japanese firms set sights on EU's new eastern flank', *Nikkei Weekly* (10 May 2004)

<sup>66</sup> 'Expansion gives EU even more clout', *Daily Yomiuri* (02 May 2004)

<sup>67</sup> Marco Kauffmann conducted an interview with Ms. Silvia Kofler, Head of Public Affairs at the European Commission Delegation in Tokyo, 11 May 2006.

already wears his Sumo dress with the EU emblem. At the same time, the Japanese media coverage of the recent EU—Japan Summit in Tokyo was observed to be rather modest.

To assess those assumptions, this study chose for observation three reputable and prestigious newspapers in Japan. Targeting various readerships (e.g., conservative, or centre-left, or business), these newspapers were selected for analysis as respected sources of information in the Japanese society able to shape public and elite opinion on foreign counterparts. Arguably, images of the EU depicted in those media outlets have a potential to influence public knowledge and perceptions of this distant to Japan foreign partner and induce its certain assessments.

Predictably, the initial assumption was that the image of the EU in the Japanese media would be significantly dominated by economic themes – as discussed above, both the EU and Japan are perceived foremost in terms of their economic might. Yet, this assumption proved to be wrong. This study revealed that the majority of the EU media representations in Japan's three leading newspapers across the two years framed the Union as a powerful *political* agent acting both inside and outside its borders. It is worth noting that the EU's internal policies and their outcomes received a greater share of press attention than any other topic. This was attributed primarily to the extensive reportage of EU enlargement, an event in which the political side was positively assessed by the Japanese media. Yet, enlargement's economic consequences were contemplated in terms of possible economic threats to Japan.

In general, the evaluations assigned by the Japanese media to the EU's political actions were leaning from neutral to positive. For example, EU's international role as an active negotiator for legal development of nuclear programmes worldwide, a visible actor in international conflict prevention, an advocate for international human rights, a promoter for democracy, and a leading aid donor were appraised by Japanese news makers. Similar neutral-to-positive evaluations were detected in the press representations of the EU's economic role, the second most visible media framing of the EU. For example, Japan and the EU were framed as partners in the WTO standing against the US.

This study dealt only with three media outlets. Understandably, a further investigation of other newspapers, as well as the broadcast media and the Internet, may present a more comprehensive picture of the EU representations in Japanese media. Nevertheless, a two year observation of the leading Japanese newspapers presented a convincing case that the EU has been consistently framed as a partner to Japan – one who 'thinks along the same lines'. Even though the volume of these representations is less than the volume of news dealing with the US or Asia (a quick search just for one term, 'the US', in one year of monitoring accounted for more than 3,000 hits in Lexis/Nexis media database), the EU was portrayed as sharing with Japan similar democratic values, economic stances, visions on peace and stability, and desires to continue a dialogue with each other. Moreover, the EU practices in various fields were often mentioned as an example for Japan to be followed and emanated. The most visible media representations of the EU within those themes featured the Union in terms of its fight against poverty, its role in international conflict prevention, its involvement in international trade, and its efforts in promoting democracy and human rights worldwide. Arguably, this particular media framing is conducive for an official dialogue that is high in quality and promising in efficiency.

## 4. IMAGES OF THE EU IN JAPAN'S OFFICIAL DISCOURSES

### 4.1. General Overview

News media is often argued to create 'reality' to which national decision makers respond (the so-called "CNN effect").<sup>68</sup> Given the fact that the leading newspapers have a higher propensity to influence opinion of the national elites on the foreign counterparts, this coming section will investigate the images of the EU in the texts produced by the national decision-makers as well as the national policy-makers.

Political dialogue between the EU and Japan is currently driven by a set of means with several high-profiled meetings being the key. Those meetings involve a limited number of government bodies and officials from Japan. For example, EU—Japan Summit is an annual meeting between the President of the European Council and the President of the European Commission with Japan's Prime Minister. The EU—Japan Troika Ministerial meeting is a biannual event involving Foreign Ministers of the EU Troika countries (or President of the Council of the EU, the new High Representative for the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy and the EC Commissioner responsible for CFSP) and the Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs. Finally, EU—Japan Troika Political Directors Meeting is another biannual event which happens between senior officials from the European Commission, EU Member States and Japanese Ministers dealing with foreign affairs.

Predictably, texts produced by Japan's Prime Minister and Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) were surveyed first in order to locate the main accents in Japan—EU official dialogue seen through the eyes of Japan's government. In addition, the websites of four other government agencies involved in the execution of Japan's foreign affairs were analysed in this study. These were the Japan Defence Agency (JDA);<sup>69</sup> Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry (METI); Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries (MAFF); and the Financial Services Agency.

Another important contribution into Japan—EU political dialogue is an annual EU—Japan Inter-Parliamentary Meeting. With both Members of the European Parliament and Japan's National Diet (Parliament) Members embarking on regular exchange visits, this meeting serves to enhance the EU's political profile amongst Japanese policy-makers. Correspondently, this study studied the official reactions on Japan—EU relations featured in the texts of the Japan's most influential parties – a ruling party, the Liberal Democratic Party, its coalition partner, the New Komeito, as well as of the current opposition party, the Democratic Party of Japan.<sup>70</sup>

### 4.2. Government agencies

Political aspects of the EU and Japan—EU interactions were the most prominent in the documents produced by Japan's Prime Minister, the MOFA, and JDA.

#### *Japan's Prime Minister*

This survey did not find any policy speeches by Japan's Prime-Ministers specifically focused on Japan—EU relations. Yet, several statements commenting on this relationship were detected in the

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<sup>68</sup> S. Livingston *Clarifying the CNN effect: an examination of media effects according to type of military intervention*. (Harvard University Kennedy School of Government Joan Shorenstein Center for Press and Politics, 1997). <[http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/presspol/Research\\_Publications/Papers/Research\\_Papers/R18.pdf](http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/presspol/Research_Publications/Papers/Research_Papers/R18.pdf)> 14 August 2006; M. H. Belknap, *The CNN Effect: Strategic Enabler or Operational Risk?* U.S. Army War College Strategy Research Project, 2001 <[http://www.iwar.org.uk/psyops/resources/cnn-effect/Belknap\\_M\\_H\\_01.pdf](http://www.iwar.org.uk/psyops/resources/cnn-effect/Belknap_M_H_01.pdf)> 14 August 2006.

<sup>69</sup> The official title of Japan's Ministry of Defence.

<sup>70</sup> All texts were located on the agencies' websites.



reports of the summits. Attending his sixth (and last<sup>71</sup>) Japan—EU summit, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi stressed the fundamental values that the EU and Japan share. According to Mr. Koizumi, there are three important points which illustrate a will to co-operation between Japan and the EU. The first one is the recently signed agreement in the area of nuclear energy, as well as an agreement in principle in the area of customs; the second is an on-going strategic dialogue between the two partners; and the third one is a never-ceasing people-to-people exchanges.<sup>72</sup> In addition, at several occasions, Mr. Koizumi was asked by journalists about his view on a possibility of an ‘EU-like’ integration process in East Asia. While acknowledging a shared by many skepticism surrounding an idea of a similar integration process in East Asia, Prime Minister Koizumi pointed out at the latest EU-Japan summit that,

“What was considered impossible to realize 40 or 30 years ago (in Europe), has been realized in today’s EU.”<sup>73</sup>

Japan’s new Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe, has not made yet any specific statement on the EU. Notably, in his *Basic Policies* paper (which included a chapter on Japan’s “pro-active diplomacy” vision) the EU was not mentioned.<sup>74</sup>

### **MOFA**

In 2004, Japan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) established a new European Policy Division which objective is to elaborate and direct a comprehensive policy towards Europe and the EU. Ueta<sup>75</sup> sees this as an indicator that the MOFA has started to pay more attention and attach a higher value to its interactions with the European institutions: “It [MOFA] came to recognize the significance of the EU as an actor in the international political arena.” Predictably, the MOFA web site includes a comprehensive collection of documents archiving Japan—EU relations featuring numerous full-texted declarations, speeches, and statements by Japanese government with regards to the EU.<sup>76</sup> Those documents ranged from the Ministry’s Diplomatic Blue Book of 2006<sup>77</sup> providing a major statement in general assessment of Japan—EU relations to various MOFA reports of top-level EU—Japan summits, as well as of more specialised, expert-oriented forums (e.g., the Regulatory Reform Dialogue or the EU high-level consultations).

The Diplomatic Blue Book of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2006, serving as a major guide of Japan’s foreign policy priorities, formulated an official statement describing Japan—EU relations at the present moment.<sup>78</sup> Notably, the official position stresses not only the importance of Japan’s interactions with the Union as a whole, but specifically singles out the bi-lateral relations with individual countries in Europe:

“Integration and enlargement are increasing the EU’s influence in the international community, and the EU is an important partner for Japan, as both share basic values such as freedom, democracy, the rule of law and human rights, and face a variety of common international issues. Japan will continue to advance dialogue and cooperation with the EU, building even firmer relations. To further bolster Japan—Europe relations and expand the breadth of Japan’s diplomacy requires efforts to strengthen not only Japan—EU relations, but also bilateral relations with each European country.”

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<sup>71</sup> Junichiro Koizumi stepped down as Prime Minister in September 2006.

<sup>72</sup> Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, ‘Japan-EU Joint Press Conference’, <[http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/koizumispeech/2006/04/24kyoudou\\_e.html](http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/koizumispeech/2006/04/24kyoudou_e.html)> 28 November 2006

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet, ‘Basic Policies’, <[http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/abespeech/2006/09/26houshin\\_e.html](http://www.kantei.go.jp/foreign/abespeech/2006/09/26houshin_e.html)> 28 November 2006

<sup>75</sup> T. Ueta, ‘Evolution of Japan-Europe Relations since the End of the Cold War’ in T. Ueta & E. Remacle (eds), *Japan and Enlarged Europe: Partners in Global Governance* (P.I.E.-P. Lang, Brussels, 2005), p.20.

<sup>76</sup> MOFA, ‘Japan-EU Relations’, <<http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/europe/eu/>> 25 September 2006

<sup>77</sup> MOFA, <<http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/bluebook/2006/pdf/index.html>> 10 October 2006

<sup>78</sup> MOFA, <<http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/other/bluebook/2006/06.pdf>> 10 October 2006, p. 85.



Despite an obvious stress on Japan's bi-lateral approach in dealings with European countries, there are several signs that the most recent official dialogue between Japan and the EU as a communal body has been notably activated. Only in 2006, there were six high-level meetings between the two. Among them there was a meeting between Minister of Foreign Affairs Taro Aso with the EU High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana.<sup>79</sup> A press release from 27 July 2006 reported that two sides discussed several 'hot issues' in present-day international affairs, namely, the situation around North Korea, Iran, and Lebanon. On the first issue, Mr. Solana shared Japan's concerns about the North Korean missile programme. Commenting on the developments in North Korea, Mr. Aso asked the EU to work together with Japan on the basis of the UN Security Council resolution. Jointly, Mr. Aso and Mr. Solana called on North Korea to return to the six-party talks on its nuclear weapons program. In this meeting, Mr. Solana also raised the question on the Iranian nuclear weapons program. He stated that the international community, including Japan, has to take a resolute stance. With regards to the situation in Lebanon, the EU officer made it clear that in the EU's eyes priorities are in the humanitarian dimension of the crisis, as well as in the achievement of a truce and in the dispatch of international force under UN mandate. In conclusion, Mr. Solana assured the Japanese Minister that the EU is eager to share information with Japan on these issues in the future.

In 2006, several other high-level meetings took place. Among them there was the 15<sup>th</sup> EU—Japan Summit in Tokyo (24 April 2006).<sup>80</sup> A joint press statement documented that the leading theme of the summit was peace and stability in the world and the contribution of the EU and Japan into this process. Summit leaders discussed the Iranian and North Korean nuclear programs, development of the post-war Iraq, as well as situations in Afghanistan and in the Middle East. The joint press statement suggests that both sides mainly engaged in informing each other about their respective standpoints. In addition to that, the EU and Japan agreed on continuing their cooperation in the field of disarmament and reintegration of illegal armed groups, reconstruction and development, as well as judicial reforms. Furthermore, summit leaders expressed their commitment to work together towards a durable peace in Sri Lanka.

In April 2006, two sides met again at the 9th Japan—EU High Level Meeting on Environment.<sup>81</sup> The press release on the MOFA web site informed that the agenda of the meeting included such issues as climate change, energy sustainable development, and international environmental governance. It was the first meeting of this kind in seven years. From 1992 to 1999, this meeting took place every year, but, "due to scheduling difficulties" (according to the press release), it has not been resumed since 1999 until 2006.

In March 2006, a meeting of Japan—EU Regulatory Reform Dialogue took place in Brussels.<sup>82</sup> The summary of that meeting featured the requests made by the Japanese side relating to such topics as intellectual property, telecommunications, and work permits. More specifically, Japan asked for an early establishment of the community patent system, requested the opening of dominant telecommunications carriers' networks to promote the spread of broadband, and called for a simpler and faster process for work and residence permits in EU Member States.<sup>83</sup> This last issue has been named as one of the most serious concerns for Japanese entrepreneurs dealing with the EU.

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<sup>79</sup> MOFA, <[www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/kaidan](http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/kaidan)> 15 October 2006

<sup>80</sup> MOFA, '15th JAPAN-EU SUMMIT - Joint Press Statement', <<http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/europe/eu/summit/joint0604.html>> 20 November 2006

<sup>81</sup> MOFA, 'The Ninth Japan-EU High Level Meeting on the Environment', <<http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/event/2006/4/0403.html>> 19 November 2006

<sup>82</sup> MOFA, 'Japan-European Union (EU) Regulatory Reform Dialogue in Brussels in FY2005', <<http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/europe/eu/overview/dereg0603.html>> 16 November 2006

<sup>83</sup> Please, note that in Paragraph 3 Switzerland was wrongly called an EU Member State.

Also, that month, an Agreement on Atomic Energy Community for Co-operation in the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy has been reached between the Government of Japan and the EU.<sup>84</sup> According to this Agreement, both parties commit themselves to a strong non-proliferation regime. Article 9, for example, stated that nuclear material (recovered or produced as a by-product) shall not be retransferred beyond the territorial jurisdiction of the receiving party.

Earlier that year, Japan—EU high-level Consultations took place in January 2006.<sup>85</sup> Despite the fact that these Consultations deal mainly with economic issues, the press release contained a far-reaching, almost declarative statement,

“At the Consultations, it was confirmed that Japan and the EU were partners in dealing with the common international issues based on the basic values of human rights, democracy and market economy”.

In a paragraph called “Global Issues”, it was stated that both Japan and the EU would advance their dialogue on possible cooperation regarding the post-Kyoto Protocol framework.

Complementing a high level of activity in the official dialogue between the EU and Japan in 2006, there were several important meetings and comments between the two partners in 2005 and 2004. For example, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Japan—EU Talks on Counter-Terrorism happened in October 2005.<sup>86</sup> A press release of the event reported that the two sides would “take up wide-ranging issues on the state of international terrorism and counter-terrorism measures as a whole”. Earlier, in 2004, MOFA commented on the EU enlargement. In her statement, Yoriko Kawaguchi, Minister for Foreign Affairs, greeted the EU’s next evolution.<sup>87</sup> While her statement intended to congratulate the EU on its enlargement, it also subtly touched on Japan’s concerns. It reminded that Japan was conducting consultations with the EU, so that Japanese companies operating in Europe would not be disadvantaged by the enlargement.

### ***Japan Defence Agency (JDA)***

In its on-line documents, JDA featured a development of the political aspects in the dialogue between the EU and Japan. The EU/Europe appears on the JDA files mainly in relation to the issues of regional security. Yet, the EU has been profiled in those documents *not as a partner* in security cooperation, but as an *example of a completely different reality*. Recent statements from the Agency suggest that the JDA considers the EU’s security challenges as relatively insignificant, if compared with Japan’s security threats,

“The international community is faced with the urgent challenge of coping with new threats and diverse contingencies including the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction and ballistic missiles, and international terrorist activities. In the vicinity of Japan, massive military capabilities including nuclear arsenals continue to exist. There remain elements of uncertainty and unpredictability such as the situation on the Korean Peninsula and cross-Taiwan Strait relations. The security situation in East Asia is totally different from those in Europe, where traditional threats have already disappeared. The development, deployment and proliferation of WMD and ballistic missiles

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<sup>84</sup> MOFA, ‘Agreement between the Government of Japan and the European Atomic Energy Community for Co-Operation in the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy’, <<http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/europe/eu/agree0603.pdf>> 21 October 2006

<sup>85</sup> MOFA, ‘Overview of the Japan-EU High-level Consultations’, <<http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/europe/eu/consult0601.html>> 23 October 2006

<sup>86</sup> MOFA, ‘Second Japan-EU Talks on Counter-Terrorism’, <<http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/event/2005/10/1018-3.html>> 28 October 2006

<sup>87</sup> MOFA, ‘Statement by Ms. Yoriko Kawaguchi, Minister for Foreign Affairs, on the Enlarged European Union’ <<http://www.mofa.go.jp/announce/announce/2004/5/0501.html>> 1 November 2006

by North Korea, and the modernization of armed forces by China and its expansion of operation at sea are also mentioned in the NDPG.”<sup>88</sup>

Presenting at the IISS Shangri-La Dialogue held in Singapore, Japanese Minister Ohno emphasized the difference between Europe and Asia in their respective approaches towards the disastrous and dramatic events in the region. In fact, he mentioned that “compared to Europe, there is a greater diversity in this [Asian] region. Individual countries have many different conditions and sensitivities”. He suggested that promising cooperation is possible if the Asian countries start with something practical, such as disaster relief. In this respect, Japan was hosting the Tokyo Defence Forum to discuss and share experiences concerning the roles of armed forces in disaster relief.<sup>89</sup>

### ***METI***

Economic dialogue between the EU and Japan has been documented in the portfolios of the three government agencies – METI, MAFF, and the Financial Services Agency.

The Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) documents evidenced that the Ministry is currently prioritizing two themes in its interactions with the EU. The first one was the alleged protectionism of the EU. It has been tracked in the relevant documents up to 2002.<sup>90</sup> The second theme was EU policies and action in the area of energy production. Observably, the second theme was profiled the most prominently being a ‘hot’ current topic actively debated in Japan. The Japanese Government aims to reduce Japan’s heavy dependency on energy sources (especially oil) from the Middle East. Contemplated measures include Japanese companies profoundly investing into the energy sector on the Russian island of Sakhalin, as well as Japanese Government stepping up efforts to enhance relations with resource-rich countries in Central Asia. In this light, the METI web site featured abundant information about the EU’s goal of reducing about 20% of its energy consumption by 2020 by promoting energy-saving measures, mainly in the transportation sector.<sup>91</sup> METI documents were also pointing out that the EU Member States consider increasing nuclear power production which has been previously frozen in several EU countries. It was mentioned that the EU Member States started re-evaluation of nuclear power enterprises. According to the METI web site, there also have been revived discussions in the EU about energy security after Russia temporarily stopped providing natural gas to Ukraine in January 2006.

Commenting on the ‘greenhouse effect’, METI documents stated that the EU, following the Kyoto Protocol requirements, had promised to reduce its greenhouse gases emissions by 8% from 2008 till 2012. Yet, the METI expressed some sceptical views<sup>92</sup> commenting that this EU’s goal seems difficult to achieve, since many of the new EU Member States currently exceed the expected amount of emission. Nevertheless, METI suggested that the trading rule for the CO<sub>2</sub> emission advocated by the EU Emission Trading System (EU ETS) could be very helpful. EU ETS was described by METI as the first functioning multination emission trading system.

It is important to note that even though some of the METI website documents referenced the EU, one of the major documents of the Ministry, an annual trading report from 2005, clearly focused on East Asia as a trading partner for Japan. Both BRIC<sup>93</sup> and the USA were found mentioned only once in the index; and the EU was not featured at all.

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<sup>88</sup> Speech by Fukushima Nukaga, Minister of State for Defence, Secretary-General of Defense Agency January 2006, <<http://www.jda.go.jp/e/rusi.htm>> 15 October 2006

<sup>89</sup> Speech by Hiroshi Imazu, senior vice minister for Defence, June 2005, <<http://www.jda.go.jp/j/defense/dialogue/tdf/20050629.htm>> 17 October 2006

<sup>90</sup> METI, <[http://www.meti.go.jp/report/hukouseboueki/2002/part\\_one/g20309d02j.html](http://www.meti.go.jp/report/hukouseboueki/2002/part_one/g20309d02j.html)> 15 October 2006

<sup>91</sup> METI, <<http://www.enecho.meti.go.jp/topics/hakusho/2006EnergyHTML/html/ib200000.html>> 15 October 2006

<sup>92</sup> METI, <[http://www.meti.go.jp/policy/recycle/main/data/research/h16fy/160714-4-3\\_jetro\\_1.pdf](http://www.meti.go.jp/policy/recycle/main/data/research/h16fy/160714-4-3_jetro_1.pdf)> 15 October 2006

<sup>93</sup> ‘BRIC’ stands for Brazil, Russia, India, and China.

## **MAFF**

Relevant documents of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) focused its attention on the EU's agricultural policy. Japan's own tiny agricultural sector is highly subsidized and protected, with crop yields among the highest in the world.<sup>94</sup> To educate its readers, the websites gives an overview of the EU's relevant policy. There is also some information on Japan's and the EU's common positions in the WTO negotiations.<sup>95</sup> For example, a former Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries Tsutomu Takebe noted in September 2001 and May 2002 that the EU and Japan take almost the same position in the WTO.<sup>96</sup> Another former Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Tadamori Oshima spoke of an EU—Japan axis against US-Cairns Group of Fair Traders in Agriculture as a strategy in the WTO negotiation in February 2003.<sup>97</sup> Current Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Shoichi Nakagawa commented on the cooperation with the EU in the WTO at the press conference in November 2005.<sup>98</sup>

Yet, Mr. Nakagawa is quoted saying that for Japan, the EU “is not the only partner in the boat”. In his view, Japan needs to collaborate also with other countries as well as to contribute to the development of the least developed countries in particular. He underlined that both the EU and Japan are importers of agricultural goods, but the EU is also a major exporter. Mr. Nakagawa urged the EU to eliminate its export subsidies which damage the agricultural developments of the least developed countries.

## ***The Financial Services Agency***

The Financial Services Agency websites documented the outcomes of the EU—Japan High Level Meeting on Financial Issues. The documents informed that both partners updated each other on their on-going activities.<sup>99</sup> The Japanese government was also reported to be working out the measures to enable Japanese companies operating according to Japanese accounting standards to be active in the EU which uses its own accounting standards.<sup>100</sup>

## **4.3. Major political parties**

The policy-makers texts were found to file mostly diplomatic and political themes in the interaction between the two partners.

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<sup>94</sup> CIA, World Factbook, <<https://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ja.html#Intro>>, 10 November 2006

<sup>95</sup> Delegation of the European Commission to Japan, ‘Economic and trade Relations’, <[http://jpn.cec.eu.int/relation/showpage\\_en\\_relations.trade.php](http://jpn.cec.eu.int/relation/showpage_en_relations.trade.php)> 14 November 2006. The EU and Japan launched a bilateral consultation process in 1998 to achieve common positions on issues relating to WTO negotiations. This dialogue has been particularly productive and has enabled both sides to identify a substantial number of areas of common interest. Since then, the two partners have maintained close relationships and drawn lessons, toward a successful conclusion of the ambitious multilateral trade Round agreed in November 2001 at the Fourth WTO Ministerial Conference in Doha, Qatar. Despite the failure to reach the agreement on the Doha Round at the Ministerial Conference in Cancun in September 2003, the EU and Japan continue to believe that a successful conclusion of this round may be beneficial to all WTO members. At the latest EU-Japan Summit in Tokyo, they recognized that the current multilateral, rule-based, trading system under the WTO remains the most effective and legitimate means to manage and expand trade relations between countries; and reiterated the importance of achieving progress in the Doha Development Agenda.

<sup>96</sup> MAFF, <<http://www.kanbou.maff.go.jp/kouhou/before/010911daijin.htm>> e; MAFF, <<http://www.kanbou.maff.go.jp/kouhou/020507daijin.htm>> 3 September 2006

<sup>97</sup> MAFF, ‘The first modality plan regarding the agricultural negotiations talks of the WTO’ <<http://www.kanbou.maff.go.jp/kouhou/030213daijin.htm>> 3 September 2006

<sup>98</sup> MAFF, <<http://www.kanbou.maff.go.jp/kouhou/051118daijin.htm>> 3 September 2006

<sup>99</sup> The Financial Services Agency, ‘EU-Japan High Level Meeting on Financial Issues’, Brussels, 18 January 2006 <<http://www.fsa.go.jp/en/refer/others/20060119.html>> 5 October 2006

The Financial Services Agency, ‘EU-Japan High Level Meeting on Financial Issues’, Tokyo, 11 November 2004 <<http://www.fsa.go.jp/en/refer/others/20041111.html>> 5 October 2006

<sup>100</sup> The Financial Services Agency, ‘Evaluation of the accounting standards of Japan and the EU’, <<http://www.fsa.go.jp/access/17/200507.html>> 7 October 2006; see also ‘Participation in Open Hearing on CESR's Draft Technical Advice on Equivalence of Certain Third Countries' GAAP’ <<http://www.fsa.go.jp/news/newse/e20050516-1.html>> 7 October 2006

## **LDP**

Japan's ruling party is the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). The party's recent<sup>101</sup> declarations and public statements in their majority focus on Japan's relationship with other Asian countries. Yet, the party annals documented some interactions with the EU. For example, in 2004, some representatives of the LDP visited the EU institutions and had meetings discussing EU—Japan interactions in the areas of foreign affairs, the WTO, and agriculture.<sup>102</sup> In 2003, the LDP stated that Japan should cooperate with the EU in the WTO.<sup>103</sup> In March 2003, an LDP lawmaker Yoichi Masuzoe met with Peter Tempel, the Head of Cabinet for Commissioner Günter Verheugen. The party documents registered how Mr. Masuzoe underlined the necessity of a deeper dialogue between Japan and the EU, especially with respect to North Korea. In particular Mr. Masuzoe suggested,

“several European countries have embassies in Pyongyang and thus may be in a position to exert some influence. We wish to cooperate with them and utilize their services to deal with the nuclear and abduction issues that confront us”.

Mr. Masuzoe also shared his concerns that Japan—EU political dialogue has become “somewhat superficial while our common concerns have shallowed somewhat”. He suggested deepening the dialogue, and his EU interlocutor, Mr. Tempel agreed, “we should expand our dialogue<sup>104</sup>”.

In addition, former LDP Secretary General, Taku Yamazaki, met with the EU Ambassador to Japan, Bernhard Zepter, in November 2002. In this meeting, Mr. Yamazaki noted,

“Although Japanese politicians visit Europe more than any other regions, Japan and the EU have less political exchange compared to US or Asian countries because we don't have common political challenges.”<sup>105</sup>

Mr. Yamazaki and the EU Ambassador agreed that both sides should work together to overcome common challenges, in particular, hurdles on the path of economic interactions, as well to ensure efficient anti-terrorist cooperation.

## **New Komeito**

The LDP's partner in the ruling coalition, party *New Komeito*, was found praising the idea of the European constitution, describing the EU as a “magnificent experiment.”<sup>106</sup> Some internal developments in Japan draw parallels on the EU practices in the party's rhetoric. For example, in its call for equal employment opportunities in Japan and its fight against age discrimination, *Komeito* refers to the respective EU legislation.<sup>107</sup>

## **DPJ**

The Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ), a current opposition leader, featured on its website several documents discussing various aspects of EU—Japan relations.<sup>108</sup> The DPJ ex-President Seiji

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<sup>101</sup> From January 2005 until May 2006.

<sup>102</sup> LDP, ‘71<sup>st</sup> rally of LDP’, <[http://www.jimin.jp/jimin/jimin/toutaikai/toutaikai71/05\\_tojyo.html](http://www.jimin.jp/jimin/jimin/toutaikai/toutaikai71/05_tojyo.html)> 2 September

<sup>103</sup> LDP, ‘Cooperation with the EU: trading investigation group of agricultural and marine products’, <[http://www.jimin.jp/jimin/daily/03\\_02/19/150219b.shtml](http://www.jimin.jp/jimin/daily/03_02/19/150219b.shtml)>

<sup>104</sup> LDP, ‘Monthly News’ April 2003 <<http://www.jimin.jp/jimin/english/news/news16.html>> 1 September 2006.

<sup>105</sup> LDP, <[http://www.jimin.jp/jimin/daily/02\\_11/28/141128c.shtml](http://www.jimin.jp/jimin/daily/02_11/28/141128c.shtml)>, in Japanese.

<sup>106</sup> Komeito, ‘No for the EU constitution’, <[http://www.komei.or.jp/news/daily/2005/0604\\_01.html](http://www.komei.or.jp/news/daily/2005/0604_01.html)>

<sup>107</sup> Komeito, ‘Making to obligatory to work till 65’, <[http://www.komei.or.jp/news/daily/2006/0310\\_09.html](http://www.komei.or.jp/news/daily/2006/0310_09.html)>

<sup>108</sup> DPJ, ‘DPJ politicians discuss transport policy with German delegation’, <<http://www.dpj.or.jp/english/news/060425/04.html>> 4 September 2006; ‘Maehara receives EU Ambassador’, <<http://www.dpj.or.jp/english/news/051017/04.html>> 4 September 2006; ‘EU delegation head visits DPJ HQ, reaffirms need for international cooperation with Okada’, <<http://www.dpj.or.jp/english/news/041209/01.html>> 4 September 2006



Maehara<sup>109</sup> met with the EU Ambassadors in March 2006 and underlined the importance of Japan's relationship with the EU. Mr. Maehara pointed out, that "the LDP is too dependent on the United States. It has got to the stage where our diplomacy is focused on the US." He also stressed that while relations with the US should remain strong, a foreign policy that includes a wide variety of exchanges with Islamic and European countries is necessary for Japan, and that Japan needs to learn from European nations in this respect. Maehara noted that the recent Koizumi/Takenaka<sup>110</sup> line is to follow policies that are totally focused on the "survival of the fittest", adding that while market economics and free competition were essential, a certain level of harmony and order is necessary. He said that he wanted to learn from Europe's example with regard to environmental problems, human security, changing the educational environment, and the advancement of women in society.<sup>111</sup>

In addition, Masahiko Yamada, Minister of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries in the DPJ-shadow cabinet, said that Japan should establish fishery price stabilization system like in the EU.<sup>112</sup>

#### 4.4. Summary of the section

A brief overview of official documents and reports of Japan's government agencies and the most influential Japanese parties referencing EU—Japan relations highlighted several accents in the dialogue between the two partners. Firstly, Asia and the US were observed to be the foreign policy priorities of Japan's ruling party and the country's government agencies. Moreover, Japan's powerful bureaucracy is known to be traditionally 'country-focused' in its dealings with the EU. Even though the EU often prefers to negotiate with Japan on the EU-25 basis (e.g., air-transport negotiations),<sup>113</sup> Japan insists on bilateral agreements with the countries of the EU.

Nevertheless, an increasing awareness of the EU's integration on various levels has been registered in the official rhetoric of Japan. Firstly, the EU is unanimously recognized as an important partner with which Japan is able to engage in meaningful co-operation. Documents of five monitored government agencies, as well as of ruling and opposition parties stressed the importance of the Japan's relationship both with the EU as a unity and with its constituent Member States. In this relationship, certain areas were accorded a priority. The surveyed documents highlighted issues of the EU's and Japan's contributions into the peace and stability process worldwide (those primarily related to the threatening developments of nuclear programmes, fore mostly in North Korea); EU—Japan interactions on environmental issues (e.g., sustainable energy prospects and post-Kyoto process), as well as Japan's government actions securing Japan's business cooperation with Europe (e.g., closely watching economic implications of EU enlargement, or dealing with the EU accounting standards). Further, both Japan's government agencies and political parties voiced the need to strengthen and deepen the dialogue between the two international partners.

This survey showed that the EU was often framed by Japan's official discourse as a partner who shares similar security priorities, democratic values, and economic visions. In particular, it was noticed that the EU's proactive role in security situation in Asia in general, and the crisis solution on the Korean Peninsular in particular, was positively appreciated by the Japanese decision- and policy-makers. Respectively, Japan's siding with the EU's position in its various external actions were seen by the Japanese official side as a progressive move. In this context, EU actions as a leading global donor of developmental aid, EU commitment to the reduction of the 'greenhouse' effect", EU

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<sup>109</sup> Maehara was forced to step down in April 2006 after a scandal within the DPJ.

<sup>110</sup> Communications Minister Heizo Takenaka is one of the leading figures in Prime Minister Koizumi's "reform camp".

<sup>111</sup> DPJ, 'Maehara participates in lunch meeting with EU Ambassadors', <<http://www.dpj.or.jp/english/news/060314/03.html>> 4 September 2006

<sup>112</sup> DPJ, <[http://www.dpj.or.jp/news/200604/20060405\\_04kikawada.html](http://www.dpj.or.jp/news/200604/20060405_04kikawada.html)> 4 September 2006

<sup>113</sup> The fact mentioned in the interview with Ms. Silvia Kofler, Head of Public Affairs at the European Commission Delegation in Tokyo, 11 May 2006.

contributions into the Middle East peace process, as well as its dealings with Eastern Europe (including Russia) and Central Asia were recognized and supported by Japanese officials. Yet, it seemed that in the global situations listed above the EU was often cast in a role of an interlocutor ready to exchange opinions with Japan rather than an actor being engaged in a clear-cut co-operation (in contrast to the US). However, in the trade policy area (e.g., WTO negotiations) the EU was regarded to be a closer partner to Japan than the US.

Finally, Japanese official discourse pictured the EU as an interesting ‘study object’ (e.g., What set of actions did the EU choose to fight ‘greenhouse’ effects? How does the EU deal with the question of nuclear power? etc.). The EU’s practices and standards are undeniably being closely watched and discussed by various ministries and parties in Japan. To conclude, a visible activation of the EU—Japan’s official dialogue in 2006 could arguably signify a renewed interest of both sides in each other.

## 5. IMAGES OF THE EU IN JAPAN’S CIVIL SOCIETY DISCOURSES

Arguably, Japan is East Asia's oldest democracy. Yet, its ruling party, the LDP, has held power almost as long as the Communist parties in China and North Korea. Younger democracies in South Korea and Taiwan have already experienced changes in their ruling parties, and have absorbed the features of active democracies, from vibrant civil societies to strong, independent news media. Those features appear to be flourishing there, when compared with Japan, where civil society organizations’ (CSO) influence is perceived to be weak. Operationally, this paper identified the CSO grouping as comprised of the non-governmental organizations (NGOs), trade-unions, and business associations.

The websites of several leading international NGOs operating in Japan were surveyed. Among those, there were *Green Peace*, *Amnesty International*, *Oxfam*, *Save the Children*, *Care International Japan*, *Peace Winds Japan*, and *JVC*. This paper has also assessed the websites of the leading Japanese trade union which were treated in this study as CSOs. Among the surveyed trade union web sites, there were the website of RENGO (Japanese Trade Union Confederation), the National Confederation of Trade Unions, and the National Federation of Agricultural Co-operative Associations. Neither NGOs, nor the trade unions under observation produced prolific references to either the EU or Japan—EU relations.

In contrast, major business organizations – a powerful voice in Japan’s internal policy making – produced an abundant EU-related discourse. It is worth noting that interactions between the EU’s and Japan’s business representatives have been formally supported by the administrations, both in the EU and in Japan. Recognizing the necessity of the two business communities to have a qualitative and efficient dialogue, the EU—Japan Business Dialogue Round Table was established in 1999. Since its inception, the goal of this meeting has been to identify and pursue main avenues of the mutually beneficial trading and industrial relations, as well as to inform each other on prospective business developments. In addition, several major business organizations in Japan have been independently proactive in their dealings with the EU. Among those, there are *Nippon Keidanren* (Japan Business Federation), *Keizai Doyukai* (Japan Association of Corporate Executives), and the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Correspondently, this survey assessed discourses of these business groupings in their views on the EU.

### 5.1. NGOs

The survey indicated that on the websites of leading Japan’s NGOs there was a very limited number of references to the EU. The only exception was the “Green Peace” website which featured a short

mentioning about genetically modified foods and the EU in this context. It said that under the current Japanese law, the obligation to indicate genetically modified ingredients on the label is not strictly followed. Moreover, by Japanese standards, the threshold for the genetically modified components is anything below 5%. In contrast, the EU standard is no more than 0.9%. The Green Peace site called Japan's government to make a similar, tighter regulation for the Japanese products.

The Green Peace website also featured an overview of the presentation by Corin Mallais, the CEO of European Wind Energy association (EWEA). His materials explained why the EU's Wind Energy project has been successful. Correspondently, Green Peace together with EWEA released a document called "Wind Fall 12" in which it explained how to make the most of the wind energy.

## 5.2. Major trade unions

Several of the leading trade unions in Japan referred to the EU or EU—Japan relations on their sites, yet those references were predominantly minor. According to our observations, the RENGO Japanese Trade Union Confederation<sup>114</sup> has made only few explicit statements on the EU.<sup>115</sup> The documents released by the Confederation more extensively referenced their cooperation with international organizations, such as the UN or the WTO, than with the EU. There were also some documents produced by the National Confederation of Trade Unions<sup>116</sup> that occasionally referred to the EU's efforts to push programs of equal treatment of workers.<sup>117</sup>

No statement on attitude towards the EU or its relevant practices and experiences has been found in the documents by ZEN-NOH (National Federation of Agricultural Co-operative Associations).<sup>118</sup> However, on the related web site of Japan Agricultural Communications,<sup>119</sup> there were statements referencing the EU in the context of the WTO's discussion. The most current comments on the Doha-round were featured in an interview with the managing director of ZEN-NOH, Toshio Yamada.<sup>120</sup> In his interview, Mr. Yamada criticized the US and underlined that the EU took a reasonably soft line in the Doha round. He explained why ZEN-NOH preferred that agricultural discussions take place within the WTO:

“In this framework we have mates such as agricultural organizations from 54 countries, G10, and the EU. It is very valuable that we can discuss and cooperate with them. In bilateral negotiations, however, opening markets supporters win over minority interests. If bilateral agreements are concluded in such a situation the interests of the agricultural side fall behind.”

## 5.3. Major business organizations

In April 2006, Japan's most influential business federation *Nippon Keidanren* (Japan Business Federation)<sup>121</sup> published its paper “Toward a Closer and Stronger Economic Partnership between Japan and Europe - Nippon Keidanren's Observation and Views on European Integration and the

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<sup>114</sup> RENGO (Japanese Trade Union Association), <<http://www.jtuc-rengo.org/>> 20 November 2006

<sup>115</sup> The EU regulation on protection of part time workers is mentioned on RENGO (Japanese Trade Union Association), ‘Toward the equal treatment of part-time workers’, <<http://www.jtuc-rengo.or.jp/roudou/koyou/part/houshin/index2.html>> 10 October 2006

<sup>116</sup> <<http://www.zenroren.gr.jp/english/index.html>>

<sup>117</sup> <<http://www.zenroren.gr.jp/jp/info/kouryu.html>>

<sup>118</sup> ZEN-NOH, <<http://www.zennoh.or.jp/ENGLISH/ALACALTE/2004/businessprofile.html>> 1 October 2006

<sup>119</sup> Japan Agricultural Communications, <<http://www.jacom.or.jp/index.html>> 1 October 2006

<sup>120</sup> Interview with Toshio Yamada, 26 July 2006

<<http://www.jacom.or.jp/ronsetsu/kaisetsu/kaisetu06/rons103s06072506.html>> 28 September 2006

<sup>121</sup> It is comprised of more than 1,300 companies, 130 industrial associations, and 47 regional economic organizations. Nippon Keidanren <<http://www.keidanren.or.jp/>> 19 November 2006



Japan—Europe Business Relations”<sup>122</sup> In this paper, the Federation attempted to formulate its assessment of the EU’s latest developments, namely the last EU enlargement in 2004 and the introduction of the single currency, the Euro, in 2000 (the Euro was recognized by the Federation to be a pivotal international currency, second only to the US dollar). According to the paper, those two evolutions have enhanced the EU’s presence on the international arena, giving the EU a strong and influential voice, similar to the one the US has at such eminent international forums as the G8 summit meeting, the WTO, and the OECD. It was pointed out that Brussels often “exerts significant influence (...) on the direction of rule making, which defines the scope of global business activities.”

The paper proceeded with the assessment of Japan—EU relations. The Federation was of an opinion that “the days of contentious trade friction [between the EU and Japan] have gone.” At the same time, the paper warned that “care must be taken to ensure these favourable relations do not lead to a state of inertia and deteriorate into mutual disinterest.” The Japan’s leading business grouping clearly favoured EU enlargement as “the countries admitted to the EU have become more than just manufacturing bases – they support the pan-European business activities of Japanese communities.” In this context, it was stated that the Japanese business community “hopes that Turkey will be admitted to the EU without delay.” The paper also considered various options for future relations between the two partners. It calls both the EU and Japan to regard each other as “one of its most important economic partners.” Commenting on the prospects of the EU’s institutional reforms, the papers noted that Japanese communities are “extremely interested in how the EU’s restructuring policies unfold in the future.”

Finally, several critical remarks were featured in the paper. The Federation noted that EU communal law is not always reflected in the laws of member countries (one example mentioned in particular was the copyright law). The EU was also asked to deem the Japanese accounting standards as equivalent to the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS). Otherwise, Keidanren warned, it might lead to the withdrawal of the Japanese companies from EU security markets.

Another influential business grouping -- *Keizai Doyukai* (Japan Association of Corporate Executives)<sup>123</sup> surveyed in this study has not issued a direct statement on the EU. *Keizai Doyukai* seems to give priority on its business partnership with East Asian countries. However, in March 2006, the Association published “Recommendations towards the realization of an East Asian community” where the EU was mentioned in brief, as one of the examples of regional cooperation. Yet, much earlier, in 1999, during the press conference that followed the EU—Japan Business Forum, one of the Association directors said that *Doyukai* needs to establish a relationship with the EU comparable with the EU’s Trans-Atlantic Business Dialogue.<sup>124</sup> *Doyukai* also had a relatively detailed report on Corporate Social Responsibility in European countries based on interviews in the EU.

References to the EU were also found in the documents by the Japan Chamber of Commerce and Industry.<sup>125</sup> One of the most visible presentations of the EU in the Chamber’s documents was on its statement on global warming posted on its website.<sup>126</sup> According to this statement, the Chamber claimed that the EU faces fewer difficulties to achieve the target established by the Kyoto Protocol,

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<sup>122</sup> Nippon Keidanren, ‘Toward a Closer and Stronger Economic Partnership between Japan and Europe’, 18 April, 2006 <<http://www.keidanren.or.jp/english/policy/2006/017.html>> 19 November 2006

<sup>123</sup> Doyukai, <<http://www.doyukai.or.jp/en/>> 15 October 2006

<sup>124</sup> The US-Department of Commerce, ‘Standards and Competitiveness – Coordinating for Results’, May 2004 <[http://www.technology.gov/reports/NIST/2004/trade\\_barriers.pdf](http://www.technology.gov/reports/NIST/2004/trade_barriers.pdf)> 4 October 2006

<sup>125</sup> Japan Chamber of Commerce & Industry, <<http://www.jcci.or.jp>> 3 August 2006

<sup>126</sup> Japan Chamber of Commerce & Industry, ‘Equality for each country to reduce the amount of greenhouse gas’, <<http://www.jcci.or.jp/sangyo/kankyopanhu.htm>> 3 August 2006. The statement is dated in December 2001.

“The Kyoto Protocol aims to reduce the amount of GHG (greenhouse gas) 5% in developed countries. (The reduction target: Japan 6%, US 7%, EU 8%) However it is not fair to set the goal according to the standard year of 1990, because Japan had already reduced huge amount of CO<sub>2</sub> with the significant effort for energy conservation by 1990. And it will be very costly for Japan to further reduce the amount of the emission in accordance with this target.”

As for the EU, 1990 was the year when the East and the West Germany united. By halting many factories and facilities in the former East Germany, and by shifting the energy, they were able to reduce 2% of GHG per year while achieving economic growth of 2% per year. As for the UK because of the energy shift from coal to natural gas, it achieved 14% of reduction by 1999. Germany and the UK combined together emitted half of the CO<sub>2</sub> in the EU as a whole, it was easier for EU to achieve the target than Japan or the US”

#### 5.4. Summary of the section

Arguably, most of the CSO organizations in Japan (more specifically, leading trade unions<sup>127</sup> and respected NGOs) in Japan do not identify themselves with the EU in their everyday activities. Although some references to the EU and to Japan—EU relations are occasionally featured in NGOs’ and trade unions’ official documents, the EU remains pretty much an invisible partner for the majority of the non-government sector in Japan.

In contrast, national business associations featured a more active attention to the EU in context of ever strengthening business contacts between the two partners. It is suggested, that business interest in establishing an effective communication with Europe is officially featured on Japanese government agenda, and this arrangement ultimately results in a more active interaction between the two business communities in the EU and in Japan.

#### 6. EU IMAGES IN THE JAPANESE PUBLIC OPINION

Coming back to the initial assumption of this paper that people are highly dependent upon the news media for information on foreign counterparts, media representations of foreign actors are viewed in this study as a making a significant -- but by no means the only -- contribution to informing and educating the general public on foreign partners. Arguably, two other important factors that also contribute to the knowledge on foreign places and peoples are personal experiences and interpersonal communication.<sup>128</sup> In this context, the importance of public diplomacy is paramount, and Japan—EU relations have a growing number of examples of it. For example, the 2005 was celebrated in Japan and 25 EU Member States as EU—Japan Year of People-to-People Exchanges. According to MOFA over 1,900 events purporting to introduce the people of the EU and Japan to each other were held in Japan and across the EU in the course of the year.<sup>129</sup>

In addition, there are several academic initiatives supporting the EU Studies in Japan (as well as other intellectual exchanges between the two). The most prominent ones are four initiatives sponsored by the European Commission, namely, EU Institute in Japan (both the Tokyo Consortium<sup>130</sup> and EU Institute in Kansai<sup>131</sup>); European Documentation Centers (EDC) in Japan (19

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<sup>127</sup> An academic approach to assess the role of the trade union both in the EU and in Japan, compare and connect those was a lead in the Workshop ‘EU-Japan: Corporate Social Responsibility & Changing Wage Systems - The Role of Trade Unions’, 26-27 November 2004 at Hitotsubashi University, Japan.

<sup>128</sup> N. Chaban, ‘The EU Portraits in New Zealand News Media: Media Contributions to Public Opinion Formation’, 1 *Asia Pacific Journal of EU Studies* (2003), pp.179-203.

<sup>129</sup> MOFA, ‘EU-Japan Year of People to People Exchanges’, <<http://www.mofa.go.jp/region/europe/eu/report/index.html>> 24 November 2006

<sup>130</sup> The EU Institute in Japan - Tokyo Consortium, <<http://www.euji-tc.org/>> 24 November 2006

EDCs are located in different universities with one Depository Libraries in the National Diet Library);<sup>132</sup> Jean Monnet Action and Jean Monnet actions supporting leading academic centers and prominent scholars in the field of the EU Studies in Japan;<sup>133</sup> and, finally, the Erasmus Mundus programme supporting research exchanges and study in the EU for Japanese academics and students.<sup>134</sup>

In addition to those academic exchanges, the Japanese public has a chance to learn and appreciate cultural developments in the present day EU. The most visible institutions that serve this purpose in Japan are EU Cultural Institutes open in major Japan's cities. Among those there are Goethe-Institut, Institute Franco-Japonais, Alliance Française, Istituto Italiano di Cultura, Finnish Institute, Japanese-Österreichische Kultur Vereinigung, and the British Council. Starting 2001, the EU—Japan Friendship Week takes place around the Europe Day on 9 May. It usually features a varied program of social, cultural, academic, and sports events. The main goal of this event is to introduce the EU to the Japanese public.<sup>135</sup> In addition, two annual film events -- the Osaka European Film Festival<sup>136</sup> and EU Film Days<sup>137</sup> -- also give the Japanese public an opportunity to learn about contemporary European lifestyles, picturing challenges and aspirations of the ordinary Europeans.

Despite a variety of academic and cultural initiatives, no opinion polls directly evaluating the image of the EU in Japan or Japanese attitudes towards the EU have been found by this research.<sup>138</sup> The European Commission Delegation in Japan is not aware of any such polls either.<sup>139</sup> So far, three polls tangentially measuring the Japanese attitudes towards and perceptions of the EU/Europe have been discovered – firstly, the Japanese Government Poll; secondly, the Japanese Public Opinion Database, and thirdly, trans-national survey “World Powers in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century – Europe's Global Responsibility”. Their relevant findings are presented in detail subsequently.

## 6.1. Japanese Government Poll

A survey, regularly undertaken by the Japanese government, also known as the *Japanese Government Poll*, assesses the Japanese people's attitudes towards the nation's foreign counterparts

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<sup>131</sup> The EU Institute in Japan, *Kansai*, <[http://www.eu-ij-kansai.jp/index\\_en.htm](http://www.eu-ij-kansai.jp/index_en.htm)> 24 November 2006

<sup>132</sup> The list of the Universities that host the EDCs could be found on the website of Delegation of the European Commission to Japan, ‘European Documentation Centres (EDC) in Japan’ <[http://jpn.cec.eu.int/relation/showpage\\_en\\_relations.academic.edc.php](http://jpn.cec.eu.int/relation/showpage_en_relations.academic.edc.php)>. Business enquiries of a more specific nature related to industry and in particular to the legislation on the regulatory framework of the Single Market are handled by the “Special EDC” located at the EU-Japan Centre for Industrial Cooperation (<<http://www.eu-japan.gr.jp/>>)

<sup>133</sup> European Commission, ‘Jean Monnet Action - Understanding European Integration’, <[http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/ajm/index\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/ajm/index_en.html)>

<sup>134</sup> European Commission, ‘Erasmus Mundus’, <[http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/mundus/index\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/mundus/index_en.html)> 24 November 2006

<sup>135</sup> Delegation of the European Commission to Japan, ‘EU-Japan Friendship Week’, <[http://jpn.cec.eu.int/relation/showpage\\_en\\_relations.programmes.friendship.php](http://jpn.cec.eu.int/relation/showpage_en_relations.programmes.friendship.php)> 24 November 2006

<sup>136</sup> Osaka European Film Festival 2006, <[http://www.oeff.jp/database/547\\_Premiere-Screenings-Schedule.html](http://www.oeff.jp/database/547_Premiere-Screenings-Schedule.html)> 24 November 2006

<sup>137</sup> EU Film Days is a unique festival of film showcasing the diversity and distinction of European film-making. In May 2006, the fourth edition of the festival in Japan was organized by the embassies of the EU Member States in Japan and the Delegation of the European Commission. A selection of films from 17 different countries of the 25-member European Union were screened free of charge at four venues in Tokyo as part of the EU-Japan friendship Week. For more information see Delegation of the European Commission to Japan, ‘EU Film Days 2006 (11-26 May)’, <[http://jpn.cec.eu.int/relation/showpage\\_en\\_relations.culture.filmdays.php](http://jpn.cec.eu.int/relation/showpage_en_relations.culture.filmdays.php)> 24 November 2006

<sup>138</sup> The first ever, targeted poll of the Japanese public opinion on the EU will be undertaken within the framework of the ESIA inaugural study “The EU through the Eyes of Asia” supported by the ASEF. For more information about the project please see <http://esia.asef.org/> 24 November 2006

<sup>139</sup> Marco Kauffmann interviewed the EU diplomats in Tokyo, and they admitted that there are no allocated financial means to undertake or sponsor such research. However, in the nearest future the Delegation intends to conduct a cost benefit analysis of its information strategy in Japan.

from a longitudinal perspective. Since the poll has never asked questions directly referencing the EU *per se*, this paper was specifically interested in the indicators that attempted to evaluate attitudes and opinions of the Japanese towards Western and Eastern Europe (see Table 1 and 2 in the Appendix II).<sup>140</sup> Yet, the interpretation of the survey's results is challenging, mostly due to terminological confusion. Asking about the perceived affinity towards the Western Europe, the surveys before 1993 featured the term 'EC countries (France, Germany, UK etc.)'. Since 1993, the term changed to "Western European countries". More terminological confusion has been observed in the question dealing with Eastern Europe. In 1999, the questionnaire question asked about affinity towards 'East European countries'. In 2001, a similar question was worded using the term of 'Central and East European countries (Poland, Hungary, Yugoslavia etc.)'.

Keeping in mind a certain conceptual confusion of this longitudinal poll, this study was able to compare attitudes of Japanese respondents towards 'Western' and 'Eastern' Europe, rather than to the EU as a whole. The latest year available for comparative analysis in this survey was a pre-enlargement year 2003. According to the poll, it was evident that in 2003 Japanese registered a higher level of affinity towards 'Western' Europe than towards 'Eastern' Europe – 51.2% expressed a positive degree of affinity towards Western Europe vs. 20.4% in a similar category for Eastern Europe.

## 6.2. Japanese Public Opinion Database Poll

Another survey that featured some findings relating to Japanese perceptions of and attitudes towards the EU was administered by the Japanese Public Opinion Database<sup>141</sup> (JPOLL) in 1998. This survey, sponsored by the Japanese Prime Minister's office and administered by the Shin Joho Center, interviewed 2,116 respondents in person from November 19, 1998 to November 29, 1998.

In contrast to the *Japanese Government Poll*, the EU was explicitly mentioned in the JPOLL. Yet, the concept of the 'EU' in the questionnaire was limited to the EU's 'Big Three', such as France, Germany, and Great Britain. Any other EU Member States were not mentioned. Respondents were asked to rate the current (circa 1998) relationship between Japan and the EU (represented by those three countries). Six options were suggested: 'good', 'somewhat good', 'not very good', 'not good at all', 'difficult to say', and 'don't know'. According to the survey, most of the respondents (46%) thought that the relations between the EU and Japan were 'somewhat good'. The second highest indicator was split between the two assessments – 'not very good' and 'don't know'. Both featured a rather high portion of the sample of 18% each (Table 3 in Appendix II).

<sup>140</sup> With "N" standing for the number of valid responses, every year of the Poll featured a different number of respondents: N=1,756 in 2005, N=2,067 in 2004, N=2,072 in 2003, N=2,127 in 2002, N=2,066 in 2001, and N=2,107 in 2000. From <<http://www8.cao.go.jp/survey/h17/h17-gaikou/chuui.html>>:

各回答の N	10% (又は90%)	20% (又は80%)	30% (又は70%)	40% (又は60%)	50%
2,500	±1.2	±1.6	±1.8	±1.9	±2.0
2,000	±1.3	±1.8	±2.0	±2.1	±2.2
1,000	±1.9	±2.5	±2.8	±3.0	±3.1
500	±2.6	±3.5	±4.0	±4.3	±4.4
100	±5.9	±7.8	±9.0	±9.6	±9.8

<sup>141</sup> JPOLL is a part of the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research at the University of Connecticut, USA. This data is provided by the partnership of the United States - Japan Foundation and the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research at the University of Connecticut <[http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/membership/roper\\_members.html](http://www.ropercenter.uconn.edu/membership/roper_members.html)> 24 November 2006

### 6.3. Survey “World Powers in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century – Europe’s Global Responsibility.”

Some results relevant to this study regarding Japan’s public opinion on the EU were found in the demoscopic survey “World Powers in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century – Europe’s Global Responsibility”<sup>142</sup> commissioned by a German foundation “Bertelsmann Stiftung” in 2005. The survey had its goal to discover whether or not the EU is accorded the role of a global player. It was conducted in nine countries -- Brazil, China, Germany, France, United Kingdom, India, Japan, Russia, and the US. The survey took place between October and December 2005 interviewing 1,250 adults from all over Japan.

When asked which countries or organizations were perceived to be world powers, the Japanese were found to hold a below-average opinion on the position of the EU if compared with other countries in the survey – 20% in Japan vs. 32% on average between the nine countries (see Table 4 in Appendix II).<sup>143</sup> In addition, when compared with the UN, the EU’s significance as a world power was ranked higher than that of the UN by most of the states selected for the survey. In contrast, Japanese respondents perceived the UN to be a slightly more important world power (21%) than the EU (20%) (see Tables 4 and 5 in Appendix II). In maintaining peace and stability in the world, 41% of the Japanese surveyed would like the UN to play a more important role in the world. By contrast, only 23% of the Japanese respondents want the EU to gain a stronger role in this area (Table 7 and 8 in Appendix). Yet, a slightly higher share of Japanese respondents (17%) expect the EU to be a world power in 2020 (see Table 6 in Appendix II) if compared with 15% who see that role given to the UN.

As far as cooperation with the EU is concerned, Japan stood out from the nine countries participating in the survey even more distinctly. The majority of the respondents (51%) were undecided whether cooperation with the EU/Europe is useful (Table 9). However, those who did have an opinion were clearly in favour of closer relations between the EU and Japan.

### 6.4. Summary of the section

Several random surveys of Japanese public opinion on the EU illuminated rather ambivalent and controversial findings. Evidently, 46% of the Japanese respondents of the JPOLL survey conducted in 1998 claimed that they see Japan’s relations with the EU as ‘somewhat good’, and 18% was registered to have no opinion on the issue in question. According to the survey administered by the Japanese government in 2003, 51.2% of the Japanese respondents declared that they feel affinity to the Western European countries (vs. 40.1% of those who felt they did not). Only 8.7% was registered by that survey to have no opinion. Yet, in the 2005 “Bertelsmann” survey, 51% of the interviewed Japanese did not know if Japan’s cooperation with the EU is useful or not. Moreover, only 20% of respondents recognized the EU as a world power, and only 23% of Japanese respondents wanted the EU to play a more important role in the world.

These disparate indicators could be explained by the fact that neither of the observed surveys was solely designed to trace the Japanese public opinion on the EU. Those instruments used almost non-compatible questionnaires, sometimes employed confusing terminology, and featured different size samples with various margins of error to generate public opinion. Arguably, there is a need to design and administer a regular longitudinal survey specifically aimed to trace the dynamics of the leading perceptions and attitudes towards the EU existing in modern Japanese society.

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<sup>142</sup> World Powers in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Bertelsmann Stiftung, Berlin, June 2006

[www.cap.lmu.de/download/2006/2006\\_GPC\\_Survey\\_Results.pdf](http://www.cap.lmu.de/download/2006/2006_GPC_Survey_Results.pdf)> 24 November 2006

<sup>143</sup> The mean margin of error of the proportional values with a total probability of 90% amounts to +/-3.1% points (based on a sample size of n = 1000)



## 7. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The repercussions of the grand changes in the geo-political landscape in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century have been felt throughout the world. The end of the Cold War, the economic rise of China, and the ever increasing concerns about international safety and security and an endangered global environment created an important need for closer political discussion and economic cooperation between global partners. In this context, a need to account for the international images and perceptions becomes even more critical -- effective communication between the world regions is a paramount condition for successful co-operation in an interconnected global reality. Given the fact that the EU and Japan are two major economic and trading powers in the world, the images and perceptions they hold of each other are not only building the background of their policies towards each other, but are a key to a more productive dialogue between the two in the ever globalizing, interdependent world. This particular report focused its attention on the images of the EU existing in various Japanese discourses. A matching survey of images of Japan in the EU public discourses was not the goal of this paper, yet, the need for such a study is recognized and advocated by the authors of this report.

While trying to describe the EU's image in Japan, one is tempted to ask: Does the EU have any particular image among the Japanese public? Do the EU's actions inside and outside its borders raise its profile as an international actor in Asia in general, and in Japan in particular? Does the EU's image keep 'slipping off the radars' of the government and public attention in Japan? Or is a dialogue between the two economic 'giants' becoming a new priority for Japan's government? Purporting to answer these questions, this study evidenced a recently activated official dialogue between Tokyo and Brussels. Arguably, this dialogue is perceived as being activated on the background of such long-term and dominant trends in Japan's foreign policy as prioritizing its relations with Asia and the US and traditional preference for bilateral relations with the European countries. The latter preference is often conditioned by a certain degree of confusion when dealing with the EU as a complex communal body.

Despite those prevailing trends, a relatively high level of awareness of the EU among Japan's national elites was observed in this study. In particular, official discourses of Japanese decision- and policy-makers, as well as representatives of business community, featured informed and visible references to the EU accompanied by a relevant detailed domestic contextualization of the EU's actions. This study also detected a pronounced interest of Japan's leading newspapers towards the EU firstly, as a progressive political actor (both internally and externally), and then as a powerful economic force in the world. Here, it is important to note that leading newspapers are among the major sources of news for national elites.<sup>144</sup> Evidently, the most recent official political and media discourses painted a picture of the EU as a promising political partner to Japan when it comes to Japan's immediate geo-political issues (e.g., in dealings with North Korea, China, Myanmar, and Sri Lanka). In economic terms, the EU's influence in the WTO, commonality of its position in the WTO with Japan against the US, and the EU's overall importance for the world trade and economy was recognized. The EU was also interpreted as an example to be emulated (e.g., the EU's on-going regional integration as a lesson for Asia, an obvious success of the EU's common currency, the EU's growing economy due to its enlargement in 2004, and the EU's dealings with its energy problems and the 'greenhouse' effects).

Yet, this study detected that most of the non-official discourses did not prominently highlight the EU or EU—Japan relations. For example, the civil society organizations (in particular, Japan's leading NGOs and major trade unions) did not explicate their interest in or immediate connection with the

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<sup>144</sup> W. Schulz, *Foreign News in Leading Newspapers of Western and Post-Communist Countries*. Paper prepared for presentation at the 51<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference of the International Communication Association, Washington D.C.: USA, May 24-28, 2001 <[http://www.kwpw.wiso.uni-erlangen.de/pdf\\_dateien/ica\\_fn2001.pdf](http://www.kwpw.wiso.uni-erlangen.de/pdf_dateien/ica_fn2001.pdf)> 14 September 14, 2004.

EU. In addition, leading newspapers under observation virtually neglected the EU's representations in the field of social affairs. Arguably, while economic and political situations in the EU have been scrutinized by the Japanese public discourses, the social affairs of the EU remain in the periphery of the media and public attention. Unsurprisingly, the majority of the Japanese general public (if consider the latest, 2005 survey conducted by the Bertelsmann group) explicated indifference (if not ignorance and resentment) towards the EU. The survey showed that most of the respondents were not aware how beneficial the EU is as a partner for Japan. A high share of responses explicated that Japanese did not recognize the EU as a world power and did not want the EU to play a more important role in the world.

Arguably, relevant literature on the EU—Japan relations provides some interpretations of those perceptions and images. Some scholars of the subject confirm that Japan—EU relation is not prioritized in the mentality of the policy-makers or the general public. These researchers focus their critical analysis on the perceived obstacles obstructing interactions between the two partners. For example, the failure of the high-flying EU—Japan agenda that never took off was attributed to a climate of relative indifference in both countries.<sup>145</sup> To prove the point, the outgoing EU Ambassador to Japan, Bernhard Zepter, was quoted saying, “Japanese policy maker’s first priority is the US – yet it’s also their second and third priority.”<sup>146</sup> According to Tsuruoka, this indifference on behalf of Japan towards the EU is arguably stemming from the so-called “expectations deficit” (from the EU’s standpoint) -- Japan’s expectations for the EU in the international arena remained low despite the growing weight and influence of the EU as an international actor.

A similar attitude, only towards Japan this time, is noticed on behalf of the EU. For example, Mr. Zepter remarked, “In Brussels I hear a similar tune: Just replace the word ‘US’ with ‘China’.”<sup>147</sup> Illustrating this point, Tsuruoka cites a Japanese diplomat Murata Ryohei who recalled that “while acknowledging the problem of Japan’s indifference to Europe, the biggest characteristic of Europe’s attitude to Japan has been its indifference to Japan and expresses his concern about ‘ignorance’ or even ‘arrogance’ toward Japan pervasive in Europe.”<sup>148</sup> Tsuruoka proceeds stating that,

It is most likely that Europe’s indifference to and underestimation of Japan influenced Japan’s own perception of Europe in a negative way. As far as the situation in Japan was concerned, there was certainly a vicious circle of what can be called mutually reinforcing indifference<sup>149</sup>

Tsuruoka<sup>150</sup> concludes that the basic structure of the problem, namely a persisting low level of attention to each other on both sides, continues to have negative impacts on the development of EU—Japan relations.

Yet, there is some research that indicates a possibility of ‘breaking the wall’ of indifference and building a promising co-operation between the two partners. The EU (and the project of the European integration it represents) is sometimes viewed in the Japanese research literature as a noble

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<sup>145</sup> See, among others, M. Tsuruoka, *Why EU-Japan Partnership cannot flourish: Expectations Deficit in EU-Japan-Relations*. Paper presented at the British International Studies Association (BISA) Conference, University of Warwick, 20-22 December 2004, <<http://www.bisa.ac.uk/confs/2004%20prov%20prog.htm>> 24 December 2006

<sup>146</sup> B. Zepter Speech at the Foreign Correspondents Club of Japan in Tokyo, 8 June 2006.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> M. Ryohei, *Kaiko suru Nihon-Gaikou, 1952-2002* [Japan’s Diplomacy in Retrospect, 1952-2002] (Tokyo: Toshi-Shuppan, 2004), pp. 74-78. See also Yutaka Kawashima, *Japanese Foreign Policy at Crossroads: Challenges and Options for the Twenty-First Century* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 2003), pp. 128 and 131. Kawashima is also former Vice Foreign Minister, as cited in M. Tsuruoka, *Why EU-Japan Partnership cannot flourish: Expectations Deficit in EU-Japan-Relations*.

<sup>149</sup> M. Tsuruoka, *Why EU-Japan Partnership cannot flourish: Expectations Deficit in EU-Japan-Relations*.

<sup>150</sup> Ibid.

model that Japan and its Asian neighbours might envy in the future.<sup>151</sup> Optimists (the European Commission Delegation to Japan among them) state that the EU and Japan has been fortunate,

“the political and economic interdependence between Japan and the EU places both sides in a strong position to shape developments in a mutually beneficial way. The EU and Japan are therefore by nature “global partners” and this relationship can only grow stronger.”<sup>152</sup>

The EC Delegation site notes that common interests make the EU and Japan “natural allies” in their efforts to develop a stable multilateral political and economic system. In addition, Gilson<sup>153</sup> points out that neither Japan, nor the EU is able to challenge the traditional power supremacy of the remaining superpower, the US. Nevertheless, according to Gilson,<sup>154</sup> both Japan and the EU are in a position to balance the power of the US within bodies such as the WTO and the UN, and the relationship between Tokyo and Brussels may become a significant international partnership which can address many of the salient issues of the new millennium.

Importantly, the EU and Japan recognize that their relationship needs a new and stronger impetus -- both sides agree that “they have not yet reached their full potential”.<sup>155</sup> The EC Delegation to Japan stated that the EU realizes the need to reinforce the political dialogue along the following lines -- “in-depth discussions about the political and security situation in North Korea, China’s evolving role in the Asian region, the evolution of security structures in Asia and the impact of unilateral and extraterritorial policies on Asia”.<sup>156</sup> Economic interactions are another area of concern. Despite numerous and various economic reforms, the change in Japan’s economic relationship with the EU is admittedly “slow” and new opportunities are often “only minor”.<sup>157</sup> In this context, the findings of this report could be another means in establishing a more meaningful dialogue between the EU and Japan.

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<sup>151</sup> T. Hoshino, ‘A Japanese View on the Global Role of the European Union’, in 72 Chaillot paper *Global Views of the European Union* (EU Institute for Security Studies, Paris, 2004).

<sup>152</sup> Delegation of the European Commission to Japan, ‘Impact on the world’

<[http://jpn.cec.eu.int/relation/showpage\\_en\\_relations.impact.php](http://jpn.cec.eu.int/relation/showpage_en_relations.impact.php)> 23 November 2006

<sup>153</sup> J. Gilson, *Japan and the European Union. A Partnership for the Twenty-First Century?* (Macmillan Press, London, 2000), p.172.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 172.

<sup>155</sup> Delegation of the European Commission to Japan, ‘Political Relations’,

<[http://jpn.cec.eu.int/relation/showpage\\_en\\_relations.political.php](http://jpn.cec.eu.int/relation/showpage_en_relations.political.php)> 24 November 2006

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*



## APPENDIX I

### Information on the chosen for monitoring newspapers

*The Daily Yomiuri* is published in Tokyo by the *Yomiuri Shimbun*. This newspaper provides a comprehensive and analytical coverage of modern Japanese society and its government, as well as reports events in business, politics, sports and culture. With a circulation of over 10 million, the *Yomiuri Shimbun* is the most influential daily in Japan and is the largest newspaper in the world. By drawing on the *Yomiuri*'s 3100 correspondents from 400-plus worldwide news bureaus, *The Daily Yomiuri* database includes the most accurate and in-depth news coverage of Japan that is available in English. Its political orientation is leaning towards a conservative viewpoint.

*Asahi Shimbun* is one of the world's largest mass circulation dailies (its morning edition has a circulation of 8.2 mil copies)<sup>158</sup>. This newspaper has an English-language service available (the service was launched in September 1982 by the *The New York Times*). It selects articles from the *Asahi Shimbun* and publishes them in the *Herald Tribune* Japan. Its political orientation is moderately left (it provides a more critical position towards the governing party the LDP than the conservative *Yomiuri Shimbun*).

The *Nikkei Weekly* is published by Japan's leading business news and information company. It covers key developments in Japanese industry, technology, finance, and raw materials market. Its reports provide comprehensive overviews and interpretations of the leading economic and political trends affecting Japan - the world's second largest economy. The paper provides coverage of individual companies' results and business plans, political and economic trends, as well as a thorough coverage of Japanese macroeconomic indicators. Its political orientation is liberal, reform- and market oriented.

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<sup>158</sup> <http://www.asahi.com/shimbun/honsya/e/e-circulation.html>

## APPENDIX II

### Tables illustrating results of various public opinion polls

**Table 1:**

*Do you feel affinity to Western European countries?<sup>159</sup>*

	number of respondents	Yes+Rather yes	Yes	Rather yes	No+Rather no	Rather no	No	I don't know
	人	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Oct. 1990	2'206	48.6	12.3	36.3	41.3	27.2	14.1	10
Oct. 1991	2'135	46.5	11.2	35.2	42.9	27.7	15.2	10.6
Oct. 1992	2'166	46	11.3	34.7	43.8	27.3	16.4	10.2
Oct. 1993	2'134	49.3	10.8	38.4	41.8	27.3	14.5	9
Oct. 1994	2'061	46.4	9.5	37	43.4	28.9	14.5	10.2
Oct. 1995	2'093	43.1	9.5	33.7	48.6	30.5	18.1	8.2
Oct. 1996	2'105	48.3	11.3	37	42.5	26.5	16.1	9.2
Oct. 1997	2'080	49.3	11.7	37.6	41.9	25.7	16.2	8.8
Oct. 1998	2'116	55.6	16.7	38.9	36.7	21.4	15.3	7.7
Oct. 1999	2'102	53.3	14.7	38.5	38.8	23	15.8	7.9
Oct. 2000	2'107	55	13.9	41.1	38.3	22.2	16.1	6.7
Oct. 2001	2'066	57.2	15.4	41.8	35.9	21.6	14.3	6.9
Oct. 2002	2'127	58.5	15.3	43.2	32.2	20.3	11.9	9.3
Oct. 2003	2'072	51.2	12.5	38.7	40.1	24.4	15.7	8.7

**Table 2:**

*Do you affinity to Eastern European countries?*

	number of respondents	Yes+Rather yes	Yes	Rather yes	No+Rather no	Rather no	No	I don't know
	人	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Oct. 1999	2'102	18.1	2.9	15.3	67.9	35.8	32.1	14
Oct. 2001	2'066	18.9	2.6	16.3	68.3	39.4	28.8	12.8
Oct. 2003	2'072	20.4	2.7	17.7	63.9	34	30	15.6
Oct. 2005	1'756	23	3.5	19.5	61.3	34.6	26.7	15.7

**Table 3: JPOLL Survey (1998)<sup>160</sup>**

*Do you think the current relationship between Japan and countries in the European Union, such as France, Germany and Great Britain, is good, somewhat good, not very good, or not good at all.*

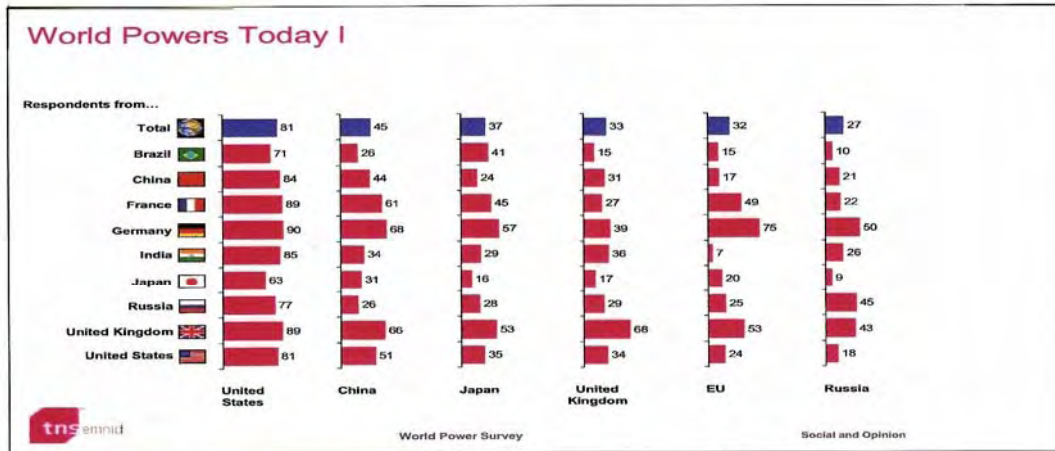
RESPONSES	%
Good	7 (margin of error ±1.1%)
Somewhat good	46 (margin of error ±2.2%)
Not very good	18 (margin of error ±1.7%)
Not good at all	7 (margin of error ±1.1%)
Difficult to say	4 (margin of error ±0.9%)
Don't know	18 (margin of error ±1.7%)

<sup>159</sup> Japanese Government Polls (1990-2003). Source: Japanese Cabinet Office, October 2005.

<sup>160</sup> This data is provided by the partnership of the United States - Japan Foundation and the Roper Center for Public Opinion Research at the University of Connecticut.

Table 4: World Powers Today I <sup>161</sup>

➤ The United States is unquestionably perceived to be a world power, and is followed at a considerable distance by China. The EU and UN are in the “middle range” of perceived world powers.

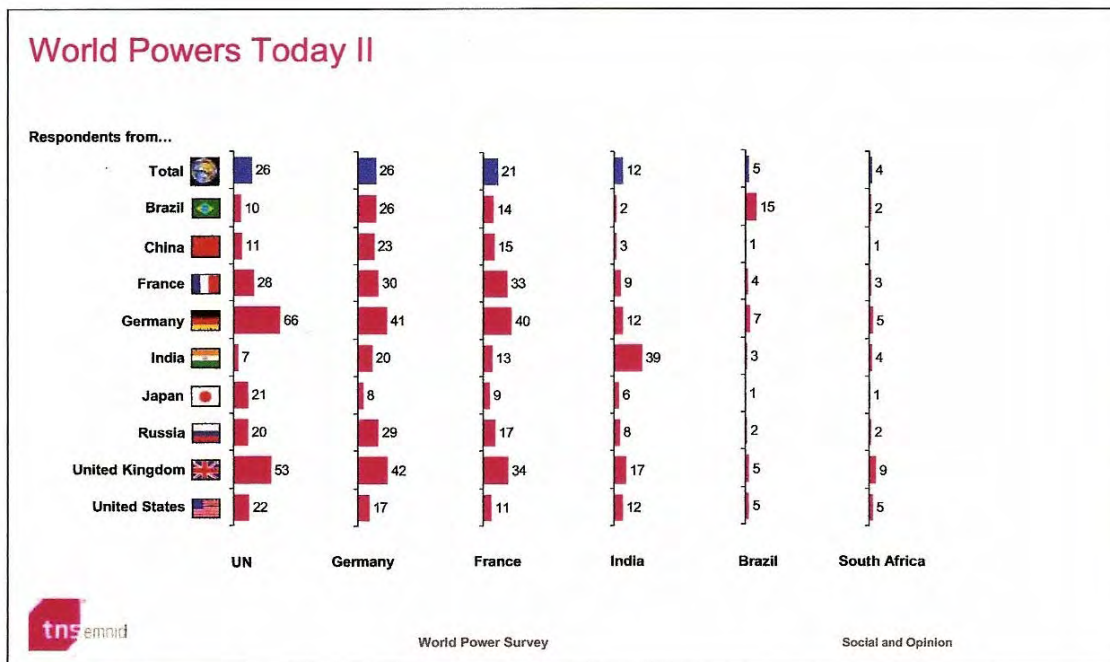


Question: Which of the following countries or organizations are world powers today?

Legend: The results from the various states in which populations were surveyed are aligned from top to bottom – in alphabetical order. The top line, which is labeled “Total”, is the mean value derived from the individual results and can be used as a benchmark with which to interpret the results from the various countries. From left to right are the individual states and organizations that might be described as world powers, arranged in descending order on the basis of the average frequency of the responses.

On average (“Total”) 81 per cent of the respondents consider the United States to be a world power, whereas in Brazil 71 per cent are of this opinion.

Table 5: World Powers Today II (continuation of Table 5)



<sup>161</sup> World Powers in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Bertelsmann Stiftung, Berlin, June 2006  
[www.cap.lmu.de/download/2006/2006\\_GPC\\_Survey\\_Results.pdf](http://www.cap.lmu.de/download/2006/2006_GPC_Survey_Results.pdf) 24 November 2006

Table 6: World Powers in 2020

- In future the United States is expected to lose its current position as undisputed leading world power. Survey respondents believe that China's growing importance will enable it to become an equal partner. The envisaged role of the EU and the UN remains basically unchanged.



**Question:** Which of the following countries or organizations will be world powers in the year 2020?

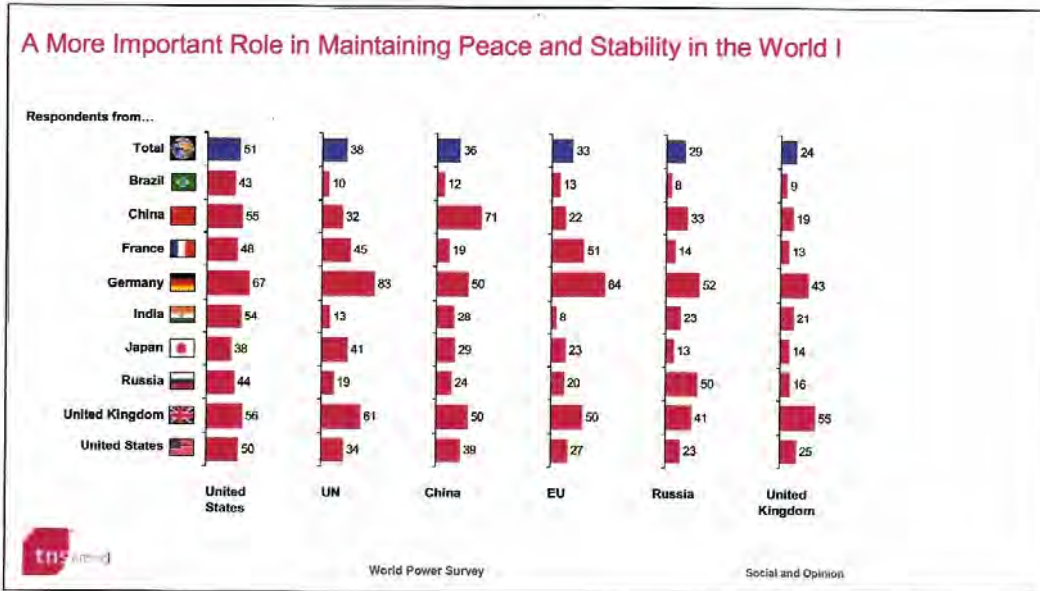
**Legend:** The results from the various states in which populations were surveyed are aligned from top to bottom – in alphabetical order. The top line, which is labelled "Total", is the mean value derived from the individual results and can be used as a benchmark with which to interpret the results from the various countries. From left to right are the individual states and organizations which it was possible to describe as future world powers, arranged in descending order on the basis of the average frequency of the responses.

On average ("Total") 57 per cent of the respondents consider the United States to be a future world power, whereas in Germany 82 per cent are of this opinion.



Tables 7: A more important role

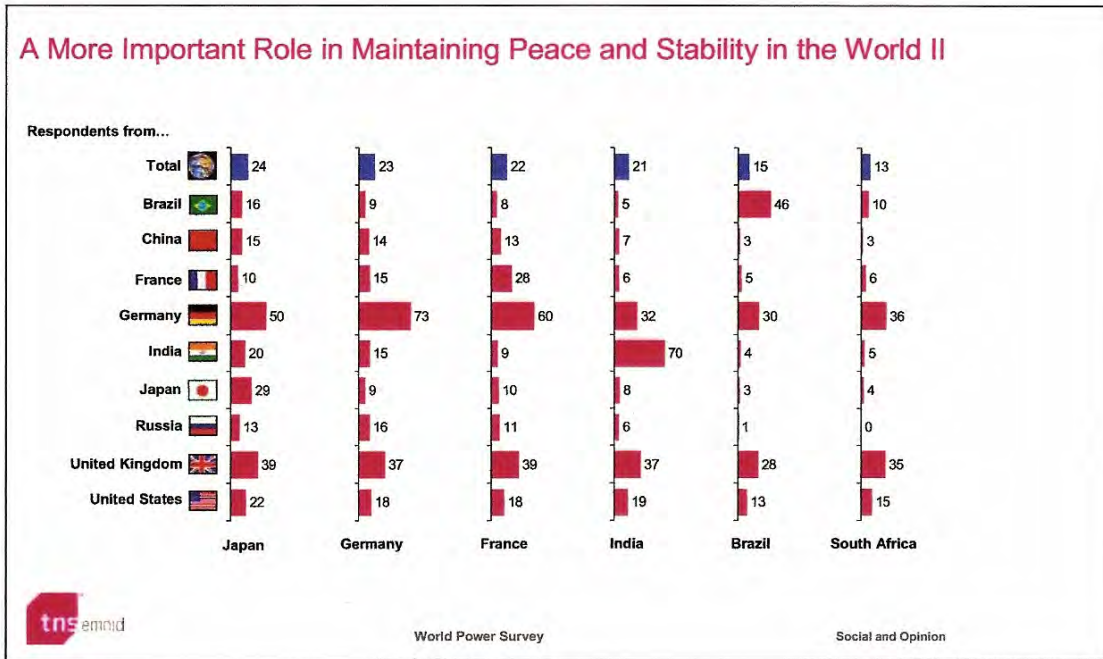
- There is above all a belief that the United States should play a more important role in maintaining peace and stability in the world. West Europeans in particular are in favour of greater UN and EU involvement. 73 per cent of the Germans would welcome a higher German profile in this area.



**Question:** In the future, what country or organization should play a more important international role in maintaining peace and stability in the world?

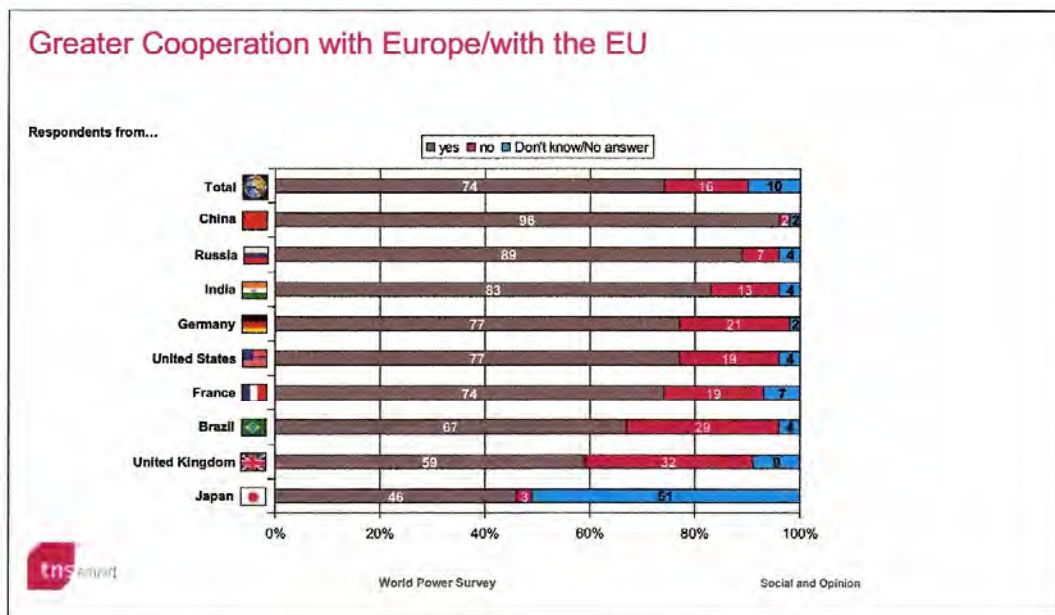
**Legend:** The results from the various states in which populations were surveyed are aligned from top to bottom – in alphabetical order. The top line, which is labelled "Total", is the mean value derived from the individual results and can be used as a benchmark with which to interpret the results from the various countries. From left to right are the various states and organizations which should in future play a more important role in maintaining peace and stability in the world, arranged in descending order on the basis of the average frequency of the responses.

**Table 8:**



**Table 9: Greater cooperation with the EU**

➤ **Three-quarters of respondents are in favour of greater cooperation with the EU/Europe**



**Question: Should your country strengthen its cooperation with the European Union/Europe?**

**Legend:** The results from the various states in which populations were surveyed are aligned from top to bottom – in alphabetical order. The top line, which is labelled "Total", is the mean value derived from the individual results and can be used as a benchmark with which to interpret the results from the various countries.

On average ("Total") 74 per cent of respondents believe that their country should cooperate more closely with the EU/Europe. 77 per cent of Americans are also of this opinion.



FORUM ON THE PROBLEMS OF PEACE AND WAR  
GARNET - Jointly Executed Research Project 5.2.1

**THE EXTERNAL IMAGE OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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**REPORT ON  
*South Africa***

**Lorenzo Fioramonti**



The survey *The External Image of the European Union* has been conducted in the Framework of the Jointly Executed Research Project 5.2.1. (*Normative issues*) of the Network of Excellence *Global Governance, Regionalisation and Regulation: the Role of the EU* – GARNET (contract no 513330); (EU 6<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme 2005-2010; Call Identifier: FP6-2002-Citizens-3). We are grateful to Garnet and to the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for their financial contribution to the project.

## ABSTRACT

The EU's image in South Africa is rather marginal. The EU is scarcely known to the South African public at large and vastly ignored by the country's media. In terms of public opinion polls, the EU is one of the least known international institutions, despite being the main source of development aid and the main trading partner of South Africa.

The EU receives only marginal coverage in South African media and, during the years surveyed, media reporting focused mainly on the role of the EU in the Zimbabwean crisis, which negatively affected the way in which the EU is depicted in the media.

Due to its mainly technocratic role in the country and the financial constraints it imposed (e.g. trade agreements, the strength of the €), the EU is portrayed as a restrictive rather than an assisting actor in South Africa. Interestingly, the role of the EU as a source of aid and development cooperation is virtually absent in the media reporting confirming that aid policies (development cooperation in general) are not significant enough to revert the negative outcomes of harder forms of policy, such as trade and sanctions.

At the level of political elites, while the EU is at times portrayed as an example for Africa's quest for unity (particularly, as a reference point for the African Union), at the same time government elites as well as opposition parties do not refrain from blaming the EU and its trade policies for the hardship African countries have been going through. Arguably, this is part of the political strategies of national elites who can more easily justify their acceptance of suboptimal trade agreements and play the role of tied-handed negotiators when bargaining with such a powerful counterpart. In this respect, it is true that (as is the case with other African countries) the EU has been used as a scapegoat for the failures or the poor gains of local politicians on the international stage. Most likely the EU is subjected to more frequent criticisms than its member states.

As far as civil society organisations are concerned, the two most important issues associated with the EU in South Africa are fair trade and debt-related issues. The introduction of a EU-South Africa free trade agreement and the approach adopted by the EU during the negotiations (that many commentators defined as 'petty politics', 'selfish' and 'unidimensional') not only provided room for criticism on the part of political elites but it also strengthened the perceptions of civil society organisations that the EU is nothing but an actor aiming at spreading those neo-liberal political reforms that hamper the concrete chances of Africa to come out of chronic poverty. In this respect, severe criticisms are not only common to fair-trade groups, anti-debt coalitions and the trade unions, but also to anti-AIDS networks such as the Treatment Action Campaign.

Overall, it appears that the EU has not managed to convince South African society that it is an international actor standing for human rights protection, social development and justice. 'Soft' issues such as development aid or international agreements for human rights (sectors in which the EU is active and rather progressive) do not make it to the South African media and seldom (if ever) are mentioned in the political and social discourse. What makes the EU better known to the public at large are issues such as trade, debt and international financial agreements. In this respect, it comes as no surprise that in the eyes of many South Africans the EU is nothing but a new form of colonialism and a source of injustice. In this regard, trade agreements and their negative outcomes (in terms of local development and unemployment) contribute to depicting the EU as a technocratic power aiming at strengthening the economic gains of unbalanced trade at the expense of South Africa and Africa at large.



## 1. INTRODUCTION\*

What is the European Union (EU) for South Africa? What is the perception that elites and citizens have of the EU and its role in world politics? How do civil society organisations view the EU? And what is the media coverage of the EU?

This report attempts to answer those questions by drawing from a collection of quantitative and qualitative data.

Based on the availability of data and information, it was decided to look at a number of documents dating back to the mid-1990s until 2004, while for the quantitative analysis this report only focuses on the years 2000-2002. This latter time span was particularly important for the EU-South Africa relationship since it saw:

- The adoption of the Cotonou Agreement, which substituted the Lomé convention;
- The entry into force of the Trade and Development Cooperation Agreement (TDCA) between the EU and South Africa;
- The establishment of the African Union and its flagship policy, the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), on which the South African government took the lead and the EU espoused as a key policy to contribute towards development and poverty eradication in African continent;
- The entry into force of the EU currency (the Euro).

Moreover, the following surveys were conducted in those years:

- A comprehensive study conducted by the institute Media Tenor on the coverage of international institutions in South African media;
- The Afrobarometer (Wave 2002), which was the only opinion poll that included some specific questions concerning the EU.

Although the quantitative data is mainly drawn from the above-mentioned studies, the qualitative information has been collected on an ah-hoc basis depending on the availability of data and documents. As can be noticed in the sections regarding 'political elites' and 'civil society organisations', most of the documents quoted in this report date back to the late 1990s or are as recent as 2004.

The analysis is organised as follows:

- The historical background sets the stage for the analysis of how South African society perceives the role of the EU. In this initial section, I discuss the relationship between European institutions/countries and South Africa during apartheid and soon after the transition to democracy. I also discuss how the EU strategy towards South Africa has changed during that period.
- The analysis of public opinion is based on the results of the Afrobarometer 2002, which is the most recent opinion survey available with data on the EU.
- The analysis of political elites focuses on the most relevant documents of the three main political parties: the African National Congress (ANC), the Inkhata Freedom Party (IFP) and the Democratic Alliance.

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- The analysis of civil society organisations focuses on three nation-wide organisations: the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) that is the largest union in the country, the Treatment Action Campaign (TAC) and a network of local NGOs (AIDC). In this case, all documents concerning the EU have been surveyed and the most important highlights are reported in the text.
- Finally, the media review draws from a comprehensive study conducted by the institute Media Tenor between July 2001 and September 2002. This media review, which specifically dealt with the coverage of international organisations in South African media, surveyed all main newspapers, magazines and TV channels.

## 2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: SETTING THE STAGE

During apartheid, relations between the European Community (EC) and South Africa were marked by a dual concern: the necessity to pressure for political change without involving unacceptably high costs which would have made any collective action unrealistic (and, in many cases, ineffective). Despite a number of cost-free declarations of principle,<sup>1</sup> division was often the final outcome among the Member States and such a lack of common position was also evident in other international arenas, like the General Assembly of the United Nations<sup>2</sup>. No action was taken until 1977, when the EC adopted a *Code of Conduct* for European enterprises operating in South Africa. The *Code* introduced two important elements in the rhetoric against apartheid: an emphasis on negotiating with Black trade unions and a procedure for monitoring compliance. Notwithstanding declared commitment, it was agreed that reporting mechanisms would be voluntary and exclude any form of oversight by the European Commission and, as someone has argued, the primary reason for the *Code* was ‘to defend the European Governments from international criticisms’ (Barber 1983: 94). Until 1984 the *Code* was the only Community instrument used to promote change in South Africa, showing how the informal nature of the then European Political Cooperation (EPC, the first form of consensual common foreign policy) led to the lowest common denominator philosophy.

The events of 1985 brought about a relative shift in the EPC, with the explicit condemnation of the behaviour of the security forces in Uitenhage and the opposition to the state of emergency declared by the South African government (EPC Bulletin 1987: 85/050). After a troika diplomatic mission to South Africa, a new policy was proposed which called for harmonised negative and positive measures. On the side of negative measures, the proposal called for: the withdrawal of military attachés between Member States and Pretoria; the ban of nuclear and military cooperation, plus the sale of EC oil and sensitive technology; the freezing of official contacts and international agreements in the sphere of security; and an embargo on exports of arms and paramilitary equipment. Finally, the proposal discouraged all sporting and cultural events ‘except where these contribute towards the ending of apartheid’.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> On 28 September 1976, the Dutch presidency made the following comments to the UN: “False solutions to the problems of apartheid [...] such as the establishment of homelands and Bantustans as presently pursued by the South African Government promote rather than diminish racial discrimination [...] Apartheid has no future and constitutes an unsupportable violation of human dignity” (*Speech by M. van der Stoep, Netherlands Foreign Minister, at the Thirty-First General Assembly of the United Nations, 28 September 1976, New York, European Community*). In 1977, the Belgian Presidency on apartheid: “[...] a form of institutionalised racism and deprives the majority of the inhabitants of the full exercise of civil and political rights. The Nine recently decided to examine a variety of different actions they could take to bring their collective influence to bear on South Africa to put an end to apartheid” [*Speech by H. Simonet, Belgian Foreign Minister, at the Thirty-Second General Assembly of the United Nations, 26 September 1977, New York, European Community*]. These two declarations are quoted in Holland 1988 (pp.32-33).

<sup>2</sup> In 1976, the UK, France and West Germany voted against UN resolutions calling for investment, trade and arms embargoes while other Member States supported such measures.

<sup>3</sup> Foreign Ministers of the European Community, *Statement of South Africa*, Brussels, 10 September 1985.

In addition, a series of harmonised positive measures was announced to finance non-violent<sup>4</sup> anti-apartheid organisations (particularly churches), to assist in the education of the non-White community (including grants for university studies), to support SADCC and the frontline states, to increase awareness among the citizens of Member States living in South Africa, and finally to intensify contact with the non-White community in a variety of sectors.<sup>5</sup>

However, it was only in 1986 that resistance to adopting restrictive measures was finally overcome. On 27 September, the EC agreed upon a partial adoption of the package of sanctions decided upon at the June meeting of The Hague. All the same, the adoption of restrictive measures turned out to be extremely vague and scarcely consistent, while implementation procedures, and—especially lack of enforcement, definitively undermined any effectiveness.<sup>6</sup> The general reactive approach essentially characterised punitive measures against apartheid.

A different story can be told with regards to the adoption of positive measures, which were generally more precise in defining objectives and significantly contributed towards shaping a more positive perception of the role the EC was playing to encourage democratization in South Africa. The EC Special Programme for the victims of apartheid was finally launched in 1986 and, in order to avoid direct politicisation of the Commission's work in South Africa, four channels were established to distribute aid to civil society organisations. A first problem the EC had to face was a lack of credibility, given the hesitant political initiatives of those years and the widespread perception of the EC as merely an economic friend of the South African government (Holland 1988). Nevertheless, the success of the Special Programme exceeded expectations. The mutual suspicion that existed between certain Member States on the one hand, and various groups among South Africa's disadvantaged population on the other, declined after the first years. While the level of funding was relatively small given the scale of the problem, the impact of the EC scheme outstripped its financial contribution. Moreover, aid for the victims of apartheid did seem to be the first step in rehabilitating the position of the Community in the eyes of anti-apartheid movements (Holland 1988). In some cases, the EC had to intervene by means of diplomatic pressure to protect the Programme from growing control from the authorities and this could have been of a certain symbolic importance in rehabilitating the EC in the eyes of anti-apartheid movements. The first phase of the Programme ran during 1985-1991 and a total of 402 projects were sponsored worth ECU 130.7 million (Holland 1997).<sup>7</sup> Given its growing extension, the programme became the "Union's largest, programmable aid programme of any kind" (Tsie *et al.* 1997).

When apartheid was finally abolished and the transition phase began, the EU did not adopt a 'minimalist approach' assuming a smooth and autonomous political normalisation of the country, but, by contrast, became more proactive in its initiatives culminating with the selection of South Africa as one of the first five 'joint actions' introduced by the Maastricht Treaty. In the field of election monitoring, the EU demonstrated skills and engagement in a relatively new field of pro-democracy external assistance. The EU initiative was the largest and the most lasting of all

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<sup>4</sup> The UK had clearly opposed the support of ANC-related organisations and had affirmed it would not have continued diplomatic relations with the ANC if the latter had not ceased recurring to violence.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Trade and continued links with South Africa were maintained through the qualified definitions and exception clauses in both the September 1985 and 1986 EPC statements. Moreover, embargoes were limited to South Africa and did not apply to the administered territory of Namibia, which could be used as a conduit for trade. As to embargoes, communitarian institutions did not have any kind of monitoring power, so that implementation was the responsibility of Member States. It has been showed how most measures were not considered legally binding and application was at the national level (Holland 1988: 113). Moreover, the only two binding initiatives, that is the ban on importing Krugerrands and the decision on iron and steel, referred to areas in which a reduction of exchange was already in place through bilateral and spontaneous actions. Yet, within six months the official import of Krugerrands had all but ceased, whereas twelve months after the implementation of the iron and steel decision only Denmark had ceased trading (Holland 1998).

<sup>7</sup> After the release of Nelson Mandela, the Programme objectives were revised and in the period 1991-1993 a further ECU 147 million was committed (Holland 1997).

international observers' actions (Holland 1997). In terms of new economic and trade relations, the aim was to take into consideration the strategic importance of South Africa in the general dynamics of SADC (Southern African Development Community), even though future negotiations would have been directed towards bilateralism. As to democracy assistance, the Special Programme formed the basis of the new policy, now more explicitly oriented towards initiatives devoted to consolidate the new democracy. The establishment of a political dialogue was both of practical importance and symbolic of the normalisation of relations. In parallel with the EU's bilateral relationships in the world, a new emphasis was placed upon support for democracy, the rule of law, social justice and the promotion of human rights as core themes in the effort to sustain the new democratic regime.

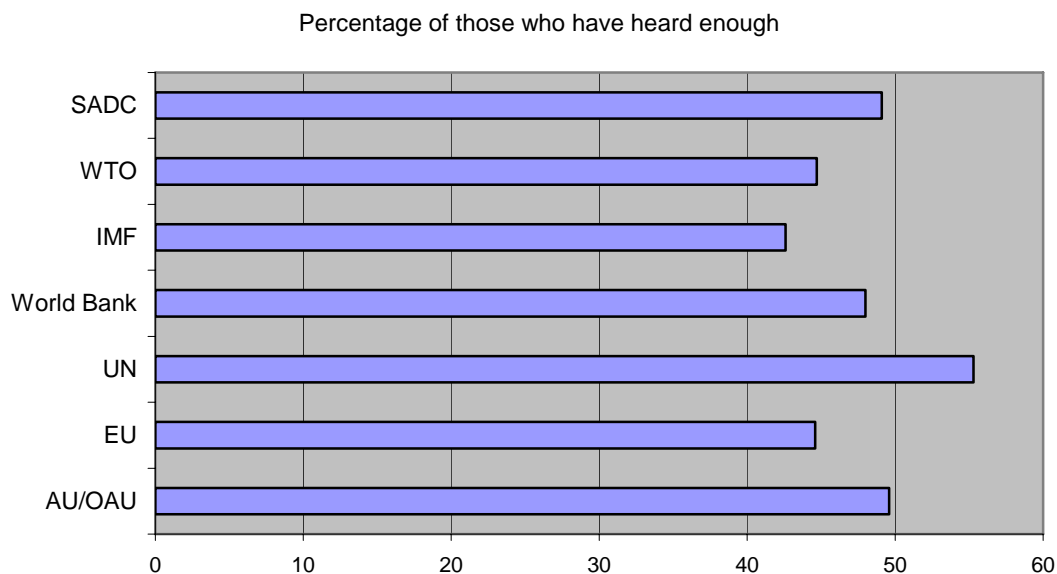
While the EU policy towards South Africa places fairly heavy stress on the do-good, benevolent-altruistic dimension of its commitment to the country, the response of the South African government has somewhat changed soon after the democratic transition. This has probably mainly to do, on the one hand, with the shift in the ideological focus of South African foreign policy under the new ANC government and, on the other, with the schizophrenic role the EU plays when it comes to trade and aid respectively. The utterly competitive way, sometimes bordering on pettiness, in which the EU conducted itself during the negotiations of the TDCA came as a surprise to its South African negotiating partners. The *Financial Times* editorial of 24 February 1999 referred to this as 'commercial haggling by wealthy Europeans.' Since then, it appears that the relationship between the EU and South Africa has been driven by technocratic and mainly financial interests, with higher political issues having fallen off the EU agenda in this country. As will emerge more clearly in the following data analysis, this technocratic dialogue between the EU and the South African government has deeply affected the external image of the EU in the country and its relevance as a political actor.

### **3. PUBLIC OPINION**

A first way to look at how the EU has been perceived in South Africa is to consider public opinion surveys. The only public opinion poll available in South Africa with information regarding the EU is the *Afrobarometer*. In 2002 (the most recent wave with information on the EU), the survey included some questions on a number of international institutions, including the EU.

According to the *Afrobarometer* 2002, only a minority of South African citizens (44%) know enough about the EU to have any opinion on the matter.

**FIG. 1 - Have you heard of this international institution enough to have an opinion about it?**



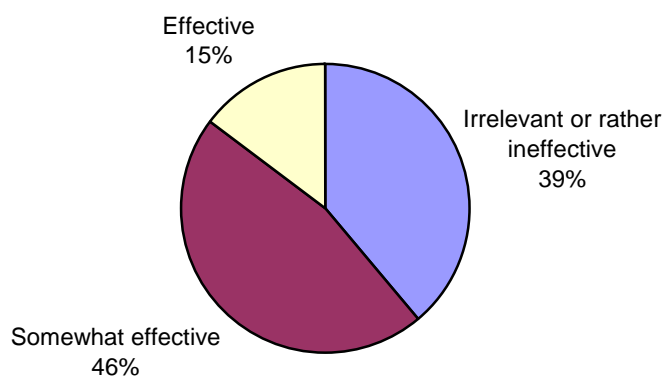
Source: Afrobarometer 2002

The EU is the second least known international organisation, only doing better than the IMF. As will be pointed out during the media review, it is not surprising that South African citizens know so little about the EU since the latter is basically a non-issue for the main media (press and TV).

However, what do those citizens who know enough about the EU think about it? How do they assess its role as an international actor?

**FIG. 2 - How do you assess the EU as an international actor?**

How do you assess the EU as an international actor?



Source: Afrobarometer 2002

When the ‘assessment’ of the EU is compared with that of other major international organisations operating in the country, it emerges clearly that, in the eyes of South African citizens, the EU is the least effective. For 39% of those who have an opinion on the EU’s role this latter is ‘irrelevant’ or ‘rather ineffective’ as international/regional organisation.

**TAB. 1 – EU’s relevance compared with other international institutions**

	EU	AU	UN	WTO	IMF	World Bank	SADC
<i>Irrelevant or rather ineffective</i>	39%	36%	31%	31%	37%	35%	29%
<i>Somewhat effective</i>	46%	46%	46%	49%	46%	48%	46%
<i>Effective</i>	15%	18%	23%	20%	17%	17%	25%

Source: Afrobarometer 2002

#### 4. POLITICAL ELITES

Collecting information regarding political elites turned out to be more difficult than for any other sector included in this report. In South Africa, the official opinions of the leadership of the African National Congress (and especially of its president) also overlap with the official declarations of government. In this part of the report, therefore, I will present the results of an initial survey of the main declarations of the ANC presidency (that is also the President of the Republic). Then I will briefly present the results of a survey of all declarations or documents of other two major parties, the Inkatha Freedom Party and the Democratic Alliance.

As is also the case with the analysis of civil society organisations, the report looks at a broader time span than for the other sections. This is mainly due to the availability of data: unlike the study of public opinion and the media, in the case of political elites and civil society the most interesting information was scattered along a longer period of time (roughly mid-1990s-2004).

#### 4.1. The African National Congress/Government of South Africa

##### *Presidency*

One of the main themes in the Presidency’s discourse around the EU is the example that this latter can set for the African Union, of which the South African government was probably the most enthusiastic founders and by all means the most relevant player.

In November 2004, the President published a document with a view to explaining to south African citizens what the EU was all about and how it related to African (and South African) development. Some main points made by government include (original quotations):

1. The EU grew out of the West European system of cooperation initiated by the Marshall Plan, informed by the same strategic political and economic objectives that inspired that Plan. In addition to the task to defeat "Soviet expansionism", these included the need to ensure that contradictions among the European powers did not lead to a Third World War.
2. It understood the benefits that derived from that Plan especially with regard to the irrationality of depending on loans and/or private investment to advance the underdeveloped regions within the EU to reach their takeoff point.
3. It understood that these regions are too poor to generate the savings and capital they need for their development, and that their levels of poverty and underdevelopment made it impossible for them to attract significant volumes of private capital.
4. Accordingly, public sector grants constitute the bulk of its development funds.
5. Contrary to arguments about minimal state intervention in the economy of the underdeveloped regions, it has proceeded on the basis of the critical need for the state to be involved in the development of these regions.

6. This state intervention has entailed detailed "dirigiste" planning and implementation of comprehensive development programmes, fully accepting the concept of a developmental state.
7. The Regional Policy is succeeding in its central objective of reducing and eradicating poverty and underdevelopment in the least developed regions within the EU, ensuring that these regions attain the average GDP level of the EU as a whole.
8. The 15-member EU aimed to achieve this objective in one generation. It estimates that given its enlargement into 25 countries, it will realise this goal in two generations.

*Source: ANC today 5 November 2004*

It appears clearly from most documents and political commentaries that the EU's internal development is often utilised by government to a) scrutinise if and how the EU is similarly contributing to the development of Africa and b) justify the governmental policy called 'developmental state', in which government coordinates expenses to encourage economic development and foreign investment (rather than fight poverty, as some within civil society would most probably argue).

Another excerpt goes on to say:

"Through the Cotonou Agreement, the developed North, represented by the EU, has tied the developing South to a development model based on the integration of the South in the global economy, which would be achieved through free trade and private foreign direct investment in the countries of the South. [...]"

However, and presumably to move the ACP countries out of the "fringe of global trade", according to the Concord Cotonou Working Group, the Economic Partnership Agreements are intended to oblige the ACP countries to conform to a "free market" model of development that was never imposed on both Western Europe and the Asian Far East after the Second World War. This was precisely because, at that time, the US understood that this would negate the possibility for these regions to overcome their condition of underdevelopment".

And it concludes that (my summary, not an original quotation):

- In the post-Cold War period, the developed countries are ready to respond to the challenge of poverty and underdevelopment in the countries of the South as a moral rather than a strategic imperative that is necessitated by a threat to their survival;
- They believe that the development of these countries should be financed through private capital, rather than public sector funds;
- They work to ensure minimal state intervention in the economies of the South and therefore reliance on "the market" and the private sector to achieve the development goals of these countries;
- They believe that these developing countries must be fully integrated within the global economy, interacting with all other countries through free trade and reliance on the global capital markets and global investors for the investment funds they need;
- Critically, they believe that the developing countries should be obliged to participate in reciprocal "free trade" arrangements, insisting that it is such "free trade" rather than "aid" that will catapult the developing countries to reach their "take off" levels of development;
- They are convinced that such economic assistance as they extend to the developing countries should act as a catalyst towards the achievement of the central goal of creating "investor friendly" conditions that would enable the developing countries to attract the requisite volumes of domestic and foreign private investment, creating the capacity for recipient countries of this investment to expand the space for these investors freely to trade their products;

- They are determined to ensure that except for developing countries with domestic economies so large that their investors cannot ignore them, all others must meet such political and governance standards as they set, especially in order to reassure foreign investors;
- They are unwilling to provide sufficient public sector funds to enable the developing countries to reach their takeoff point, and do not pursue this objective, leaving it to the private sector;
- This development model has not produced any success with regard to sustained development that does not require exceptional external intervention, despite all efforts by the developing countries to create the political, policy and other conditions the developed countries set as pre-conditions for the sustained development of the countries of the South.

Source: ANC today 12 November 2004

A note is necessary here, for those who are not familiar with South African politics. The ANC-led government of South Africa widely employs a nationalist and pan-Africanist vocabulary when it comes to official speeches and internal political discourse. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that the foregoing discourse could be easily associated to pro-market and pro-private investment policies at home. Many analysts feel that the EU, more than any other international organisation, is the target of government's criticisms, even though South African government is very happy to enact EU-friendly policies. Has perhaps the EU become a scapegoat in South Africa, as it has long been a scapegoat for European political elites that need to justify fiscal austerity at home? The EU also pays the price of being home to many former colonial powers.

## 4.2. Other political parties:

### *Inkatha Freedom Party*

(Zulu nationalist party: in office through a loose alliance with the ANC)

On the TDCA negotiations (1999):

"We must make it crystal clear to those members of the EU who.... wish to use their economic muscle to impose a one-sided agreement; who want to have their cake AND eat it, - that their stance is economically, politically and morally unjustifiable. South Africa is tired of the contradiction between the warm words we hear from European leaders, eager to be associated with our transformation, and the cold reality that we experience in our trade negotiations. We in the IFP offer our full support to the Minister and the Government in their efforts to stand firm in these trade negotiations and we wish them success."

(<http://www.ifp.org.za/Archive/Releases/090399dpr.htm>)

At the Africa-European Union summit in Cairo (2000):

"The IFP is fully behind the African appeal for the cancellation of foreign debt. Our motivation is that, by and large, Africa is called upon to pay for debts accumulated by governments that were not serving the interests of the majority of her citizens. This is particularly the case with South Africa where the previously oppressed majority are now expected to atone for the sins of National Party governments which were using the same funds to bolster the most inhuman system."

"In addition, the reality is that the productive capacity of African economies is not capable of paying this debt. African countries are generally at a stage of reconstructing their economies after they went through economic problems which emanated from various sources. Therefore any insistence that Africa must pay is merely condemning the poorest citizens of these countries to perpetual poverty, as it drains the little that their economies can produce."



"If the international community is serious in its commitment to helping Africa, this is where it must begin. African governments cannot address the development needs of their people as long as they are carrying this albatross around their necks."

(<http://www.ifp.org.za/Archive/Releases/040400bpr.htm>)

On the establishment of a Pan African Parliament within the African Union (2004)  
(the EU is used as a model of regional political integration to imitate and learn from):

The IFP hopes that, in time, the African Union (AU) will evolve along the lines of the European Union and its broad emphasis on the practice of democracy, human rights, trade benefits, and regional development.

"the Party hoped that the AU will evolve along the lines of the European Union and that the Pan African Parliament would serve to strengthen the practice and means of democracy and human rights throughout Africa by standardising norms and principles throughout the member states."

(<http://www.ifp.org.za/Archive/Releases/150904apr.htm>)

Another statement that stresses the importance of using the EU as an example of successful regional economic development (2004):

Skewed development concentrated in urban areas is particularly apparent in KwaZulu-Natal. The IFP looks to the European Union for successful models of regional development." "One of the fundamentals of EU's regional development is co-funding. The IFP believes co-funding of local projects will boost Richards Bay's poor transport infrastructure and broaden access to finance by the emerging local entrepreneurs."

(<http://www.ifp.org.za/Archive/Releases/071004bpr.htm>)

### ***Democratic Alliance (DA)***

(Main opposition party: mostly white, with a liberal manifesto)

The only DA public document that refers to the EU is a speech delivered by the DA leader, Tony Leon, to the EU Heads of Missions on 24 April 2001. The speech concerns the allegations of an illegal arms deal between EU and South Africa companies. The tone of the speech is slightly negative and, at times, it seems to blame the EU for not doing enough to enforce arms trade regulations on European companies trading with foreign countries. Here are some relevant excerpts:

The DA regard themselves as Constitutional patriots. We therefore need to remind ourselves and our friends abroad that our country and its relatively new Constitution has no place - and should provide no shelter - for either the stain and stench of corruption on the one hand, or profligacy and recklessness with the public purse, on the other. Regrettably, the controversial Arms Deal seems to resonate with the echoes of both. [...]

The DA calls on the Heads of Mission of the European Union to put pressure on their governments, and on EU structures, to investigate allegations of bribery and kickbacks involving European armaments companies awarded contracts in South Africa's Strategic Defence Procurement. [...]

The Convention - to which each of these countries is signatory - makes it a crime to offer, promise or give a bribe to a foreign public official in exchange for favourable terms of business. [...]

All member-states of the EU should lobby for the strengthening of the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports. Whether or not EU countries should continue to extend credit to poor nations for arms acquisitions, which they can ill-afford, should be part of the political dialogue around poverty reduction discussed at the recent ACP-EU summit in Cotonou, Benin. [...]

Our key concern is that the Arms Deal will raise the budget deficit after South Africa has just turned the corner with sound public finance management in the 2001/02 Budget. [...]

## 5. CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

A common theme in the discourse of indigenous civil society organisations around the EU can be found in a declaration subscribed by a number of local organizations for the inauguration of the widely heralded (by governments) New Partnership for African Development. An excerpt that cites the EU (see <http://www.aidc.org.za/?q=node/view/174>) goes as follows::

“ We noted that NEPAD [...]:

reinforces Africa’ focus on market access into the richest countries through unilateral but false offers such as the EU’s Everything But Arms (EBA);

endorses the aims of reciprocal free trade and other policy conditionalities demanded by the EU and the US, such as privatisation, labour deregulation, and investment liberalisation in the Cotonou Agreement and the African Growth and Opportunities Act (AGOA), respectively;

accepts the erroneous depiction of the ‘marginalisation’ of Africa, whereas Africa has long been deeply and disadvantageously integrated into the global economy”.

Interestingly, the above-reported document was subscribed to by the South African Council of Churches and a number of local organizations. As far as this survey could find out, it was the first time the South African Council of Churches expressed a view on the EU.

For the purpose of this report, I analysed the main documents of three South African civil society organisations:

1. Congress of South African Trade Unions
2. Treatment Action Campaign
3. Alternative Information and Development Centre/Jubilee South Africa

As was the case with the analysis of the political elites, this section focuses on documents issued between the mid-1990s and 2004.

### 5.1. Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU)

#### *Quantitative information*

- 30 documents that cite the European Union

	Negative	Not clear	Positive
<i>Documents</i>	19	4	7

- Main issues addressed in the documents

- EPAs and free market (5 negative)
- TDCA and agricultural subsidies (9 negative)
- International regulations for workers’ safety (2 positive)
- Xenophobia, Racism and Colonialism (1 negative)
- European social welfare system (3 positive)
- Drugs and HIV/AIDS (2 negative but 1 positive on the European Parliament and 1 positive on availability of AIDS drugs)
- Fiscal austerity and state expense cuts (2 negative because it pushes unemployment up and reduces the protection of labour)

#### *Qualitative information* (excerpts from the above-reported documents)

COSATU on the TDCA: <http://www.cosatu.org.za/docs/1999/eutrade.htm>

On the same issue in 2000 (<http://www.cosatu.org.za/congress/cong2000/parlrep.htm>):

The Committee’s deliberations were basically to ratify a "done deal". Their official report did reflect a number of the issues raised in COSATU’s submission, such as the differentiated readiness of South African and European industry to take advantage of opportunities; the need to empower South African business to take advantage of opportunities and to overcome non-tariff barriers; the fact that

EU agricultural subsidies continue to act as trade barriers; the need for continual monitoring of the Agreement involving all stakeholders; the need for sensitivity in the impact on the region; and the need for a proper impact assessment of expected benefits and challenges for the South African economy. The Committee made some proposals on these issues but many of them were left hanging.

Since the time of COSATU's submission on the EU Agreement, there has been much haggling over particular spirits which EU member states want specific protection for. This confirms the lack of sincere European commitment to South African development, as well as their concern over setting precedents which could weaken their position in future trade negotiations with developing countries.

#### COSATU on the EU and Racism at the UN Conference in Durban (2001):

The EU did not like these issues being discussed by the conference because European countries have been the main perpetrators of colonialism and racism. Most of the EU countries have never come to the rescue to the poor and the vulnerable in the Middle East, or in Rwanda and Burundi where thousands of innocent lives were lost as a result of colonial balkanisation and divide-and-rule policies of imperialist powers.

#### COSATU striking against the TDCA with the EU (November 2001):

The union is preparing a one-day strike against South African government and European Union trade agreement, which allows importation of foodstuffs. The union says the foodstuffs are highly subsidised by the European Union and are sold cheaply in South African markets, which make it difficult for local industries to compete. FAWU said this would eventually lead to a decrease in profitability and job losses. The union has cited canned beans and dairy industries as the hardest hit by the current trade agreement.

#### COSATU on the European labour market and welfare (1999):

We need to look at the European experience, where it is now accepted that progressive labour market policy cannot succeed in the context of inappropriate macroeconomic policies. In other words, a labour market policy aimed at human resource development, equity, creation of quality employment, security, and creation of new employment- cannot be effective in the context of inappropriate macroeconomic policies which are contractionary and job-destroying in character. Increasingly the consensus in Europe is that you should not be to try to tailor labour market policy to outdated macroeconomic policy, but rather adjust macroeconomic policy to create the environment within which the sort of labour market policy outlined in the document can flourish.

#### On the same issue in 2000 (<http://www.cosatu.org.za/congress/cong2000/parlrep.htm>):

Social security is spoken of in the EU as a "productive factor in the economy", rather than a squandering of wealth. A 'productive factor' because it raises living standards and thus effective demand in the economy. The Europeans also argued that social security lessens social division and conflict, and ensures greater co-operation in the production and distribution of wealth.

A view is commonly held in the developing world and South Africa that only advanced capitalist states can have comprehensive social security systems. However, in the current debate about enlargement of the European Union, Eastern European countries which operate under a primitive form of capitalism, are being expected to construct social security systems as a condition of entry into the EU. EU officials argue that this is feasible, since many post-war European states built social security systems in the context of relatively backward economies; and that, more recently, large gaps between systems of relatively poor Southern European states, and their Northern counterparts have had to be bridged.

## 5.2. Treatment Action Campaign

(Coalition of HIV/AIDS activists: In 2000, they became renowned worldwide when they sparked a global protest against pharmaceutical companies preventing the South Africa from producing generic versions of anti-retrovirals – further information at [www.tac.org.za](http://www.tac.org.za))

	Negative	Not clear	Positive
<i>Documents</i>	8	2	4

- Main issues addressed in the documents
  - Right to health and use of generic medicines (7 negative)
  - Free trade and poverty (1 negative)
  - Aid (2 not clear and 1 positive)
  - EU health system and European social democracy (3 positive)

### *Qualitative information* (excerpts from the above-reported documents)

Governments across the world recognise that the costs of medicines are unacceptably high. These measures are used in many countries to lower the price of medicines and they are legitimate. Yet, the US government and the European Union supported the drug companies in their legal action against the South African government.

The mantra of the aristocratic patricians of the G8 countries is that trade will set you free. But how in God's name can you promise a liberalized trading regimen on the one hand, while promulgating \$190 billion worth of domestic agricultural subsidies on the other? And that's just the United States. Add another \$160 billion or more from the European Union, throw in other heavily protected industries, and you effectively deliver a message to Africa that the new round of trade talks under the WTO are a Machiavellian illusion.

A few years ago, the dominant view was that prevention of HIV was all that was necessary for the developing world. This has changed. UNAIDS, the European Union and the United States now say that treatment is critical.

Countries like Brazil, Thailand, India and South Africa, need to co-operate in order to produce more generic anti-retrovirals in order to reduce the price through an economy of scale. Brazil and Thailand have offered to transfer knowledge for developing the technology and infrastructure for anti-retroviral programs. It is difficult for poor countries to do this, however, in a climate of consistent legal challenges from multinational pharmaceutical companies, threats from the US and EU governments and lack of clarity over TRIPS.

There is little treatment available and public education is poor. Many people do not get enough nutritious food, making their health worse. Much of this is due to the legacy of colonialism and the ongoing foreign policies of the United States, European Union and Japan, but much of the responsibility for the failure to provide decent health care services lies with lack of human rights and bad governance in Africa.

### TO THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE USA AND EUROPEAN UNION:

People from poor countries cannot help but believe that whilst your governments will draw massively from public funds when your own security is threatened, the lives of poor and black people in the emerging 'global village' are considered dispensable and unworthy of protection.

We invite the ambassadors of the European Union and the United States to receive this call against pressurising poor countries on behalf of drug companies.

Alleviating the effects of the AIDS epidemic will require political leadership and greater accountability from national governments, international organisations, the private sector, especially the pharmaceutical industry, and wealthy countries, particularly the United States and the European Union.

There is much that governments can do. When Dr Nkosazana Dhlamini-Zuma was Minister of Health she fought courageously to put people before profits and democracy before the market.

However, her efforts were undermined by pressure from the big drug companies and the governments of the United States and the European Union.

Instead of following the more appropriate European model of social democracy, many developing countries are following the US/UK model. South Africa is no exception.

### 5.3. Alternative Information and Development Centre/Jubilee South Africa

	Negative	Not clear	Positive
<i>Documents</i>	4		

- Main issues addressed in the documents
  - EU free trade agreement with South Africa (1 negative)
  - Debt and reparations for apartheid crimes (2 negative)
  - European Partnership Agreements – EPAs (2 negative)

#### **Qualitative information** (excerpts from the above-reported documents)

The SA government is stressing that the proposed FTA was the EU's initiative and is not SA's own option. This position has emerged, in part, from intensive analyses of the implications of the EU's proposal. Government and independent researchers in South Africa soon exposed the highly disadvantageous restrictions upon SA agricultural exports to Europe; coupled with the threat of subsidised European agricultural products flooding into SA... and its SACU partners. Analysts also exposed the potential threats posed by Europe's industrial power against the industrial reconstruction and development needs within South Africa and between SA and its SADC partners.  
<http://www.aidc.org.za/?q=node/view/192>

This gave rise to negotiations to determine a "post-Lome" dispensation that would comply with WTO rules. The result of these negotiations was the eventual signing of the Cotonou Agreement in June 2000. This new agreement presented the framework of cooperation between the EU and the ACP as envisaged for the next 20 years. Initially the trade preferences of the Lome could be extended until the end of 2007, whereafter a new trading regime should be in place that complies with WTO rules. The EU's EPA-proposals extended to the ACP pertain to the period 2008 and beyond. A bird's eye view of the EU's EPA-proposals would to a certain extent, translate into a feasible and even attainable option. However, on closer scrutiny (and in all honesty), the proposals give rise to more questions than answers. These questions become even more relevant if the EPA-proposals are compared to the legal text of the Cotonou Agreement. (March 2005)  
<http://www.aidc.org.za/?q=node/view/515>

Although the EPAs negotiations are presented as a win-win situation, it must be understood that they are between unequal partners. The processes leading to the negotiations, the host of unresolved issues being swept under the carpet, and the manner the EU is fast tracking them, can only go in one direction - and that is to the benefit of the EU, and at the cost of the poor ACP countries that are compelled to bear all the costs of adjustment. (December 2004)  
<http://www.aidc.org.za/?q=node/view/435>

European banks were the largest creditors. Indeed, European assistance to apartheid increased as the campaign against apartheid grew. European Community (now Union) banks increased their credit to the odious regime by 546% in five years from R13-billion in 1980 to R71-billion in 1985  
<http://www.aidc.org.za/?q=node/view/18>

## 6. THE EU AND SOUTH AFRICAN MEDIA: A SMALL FISH IN THE OCEAN

The question of how the EU is reported in the South Africa media is particularly interesting, since it broadly confirms what has been argued thus far. For many South Africans, the media – especially TV – is the sole source of information about the rest of the world. This makes the analysis of the media a crucial element to understand how the EU is perceived in South Africa. Most data reported in this section comes from a comprehensive and in-depth study conducted between July 2001 and September 2002 by the institute Media Tenor. For the purpose of this report, only the data on the EU has been extrapolated from the overall study. All data refers to the most important daily and weekly newspapers available in South Africa, as well as all TV news on state controlled and private channels.

The time span selected for this report therefore includes a number of crucial events that emphasised the role of the EU in South Africa (and the rest of Africa at large):

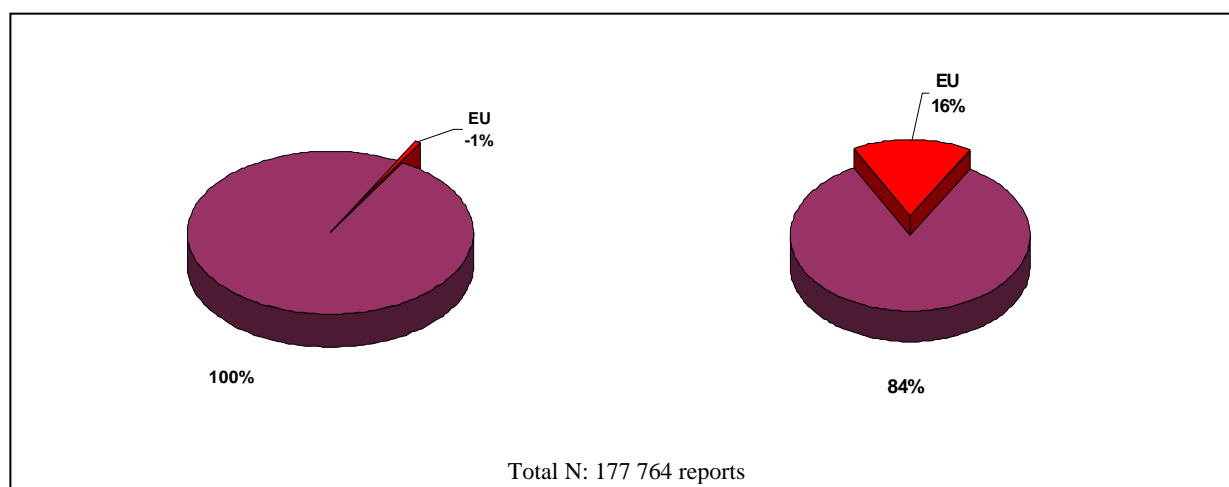
- The entry into force of the EU currency (the Euro);
- The adoption of the Cotonou Agreement, which substituted the Lomè convention;
- The entry into force of the Trade and Development Cooperation Agreement (TDCA) between the EU and South Africa;
- The establishment of the African Union and its flagship policy, the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), on which the South African government took the lead and the EU espoused as a key policy to contribute towards development and poverty eradication in African continent.

Hence, it can be argued that such a time span is particularly appropriate to assess the media coverage of the EU in a period of significant political exposure.

### *Analysis*

Confirming what this survey has already noted with respect to elites, public opinion and civil society organisations, the media coverage of the EU in South Africa is particularly scarce and limited to some specific issues; and this despite not only a strong physical presence of the EU in South Africa but also, historically strong ties. Even though 32% of South Africa's media coverage focuses on international issues, only 0.5% focuses geographically on the EU. Even when EU member states are included in the calculation, the overall figure reaches a mere 16% of all international news.

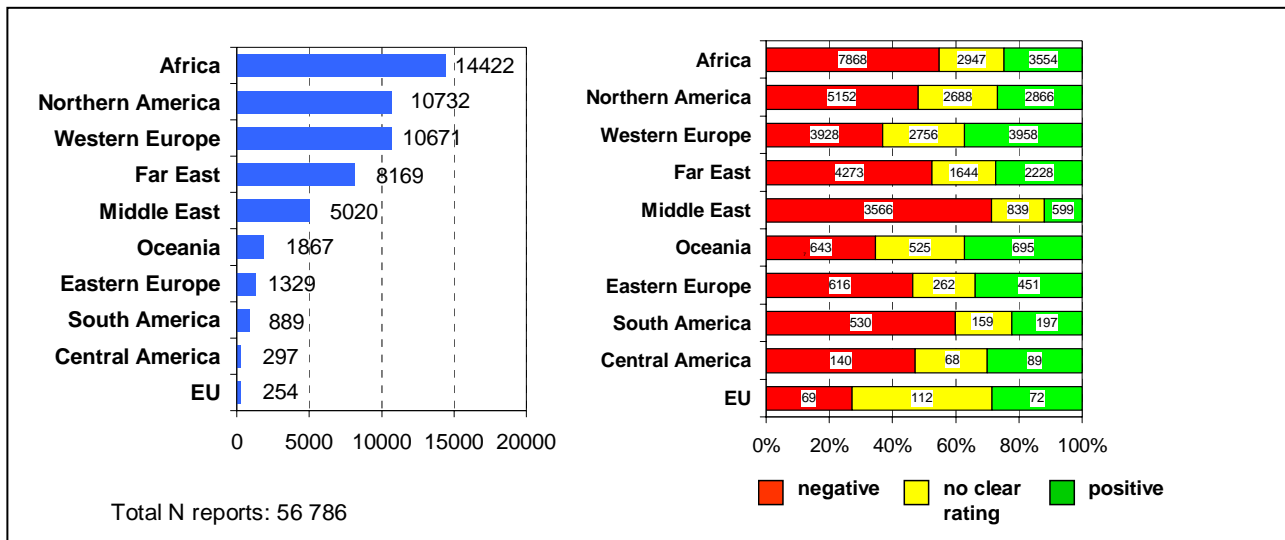
**FIG. 3 - Share of EU coverage of foreign country coverage in SA media (July 2001 –September 2002)**



Source: Media Tenor

It is likely that September 11 limited media coverage to countries involved in the ‘war on terror’, putting all other regions of the world into a ‘focus periphery’. It should be noted, though, that the ‘war on terror’ has also put the spotlight on the ‘transatlantic rift’, especially with regard to the role of the United Nations. Nevertheless, it seems most likely that the South African media captured the friction between the USA and the ‘old Europe’ with a specific focus on some member states (e.g. France and Germany) rather than on the EU as a whole.

FIG. 4 - Regions of coverage by media and the rating (July 2001 – September 2002)



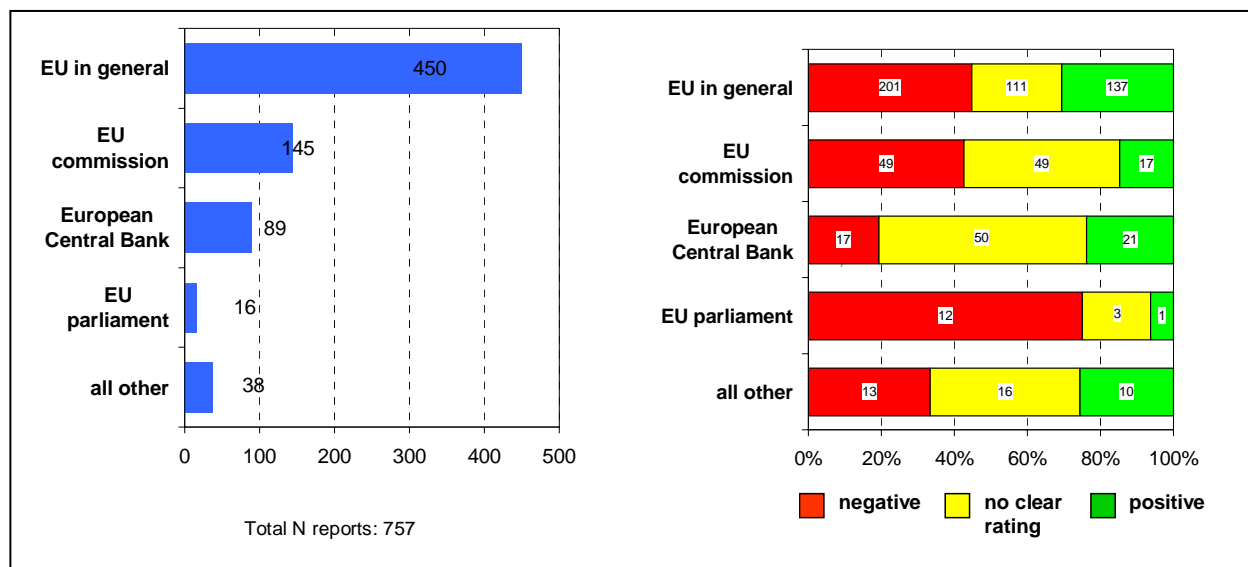
Source: Media Tenor

Despite the number of EU-related events occurring in 2001-2002, the coverage of the EU was the most limited when compared to other geo-political regions of the world (only 254 reports). Interestingly enough, the EU coverage is sensitively lower than the coverage granted to the main Western European countries that come right after Africa and North America. It is interesting to note that the introduction of the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD) and the growing importance of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) has led to an increase of reports on Africa, but not on the EU (even if there was an increase in the coverage of some member states, particularly the UK and France). As will be further discussed below, the introduction of NEPAD and especially the peer review mechanism that governs democratic issues and human rights has brought about a significant increase of media reports (33% of all those concerning Africa) dealing with the degeneration of political and economic conditions in Zimbabwe.

In most cases yjr media refer to ‘the EU’ without stipulating a specific organ. Nevertheless, the European Parliament receives the greatest portion of negative news. This is particularly surprising if one considers that the European Parliament was at the forefront (within the EU institutions) in the condemnation of apartheid and significantly pushed for Member States to take a strong and consistent position against the minority government that ruled South Africa until 1994. However, the negative description of the European Parliament can be explained by the strong position that this EU institution assumed against the Zimbabwean government. Although SA media are generally approving sanctions against Zimbabwe, the context of reference still remains negative.



FIG. 5 - Statements on various EU organs (July 2001 – September 2002)



Source: Media Tenor

The World Summit on Sustainable Development that took place in Johannesburg in 2002 gave some resonance to the EU but, once again, the portrayal was mainly negative: the debate around Europe’s agricultural subsidies during the conference was a particular cause for concern and contributed to revitalizing the opposition to international agreements around trade and economic justice, at times exploited by the South African government itself.

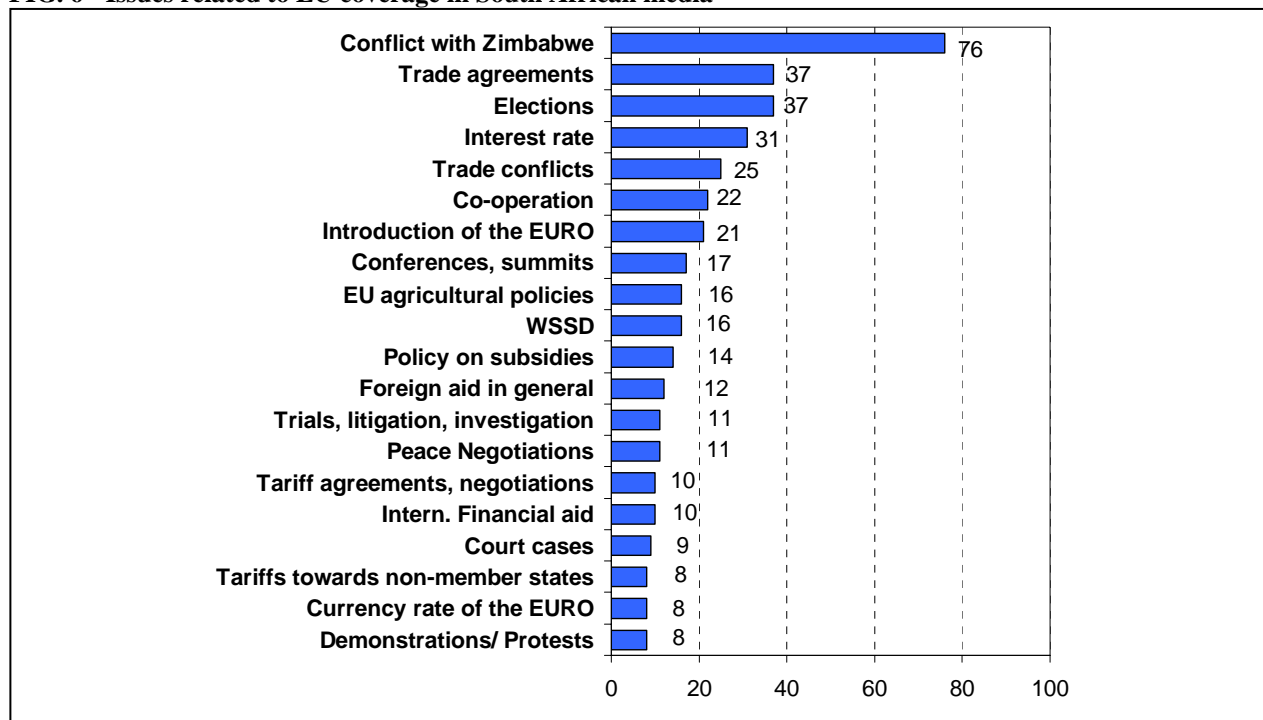
Overall, the South African mass media tends to portray the EU as an organisation of restrictions rather than assistance. And this despite the role of the EC/EU during the late years of apartheid and the fact that the EU is still the main donor of development aid and the most relevant commercial partner.

Once again, the main reason for such a portrayal seems to be the EU’s position towards Zimbabwe. 18% of all reports focusing on the EU as an organization focused on Zimbabwe, 40% on Europe and only 13.5% on South Africa.

Although the EU policy towards Zimbabwe heavily contributed towards a negative image in the media, the EU’s immediate travel ban on the Zimbabwean President, Robert Mugabe, and a number of parliamentarians after the controversial national elections of 2002 was welcomed by the South African media, which for many months held an opinion contradictory to those of the South African Government, that, on the contrary, maintained closed ties with the Zimbabwean government.



**FIG. 6 - Issues related to EU coverage in South African media**



Source: Media Tenor

Interestingly for this research, trade issues were the second most covered topic. However, as noticed above, the coverage of trade issues was one of the reasons why the media depicted the EU negatively: topics such as the EU’s Common Agricultural Policy, disagreements over the Trade and Development Cooperation Agreement (that led to a deadlock over geographical denominations for wines and spirits) clearly affected these reports. The EU agricultural policy (16%) and EU policies on subsidies for European firms (14%) made up an important share of the EU overall coverage and further corroborated the perception of the EU as a source of constraints rather than opportunities/assistance. Interestingly enough, no reports ever discussed the benefits for South Africans deriving from trade with the EU, but only confined themselves to discussing the advantages for government and some main companies.

In this context, it comes as no surprise that topics such as foreign and financial aid to South Africa by the EU received very little coverage in the South African media. Nor were any individual projects pertaining to EU development cooperation specifically mentioned.

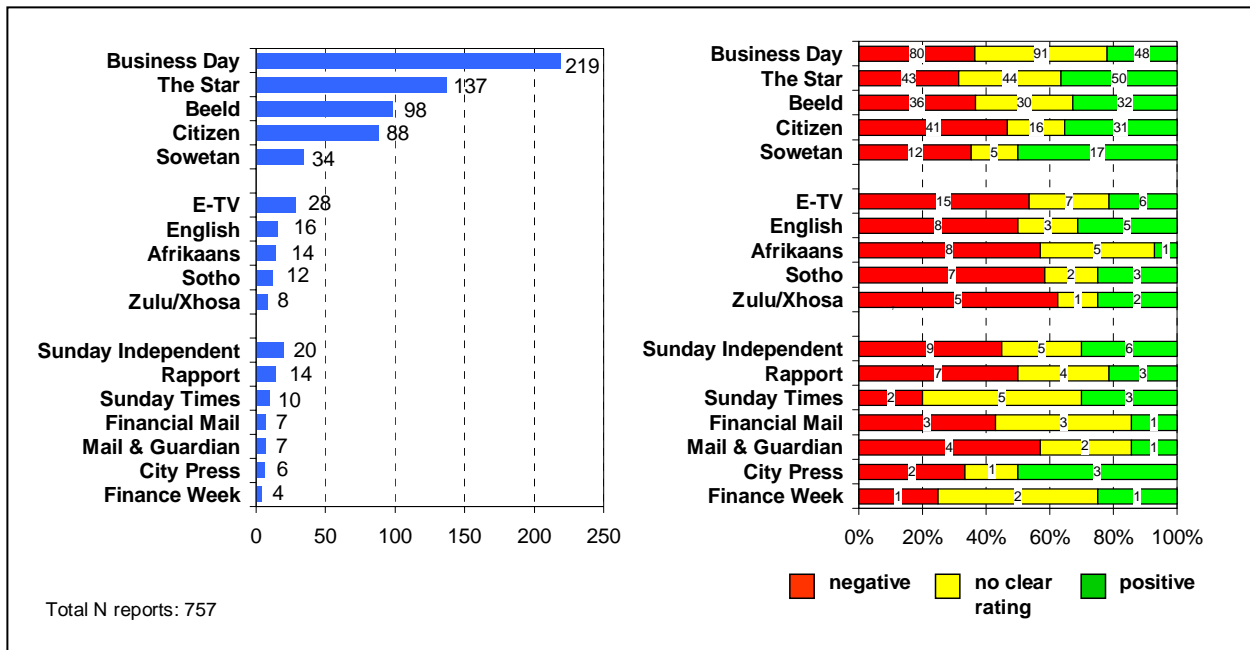
When looking at the different types of media, it must be noted that the EU is mainly reported in financial newspapers and magazines targeted at an English speaking audience.

Financial newspapers (i.e. Business Day) featured most articles on the EU, but a big chunk of them (40%) were particularly critical. A liberal newspaper such as The Star, with its insert-publication Business Report, featured several articles focusing on the EU, with a discreet number of articles offering amore positive analysis of the EU. However, a progressive weekly magazine such as the Mail&Guardian (associated with the British ‘Guardian’) reported on the EU very occasionally and, unlike The Star, in a rather critical way. Surprisingly, for other financial weekly magazines, such as Financial Mail and Finance Week, the EU was almost a non-issue.

From all EU protagonists, only the European Central Bank gets more approval, largely related to the strength of the Euro. South Africa’s National Assembly’s ‘partner’, the EU parliament receives 80% negative coverage and EU Commission also receives rather more blame (42%) than praise.

For example, the Sowetan (the newspaper with the largest readership, mainly made up of African readers) referred in one of its special Summit pages to the widely known fact that one European cow gets 20 times more subsidies than one African in aid.

**FIG. 7 - Media reporting on the EU**

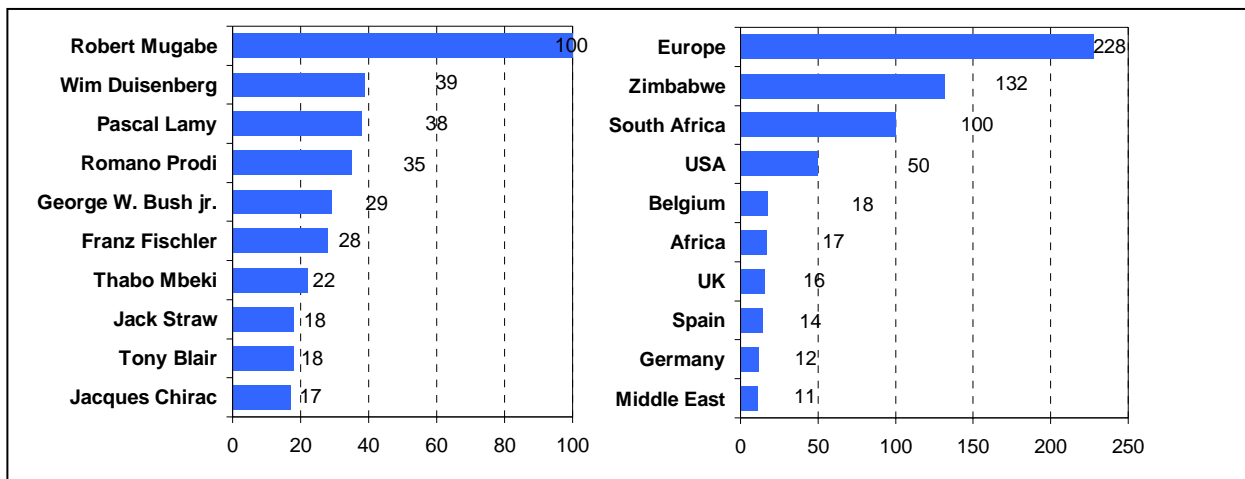


Television is also largely responsible for a negative image of the EU. Between 50% and 60% of television's coverage on the EU is negative, again focusing to a large extent on EU-Zimbabwean relations. TV is generally more critical since it relies on visual and audio input, and the conflict with Zimbabwe led to a more context related reporting. The private broadcasting company E-TV exhibits the highest number of reports on the EU. Along the line of the press, most reports depicted the EU in a negative way and were particularly critical. The EU is less present in reports of the public television (SABC). Despite the limited number of reports overall, there are differences regarding the specific audiences of SABC news. The English news are those that describe the EU more positively, whereas the news in other languages such as Sotho and Zulu/Xhosa report the EU more sporadically and mainly in a negative light.

A further drawback to the image of the EU is the growing importance of the Euro on the national currency Rand. While the British pound and the US dollar are the traditional currencies dominating the up and downs of the Rand, the Euro remains surprisingly stable and negatively affects the exchange rate of the Rand.

As a confirmation of what was argued above, the Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe is the most prominently featured person in reports on the EU. Protagonists from the EU do not receive the same visual coverage and are therefore often denied a chance to portray their side of the story.

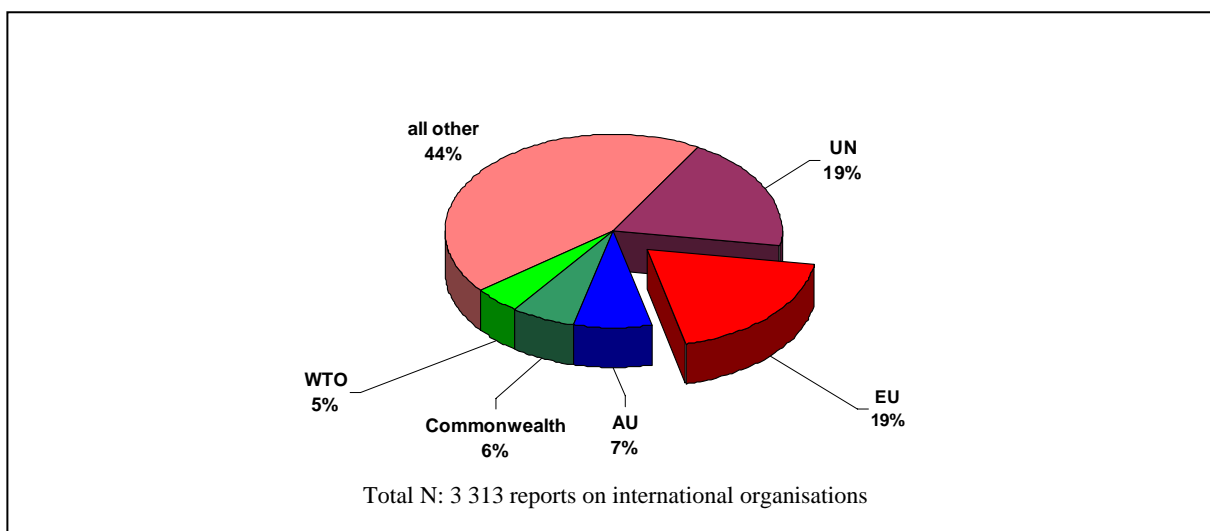
**FIG. 8- Top 10 people and countries of reference in EU reports**



The close link between the EU and the Zimbabwean crisis (which, as argued through this report, is crucial to understanding the media coverage of the EU in South Africa) is further demonstrated by the fact that Zimbabwe is the second most cited country in reports concerning the EU. The opposition of the EU to the land redistribution programme enforced by the Zimbabwean government is probably one of the reasons why the media took such a stand vis-à-vis the EU: for most people in South Africa, land redistribution is an extremely important issue and, although recognising that the Zimbabwean policy has been abusing human rights, many citizens expect the South African government to start a long-awaited land reform shortly. In 2002, during the UN World Summit on Sustainable Development, Robert Mugabe, amid applause and cheering, was warmly welcomed by many South African citizens protesting against the world leaders gathering in Johannesburg for the summit.

Finally, the media review offers some insights on how the EU fares in the South African media when compared to other major international institutions.

**FIG. 9 - Share of coverage on international organisations in SA media (July 2001 – September 2002)**



Both the EU and the UN receive an equal share of 19% of the total coverage on international organisations. In this respect, this data demonstrates that the EU is not the only international organisations to be ‘marginalised’ by South African media. However, the media coverage of the UN most likely increased in the following years because of the war in Iraq, the ‘Oil for Food’ for food

scandal and the overhauling process this institution has been going through in the last years. By contrast, it appears that the coverage of the EU has remained the same, if not further decreased.

Most probably, one of the reasons for such a lack of reporting on development cooperation is the policy of 'quiet' aid, whereby the EU supports many activities, but does not necessarily publicise them as a PR or social responsibility action. For any organisation investing such large amounts of funds into developmental projects a measurable output must surely be important to highlight transparency and accountability. The media output for the EU is, as we have seen, below measurability and would definitely require significant attention.

At the same time, though, this condition cannot only be explained in terms of 'bad marketing'. On the one hand, South African media are aware that the EU is still a creature in the making. The type of role that the EU plays in the country is clearly relevant, but it is not interesting to the average reader or TV viewer. The EU policy in South Africa has mainly to do with the daily administration of financial and trade flows. In most cases, it appears that the EU itself has intentionally tried to maintain a low political profile in the country emphasising its technocratic, rather than political, role.

## 6. CONCLUSION

As emerges from this survey, the EU's image in South Africa is rather marginal. The EU is scarcely known to the South African public at large and vastly ignored by the country's media. In terms of public opinion polls, the EU is one of the least known international institutions, despite being the main source of development aid and the main trading partner for South Africa.

The EU receives only marginal coverage in South African media and, during the years surveyed, media reporting focused mainly on the role of the EU in the Zimbabwean crisis and this negatively affects the way in which the EU is depicted in the media. Obviously, some of the results of this media review are bound to a specific point in time, which was marked by some key events such as the hosting of the WSSD in 2002 or the introduction of the euro. Currently, the Zimbabwe factor has definitely lost the prominence it enjoyed in 2001-2002, but is still reported by the South African media, although the tone is now much more critical of the Zimbabwean government. For instance, the meeting between the French government and African Union leaders held in February 2007 (to which the Zimbabwean president Robert Mugabe was not invited) was reported as a good step forward in strengthening the relationship between Africa and Europe.<sup>8</sup>

Moreover, due to its mainly technocratic role in the country and the financial constraints it imposed (e.g. trade agreements, the strength of the €), the EU is portrayed as a restrictive rather than an assisting actor in South Africa. Interestingly, the role of the EU as a source of aid and development cooperation is virtually absent in the media reporting confirming that aid policies (development cooperation in general) are not significant enough to revert the negative outcomes of harder forms of policy, such as trade and sanctions.

At the level of political elites, it emerges clearly from the analysis that, while the EU is at times portrayed as an example for Africa's quest for unity (particularly, as a reference point for the African Union), at the same time government elites as well as opposition parties do not refrain from blaming the EU and its trade policies for the hardship African countries have been going through. Arguably, this is part of the political strategies of national elites who can more easily justify their acceptance of suboptimal trade agreements and play the role of tied-handed negotiators when

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<sup>8</sup> See SABC Africa News Report on 21 February 2007.

bargaining with such a powerful counterpart. In this respect, it is true that (as is the case with other African countries) the EU has been used as a scapegoat for the failures or the poor gains of local politicians on the international stage. Most likely the EU is subjected to more frequent criticisms than its member states.

As far as civil society organisations are concerned, the two most important issues associated with the EU in South Africa are fair trade and debt-related issues. The introduction of a EU-South Africa free trade agreement and the approach adopted by the EU during the negotiations (that many commentators defined as ‘petty politics’, ‘selfish’ and ‘unidimensional’) not only provided room for criticisms on the part of political elites but it also strengthened the perceptions of civil society organisations that the EU is nothing but an actor aiming at spreading those neoliberal political reforms that hamper the concrete chances of Africa to come out of chronic poverty. Severe criticisms in this respect, are not only common to fair-trade groups, anti-debt coalitions and the trade unions, but also to anti-AIDS networks such as the Treatment Action Campaign.

Overall, it appears that the EU has not managed to convince South African society that it is an international actor standing for human rights protection, social development and justice. ‘Soft’ issues such as development aid or international agreements for human rights (sectors in which the EU is active and rather progressive) do not make it to the South African media and seldom (if ever) are mentioned in the political and social discourse. What make the EU better known to the public at large are issues such as trade, debt and international financial agreements. In this respect, it comes as no surprise that in the eyes of many South Africans the EU is nothing but a new form of colonialism and a source of injustice. In this regard, trade agreements and their negative outcomes (in terms of local development and unemployment) contribute to depicting the EU as a technocratic power aiming at strengthening the economic gains of unbalanced trade at the expense of South Africa and Africa at large.

## **7. PROSPECTS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

This survey is based on a relatively small number of documents and the data available to date. Future research should try to generate new data, mainly in terms of public opinion polls and political elites’ surveys. Due to the fact that the EU is a relatively marginal issue in the South African political and social debate, the data available is not extensive and can hardly allow for significant generalisations. Future studies would benefit from conducting of primary research in the following sectors:

- Opinion polls dedicated to the image of international organisations in the country that could be funded by international donors or agencies interested in the public perceptions of their activities and programmes in the country.
- Elite surveys focused on the EU’s role in South Africa (or Southern Africa).
- Systematic content and text analysis of the main political documents, including those that are not available on the internet.
- Analysis of the main parliamentary proceedings, with a specific focus on the relevant parliamentary commissions.
- In-depth interviews with selected stakeholders in government, civil society, the media and EU representatives.
- A more systematic and long-lasting media review.

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FORUM ON THE PROBLEMS OF PEACE AND WAR  
GARNET - Jointly Executed Research Project 5.2.1

**THE EXTERNAL IMAGE OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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**REPORT ON**  
*TRADE UNIONS, SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AND NGOs:*  
*EUROPEAN AND NON EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVES*

**Massimiliano Andretta and Nicole Doerr**



The survey *The External Image of the European Union* has been conducted in the Framework of the Jointly Executed Research Project 5.2.1. (*Normative issues*) of the Network of Excellence *Global Governance, Regionalisation and Regulation: the Role of the EU* - GARNET (contract no 513330); (EU 6<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme 2005-2010; Call Identifier: FP6-2002-Citizens-3). We are grateful to Garnet and to the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for their financial contribution to the project.

## ABSTRACT

This contribution studies the external images of the EU through the construction of imaginaries and images associated with Europe and the European Union on the part of non-state actors (social movements, trade unions and NGOs) with a background external to the EU. Based on a social constructivist approach, this report gives a strong emphasis to the role of the discursive identity formation as a process of social transformation embedded. As for other kind of collective and individual identities, the view from outside is relevant in shaping EUrope's identity and self-image; for an identity to exist it must be recognised by "others". The external image of 'EUrope' not only relates to the institutional identity of the EU but also to civil society non-states actors internal to the EU and their contentious social struggles in the making of 'EUrope' 'from below'.

Departing from the assumption that European institutions attribute to their policies the aim of fostering democracy, human rights, a market economy, the welfare state, and cultural diversity, this report enquires as to how these policies are evaluated from outside, by non-state actors. Thus, the interest is in the critical comparison of the self-image of EUrope with its reflection by non-EU actors of civil society who struggle for democracy, human rights and global justice. Considering this comparison, the report is particularly interested in possible 'misfits' in between external and internal images of EUrope as mirroring the interactive nature of a process of identity negotiation and transformation. This research interest in an interactive identify formation of EUrope through the making of discourses and imaginaries was operationalised through a diversified research design, combining quantitative images with qualitative data and discourse analysis. First, this report uses content analysis of documents provided by European and non-European non state actors was conducted on their homepages. Second, a survey was conducted at the First European Social Forum (held in Florence in 2002). Third, the social context and lifeworld meaning in which the discourse on EUrope emerges in interactive public meetings of EU-external and EU-internal activists was studied in the case of the European Social Forum with in-depth interviews and critical discourse analysis.

Given the focus on social movements, trade unions and NGOs the report gives an illustration of the fact that the EU is not only shaped by governmental actors, but that the discourse on EUrope and EU politics is essentially seen as a form of "contentious politics." For this, this report provides a comparison of different images of EUrope by diversive EU-internal and external non-state actors in order to assess whether their images of Europe differ from each other or, instead, converge. First, the findings illustrate that non-state actors share some "core values" (democracy, human rights, social justice, peace, etc.) which lead to similar framings of the EU. Second, the actors studied are building global transnational networks through which they interact, exchange information and views, and mobilise in world politics. At the transnational and mixed level of the European Social Forum (ESF), EU activists meet not only other activists from within the EU, as the focus is explicitly on the creation of 'another' Europe, than on the EU alone, that is, the building of an alternative meaning of Europe.

In a first step, the report analyses the external image of Europe and the EU by non-state actors through content analysis of meaning attributed to the EU and EU politics on the homepages of non-EU NGO, trade unions and social movements within the global justice movements. In a second step, the report analyses the perspective of non-EU citizens and citizens from the recently accessed member states of the EU within the European Social Forum process as a mixed transnational counter-public with the social transformative objective to create 'another' Europe. Thus, the report combines findings from the macro level of content analysis and survey with the micro-analysis of the images on EUrope resulting from direct face-to-face interactions of activists from outside the EU with EU-internal activists in the European Social Forum (ESF) process.



The results show that the image of the European Union that NGOs, trade unionists and left libertarian social movements develop from ‘outside’ or what one may describe as the ‘borderlands’ of the European Union is an ambivalent picture of a powerful political community with both a hegemonic but also a socially transformative and democratic aspiration. As a general outcome of the findings, non-European trade unions, social movements and NGOs agree with EU internal groups and organisations on the perception of the EU as a neoliberal political agent, which threatens the social and economic life conditions of ordinary people both within and outside the political boundaries of the European Union. Thereby activists from outside the EU or from its politico-geographical boundaries are consensual with their EU-internal allies from left libertarian movements about the wish to build a more democratic, peaceful, ecologist and social Europe. At the same time, these activists tend to judge EU politics from the external point of view of *those concerned* in the most dramatic way by the EU external policies, in particular, when materialistic (social as well as economic) issues are concerned. In many policy fields, the EU receives a bad evaluation from the outside, being often considered in the same vein as the strongly criticised neoliberal institutions of the WTO, the World Bank, the IMF as well as the United States. At the same time, non European NGOs dealing with non-economic issues, such as human rights, women rights and peace, draw a less negative picture in which the EU represents a potential ally to bring progressive change to their countries. Thus, while EU-internal organisations and groups claim the *internal* democratisation of Europe, EU-external activists see the EU as an important *external* ally for the implementation of human rights and democratisation (or gender equality) to which they make appeal in order to reach, via a *boomerang effect*, the desired policy changes at the domestic level.

For these motives the European Social Forum process as a transnational counter public for ‘another’ Europe is an attractive point for activists without EU citizenship or from newly accessed EU countries in Central and South Eastern Europe. In dealing with the social context of the European Social Forum that these activists perceive nevertheless as ambivalent and eurocentric, activists choose different strategies dependent on their ideological, financial and national background and their gender. While some activists *address ‘Europe’* in speaking to the present multipliers in the ESF process, others would more or less disruptively claim more agency and question the perceived Eurocentric and exclusive constitution of ‘Europe’ in the internal making of the ESF process itself, struggling for equal recognition. The voices of these activists seem to warn that the democratic constitution of Europe may be structured by an operational logic (of exclusion and marginalisation) which is attributed and imputed to the EU institutions and also, to a certain extent, to the EU-internal social movements willing to construct ‘another’ Europe. Only through the consideration of the outside-perspective, and through the work “in coalitions across differences” the political subject of Europe might become a credible agent of *social transformation and of democratization*. In sum, the report gives policy advice on the need to consider the external critique addressed to both the institutional and the societal Europe by EU-external left libertarian non-state actors struggling for democracy. In the interactive process of forming its political identity, the legitimacy of EU politics and EU-internal non-state actors crucially depends on the evaluation given by those critical voices ‘from outside’, challenging and thus stimulating the self-image of EU institutions to bring social and political change to Europe and to world politics.

## 1. THE EXTERNAL AND INTERNAL NON STATE ACTORS' IMAGE(S) OF EUROPE: THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

Studying the external images of the EU brings along some theoretical and methodological challenges and choices that must be made explicit. Theoretically, in the study of the external perception of *Europe* we assume that the construction of imaginaries and images associated with Europe will have an impact on the making of the EU polity, not to forget its legitimacy and its identity. Considering these assumptions means going beyond the classical intergovernmentalist and neofunctionalist approaches, and to speak the language of “social constructivism”, that is, that our analysis gives a strong emphasis to the role of *culture*, understood as a constructed and dynamic product. In this respect, “social constructivist accounts deal particularly with identity formation, the process of socialization, and the importance of discourse in shaping and setting limits to what is achievable”.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, a “European identity is not a given [...] but a specific construct in time and space whose content actually changes depending on the social and political context in which it is enacted”.<sup>2</sup>

Moreover, not only the images but also the way in which the ‘others’ (those actors who situate themselves or are seen as external to the EU) construct those images do matter, including their impact on shaping of the political identity of the EU as a polity. In other words, as for any other kind of collective and individual identities, the views of Europe’s ‘others’ are relevant: for an identity to exist, it must be recognised by “others”.<sup>3</sup>

In order to understand why a study on the external images of the EU is indeed a study on a collective identity building process, one must recall the fundamental works of Charles Cooley<sup>4</sup> and George H. Mead,<sup>5</sup> who introduced the notion of the “self” as an ongoing process of internal and external definition. As Anna Triandafyllidou and Ruth Wodak put it, the process of identity formation involves “the constitution of selfhood as a dialectical process of internal and external definitions holds true also with reference to collective identity”.<sup>6</sup> Two mechanisms interact in this double process: the moment of the internal identity formation from within, and the moment of social (or political, or cultural) categorisation from outside: From an *internal* point of view, the actors, including political institutions who engage in a collective identity building process, must produce discourses (in the case of institutions, discourses are also embedded in policies) in order to explain the meaning of this constructed identity to the ‘others’. From an *external* point of view, the very meaning of this identity is constrained by what the ‘others’ say about and how they will relate themselves towards this self-defined identity. This double process of identity formation has some important consequences for a theory of identity that conceptualises identity as a *process of transformation* and thus goes beyond an essentialist understanding that instead treats identities as given. That is, the promoters of a collective identity must negotiate its meaning with the “others”.

Let us assume that European institutions are fostering the implementation of a post-national identity emphasising democracy, human rights, market economy, the welfare state, and cultural diversity.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> C. Hoskyns, ‘Gender perspectives’ in A. Wiener and T. Diez (eds) *European Integration Theory* (Oxford University Press, Oxford 2004) p.228.

<sup>2</sup> T. Risse, ‘Social Constructivism and European Integration’ in A. Wiener and T. Diez (eds) *European Integration Theory* (Oxford University Press, Oxford 2004) p. 171.

<sup>3</sup> A. Pizzorno, *Le radici della politica assoluta* (Feltrinelli, Milano 1993).

<sup>4</sup> Ch. H. Cooley, *Social Organization: A study of the larger mind* (Charles Scribner’s Sons, New York 1909).

<sup>5</sup> G. H. Mead, *Mind, Self and Society from the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist* (Chicago University Press, Chicago 1934).

<sup>6</sup> A. Triandafyllidou and R. Wodak, ‘Conceptual and Methodological Questions in the Study of Collective Identities’ (2003) 2 *Journal of Language and Politics*, p. 212.

<sup>7</sup> J. Habermas, *The Postnational Constellation: Political essays* (MIT Press, Cambridge 2001). See also T. Risse, note 2 above.

How then will those from outside, Europe's "others" respond to the promotion of such an identity by EU institutional actors? How will they, thus, categorise the identity of Europe and the EU? Considering this, one may suspect that if the interactive process of identity making led to a "misfit" between what the promoters of the identity say about it and the others, this might trigger a mechanism of identity negotiation and transformation. Thus, talking about the construction of identity in this chapter, we choose to use the plural rather than the singular, the concept of "images" rather than "image". This implies a plurality of possible meanings and understandings of the EU, or, in other words, to treat the EU as a "contested concept", a space of social, cultural and political attributes over which a "symbolic struggle" is fought. Thus, the concepts of "Europe" and "EU", including the discourse or images related to these terms are considered here as essentially contested political concepts without clear-cut geographical or political boundaries and that allow for a multiplicity of interpretations<sup>8</sup>. Nevertheless, the European Union is assumed to be an explicit and politically most relevant political actor or a respective supranational level of governance. The advantage of this social constructivist position is that it allows grasping the reality of a changing political actor such as the EU. As Thomas Risse has recently argued "Europe as a space of political organisation and institutionalisation has no clear boundaries"<sup>9</sup>: the enlargement process has profoundly changed them, and will continue to change them in the future; the European Economic and Monetary Union with the single currency does not include European countries such as Great Britain, Denmark and Sweden; while the European Single Market includes non EU-members such as Norway, and even more complicated borders are drawn from the Schengen agreements.

At the same time, even if the EU has no clear boundaries, European institutions and policy makers attempt to cover the meaning of space with the very concept of Europe: "the EU has achieved identity hegemony in the sense that 'Europe' increasingly denotes the political and social space occupied by the EU ... If Europe and the EU are used interchangeably, it means that the latter has successfully occupied the social space of what it means to be European... The EU not only increasingly regulates the daily lives of individuals in various respects; it also constitutes 'Europe' as a political and social space in people's beliefs and collective understandings"<sup>10</sup>. For this, the term 'EUrope' is used here explicitly in order to take into consideration such processes of a specific EU constituting of the meaning of Europe as a collective identity.

If then it is true that "there is not one Europe but many",<sup>11</sup> then the fact that there are multiple definitions constructed by different actors and according to different contexts may not be surprising. Moreover, several studies on EU-related discourses in the European press have shown that even within the EU, there are different definitions and understandings of the meaning of what the EU is and what it should be, and although those meanings are nationally shaped, different collective actors (governments, parties, interest groups, social movements, etc.) are drawing competing images.<sup>12</sup>

Our focus on social movements, trade unions and NGOs bears the further assumption that the EU is not only shaped by governmental actors, as the intergovernmental approach would maintain, and that discursive practices are seen essentially as forms of "contentious politics." Moreover, we will analyse images built by both European and non European non state actors by means of comparison in order to assess whether their images of Europe differ from each other or, instead, converge. For

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<sup>8</sup> B. Strath, *Europe and the Other, Europe as the Other* (Peter Lang, Brussels 2001).

<sup>9</sup> T. Risse, note 2 above, p. 171.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 169-171.

<sup>11</sup> O. Waever, 'Discursive Approaches' in A. Wiener and T. Diez (eds) *European Integration Theory* (Oxford University Press, Oxford 2004) p. 202.

<sup>12</sup> F. Oberhuber, C. Bärenreuter, M. Krzyzanowski, H. Schönbauer, and R. Wodak, *Debating the Constitution: On Representations of Europe/the EU in the press* (John Benjamins Publishing, Amsterdam 2005); D. della Porta and M. Caiani, *Quale Europa?: europeizzazione, identità, conflitti* (Il Mulino, Bologna 2005); M. Andretta and M. Caiani, 'Social Movements in Italy: Which kind of Europeanisation?' (2005) 3 *Journal of Southern Europe and the Balkans*, pp. 283-298.

several reasons, we should expect *converging* images on EUrope to emerge in the comparison of internal and external discourses on EUrope. Firstly, it may be expected that non state actors share some “core values” (democracy, human rights, social justice, peace, etc.) which could might lead to similar framings of the EU. Second, the actors studied are building global transnational networks through which they interact, exchange information and views, and mobilise in world politics.<sup>13</sup> Since 2001, these networks have created a counter-public space, the World Social Forum (WSF), in which not only leaders but also ordinary members and citizens coming from different countries (European, USA, Latin America, Africa, Asia) meet every year to discuss possible alternatives to neoliberal globalisation.<sup>14</sup> This space can be understood as a setting for discursive practices where images of world politics emerge in the process of deliberation, diffusion and subsequent mobilisation. Third, these social forums organise at the (macro)-regional level as in the case of the European Social Forum (ESF), one of the most attended counter forums among social movements in the world. At the transnational and mixed level of the ESF, EU activists meet not only other activists from within the EU, as the focus is explicitly on the creation of ‘another’ Europe, than on the EU alone, that is, the building of an alternative meaning of Europe.<sup>15</sup> For this, the ESF can be considered a discursive setting for the creation of “another Europe”, giving once again a concrete example on the contentious and contested making of “EUrope”.

At the methodological level, these theoretical grounds lead us to an approach that studies the external view on EUrope through discourses. After all, “it is through discursive practices that agents make sense of the world and attribute meaning”,<sup>16</sup> and it is through discursive practices that agents, such as social movements, try to transform the world.<sup>17</sup> A discourse is in fact not “only a short-term justification of this or that decision but also a struggle over the resources for future battles that reside in the structuring of public discourse”.<sup>18</sup> Discursive practices allow “for certain interpretations while excluding others”<sup>19</sup>, and have “constraining effects on political options”.<sup>20</sup>

From a perspective of critical discourse analysis, discursive practices have an ambivalent position with regard to politics: they might be transformative or conservative, their operational logic might empower people and actors, or establish (or reproduce), in the opposite existing power relationships. As Foucault has argued: “although it is “we” who impose meaning, “we” do not act as autonomous subjects but from a “subject position” made available by the discourse context in which we are situated.”<sup>21</sup> Considering this, the question becomes to know “(W)ho is allowed to speak in a discursive arena, what counts as a sensible proposition, and which constructions of meaning become so dominant that they are been taken for granted?”<sup>22</sup>

Discourses can be retraced through the means of document content analysis or through interpreting data from a survey. In addition, they can be studied in relation to the specific *social context* in which they emerge, are elaborated and embedded. In this contribution, we have included all three of these approaches into our multi-methodological framework: we analysed documents provided by European and non European non state actors in their homepages, we collected data from a survey

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<sup>13</sup> M. E. Keck and K. Sikkink, *Activists beyond Borders: Advocacy networks in international politics* (Cornell University Press, New York 1998).

<sup>14</sup> G. Schoenleitner, ‘World Social Forum: Making Another World Possible?’ in J. Clark (ed.), *Globalizing Civic Engagement* (Earthscan, London 2003) pp. 127-149.

<sup>15</sup> D. della Porta, M. Andretta, L. Mosca and H. Reiter, *Globalization from Below: Transnational activists and protest networks* (University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis 2006).

<sup>16</sup> Risse, note 2 above, p. 164.

<sup>17</sup> L. Hunt, *Politics, Culture and Class in French Revolution* (University of California Press, Berkeley 1984).

<sup>18</sup> Waever, note 11 above, p. 200.

<sup>19</sup> Risse, note 2 above, p. 165.

<sup>20</sup> Waever, note 11 above, p. 199.

<sup>21</sup> M. Foucault, ‘Politics and the Study of Discourse’, in G. Butchell et al. (eds.), *The Foucault Effect. Studies in Governmentality* (Hemel Hempstead, Harvester Wheatsheaf 1991) p. 58.

<sup>22</sup> Risse, note 2 above, p. 165.

conducted at the First ESF (held in Florence in 2002) and we reconstructed how the discourse on the EU is practiced in the ESF process, with in-depth interviews and participant observation conducted during the preparatory assemblies to the ESF from 2003 (Second ESF in Paris) to 2006 (Fourth ESF in Athens).

In what follows we provide an overview of the various images that emerged on the EU and on EUrope in our empirical materials, in distinguishing in between EU actors and non EU actors. We will show that the images of EUrope are embedded in the subject situation of the non-state actors themselves as the producers of images shaped by their respective values and strategies. If the EU is criticised for its policy choices (by both Europeans and Non Europeans) and its democratic deficit (mostly by Europeans), the counter-public space - in which a discourse on “another Europe” emerges - nevertheless risks to be seen itself as working with a similarly exclusive logic as that of the much-criticised EU policy makers – this is what the perspective of non EU NGOs, trade unions and leftist libertarian social movements activists shows.

## 2. MAPPING TRADE UNIONS, NGOs AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS DISCOURSE ON THE EU

Social movements, NGOs and trade unions in Europe are part of the political process that the very existence of the EU as a political setting has triggered. They started mobilising at the European level in order to target EU institutions, claiming political and social policy changes. From 1996, when the first truly European political campaign was organised on the unemployment issue<sup>23</sup> to nowadays, we have witnessed a diffusion of political actions that attempt to give Europe an alternative meaning and that urge for radical changes in both the EU institutions and policies. A transnational movement emerged around the objective and mobilised in the context of EU summits. In addition, activists have created a permanent political space for allowing non governmental and civil society actors to network, the so called European Social Forum space.<sup>24</sup> In this constellation, new policy campaigns have been organised, as the recent EuroMayday campaign on the issue of “precariousness”,<sup>25</sup> and the successful campaign against the Bolkestein directive.<sup>26</sup> At the same time, social movements, NGOs and trade unions in other regions (among others North America, Latin America, Africa, Asia, East Europe), are more and more involved in macroregional networks and in world politics. These non governmental actors are also developing a discourse on EUrope with a political relevance to be considered here.

In this section, we will thus contrast the internal and the external images of Europe elaborated by European and non European social movements, NGOs, and trade unions, by looking at the documents produced by such actors and available online. A list of organisations’ websites was selected on the basis of information gathered through the analysis of the literature on transnational social movements.<sup>27</sup> The list includes, on the internal (European) side, protest campaigns such as the Euromarches against unemployment, job insecurity and exclusion and the counter EU-summits, the European Trade Union Confederation, the European Social Forums, and ATTAC. For the external (non European) side, we selected NGOs active in issues such as peace, gender, labour and

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<sup>23</sup> D. Chabanet, ‘Les marches européennes contre le chômage, la précarité et les exclusions’ in R. Balme and D. Chabanet (eds) *L’action collective en Europe* (Presses de Sciences Po, Paris 2002) pp. 461-494.

<sup>24</sup> della Porta et al., note 15 above.

<sup>25</sup> A. Mattoni, ‘Multiple Mediation Processes in Contemporary Social Movements’, paper presented at the International Conference “Identifier. S’identifier – Faire avec, Faire contre” (University of Lausanne 2006).

<sup>26</sup> L. Parks, ‘No Valentine for Bolkestein’, paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Italian Political Science Association (SISP) (University of Bologna 2006).

<sup>27</sup> For reviews see D. della Porta and H. Reiter, ‘The Global Justice Movement/s in Europe’, WP1 Report for Democracy in Europe and the Mobilization of Society (EC project, Contract n. CIT2-CT2004-506026, 2005); D. della Porta and D. Rucht, *Social Movements in a Globalizing World* (Palgrave MacMillan, Basingstoke 1999); and D. della Porta and S. Tarrow (eds) *Transnational Protest and Global Activism* (Rowman & Littlefield, Lanham 2004).

development issues, as well as the World Social Forums. The documents which referred to “EUrope” were downloaded and carefully analysed for a substantial selection of the most representative pieces of texts quoted here.<sup>28</sup>

The activists within the Euro-marches campaign see the EU policies as part of the neoliberal globalisation project: “The context for the development of organisations such as Euromarch is one in which the global capitalist crisis has been met by attempts to restructure social relations and consequently economic, political and social institutions. Such restructuring has had regionalising and globalising dynamics of which the development of the European Union and, more recently, of the European single currency are concrete manifestations”.<sup>29</sup> The motivation for the organisers within the Euro-marches campaign to become involved in the protest of Nice (2000) was framed as a counter mobilisation against the actual configuration of “an ultra-liberal Europe, which does sacrifice the social *acquis* and the democratic rules in order to satisfy the market and the financial forces”.<sup>30</sup> In another document the Euro-marches campaign rejects the neoliberal promises by underlining the “real effects” of the neo-liberal restructuring: “In the 70s and 80s it was said that if the economy was in good shape, there would be enough jobs for everyone. Now we read in the newspapers that firms are making massive profits. The level of profits being made from speculation has never been seen before. Despite this, in the EU countries there are 20 million people unemployed and 50 million people, above all women, are threatened by poverty”.<sup>31</sup>

The European Trade Union Confederation is no less critical: “Europe is too much about markets and capital. Europe is too little about employment, about people, dignity and solidarity. A change is absolutely necessary.”<sup>32</sup>

The call for the first European Social Forum declared the “opposition to a European order based on corporate power and neoliberalism. This market model leads to constant attacks on the conditions and rights of workers, social inequalities, and oppression of ethnic minorities, and social exclusion of the unemployed and migrants. It leads to environmental degradation, privatization and job insecurity. It drives powerful countries to try and dominate the economies of weaker countries, often to deny them real self determination. Once more it is leading to war.”<sup>33</sup> Also the European Social Forum in London (2004) complaints against “a Europe which privatises public services, takes away pensions rights, accepts racism and excludes asylum seekers and refugees, plunders the global south, destroys the natural environment and join the United States’ project of a new colonialism.”<sup>34</sup> In the face of the EU enlargement, European social movements complained about the social dumping that such a process would imply with the integration of the Eastern countries’ labour market, but they do not oppose enlargement, welcoming new countries and asking that “elementary social rights such as the right to housing, to employment, to health, to education, to culture, to real gender equality, the rights to transports and fluids, the right to land have to be recognised and implemented throughout Europe”. “The right to a guaranteed income to live must be recognized in all the EU For an East – West solidarity of the social movements countries; a mechanism of wealth redistribution, according to a common percentage of GDP per head in all

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<sup>28</sup> Finding relevant documents and texts inside each website is relatively easy. A google search is generally sufficient in assembling all relevant documents and pieces of sentences included in the website with words which have EU in their body (EU, Europe, European and so on). At the end of the selection process, we gathered about 500 hundreds pages of relevant documents. We thank Lorenzo Mosca for having suggested this method.

<sup>29</sup> A. Mathers, ‘Euromarch-The Struggle for a Social Europe’ (1999) available at

[www.euromarches.org/english/01/andym01.htm](http://www.euromarches.org/english/01/andym01.htm).

<sup>30</sup> [www.euromarches.org/english/01/nice10.htm](http://www.euromarches.org/english/01/nice10.htm).

<sup>31</sup> [www.euromarches.org/english/98/vienna.htm](http://www.euromarches.org/english/98/vienna.htm).

<sup>32</sup> [www.euromarches.org/english/00/egb4.htm](http://www.euromarches.org/english/00/egb4.htm).

<sup>33</sup> [www.euromarches.org/english/02/esf03.htm](http://www.euromarches.org/english/02/esf03.htm).

<sup>34</sup> [www.ukesf.net/downloads/9ddec3f280478d6f93933eaff10149d5/P1-8-%20introductionand%20contents.pdf](http://www.ukesf.net/downloads/9ddec3f280478d6f93933eaff10149d5/P1-8-%20introductionand%20contents.pdf).

states, (this would take into account the disparities in terms of wealth production and unify demands and rights, we suggest this percentage could be of 50% of the GDP).”<sup>35</sup>

As we can see illustrated in all these documents like in many others that we cannot quote here for lack of space, EUrope neoliberal policies are understood as not only affecting the lives of EUropeans but also the lives of the people within developing and third world countries. In addition to this, social movements in Europe express themselves on the democratic functioning of EU institutions. The Euro-marches for instance find that “the most important problem is the perception that “Europe” has a far-away centre, where decisions are made, but about which it is difficult to know the details, or to establish who we can put our demands to.”<sup>36</sup> The European Social Forums frame this issue as their political goal to democratise the EU: “It is a matter of affirming not only the necessity of a democratic Europe for citizens and people, but also to demonstrate that it is possible, and to outline the ways and means of achieving this.”<sup>37</sup> When the European Constitution was blocked by the French and the Dutch “NO”, Attac proposed a civil society convention for a more democratic EU: “We need to strengthen the role of the national parliaments and the function of the European parliament; we should take the monopoly of law initiative off from the Commission...we should give citizens an actual right of political participation...”<sup>38</sup>

Summarising European social movements image of Europe we can say they underline that there is a lack of democracy in combination with an effective promotion of neoliberal policies that threaten the European “social acquis” and which keep developing and third world countries poor and dependent. At the same time, non state actors do not wish for the European Union to disappear; instead they strive for a more democratic and social Europe standing for peace. European social movements are fighting for a new meaning of the project of the European Union and in some respect they seem to be more Europeanist, although critical, than many other political actors. They are not euro-skeptics, but may be considered as agents that might stimulate the building of a “critical social capital” for the European Union.<sup>39</sup>

Thus, considering this image ascribed to the EU by social movements from within EUrope, to what extent do their non-European “colleagues” share the same view? Analysing this aspect is a very difficult task, first, as it is difficult to find documents in which the EU is explicitly referred to, second, in the rare cases of such explicit statements in official documents this is done usually with respect to very specific and policy-related issues. In other words, one hardly finds an elaborated and general vision of the EU, and the images of the EU will be much more correlated to the specific issue at stake.

Take for instance the debate on the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) that the EU negotiates with developing countries. Those negotiations are considered “critical for long- term development, economic growth, and poverty reduction in African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries, according to participants at the ACP Civil Society Forum held in Brussels Apr. 19-21”.<sup>40</sup> At the same time, non state actors, among which also the ACP farmer trade unions that participated in this Forum, urged the ACP member states and the European Commission, the executive arm of the European Union, to mobilise financial resources to ensure that “representatives of national, regional and all NSA organizations are routinely informed, consulted and allowed to express their views on the promotion of long-term development priorities throughout the course of the EPA negotiation

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<sup>35</sup> [www.euromarches.org/english/04/0319\\_6.htm](http://www.euromarches.org/english/04/0319_6.htm).

<sup>36</sup> [www.euromarches.org/english/96/first.htm](http://www.euromarches.org/english/96/first.htm).

<sup>37</sup> [www.2003.fse-esf.org/article.php3?id\\_article=567](http://www.2003.fse-esf.org/article.php3?id_article=567).

<sup>38</sup> [www.italia.attac.org/spip/article.php3?id\\_article=703](http://www.italia.attac.org/spip/article.php3?id_article=703).

<sup>39</sup> D. della Porta, ‘The Antiglobalization and the European Union: Critics of Europe’ (2006), Notre Europe online paper, available at [www.notre-europe.eu/fileadmin/IMG/pdf/Policypaper22-en.pdf](http://www.notre-europe.eu/fileadmin/IMG/pdf/Policypaper22-en.pdf).

<sup>40</sup> [www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/int/eu/2006/0423southern.htm](http://www.globalpolicy.org/ngos/int/eu/2006/0423southern.htm).



process." (id.).<sup>41</sup> Renswick Rose, coordinator of the Windward Islands Farmers Association (the islands include St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Martinique, Dominica, Grenada and St. Lucia) told the ACP secretariat and EU representatives that "there has been a failure to...allow for the full participation of the civil society in ensuring implementation of the Cotonou agreement" (id.).<sup>42</sup> Moreover, these agreements are criticised because "the overwhelming emphasis on liberalisation in the EPA negotiations proves that these negotiations are about expanding Europe's access to ACP markets, rather than about ACP countries' development" (id.).<sup>43</sup>

It seems that when materialistic (social as well as economic) issues are concerned, the EU is perceived very negatively, and often considered in the same vein as the WTO, the WB, the IMF and the USA. The US Network for Global Economic Justice, called "IMF, WB: 50 years is enough!" urges a paradigmatic shift from the economic and neoliberal globalisation agenda. The EU is accused along with the IMF and the WB to worsen poor countries' social conditions by implementing neoliberal policies: "The IMF and the World Bank, and the EU as well, are killing Africans in their thousands in Niger, Mali and throughout the Sahel region of Africa".<sup>44</sup> This image of the EU was also reiterated in the analysis of the collapse of the Cancun WTO meeting held in 2003. The "50 years is enough!" organisation welcomed "the refusal of developing countries there to accept the US/EU agenda: Africans demanding the U.S. end its cotton subsidies that have crippled African growers; about 70 states that refused to go along with the European agenda for expanding the scope of the WTO".<sup>45</sup>

Similar analyses can be found in the documents of the African trade unions, such as COSATU (the South African Trade Unions Congress), which attributes to the European Union and its colonialist past most of the responsibility for poverty in Middle Eastern and African countries: "Most of the EU countries have never come to the rescue to the poor and the vulnerable in the Middle East, or in Rwanda and Burundi where thousands of innocent lives were lost as a result of colonial balkanization and divide-and-rule policies of imperialist powers".<sup>46</sup> The African trade unions accuse the EU along with the US, for pushing for privatisation and liberalisation in developing countries, and for applying a double standard: neoliberal abroad and protectionist at home. This is why they ask for "changing the rules of trade in favor of developing countries. With regard to this aspect, the US and the EU must change their trade policies to open their markets for goods from developing countries".<sup>47</sup>

In the World Social Forums, in the years 2001 to 2006, trade unions, NGOs and social movements repetitively accuse the EU along with the US for pushing neoliberal policies which deepen the economic dependency of poor countries.<sup>48</sup> Other international organisations which are very critical with the EU policies are the Fair trade Organisation (whose aim is to combine a market economy with the principles of environmental and social justice) and the Via Campesina (a network of developing and poor countries' peasants), and Jubilee South, a network of Southern NGOs which fight for the cancellation and the repudiation of the external debt of poor countries.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. The Cotonou agreement, signed Jun. 23, 2000 in Cotonou in the West African nation of Benin lays down the basic principles and the timeframe for negotiations on EPAs, which are scheduled to enter into force by 1 January 2008. The treaty spans a 20-year period from March 2000 to February 2020.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> [www.50years.org/cms/updates/story/287](http://www.50years.org/cms/updates/story/287).

<sup>45</sup> [www.50years.org/cms/ejn/story/57](http://www.50years.org/cms/ejn/story/57).

<sup>46</sup> [www.cosatu.org.za/shop/shop1006/shops1006-08.htm](http://www.cosatu.org.za/shop/shop1006/shops1006-08.htm).

<sup>47</sup> [www.cosatu.org.za/speeches/2001/zv010718.htm](http://www.cosatu.org.za/speeches/2001/zv010718.htm).

<sup>48</sup> See documents in [www.forumsocialmundial.org](http://www.forumsocialmundial.org).

<sup>49</sup> See documents in: [www.flfairtrade.org](http://www.flfairtrade.org); [www.viacampesina.org](http://www.viacampesina.org); [www.jubileesouth.org](http://www.jubileesouth.org).



However, the picture changes if we take into account another field of issues such as democratisation and human rights; in which the EU is seen in a different light. The Sudan Human Right Organisation for instance welcomes the European Parliament condemnation of the Sudanese Government, which has been accused of “complicity”, by reporting “government provision of financial, logistical and other support given to the Janjaweed militia ... killings, the use of sexual violence against women, looting and general harassment, as well as forced recruitment, including of children ... continued reports of disappearances, abductions and rapes”.<sup>50</sup> Related to this, the Organisation welcomes the resolution of the European Parliament “to monitor carefully the situation in Darfur, to take the necessary steps to bring about a peaceful solution ... notably with regard to respect for human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law” (id).<sup>51</sup> It is clear that in this case and in similar ones, the EU represents an important ally for NGOs dealing with human rights and democratisation in Sudan. Their strategy is to ensure a “boomerang effect,”<sup>52</sup> that is, an appeal to external and international political actors in order to bring about political changes at the domestic level: “to motivate the Sudan Government to comply fully with international norms”.<sup>53</sup> The same kind of strategy, not surprisingly on a very close issue, and the correlated image of the EU, are promoted by the “Inter-Africa Committee on Traditional Practices” (IAC), which deals with female genital mutilation. Its leaders welcome the fact that “the EU has threatened to withdraw aid from countries which turn a blind eye or refuse to ban it.” And even if the Committee consider that the “EU concern has increased because of the influx of refugees and immigrants”,<sup>54</sup> this implicitly gives an image of the EU institutions open to immigrants and refugees claims.

If this is true for NGOs based on Southern and developing countries, it is no less true for NGOs based in countries awaiting EU membership such as Turkey. With regard to gender equality, the EU conditionality for membership has been considered very important for improving women’s political and social conditions at home by a Conference on Women Studies held in Izmir (Turkey) in June 2006. The conference’s contributions stressed that “Turkey, a predominantly Muslim country, has recently taken historic steps towards EU full membership and the effects of this accession on her democratic consolidation and human rights laws have generated much interest”. This is because “improving women’s status in social, economic and political like and providing gender equality in the social security system are among the main objectives of the EU”, and “compared to other countries, members of the EU have taken serious steps on these issues.”<sup>55</sup>

Peace is another issue in which the European Union is seen as a potential ally. With regard to this subject, the image of the EU is associated stronger in relation with the UN than with the US - as we can see in the following document by the United for Peace organisation on the Israeli/Palestine conflict: “The image of both the EU and the UN has suffered substantially among Palestinians as a result of the Quartet’s apparent support for economic isolation, under the direction of the United States. ... However, they remain the bodies most likely to achieve peace and promote human rights in the region.”<sup>56</sup>

Summarising, non European trade unions, social movements and NGOs agree with EU internal groups and organisations in drawing an image of the EU as a neoliberal agent that threatens the social and economic conditions of ordinary people within and outside of Europe. At the same time the issue of the democratic deficit is, for obvious reasons, mostly an internal EU concern; non-European organisations focus much more on the policy side of the EU political system. It is indeed

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<sup>50</sup> [www.shro-cairo.org/pressreleases/04/april/eu.htm](http://www.shro-cairo.org/pressreleases/04/april/eu.htm).

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Keck and Sikkink, note 13 above.

<sup>53</sup> Document note 50 above.

<sup>54</sup> [www.womennet.ca/news.php?show&1332](http://www.womennet.ca/news.php?show&1332).

<sup>55</sup> [dba.ieu.edu.tr/women/](http://dba.ieu.edu.tr/women/)

<sup>56</sup> [www.unitedforpeace.org/article.php?id=3323](http://www.unitedforpeace.org/article.php?id=3323)

through EU policies that such organisations get to know and to evaluate the EU. At the same time, non European NGOs which deal with non economic issues - such as human rights, women rights and peace - draw a different image: they frame the EU as a potential ally in bringing positive changes at home.

### 3. MAPPING THE CONTEXT: DISCOURSES ON THE EU AND ‘ANOTHER EUROPE’ IN THE ESF PROCESS

So far we have analysed how the European and non European NGOs, social movements and trade unions interpret the political role of the EU. We did this by means of content analysis of documents available on the organisations’ websites. In the following section, we will add to these written documents the consideration of the *social context* in which an imaginary of Europe emerges in the mind of activists.<sup>57</sup> Thus, to become part of discursive practices at both the societal and political levels, the image of Europe as a political entity needs to be shared and promoted by the activists we study as actors themselves. After all, to study the politically constructed image of Europe in text documents might risk reproducing the ‘official’ politically correct image of political elites within non-states organisations. Even if this refers to a counter-elite, it can hardly become a complete definition of the reality. Only if it resonates with, or is accepted by, social and political constituencies, an image can trigger mechanisms of social and political change.

In this context, the European Social Forum (ESF) process lends itself as an ideal case to go in depth in our analysis. The ESF process is, in fact, a counter public emerging at the European level as a transnational, new and multilingual space providing room for reflecting the social and cultural multi-vocalism of societies.<sup>58</sup> As a regional variety emerging from the World Social Forum process, it is as a forum of critical citizens contesting the neoliberal policy-making of the European Union (della Porta et al. 2006). The ESF counter summits and in particular their *European-wide preparatory assemblies*<sup>59</sup> lend themselves as an interesting case study in the external image of ‘Europe’ held by participating activists from *outside* the EU. We comparatively analysed the images of the *European Union* and the possibly emerging *imaginaries and discourses on ‘Europe’* and ‘another’ Europe by the part of both non-(Western) European and Western European activists participating in the ESF preparatory process and within the First ESF held in Florence in 2002. We based our analysis on findings of a survey conducted during the First ESF that is complemented with in-depth interviews and participant observation conducted during the preparatory assemblies to the ESF from 2003 (Second ESF in Paris) to 2006 (Fourth ESF in Athens).<sup>60</sup> As for the survey, we

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<sup>57</sup> A. Triandafyllidou and R. Wodak, note 5 above, p. 212; see also R. Wodak and M. Meyer, *Methods of critical discourse analysis* (London: Sage, 2001).

<sup>58</sup> See N. Doerr. ‘Is ‘another’ public space actually possible? Deliberative democracy and the case of ‘women without’ in the ESF process’, in *International Journal of Women’s Studies*, Special Issue on the Forum Social Mundial (forthcoming). See also N. Fraser, ‘Die Transnationalisierung der Öffentlichkeit,’ In Gerald Raunig & Ulf Wuggenig (eds) *Publicum. Theorien der Öffentlichkeit*, in *republicart. Kunst und Öffentlichkeit: Vol. 5*, Wien: Turia + Kant.

<sup>59</sup> As a vital part of the ESF-process, a number of European preparatory assemblies take place about four times yearly, gathering between 100 and 300 activists from across Europe in order to collectively prepare the next ESF.

<sup>60</sup> The data of participant observation and 100 qualitative in-depth interviews was collected by Nicole Doerr in the context of her PhD thesis at the European University Institute and her diploma thesis (see N. Doerr ‘Towards a European public sphere ‘from below’? The case of multilingualism within the European social forums’ in C. Barker and M. Tyldesley (eds) *Conference Papers of the Eleventh International Conference on ‘Alternative Futures and Popular Protest’* held at Manchester University 19-21 April 2006 (Manchester: Faculty of Humanities and Social Science 2006); N. Doerr, ‘Sprache ist nicht das Problem: Die Sozialforen als Testfall für eine zukünftige europäische Öffentlichkeit’, in *Berliner Debatte Initial*, (Vol. 16, 4, 2005), pp. 93–105.

See N. Doerr note 50. Participant observation includes data on European and national preparatory meetings to the ESF. The cases at the national level were the national preparatory meetings in Germany, Italy and Britain. For the in-depth interviews, a representative sample of activists participating in the ESF preparatory meetings was constructed taking into consideration their national and ideological backgrounds and gender.

used the data from a structured questionnaire that included several questions related to the European Union.<sup>61</sup> These data are complemented by findings of participant observation within the *European preparatory meetings* to the ESF, in a cross-national comparative study<sup>62</sup> in which three types of data were collected: (1) field notes of the occurrences during the European preparatory meetings and similar preparatory meetings at the national level, (2) recordings as well as in-vivo-transcripts of the discussions within the sessions, and (3) the perceptions of activists on Europe, the European Union and the ESF process through in-depth interviews. Following the methodological approach of critical discourse analysis (CDA), these data were analysed subsequently with a sensibility to the *social context* shaping the imaginaries of Europe within these transnational activists meetings.<sup>63</sup>

In both the analyses of the survey data and the results of participant observation we shall distinguish between Western Europeans, non Western Europeans, i.e. participants from Central and Eastern Europe (CEE), South Eastern Europe (SEE), Turkey, and other participants from outside the EU. In the European preparatory meetings we could also identify activists living in the EU member states as migrants. Finally, it is worth noticing that while the *personal backgrounds* and *political motivations* of the activists related to differing *political opportunity structures* in these various selected countries which are different and complex, the situation of these groups as participants in the ESF process was structurally very similar in terms of their *lesser access to financial resources* and their lack of *access and social embeddedness* in the networks of the European Left libertarian movements that organise the ESF.<sup>64</sup> This explains the small number of activists with these characteristics in the casual sample of the first ESF survey. In addition, this also indicates why, as we shall see, these activists relate themselves in a critical way to EU institutions and also take a critical position in the ESF process itself.

One interesting aspect in the European Social Forum process as an informal, open and fluid counter public created by activists at the transnational level, is its internal linkage of practical organising questions with wider political debates on the meaning of ‘another’ Europe in regular European-wide preparatory assemblies. In addition, the discourse on Europe within the plenary discussions of these transnational meetings takes place in an open and deliberative setting for public decision-making (on behalf of the organisation of the ESF) - non-Western European participants are invited by EU participants to join in a formally open and free basis to create a more inclusive and open Europe.<sup>65</sup> Nevertheless, a contentious formation of the shape and meaning of ‘another’ Europe takes place in these European preparatory meetings as a setting that many of the interviewed activists themselves described as divided into *periphery* and *centre* in terms of multiple geographical, economical and cultural cleavages,<sup>66</sup> which points to the fragility of these transnational spaces and discourses on

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<sup>61</sup> The survey was coordinated by Massimiliano Andretta and Lorenzo Mosca on behalf of the Gruppo di Ricerca sull’Azione Collettiva in Europa (GRACE). A detailed analysis of these data can be found in della Porta et al, note 15 above. The sampling of the activists was based on a casual method: questionnaires were distributed to activists in the collective spaces for discussion and at the registration point. The number of activists responding to the questionnaire was 2,384. Maria Fabbri was responsible for data inputting. For the purpose of this article we could identify about 100 non Western European participants. In order to make the comparison with Western Europeans statistically meaningful we had to select a comparable number of them from the full sample (about 120). This was done casually by the computer (SPSS).

<sup>62</sup> This part of the research was conducted by Nicole Doerr. The qualitative in-depth interviews are based on a sample representing the respondents in national and European preparatory meetings according to the criteria of different political orientations, gender, nationality and age (n = 100). These data include EU citizens and non-EU citizens.

<sup>63</sup> A. Triandafyllidou and R. Wodak, note 5 above; see R. Wodak and M. Meyer, note 58.

<sup>64</sup> N. Doerr, note 58.

<sup>65</sup> In the European preparatory assemblies to the ESF, the organisers and facilitators often mention the necessity of the *inclusion* of movements from outside the EU, CEE, SEE and Turkey as well as migrant groups as an important aim of the process.

<sup>66</sup> Geographically, the centre of decision-making in the process is, in the perception of the majority of activists, located in the Western European countries, while Eastern, Central and South Eastern European and Turkish participants who lacked resources risked to be marginalised in the decision-making. The same problems were also mentioned to be relevant for migrants, no-vox, newcomers or small local networks (see N. Doerr, note 50).

‘another’ Europe. The discourse on the EU and the image of Europe by non-EU citizens and/or Central and South Eastern Europeans active in the European Social Forum thus can be situated in the context of these internal cleavages and financial inequalities in the ESF process as a loosely linked network structure related to a context of economic globalisation. As we will show, the idea to create the basis for ‘another’ Europe in the ESF process in the perception of many participating non-EU citizens represents a *window of opportunity* that however suffers from an internally hierarchical and ‘Eurocentric’ internal discourse in the ESF preparation process.

### 3.1. An ambivalent image of Europe and the European Union

According to the data of the survey presented in Table 1, there are no statistically significant differences between activists with regard to their trusting the EU institutions: only 10.7% of Western EU activists, 13.2% of Central and South Eastern Europeans and 16.0% of Non Europeans declare to trust it at least “enough”. The differences in the image of the EU become more relevant (and statistically significant) when we consider other aspects. For instance, activists from Central and South Eastern Europe are definitely less prone to agree with the statement “In order to achieve the goals of the ESF process –as a part of the Global Justice Movement- it would be necessary to strengthen the EU”. If we consider the timing of the survey (2002), when none of the CEE countries had acquired the status of an EU member state (although most of these countries achieved accession in 2004), this is remarkable. However, according to other items, activists from Central- and South Eastern Europe (CEE and SEE) seem to be less negative than their Western European “colleagues”: 74.4% of the former against 92% of the latter, and 89% of the non Europeans agree with the opinion that “the EU institutions are strengthening the neoliberal globalisation process”. In the same direction goes the result that the Western Europeans are always more critical than activists from Central and South Eastern Europe and non-EU activists in the following statements: “The EU mitigates the neoliberal globalisation process” and “the EU attempts to safeguard a social model which is different from a neoliberal one”. The following table illustrates these findings:

**Tab. 1. Percentage of agreement with several questions related to the EU by activists’ regional origin.**

Activists’ regional origin	EU related questions				
	<i>To Strengthen EU</i>	<i>EU strengthens neoliberalism</i>	<i>EU mitigates neoliberalism</i>	<i>EU safeguards a social model</i>	<i>Trust EU</i>
<i>CEE-SEE</i>	17.9	74.4	36.7	25.7	13.2
<i>Other Non EU</i>	34.0	88.5	36.0	13.5	16.0
<i>Western EU</i>	38.6	91.7	18.9	6.2	10.7
Total cases	219	224	212	216	219
Cr. s’ V <sup>67</sup>	.16*	.20**	.19**	.23***	n.s.

Confirming these results, both the discourse analysis of the discussions in the plenary sessions of the European preparatory assemblies and the in-depth interviews with activists indicated that the image of Europe and the EU by non EU-citizens among the activists is ambivalent. The EU is perceived not only as the strongly criticised exclusive neoliberal project but also, in a more subtle way, as a powerful, possibly empowering and democratically rooted structure. The opportunity to engage in the making of ‘another’ Europe in the ESF process thus becomes a supranational *window*

<sup>67</sup> The Cramer’s V is measure of association between two categorical variables.

*of opportunity* for movements to engage and to build networks with activists from other countries where at the domestic level their political situation is that of a limited significance, of marginalisation or political repression. The concept of Europe is mainly present in two different though interrelated discourses in the ESF process: (1) Firstly, there is the discourse on the EU as a criticised political actor and as an existing political space for movement activities that needs to be integrated in the still nationally shaped repertoire of collective action.<sup>68</sup> (2) Secondly, Europe as an imaginary becomes ‘real’ through the experience of participation and socialisation and the making of ‘another’ Europe in the ESF process. Here, the ambivalence lies in the contentious definition of the political meaning of ‘another Europe’ as the collective master frame of identification and mobilization in the ESF that is however perceived as ‘Eurocentric’ by many activists, in particular by activists from outside the EU.

In the discourse of non-EU citizens among the activists within the ESF meetings, the EU as a political space is framed first of all as an agent of institutionalised neoliberalism. Occasionally, the EU is also ascribed the potential of a powerful political actor who actually stimulates processes of democratisation in non-EU countries like for instance with regard to Russia or Turkey. While these points are widely consensual among most of the activists in the ESF process, the positions vary dependent on the specific *national* and *ideological* context among the activists. On the one side, one *EU-internal* leading informal group of Western European professional activists in the ESF coming associated to trade unions and political parties work on first concrete political campaigns at the supranational level to contest criticized EU policies through initiatives. Two examples for this are the *campaign against the Bolkestein directive* or the “*Charter of principles for the Other Europe*”.<sup>69</sup> In a structurally more precarious position, the participating activists from outside the EU, CEE or migrants living in the EU understand their own positions more strongly as one of speaking for/representing their groups or people who are not present in the meetings as ‘delegates’ due to a lack of finances and difficulties in acquiring visas to participate in the meetings.<sup>70</sup> The discourse of these participants therefore often focuses on *concrete practical problems of accessing the EU or the making of ‘another Europe’* in the concrete situation of getting access to the ESF preparatory process.<sup>71</sup> These activists more often than most Western European activists criticise *concrete external* aspects of EU politics.<sup>72</sup> Thus, *Europe* for these activists in the ESF preparatory meetings becomes a transnational counter-public, which they address in communicating to the influent delegates of various (Western European) social movements present in the meetings.

In addition to these different national backgrounds, the emerging images of Europe and the EU are equally influenced by the ideological backgrounds related to specific and differing national political opportunity structures. Similarly, as in the case of EU citizens among the activists, one can observe a more critical position among activists with an anti-imperialist or anarchist framing from outside

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<sup>68</sup>D. Imig and S. Tarrow (eds) *Contentious Europeans: Protest and politics in an emerging polity*. (Rowman Littlefield, Lanham 2001); D. della Porta, ‘The Europeanization of Protest: a Typology and some Empirical Evidence’, in G. Bettin Lattes, and E. Recchi, (eds) *Comparing European Societies. Towards a Sociology of the EU* (Monduzzi, Bologna 2005) pp. 261–286; M. Giugni AND F. Passy, ‘Le champ politique de l’immigration en Europe: opportunités, mobilisations et l’héritage de l’Etat national’, in R. Balme, and D. Cabanet, (eds) *L’action collective en Europe* ( Presses de Sciences Po, Paris 2002) pp. 347-374.

<sup>69</sup> The “Charter of the Other Europe” proposes a more social, equal, open, ecological and peaceful alternative of “democratic constitutionalism” proposed by social movements to the perceived top-down initiative of the EU Constitutional Treaty (draft of the Charter of principles of the Other Europe 2006)Source: <http://www.europe-solidaire.org/spip.php?article1562>, accessed 7.11.2006.

<sup>70</sup> N. Doerr, note 50.

<sup>71</sup> They would, for instance, stress the problem of lacking access, visas and financial resources for their groups or activists in their countries, asking for the support of Western European organisers and their solidarity funding.

<sup>72</sup> This concerns for example EU governments’ support for Putin’s policies towards Chechnya or the European Union accepting Turkey’s repressive policies towards political activists or the perceived new exclusion of Ukrainians, Russians, Serbians and other CEE countries due to the visa restrictions of the Schengen legislation.

the EU, like among some Turkish participants from extreme left parties. In the framing of these groups - as is also the case within the Greek anti-imperialist spectrum or within Trotskyite or anarchist movements of various EU countries - the EU as a political project in itself represents an illegitimate imperialist or neocolonial and therefore unreformable project. The only difference between EU-internal and EU external groups in this case was that the critical position of non-EU citizens was discursively linked to the narration of personal concrete experiences of these activists with *external* EU policies in their own countries. As a counter-position to this, various more moderately oriented groups and networks from outside the EU stressed the progressive effects of the EU accession process in terms of their countries democratisation.

These findings are also reflected in the results of the survey presented in table 2, where we can see that there are differences (although not always statistically significant) with regard to the opinions on the EU according to the different sectors of affiliation of the participants at the first ESF: radical anti-capitalist leftist activists are more critical than the others.

**Tab. 2. Percentage of agreement with several questions related to the EU by activists' sectors of affiliations.**

Activists' organisation affiliation	EU related questions				
	<i>To Strengthen EU</i>	<i>EU strengthens neoliberalism</i>	<i>EU mitigates neoliberalism</i>	<i>EU safeguards a social model</i>	<i>Trust EU</i>
<i>No affiliation</i>	38.6	85.6	25.5	13.5	17.3
<i>NGOs</i>	32.0	84.6	32.0	16.7	4.2
<i>Traditional left</i>	42.1	88.1	29.3	7.0	11.9
<i>Radical left</i>	13.9	97.4	21.6	8.1	5.4
Total cases	213	217	205	208	213
Cr. S' V	.20*	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.

### 3.2. The imaginary of 'another' Europe from outside

As the analysis of the discourse on the EU and EU politics already indicated, Europe is related to as a source of legitimacy and self-representation in the ESF process that understands itself as the platform on the discussion of the future of 'another' Europe. With regard to this, non-Western European citizens in their speeches in the meetings and in the interviews strongly express their willingness to participate in 'another Europe' often mixed with a strong feeling of marginalisation in the ESF process itself based to the experience of exclusion, as the following section will show.

#### *The difficulty of securing access*

As a first contextual aspect, there is the particular experience described by non-EU citizens willing to participate in the ESF process and trying to access the European preparatory meetings. These activists have stronger concerns than EU citizens about border controls and difficulties in getting visas to participate in meetings that usually take place in different cities across Western Europe. This perceived *difficulty in gaining access* makes non-EU citizens highly vulnerable and dependent on the support of 'EU insiders' among the organising activists. The following abstract of an interview with a participant in the ESF preparatory meeting from a Social Forum in the Czech Republic illustrates these different aspects of a perceived 'asymmetric' though politically important opportunity in participating in the making of 'another Europe' in the ESF process:

"Together with others, I have founded the Social Forum Prague [...]. My impression of the European preparatory assemblies is mixed. [...]. The mix of very experienced professional organisations and

less experienced people with different backgrounds makes the assemblies very asymmetric. The activists here (i.e. activists from different mainly Western European countries in a European preparatory assembly taking place in Germany) can be very happy as they have strong movements. For us in Czech it is just a small number of groups who participate. [...]. I feel as European here, but also as Czech, as Eastern European, as all that. The wishes of Eastern Europeans are formally taken into consideration in this meeting here, on the paper [...]. To be honest I perceived it as a disadvantage that the ESF 2004 will be held in London, which is too expensive and far for activists from CEE. [...]. One thing that I don't like is that activists from South Eastern Europe, from the Balkans, from Moldova and Albania had no voice here. The Middle Europeans from Poland, Czech and the Russians are always present in the European preparatory meetings. But the others need financial support to make their voices heard - they are not here."<sup>73</sup>

As this interview abstract indicates, there seem to exist subtle tensions in relation to the relatively more influential political weight of some Western European Left-wing European organisations organising the ESF, and the much lesser weight of the participating non-EU citizens, which is further confirmed in the following findings on the internal discourse and decision-making.

### ***The experience of exclusive decision-making and resources determining who is inside Europe***

As the majority of in-depth interviews indicate, the main determinant of whether activists described themselves as insiders or outsiders in the making of 'another' Europe in the ESF process was their access to financial resources, as related to the possibility to travel across borders within the EU and/or to social networks in the ESF process. An interview with a migrant active in the ESF preparatory process in Germany shows:

As migrant I have, like many others, a big problem with London as the place where the next ESF shall take place [...]. I am Turkish and live on social benefits, and a visa costs 70 Euro plus travel costs and accommodation. The probability that my visa demand will be rejected is about 50 percent, because I cannot show to the English that I have work. The important is that I have spoken about this *before* the decision was made that the ESF will take place in London. But my position was not taken seriously and considered as "anti-position" within the "consensus" of the German preparatory assembly that decided that the ESF 2004 will take place in London [...] In consequence of this decision, I am effectively excluded from participating in the ESF<sup>74</sup>

Like this interview illustrates, many non-EU citizens among the activists perceived the discourse and consensual decision-making in the ESF preparatory process as problematic.<sup>75</sup> These perceived structural inequalities in the making of 'another' Europe expressed in different ways in the public meetings; by ambivalent grateful or on the contrary disruptive speech acts on the part of non EU-delegates: some of them thanked the Western European organisers for solidarity funding they had received but then diplomatically criticised the decision-making process on the basis of power and resources. Others would contest the internal decision-making in the ESF process and after a while of participating in the meetings, exit. Thereby not only ideology seemed to play a role with regard to an activist's choice of strategy (i.e. whether to adapt, to exit or to protest against perceived marginalisation within in the ESF preparatory meetings), but also, gender. In the case of activists from Central and South Eastern Europe, Turkey and among the second-generation migrants illustrates, it was mostly women among the non Western European citizens who disruptively contested the perceived lack of democracy in the ESF, while male activists with this background would rather tend to choose a more diplomatic strategy. This finding can be explained by more statistical evidence showing that there were differences in terms of gender influencing the way in which the perceived internal problems of access in the ESF preparatory process was judged: Independent of age, ideological and socio-economic background, *female* activists in the ESF

<sup>73</sup> Mirek, Social Forum Prague: Abstract of an interview within the ESF preparatory assembly, Berlin, 2004.

<sup>74</sup> Extract from the interview after the meeting of the preparatory assembly in Frankfurt, 21.-22.2.2004

<sup>75</sup> N. Doerr, note 50; C. Harrison, 'Problems of negotiation in the London ESF: Horizontals versus Verticals', in C. Barker and M. Tyldesley (eds) *Conference Papers of the Eleventh International Conference on 'Alternative Futures and Popular Protest' held at Manchester University 19-21 April 2006* (2), Faculty of Humanities and Social Science Manchester 2006.

preparatory process were more sensitive to the need to provide an open and inclusive process than were men.<sup>76</sup>

### *A self-perception of 'being different' and of victimisation as related to the experience of exclusion*

The impression of being excluded from the decision-making process by many interviewees seemed to have led to a self-description of 'being different'. These activists then interpreted these experiences to cultural communication problems based on socio-economic inequalities and of a predominant 'Eurocentric' framing of 'another' Europe in the ESF preparatory meetings. One interviewee from Istanbul Social Forum describes this:

"I try to integrate in the European preparatory process, but it is difficult. This discussion here is not equally good for all. There is a hierarchy between the big countries, Germany and France, they count here. They are not interested in the problems we have here in Istanbul. They would not at all understand anything here. The local people from Istanbul, the poor, the women we work with will not get integrated here, they don't understand English...They say we belong to Europe, but that somehow this is not true. Yes, but we are different. We have different types of problems. Very different kinds of problem, like poverty. Here is a hierarchy between the Europeans and us."<sup>77</sup>

The 'difference' that this interviewee perceives can be related to a situation in one meeting of the ESF preparatory process in Istanbul – as a particularly interesting place for studying inside and outside construction of 'Europe'. In this meeting, the speakers of the informal leadership group within the ESF from some Western European countries presented their proposals as proposals by "the Europeans." In the context of the ESF process going from London (ESF 2004) to Athens (ESF 2006), this kind of framing, saying that "the Europeans have decided" or "the Europeans propose" politically can be interpreted as a double positioning of the ESF organisers to deal with (1) the internally divided national organising committee of Greece and, also (2) with Trotskyite and other extreme left groups perceived as trying to infiltrate the process.<sup>78</sup> This framing nevertheless implicitly or explicitly was perceived by both Turkish participants, participants from Central and South Eastern Europe and participants coming from horizontal networks within the EU as an exclusive framing.<sup>79</sup> An activist from Turkey described her difficulties to get involved in this context, criticising both the "Europeans" and the self-victimising discourse of Turkish activists hosting the ESF preparatory assembly in Istanbul under debate:

"This is not my first European preparatory assembly, so I see that the problem with a part of Turkish activists here is also that they victimise themselves. They don't see that it doesn't help if they tell everybody how many years they spent in prison if they want to get recognized as equals in the ESF process. This European process is also an opportunity for us [...]. On the other side there is a complete misunderstanding from the side of the so called 'Europeans': Including the Turkish elite people that participate in these assemblies. They see Turkey as if they lived in London, for instance what concerns the issue of Muslim resistance. This is something different here as it is in London

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<sup>76</sup> These are the statistically significant results of a survey carried out in the meetings within the ESF preparatory process in which 100 respondents representing different countries and ideological groups in the ESF process were asked on their attitudes towards the internal democracy of the process. The results in detail are: (1) female respondents find it more important to combat discriminations ( $\chi^2$  0.05\*), (2) female respondents emphasise more strongly the necessity to give everyone the same opportunity to participate ( $\chi^2$  0.03\*), (3) female respondents find it more important to have elements of rotation ( $\chi^2$  0.01\*). See N. Doerr, note 58.

<sup>77</sup> Fatima, from Istanbul Social Forum. Interview within the European preparatory meeting in Istanbul, September 2005.

<sup>78</sup> C. Harrison, note 75 above; J. Boéri 'The role of Babels in the ESF in London 2004' in C. Barker and M. Tyldesley (eds) *Conference Papers of the Eleventh International Conference on 'Alternative Futures and Popular Protest' held at Manchester University 19-21 April 2006*. Manchester: Faculty of Humanities and Social Science; O. Reyes; H. Wainwright; M. Fuster I Morell; M. Berlinguer, M. (eds) 'The European Social Forum: debating the challenges for its Future' URL: <http://www.euromovements.info/newsletter/>: accessed 1.1.2005.

<sup>79</sup> While activists from horizontal networks within the EU critically noted that those who were claiming to speak for "the Europeans" were only coming from some countries and representing functionaries of some important political organisations in Italy, France, Germany and the UK, non EU-citizens in addition criticised the lack of a constructive dialogue with non-Western European activists in the ESF process.



[...]. We all fight neoliberalism, but they come from the centre and we live in the periphery. However, this is an important opportunity for us.”<sup>80</sup>

This statement shows that the contentious shaping of the political meaning of Europe in the ESF process produces a series of misunderstandings between what is perceived by the activist interviewed as a (wealthy) Europe and what she describes as its “periphery”. However, there seems to be also hybridity: there are the activists of the second generation of migrants who have studied or live in London and have become professional leaders within the ESF process. Again, the hypothesis is confirmed that the inclusion/ exclusion into ‘Europe’ goes alongside material differences – as the interviewee clearly refers to the Turkish activists in the ESF process living in London as ‘Europeans’.<sup>81</sup> The statement shows again the important intervening of access to resources as a variable to explain the problematic exclusionary imaginary of Europe in the ESF process. While situating herself as ‘being different’ due to having fewer socio-economic means, the interviewee problematises the self-victimisation by other non-EU citizens in their positioning within the ESF process. Another observed interpretation in relation to this perceived exclusive Eurocentric discourse structure was to describe the making of ‘another’ Europe in the ESF as an ‘incomplete and non-democratic Europe’, as the statement of another participating activist from Bulgaria illustrates:

“This wasn’t a ‘European’ assembly! Neither was this a consensus decision. It was not ok. Many people have been simply overheard and ignored, not only those from Eastern Europe, but also from other delegations. There are a small number of people who have the power. They come from France, Italy, Great Britain and Greece. They make the decisions.”<sup>82</sup>

Thus, as this interview abstract indicates, the making of Europe in the ESF process is reflected in the image of an incomplete and exclusive project. In the imaginary of those ‘outside’, Europe in its particular version of a perceived Eurocentric making of ‘another’ Europe in the ESF process has not yet reached its full emancipatory potential of ‘another’ politics, but still in many ways constructs boundaries in between those ‘who have’ and those who ‘have not’.

#### **4. IMAGINING THE EU AS A TRANSFORMATIVE SOCIAL PRACTICE: PARTIAL CONCLUSIONS**

In conclusion, the image of the European Union that NGOs, trade unionists and left libertarian social movements develop from ‘outside’ or what one may describe as the ‘borderlands’ or the ‘periphery’ of the European Union is an ambivalent picture of a powerful political community with both a hegemonic but also a socially transformative potential of democratisation. In our study, we have in a first step analysed the external image of Europe and the EU by non-state actors. We did this through content analysis of meanings attributed to the EU and EU politics on the homepages of non-EU NGOs, trade unions and social movements within the global justice movements. In a second step, we studied the perspective of non-EU citizens and citizens from the recently accessed member states of the EU within the European Social Forum process as a mix of transnational counter-public with the social transformative objective to create ‘another’ Europe.<sup>83</sup>

Summarising, the non European trade unions, social movements and NGOs agree with EU internal groups and organisations on the perception of the EU as a neoliberal political agent which threatens the social and economic living conditions of ordinary people both within and outside of the European Union. Thereby activists from outside the EU or its political boundaries reach consensus

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<sup>80</sup> Neyla, from a mixed organisation for poor people’s housing, Istanbul. Interview within the European preparatory meeting in Istanbul, September 2005.

<sup>81</sup> I.e. referring to the following part of the cited interview abstract: “there is a complete misunderstanding from the side of the so called ‘Europeans’: Including the Turkish elite people that participate in these assemblies[...].”

<sup>82</sup> Natasha, feminist network from Bulgaria. Interview within the European preparatory meeting in Paris, September 2003.

<sup>83</sup> The ESF process can be understood as a transnational, new and multilingual space providing room for reflecting the social and cultural multi-vocalism of societies. See N. Doerr, note 50; N. Fraser, note 58.

with their EU-internal allies from left libertarian movements about the wish to build a more democratic, peaceful, ecologist and social Europe. At the same time, these activists tend to judge EU politics from the external point of view of *those concerned* in the most dramatic way by EU external policies, in particular, when materialistic (social as well as economic) issues are concerned. In these policy fields, the EU is evaluated from the outside very negatively, and often considered in the same vein as the strongly criticised neoliberal (neocolonialist and in some instances also perceived imperialist) institutions of the WTO, the World Bank, the IMF as well as the United States. At the same time, non European NGOs dealing with non-economic issues, such as human rights, women rights and peace, have a less negative image in which the EU represents a potential ally in bringing progressive change to their countries. Thus, while EU-internal organisations and groups emphasise the *internal* democratisation of Europe, EU-external activists see the EU as an important *external* ally for the implementation of human rights and democratisation (or gender equality) to which they make appeal in order to reach, via a *boomerang effect*,<sup>84</sup> the desired policy changes at the domestic level.

In a second step, we related the finding of the content analysis to the image resulting from direct face-to-face interactions of activists from outside the EU with EU-internal activists in the transnational counter-public of the European Social Forum (ESF) process. Like in the analysis of homepages of non-EU groups and organisations, the discourse analysis and interviews with participants in the ESF process show the construction of an ambivalent image of Europe, including the utopia of ‘another’ Europe in the ESF itself. Activists without EU citizenship or from newly accessed EU countries in Central and South Eastern Europe situate themselves ‘at the periphery’ of the ESF as a politically interesting though exclusive transnational counter public. In dealing with this social context, activists choose different strategies depending on their ideological, financial and national background and their gender. While some activists *address ‘Europe’* in speaking to the present multipliers in the ESF process, partly constructing themselves as victims, others would more or less disruptively claim more agency and question the perceived Eurocentric and exclusive constitution of ‘Europe’ in the decision-making of the ESF process itself, struggling for equal recognition. In sum, the voices of these activists seem to warn that “alternative meanings” of Europe may be structured by an operational logic (of exclusion and marginalisation) which is attributed to the EU institutions. If this logic is not overcome in the future, the risk might be the confirmation of the external negative image of the European political project both in terms of the EU institutions and of the European social movements. In particular, the internal tensions and processes of exclusion observed within the ESF process as an ‘open space’ for dialogue might in turn break the transnational coalition within civil society to construct an alternative political meaning of, and indeed a more inclusive understanding of the European identity. If this happens, the “counter”-definition of what the EU is and should be will not perform the function of social and political change in Europe and in world politics. All the same, the predominantly experienced eurocentric making of ‘another’ Europe in the perspective of participating activists ‘from outside’ the EU could reduce the critical, transformative and emancipatory social practice in the common space of the social forums as a mixed transnational counter public.<sup>85</sup> Only in considering the outside-perspective, and through the work “in coalitions across differences”, might the political subject of Europe become the object of *social transformation by movements*.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Keck and Sikkink, note 13 above.

<sup>85</sup> N. Fraser, note 59; B. de Sousa Santos de Sousa Santos, B. (2005) ‘The future of the World Social Forum: The Work of Translation’, in *Development 2* pp. 15-22.

<sup>86</sup> J. Butler, ‘The question of social transformation’, in *Undoing Gender* (New York, London: Routledge. 2004), p. 228; G. Anzaldúa ‘Borderlands = La frontera’, (San Francisco: Aunt Lute Books, 1999).



FORUM ON THE PROBLEMS OF PEACE AND WAR  
GARNET - Jointly Executed Research Project 5.2.1

**THE EXTERNAL IMAGE OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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**REPORT ON  
*THE COMMISSION'S DIPLOMATS AND THE EU INTERNATIONAL IMAGE***

**Caterina Carta**



The survey *The External Image of the European Union* has been conducted in the Framework of the Jointly Executed Research Project 5.2.1. (*Normative issues*) of the Network of Excellence *Global Governance, Regionalisation and Regulation: the Role of the EU* - GARNET (contract no. 513330); (EU 6<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme 2005-2010; Call Identifier: FP6-2002-Citizens-3). We are grateful to Garnet and to the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for their financial contribution to the project.

## ABSTRACT

This report intends to present an overall portrait of the Union as an international actor, as stemming from the images that officials working in the delegations of the European Commission hold. The analysis relies on different sources. Firstly, the report analyses speeches, declarations, official statements and information materials published on some 80 websites of the Delegations. As it will be argued, the Delegation websites propose a standardised presentation of “the EU as a global player”, which can help us to define the official position of the European Commission on the issue. An “unofficial” picture of the EU as a global player stems from the analysis of 48 semi-structured interviews to A grade civil servants having worked in a Delegation – conducted between October 2003 and March 2004 and in May 2005 - and some 40 questionnaires filled out by Heads of Delegations, out of 74 participants to a cycle of seminars promoted by DG RELEX K/6 for the Heads of Delegations, in December 2004. Although there is a relative homogeneity in the presentation of the EU’s international image, the “two sides of the coin” are not always interchangeable, so that we can compare differences and analogies between the official position of the Commission and the opinions of its civil servants. It is widely accepted that the foundations of the EU international presence lays on the lessons drawn by its history. The EU is portrayed as a living laboratory of interstate, peaceful cooperation. However, it is precisely its multilateral endorsement which weakens its international actorness. The Union is, thus, portrayed as an atypical foreign policy actor: a sum of actors which, at times, is keen to produce a choir, rather than a common voice. As an analysis of the recurrent patterns present in the interviews shows, the Union is mainly described through three metaphors: a new model of an international system, a not-into-politics actor, and a developmental actor. Once counting images of Europe within the sample, one realises that the element that characterises most officials’ image of Europe is the unique character that the European Union holds in the international arena. It is precisely the awareness of not being a state which makes the Union a new model of an international system.

## 1. PRESENTATION OF THE OBJECT OF THE RESEARCH

The European Commission leads a consistent diplomatic network in third-party states and International Organisations, an atypical condition for a non-state actor. The fact that European Delegations can be regarded as the sole, stable representatives of the Union abroad, makes the analysis of their visions of the European international image of great interest. The aim of this work is to provide a definition of the main elements composing the Commission officials’ *images of Europe* and to describe the kind of identity pursued through the Commission’s diplomatic practices.

To this aim, this work relies on the examination of 48 semi-structured interviews submitted to Heads of Delegation and Grade A officials having worked in a Delegation, and on the examination of the international role of the Union as presented in the websites of the Delegations of the European Commission. Hence, the sources are both official – as stemming from the public presentation given in the websites – and “informal” – as stemming from the declarations which officials gave in the course of interviews. This work intends to analyse the two sides of the coin, in seeing whether there is overlap among in the Commission official position and the views of its delegates. The report shows that in spite of the relative convergence of the two representations of the Union – there are some important differences between the two versions of the story.

After presenting the sample and the main foundations of the Union as an international actor, the work focuses on the peculiar nature of the EU as an international actor: the institutional configuration of the European system of international relations is an important feature of its actorness on the international scene. Following the official presentation given on the websites, the report will present the role of the Union as a global trade actor, as a developmental actor, as a human rights advocate, trying also to define the nature of its relationship with some important international partners, such as the US.

## 2. PRESENTATION OF THE SOURCES AND THE SAMPLE

The research is based on some 48 semi-structured interviews to A grade civil servants having worked in a Delegation – conducted between October 2003 and March 2004 and in May 2005 - and some 40 questionnaires filled out by Heads of Delegations, out of 74 participants to a cycle of seminars promoted by DG RELEX K/6 for the Heads of Delegations, between the beginning and the end of December 2004.

In addition to these sources, an analysis of 80 out of the 128 websites of the Delegations has been conducted. Speeches of the Heads of Delegation, presentations of the role of the Union as an international actor, structure and contents of the websites were taken into account. Delegation websites are generally used for presenting both the Union and the role of the Commission in a given country and constitute an example of institutional communication towards third parties. Delegation websites also serve practical purposes, related to the communication of calls for tenders and other initiatives pursued in the framework of the programmes of cooperation managed by the Commission. It has to be pointed out that, generally speaking, the websites of the Delegations have a standardised structure shown below, even though there is room for some variation, due to the particular vocation of each delegation. Many items are also standardised in terms of content, a fact which reduces the personal endorsement of delegates. Looking at the websites is, nonetheless, important, as it shows the way in which the Commission and Union are presented to a broad foreign public.

### *The standardised structure of the website*

<b>About us</b>	<b>The EU and the host country</b>	<b>The EU and the region</b>	<b>The EU as a global actor</b>	<b>The Euro and you</b>	<b>The EU guide</b>	<b>What's new</b>	<b>Newsletters or other information activities</b>
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With regard to the sample of the questionnaire respondents, the ideal type of Commission civil servant is a highly educated man, as other scholars have already showed (Page, 1997:70; Hooghe, 2001:54). Within this sample, all Heads of Delegation had degrees, as appears to be the case for Commission officials in general.<sup>1</sup> Most have studied social sciences or law (75%), 17.5% had a degree in science, and 7.5% in arts. The majority had an international education, whether in Europe, North America, or both (respectively 35%; 10% and 22.5%).

In general, the Commission civil service does not represent the first employment in the careers of its officials. Officials join the Commission later in their working life. Page shows that this result is quite common among EU institutions. In conformity with Hooghe's data (Hooghe, 2001:57), the sample of top officials examined here had experience at universities (19.4%), business and the private sector (16.1%) and other International Organisations (12.9%) (in the case of Hooghe's sample, this result was respectively 16.5%, 11.3% and 4.5%). Cumulatively, 29% of respondents had governmental experience before entering the Commission, a result slightly higher to that found by Hooghe, who showed that some 25% had governmental experience.

The proportion of women is strikingly low among Heads of Delegation. «This is hardly surprising since most studies on senior officials in nation states have found few women in top jobs, political, administrative or otherwise» (Page, 1997:72). Indeed, out of 40 respondents only two Heads of Delegation were women, in spite of the promotion of equal opportunity inaugurated by the Santer Commission in 1995. Even if, according to the data of the Commission, men and women are in proportion fairly balanced within the Delegations (1953 women; and 2093 men, in 2003), there are notably few women performing the role of Heads of Delegations in 2003.

With regard to the nationality of respondents to the questionnaire, on average, the sample shows a majority of Germans (7 respondents; 17.5% of the sample), British (7 respondents; 17.5% of the

<sup>1</sup> On a sample of 1131 Officials, Page found that only the 1% did not have a university education.

sample), French (5 respondents; 12.5% of the sample), Italians (5 respondents; 12.5% of the sample) and Dutch (5 respondents; 12.5% of the sample).<sup>2</sup> The proportion of nationality fairly portrays the general proportion of nationality among the Heads of Delegation: on a sample of 84 Heads of Delegations,<sup>3</sup> one can presume that Austrian, Danish, and Irish are the least represented, followed by Belgian, Dutch, Greek, and Portuguese. Due to the size of the countries and the informal policy of national balance pursued by the Commission, the most represented are the nationalities of bigger Member States.

Heads of Delegations are for the most part A3 or A4 civil servants.<sup>4</sup> Out of 69, Heads of Delegation are on average 60 years old. This sample is therefore quite representative, with an average age of 57.2 years.<sup>5</sup>

On average, the length of service within the Commission of Heads of Delegation is about 22.75 years, with a high degree of variation: from seven years of service (5% of the sample), to 35 (5% of the sample), of which more than half serving in the Delegations.

With regard to the sample of the interviews, among the 48 officials interviewed, some 20 were Heads of Delegation, thus “Ambassadors of the Commission”. Interviewees were chosen mainly because of their experience, or for the specific role they had in the Delegations. Therefore, this standard interview – mainly addressed to grade A civil servants – was also addressed to 1 Head of Delegation already retired, 5 Heads of Delegation very close to retirement, 2 young Grade A officials having had experience of Delegation as Young Experts (JPO), 2 Grade B officials, notable for their length of service and for them having covered the role of Head of Administration, a privileged observatory for the enquiries on personnel, relations with Brussels, legal and administrative status and security-related matters. Among these interviewees, 7 had previous experience in a national Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and 3 were University professors before joining the Commission. None of them declared explicitly to have been “parachuted”. With regard to their nationality, 2 were Belgian, 2 Dutch, 3 German, 1 Greek, 1 Irish, 1 Portuguese, 6 Spaniards, 5 Britons, 13 French, 1 Danish, 1 Finnish and 11 Italians. The Germans and Britons are therefore underrepresented, and the interviews do not cover all the nationalities of the EU 15.<sup>6</sup> In spite of this hindrance, an effort was made to respect the proportion of nationalities within the Delegations, as the data stemming from the analysis of questionnaires suggested. The interviews collected on the whole covered experiences from the entire network.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Additionally, there were 2 Belgians, 1 Dane, 1 Finn, 1 Greek, 2 Irish, 1 Portuguese, 1 Spaniard and 2 Swedes. No Austrians or Luxembourg citizens filled out my questionnaire.

<sup>3</sup> Data on nationalities was extrapolated from the Commission database.

<sup>4</sup> Commission data shows that out of 73 HoD, 29 are A3 grade Civil Servants; 37 A4 civil servants, and 7 A5 civil servants.

<sup>5</sup> This figure is slightly higher than the average of senior officials in the Commission (53.9%), Parliament (52%), Council (53.6%) and Social Committee (53%) (Page, 1997:3). This slight difference could be explained in two ways: either the Commission appoints experienced officials as Heads of Delegation or, less benevolently, tends to get rid of older officials in order to rearrange top positions among “new levies” at the Headquarters in Brussels.

<sup>6</sup> In fact, some nationalities are not represented at all, as is the case with Austrians, Luxembourg citizens and Swedes. There are two main reasons for that: first, some officials declared they did not have time to dedicate to the interview, as many Heads of Delegation were temporarily in Brussels for a cycle of Seminars promoted by DG RELEX/K6. Second, the Commission is reluctant to provide personal data about officials, above all concerning nationality.

<sup>7</sup> Interviewees declared to have worked in these postings: Sarajevo, Congo Kinshasa, Congo Brazzaville, China, Singapore, Georgia, Morocco, Tunis, Brazil, Egypt, Syria, Guyana, Caracas, New York, Washington, Kenya, Korea, Japan, Canada, Barbados, Poland, Mali, Haiti, Burkina Faso, Zimbabwe, Ghana, South Africa, Bangkok, Mexico, Bangladesh, Geneva, Somalia, India, Indonesia, Guyana, Uganda, Chad, Mauritania, Central Africa, Niger, Gabon, Principe, Montevideo, Dominican Republic, Gabon, Botswana, Madagascar, Burundi, Mexico, Lesotho, Namibia, Syria, Hong Cong and Algeria. On average, over nearly 50 interviews, more than half had had at least two mandates in Delegations, in some cases up to four mandates.

### 3. THE EU AS A LABORATORY OF A NEW INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM: PEACE AND INTERSTATE COOPERATION

In the 1950s six countries emerging from the terrible effects of the second world war decided to launch an ambitious project of economic integration to overcome the causes of the numerous European conflicts of the past. This project is rooted in three basic concepts: peace, prosperity and progress. The dark pages of our history have made us want to improve our present and our future prospects. And, you will agree with me: this goes far beyond economic integration.<sup>8</sup>

The perception of the external role of the Union is profoundly linked to the idea these officials hold about the process of European integration. It is linked to a historically constructed sense of “uniqueness”: the EU represents a model of peaceful interstate cooperation, where States decided to ban war from reciprocal relations and to act together in order to accomplish such common goals as peace, prosperity and freedom. «It is perhaps the largest uninterrupted period of peace on the European continent torn by centuries of terrible wars, which constitutes not a negligible contribution to world political affairs. The European Union has become a pole of democratic stability for its neighbours and a model of regional integration for other parts of the world».<sup>9</sup> This aspect is also widely synthesized in the words of a French respondent: «I had very personal reasons for joining the Commission, principally linked to my family and to the Franco-German wars. I was 18 – and I wanted to participate in the construction of a Europe that would not allow this to happen anymore» (interview 08).<sup>10</sup> The Union and the Commission are, thus, mainly described as a unique, peaceful, cooperative experience. The slogan “unity in diversity” – which gained the status of European motto in the framework of the Constitution – summarises well the shared sense of inclusiveness, tolerance, and acceptance of cultural and national differences. «The Europe of 2006 is a dynamic, prosperous place of disappearing borders, more mobility and still greater diversity».<sup>11</sup> One of the elements officials tend to mention emotionally in stating that the uniqueness of the Union is indeed its multicultural and multinational status,<sup>12</sup> which enables different nationalities, cultures and identities to live together.

Inevitably there are political and economic controversies – as the rejection of the proposed EU Constitution by voters in France and the Netherlands demonstrated. However, the EU’s great strength lies in the fact that its 25 Member States and institutions remain tenaciously around the negotiating table and actively work for compromise and agreement. That is a positive lesson for countries and regions undermined by distrust and partisanship.<sup>13</sup>

Thus, the process of integration – started at the end of the World War II – is the most meaningful example of how officials conceive the external role of the EU: «the EU is a product of the international law, the respect of the international law is inscribed in our genetic code» (interview 7). In the words of this official, the external role of the Union lays precisely in the example of multilateralism and cooperation it represents on the international scene:

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<sup>8</sup> Speech of Romano Prodi, former president of the European Commission, "EU–India Relations in a changing global matrix", FICCI Auditorium, New Delhi, 29 November 2003.

<sup>9</sup> Europe Day 2005 – Mr Piergiorgio Mazzocchi, Ambassador, Delegation of the European Commission to Australia and New Zealand, Brisbane, Friday, 20 May 2005.

<sup>10</sup> My translation from French.

<sup>11</sup> “The European Union: a global player”, speech by Benita Ferrero Waldner, Commissioner for External Relations and the European Neighbourhood Policy, George Bush Presidential Library Foundation and Texas. A& M – University EU Center of Excellence – College Station, Texas, 25 September 2006.

<sup>12</sup> In the passionate words of this official: «The Commission has always been a dream, because when I arrived in Belgium I was a foreigner. Therefore, the European Union was a way of finding a nationality that I had not. The European Union is a new nationality that gives its hand to all the world. Also now I have to say that when I go the Centre Borschet - the main Conference Centre of the Commission - and I simply climb the stairs, it still amuses me.... It is the Tower of Babel: so many nationalities, all these languages, these energies... There is a project: and I find it a high idea» (interview 01).

<sup>13</sup> Speech of the Head of Delegation Ridolfi on the occasion of the completion of the Lautoka teachers college undergraduate construction project – Lautoka, 20/10/2005, Fiji Islands.

We are in history but we cannot feel it because we are experiencing it from the inside. It is very special seeing that 15 countries which live together without fighting... In the same way, the external role of the Union is representing a vehicle to promote a way of working and problem solving. You cannot export the EU in all the countries, but you can export a part of the ideal. When you speak in Africa about democracy, you can always bring the EU as example. We are different among us, but we can live together and cooperate. We do not just say “democracy”, we say, look, in Europe you had people who were fighting, who were destroying each others, and now they work together, and so you can do the same. The fact that there is a “country” [*the EU*] that wants to cooperate and to promote its ideas of problem solving is the most important thing (interview 01).

The EU is, therefore, mainly seen as an example of peaceful interstate cooperation, an example which can *per se* constitute a peculiar aspect of its external identity. As the standardised presentation of the “EU as a global player” states, «the EU did not set out to become a world power. Born in the aftermath of World War II, its first concern was bringing together the nations and peoples of Europe».<sup>14</sup> Thus, the appeasement of Europe was and is effectively regarded as the main foundation of the process of integration even before the Union set up a form of foreign policy. It is precisely on the basis of the past that the path for the future is drawn: «In order to make sense of the future, it is necessary to have a full understanding of our past, and to learn from our mistakes. It was the struggle against totalitarianism in Europe, including the defeat of Nazi Germany, which led to the birth of the EU. European politicians vowed that never again should the principal powers of Europe descend into armed conflict».<sup>15</sup> «But – as is possible to read in the standardised presentation of the Union –as the Union expanded and took on more responsibilities, it had to define its relationships with the rest of the world».

Our commitment to global governance is also a result of our own successful experience in Europe. We have proven ourselves that cooperation and integration, based on strong institutions, pay off – both politically and economically. They can even overcome deep historical divisions. European integration has thus not only transformed the very fabric of our own continent. It has also shaped our European foreign policy.<sup>16</sup>

As a consequence of its multilateral, cooperative genesis, one of the main guidelines for external action will be, indeed, multilateralism, a special vocation which is equally emphasised in the official presentation of the role of the Union and in the words of delegates:

Our commitment to effective multilateralism is not just a rhetorical profession of faith. Nor does it mean that there would be no need to reform those institutions which have served as the bedrock of the international system since 1945. On the contrary, it means to actively reform and develop multilateral fora and promote a forward-looking common agenda. It also means taking the agreed global rules seriously, whether they concern the preservation of peace and security, the limitation of carbon emissions or international trade.<sup>17</sup>

We represent in the world the European democratic example, a model which is the counterpart to the US unipolarism. This is not to context the American democratic model, but to emphasise our multilateral vocation even in relation to our partners in the world. And this is clearly perceived throughout the world. The European democracy is born in the aftermath of two World Wars, so that the value of multilateralism is rooted in a specific historical pattern, in acquiring an important value, perceived also in third party states (interview 26).

The values that the Union embodies abroad are the same values which are central to the internal action of the Union, that is preserving peace: the top priority for me in the external relations of the EU, or should be. Then, the promotion of global development and the promotion of a multilateral method, the respect of the international law, as the basis for international relations, that’s probably something

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<sup>14</sup> We can find this standardised presentation of the EU as a global player in many Delegation websites, for instance, in [http://www.delafg.ec.europa.eu/en/eu\\_global\\_player/index.htm](http://www.delafg.ec.europa.eu/en/eu_global_player/index.htm).

<sup>15</sup> Speech of the Head of Delegation of Bangladesh on the occasion of the celebration of the Europe Day, 9 May 2006.

<sup>16</sup> “The European Union and the emerging world order”, speech by José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, 7<sup>th</sup> ECSA (European Community Studies Association) World Conference, Brussels, 30 November 2004.

<sup>17</sup> “The European Union and the emerging world order”, speech by José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, 7<sup>th</sup> ECSA (European Community Studies Association) World Conference, Brussels, 30 November 2004.



relatively new in international relations. So, I mean, if one wants to be very ambitious, I would say that we are proposing a new system of international relations, which is not based any longer in the balance of power, but on the rule of law (interview 32).

The EU is a leading voice in world affairs and wields significant influence through the collective voice of its members. It is a voice which has been placed at the service of responsible multilateralism. In the WTO, the EC is striving to ensure an outcome which not only advances the liberalization of world trade but which also recognizes the legitimate needs of Least Developed Countries. The EU has been an active advocate of action to tackle climate change, not least through its strong support to the Kyoto Protocol. It has actively backed the creation of international tribunals to bring human rights violators to justice, not least the International Criminal Court. The EU also recognises that its relative wealth and privilege entail responsibilities and it is hence the largest provider of development aid and humanitarian assistance in the world. The future of the EU will be shaped by the dynamics which have governed its development throughout the past 60 years. That means serving as a distinctive alternative power bloc, which not only works for solid, lasting co-operation within its borders, but also for such co-operation with States across the world.<sup>18</sup>

The role of multilateral appeaser, which constitutes the main foundation of the European experience is claimed to be the reason for which the Union has to take on more international responsibilities. «[...] To meet this challenge, the EU is developing a common foreign and security policy so that it can act as a force for stability, cooperation and understanding in the wider world».<sup>19</sup> We can see that – in the officials’ opinions – the development of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) is another peculiar element of the Union external identity, which constitutes, at the same time, the main difference and limits of its international capability to act.

#### 4. THE EU AS AN ATYPICAL FOREIGN POLICY ACTOR

If the inherent nature of the EU as a multilateral actor gives rise to a positive vision of the EU as a new, more peaceful, international actor, it also explains its inability to act. The EU is, indeed, a divided foreign policy actor. The standardised presentation of the Union as a global actor starts with a paragraph intending to explain how the Union conducts its external relations:<sup>20</sup>

Since its birth in the 1950s, the European Union has been developing relations with the rest of the world through a common policy on trade, development assistance and formal trade and cooperation agreements with individual countries or regional groups. The EU began providing humanitarian aid to those in need around the world in the 1970s. Since 1993, under the Maastricht Treaty, it has been developing a common foreign and security policy (CSFP) to enable it to take joint action when the interests of the Union as a whole are at stake. Defence is becoming an important aspect of the CFSP as the EU seeks to promote and maintain stability around the world. As it deals with terror, international crime, drug trafficking, illegal immigration and global issues like the environment, the Union also works closely with other countries and international organisations. The EU’s common trade policy operates at two levels. Firstly, within the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the European Union is actively involved in setting the rules for the multilateral system of global trade. Secondly, the EU negotiates its own bilateral trade agreements with countries or regional groups of countries. Development assistance and cooperation, originally concentrated in Africa, was extended to Asia, Latin America and the southern and eastern Mediterranean countries in the mid-1970s. The underlying purpose is always to support sustainable growth and development in the partner countries, so that they have the resources to tackle and eradicate poverty. The Union has every interest in supporting its partners and encouraging them to be successful and prosperous.

Strangely enough, this seems more an explanation of “what” the Union does, rather than an explanation of “how” it pursues these goals. However, we will see, the institutional configuration of the Union system of external relations is one of the main elements which leads to confusion for third parties and also, an element of frustration in the inability to achieve a “common voice” on

<sup>18</sup> Speech of the Head of Delegation Ridolfi on the occasion of the completion of the Lautoka teachers college undergraduate construction project – Lautoka, 20/10/2005, Fiji Islands.

<sup>19</sup> [http://www.delafg.ec.europa.eu/en/eu\\_global\\_player/index.htm](http://www.delafg.ec.europa.eu/en/eu_global_player/index.htm).

<sup>20</sup> [http://www.delafg.ec.europa.eu/en/eu\\_global\\_player/index.htm](http://www.delafg.ec.europa.eu/en/eu_global_player/index.htm).

behalf of officials. The institutional configuration of the system set up in order to deal with external affairs contributed to a triangular definition of the Union system of international relations, «a collective enterprise which allows its members to pursue partly common partly separated international actions» (Hill, 1996:2). The European external representation has similar characteristics to those of foreign policy: it varies according to issue areas and rests on a formula of coordination between the Commission, the Council and the Member States.<sup>21</sup>

The pillar-structure abroad is felt as an important feature of the daily work of the Heads of Delegation, often a constraint, which can affect deeply the EU's external image. A German Head of Delegation synthesises thus the issue of plurality of representations and how the Delegations are perceived abroad:

Third parties perceive the role of the Head of Delegation as representing the Union, so they do not easily differentiate between procedures, roles, represented on the one hand by whoever is at the chair of the Presidency at a given time by the ambassadors of Member States, and the Commission on the other hand. Generally speaking, people perceive the delegation as a key entry point for EU matters (interview 11).

Confusion is also encouraged by the variety of terminology used in the main documents: «It was very difficult for third parties to understand, because, some documents or some projects they were receiving were signed European Community or European Commission, European Union, Community in the singular, Communities in the plural... How can you explain this to your partners in third countries, if our Member States are not even understanding very well what they have to tell or to use? » (interview, 17). Such confusion is generally referred to by all respondents.<sup>22</sup> Thus, there is not necessarily an understanding of the Union system of international relations. Hence, the knowledge of the European Union – its institutional setting, its external role... – still makes a difference to third parties' perceptions of its external and diplomatic action. In the words of officials, this problem is even more acute when foreign policy matters are at stake. This is why, in the words of this Head of Delegation, for a Commission's official the smooth management of the European system of external relations can be defined as a substantive value of their action: «Personally, I think the most important value is trying to coordinate positions of the Member States. To make it very cautiously for the EU not to appear divided in third countries» (interview 039).

The institutional configuration of the EU and the degree of acceptance that officials show towards it determines deeply the way in which they describe the EU as a global actor. The EU is not necessarily seen as “an actor”, but as a sum of actors – the Council, the Member States and the Commission – which does not produce necessarily a single voice, but sometimes a choir. In general, there is a widespread claim to support moving on from a pillar structure. For the officials working in a Delegation, the problems of coordination caused by the pillar structure are undeniable:

Of course, it would be auspicious to have a stronger CFSP. This would make the job easier for all of us, because we could start to think about a truly common foreign policy, rather than a sum of policies

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<sup>21</sup> At the European level, the Maastricht Treaty and its subsequent modifications envisaged a differentiation of political actors following the distinction between Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and Common Commercial Policy (CCP). In addition, mixed competences – such as cooperation for development – correspond to the parallel action of the Commission and individual Member States. This consideration reveals that no institution enjoys an exclusive right of legation.

<sup>22</sup> These other two respondents show that a correct distinction is provided by the different roles covered respectively by the Commission and Member States, in including a neat judgment: «Member States' embassies are involved in promoting their own countries, and I think that European Delegations are perceived as proper European representations on this regard. It is also true that few persons know about the EU, therefore the difference is difficult to understand... I would say that the Delegations are perceived as representing the European position and identity. Sometimes, indeed, Delegations may even be considered a major player in diplomatic circles; for instance in the US, I would say that the Delegation is the fifth or the sixth in terms of influence» (interview 13). And: « In my country we are the bigger donors and “bailleurs de fonds”. And people continue to think that, as HoD, I am more important... This is not that glorious, but it is how it works. What is more, people think that I concretely work on the spot with some important development programmes, while Member States, most of the time, make politics. So, they have the vision that Member States do politics, and do stupid stuff, while us, we do development» (interview 08, my translation from French).

which seeks to find a compromise, which is always questionable on the least common denominator (interview 043).

The main problem we face in [*country I was posted in*] it is the lack of coherence of our actions. since we do not have a foreign minister, we are several actors, and therefore, as they come – Chirac, Berlusconi, Prodi and this and that...– they reflect what we are, and we are a **mosaic of various positions**. There is a sense of gravity somewhere there in that mosaic. But we are not a State, therefore we have no one, single, clear-cut, very legible foreign policy. And you can see that on human rights. Chirac comes and says something that even his briefing does not say, and tells to the [*country I was posted in*] staff: that they are very good. The Italians don't even raise human rights issues, because there are many businesses at stake. The Spaniards, they do that, but while saying that, at the same time, they're brothers with the [populations of the *country I was posted in*]. The British, the Finnish, the Swedish, and so on, they do because they have very little interests here, so they are free to say it. So, that is the mosaic of the EU. And we have to work with that (interview 041).

The reaction to this state of the art is, generally speaking, two-fold, following the well known distinction between supranationalist and intergovernmentalist visions of European external relations. Officials usually tend to be very respectful of their instructions and to accept the inherent limitation of their external role, but they diverge significantly both in interpretations and in preferences about the structure of the European system of external relations. We can synthesise the reasons behind the two positions in these two, very different, interventions:

In terms of CFPS, yes, there's a role that we can play, but that role can only being measured in as far as the Member States would allow that role to be played. In areas of CFSP, a number of our Member States have their own view, their own policies in terms of foreign relations or national interests. And therefore the Commission is in inverted commas, the servant of the Member States. I don't mean that in any derogatory way, but in terms of an instrument of Member States. Then, it can only play a role in terms of these confines. Now, where there's convergence in the views of Member States to devolve powers in terms of CFSP to the Commission, the Commission is indeed playing a role (interview 38).

Tout d'abord au niveau politique, il faut accroître l'esprit supranational, européiste de l'UE. Et alors, accroître le niveau européiste et supranational ça va dire finalement supprimer les pouvoirs des Etats Membres pour les donner à la Commission et à la Communauté. Et ça, en matière des relations extérieures n'est pas encore là. Pour moi l'élément essentiel c'est que l'Europe soit plus supranationale. Si elle ne l'est pas, elle succombe ( interview 42).

Even though these two positions cannot be treated as monolithic blocks – as the reasons beyond them are not – we can state that these two positions are nearly at odds within the sample of the interviewees:

*Political preferences on CFSP matters:*

Supranationalist	Intergovernmentalist
27	21

Frustration in the Union's inability to act sometimes leads the officials to feel themselves as a part of the Commission first (less tied to national interests and more to the so-called "common interest"), and of the Union later (still permeated by Member States' own interests and inability to act in the international scene).

We are the 16<sup>th</sup> member of the CFSP cooperation, so we count basically as a 16<sup>th</sup> partner, in addition to the 15 Member States, and, of course, we are a little bit more equal than the others are. Because we have all these participants in the Troika, we are a kind of "collective memory" for the CFSP. (...) I think that it would be better for Member States to act more cohesively. Together with the Commission, they are the Union and then the Union has a stronger political status. That is: the spirit of the treaties (interview 05).

As we can see in this intervention, the unique status of the Commission does not necessarily produce a quest for a more supranational CFSP. More modestly, it is the way the Commission acts

that makes for a more European approach, the only thing to favour in the long term. Even more extensively, this Head of Delegation speculates on this question:

I think we have to be more modest, and not to claim a bigger role, and not to hurt our Member States' feelings, because, in the future, with the delegations representing the EU as a whole, I think we are going to work even more closely with the diplomats of our Member States and colleagues of the Council Secretariat. Wonderful things in the European integration process have happened through a further integration of national services. I think that, if we can work together, this will make our strength even bigger, this is my personal view. Because we can influence, we can have a more European approach than national approach. So, I think that on the long run, we are the winner. So, Europe, not the Commission: because we are simply part of the Union (interview 39).

Generally speaking, Commission officials – as diplomatic representatives of a non-state actor – feel that they are in a unique situation, which distinguishes them from other diplomatic actors. As is possible to see from a contribution to the reform envisaged within the Constitution presented by the Bureau of Head of Delegations, the Union's diplomacy is perceived as somewhat different from classic diplomacy:

In contrast to classical diplomacy, we focus also much more on **regional issues** and **cross-border matters**. Whereas Member States put emphasis on political and security issues, considering economic development technical in nature, to be taken care of by experts and markets, our focus on trade, economic and social developments has allowed us a better insight into developments such as **regional integration** or **globalisation**. Much of the Union's external action is now devoted in one way or another to the use of “**soft power**” to propagate and encourage the adoption on forms of governance consonant with EU values (democracy and human rights, rule of law, social market economy, sustainability). This area falls between “noble” diplomacy and external economic diplomacy (both of which can be said to reflect the defence of the EU interests in the narrower sense) and the needs to be recognized clearly as a **specificity** of the diplomacy of the Union.<sup>23</sup>

Officials tend to perceive the Union as a carrier of high values and to envisage the consequences of its action as political in nature, through the spread of these values. In relation to its functions, the Union is viewed as a highly recognised actor who brings funds (interviews number 1, 8, 10; 23; 25) and know-how (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 20, 27; 38; 39; 24; 25, 26; 48), even if it may sometimes pursue this job in a contradictory way (14; 3, 4). Thus the Union is regarded as a peculiar diplomatic actor, less involved in politics (1, 2, 4, 6; 31; 40), but holding stronger values, reliability and neutrality. In a way, this is virtually the picture of a benevolent money-giver, distributing resources, powers and suggestions. Many interviewees connect these values to the peculiar “nature” of the Union, as a non-state actor in the international scene. Thus, for one official «the value is the one of a peaceful foreign policy. All Member States have military means at their disposal, even though they usually do not use them: but the EU foreign policy is not backed up by military means» (interview 02). Thus, a British Head of Delegation declared emblematically:

We are not imposing, we are not seeking to use historical relationships, as the British, we are not seeking to dictate as the Americans. If one is dealing with new ministries there is an initial suspicion, which is very rapidly dissipating, because of the way we operate. We are not saying we are now better, we are saying we can bring European knowledge to what they are trying to do. That is actually is something a very special role, differentiating us from bilateral donor or a single Member State (interview 14).

However, as has been noted, this “special role” is not always likely to emerge in foreign policy matters. Efforts to improve the effectiveness of the Union's international actorness are defined as slow, but continuous and, in both official speeches and declarations of interviewees, the claim for a stronger EU external role is unanimous: «If the EU wants to be an active, equal partner of the US, we need to further strengthen our European foreign policy. Hence, even constructive criticism is not

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<sup>23</sup> The role of the future Union's delegations of a Joint External Service (JES), Draft of the Report of the Bureau of Heads of Delegations, 17<sup>th</sup> December 2003: *Emphasis in text*.

a substitute for creating a more assertive EU role on the world stage. We need to get our own act together and strengthen the EU's external role».<sup>24</sup> In terms of results, an oscillating picture is given, in portraying at time successful performance at time failures. «Only a few months later [*since the CFSP was formalised*], war broke out in former Yugoslavia. The European Union tried unsuccessfully to broker a political solution to the crisis. [...] The lessons of this experience were not lost.»<sup>25</sup>

The EU has been a steadfast partner in the stabilization and recovery process of Afghanistan. [...] There were important discussions in New York on moving towards lasting peace in Lebanon. The EU played a vital role, together with the US, in obtaining Resolution 1701 and European troops now form the backbone of the UN peacekeeping force. [...] We are now bolstering our support for the most pressing priorities: strengthening the rule of law and internal security forces, reviving the economy, creating jobs and generating family income. Institutional reforms and state-building are essential for the country's socioeconomic reconstruction. Only that way will we see the strong, sovereign unified and politically independent country which is essential for lasting peace in the region.<sup>26</sup>

## 5. THE UNION AND THE WORLD TRADE SYSTEM: A ZEALOT AND RELIABLE PARTNER?

Delegation websites provide a definition of the international role of the Union. As we will see, this presentation synthesises well the way in which the Delegates perceive the image of Europe in the world, even if some differences still remain. The main differences concern the role of the EU as an international trade actor.

As a simple operation of counting of words would suggest, in the official presentation provided in websites, the most emphasised aspect of the peculiarity of the Union action in the world is the special status attributed to international trade. The emphasis on trade-related benefits to the world is the element that distinguishes the most the official vision of the Union given by the Commission from the declaration of Commission delegates. The official positions in trade matters seem to be related to three reasons:

1. The first reason is the weight that the Union acquired in the world trade system: «The European Union is the world's biggest trader, accounting for 20% of global imports and exports. Open trade among its members underpinned the launch of the EU nearly 50 years ago and has brought growing prosperity to all its member states».
2. The second reason is that the Union has a Common Commercial Policy, which means that the management of trade issues is *communitarised*, allowing a smooth and cohesive European presence in the world: «The EU is one of the key players in the World Trade Organisation (WTO). This is because the EU has a common trade policy, where the European Commission negotiates on behalf of the Union's 25 Member States».
3. Finally, international trade is portrayed as a vehicle of higher values. Indeed, the Union attaches to its modus to pursue international trade some substantive values related to its multilateral vocation, support for common rules, and above all to the fight to poverty.<sup>27</sup> Thus, it is precisely the link with development which marks the value of the EU role of international trader. The Union has, in its history, developed a series of instruments to boost the relation between trade and

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<sup>24</sup> «The European Union and the emerging world order», speech by José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, 7<sup>th</sup> ECSA (European Community Studies Association) World Conference, Brussels, 30 November 2004.

<sup>25</sup> [http://www.delafg.ec.europa.eu/en/eu\\_global\\_player/index.htm](http://www.delafg.ec.europa.eu/en/eu_global_player/index.htm)

<sup>26</sup> «The European Union: a global player», speech by Benita Ferrero Waldner, Commissioner for External Relations and the European Neighbourhood Policy, George Bush Presidential Library Foundation and Texas. A& M – University EU Center of Excellence – College Station, Texas, 25 September 2006.

<sup>27</sup> More precisely, the values that the Commission attaches to global trade are symbolised by the following instruments: trade and development; generalised system of preferences (GPS); access to essential medicines; trade and environment; sustainability impact assessment (SIA); trade and social welfare; corporate social responsibility (CSR); civil society dialogue. A more extensive report of these instruments can be found at:

[www.ec.europa.eu/tradeissues/global/index\\_en.htm](http://www.ec.europa.eu/tradeissues/global/index_en.htm).

development. «The EU's agreements with its partners around the globe cover not only trade and traditional financial and technical assistance but also economic and other reforms as well as support for infrastructure and health and education programmes. They also provide a framework for political dialogue and contain a clause which enables the Union to suspend or cancel trade or aid if the partner country violates human rights. Moreover, in 2003, the EU decided that all new agreements must include a clause in which its partners commit themselves to the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction». «As early as 1971, under its 'generalised system of preferences' (GSP), the EU began reducing or removing tariffs and quotas on its imports from developing countries. Furthermore, through its 'Everything but arms' initiative launched in 2001, the Union grants the 49 least-developed countries free access to the EU market for all their products, except weapons».<sup>28</sup> It is said that «the EU's trade policy is closely linked to its development policy. The two come together as the Union assumes its share of responsibility to help developing countries fight poverty and integrate into the global economy». Even more extensively,

The Union therefore takes a lead in efforts to open up world trade for the benefit of rich and poor countries alike. Increased trade is likely to boost world growth to everybody's advantage. It brings consumers a wider range of products to choose from [...]. The EU believes that globalisation can bring economic benefits to all, including the developing countries, provided appropriate rules are adopted at the multilateral level and efforts are made to integrate developing countries in world trade. That is why the European Union is negotiating with its partners to open up trade in both goods and services. The EU seeks to help developing countries by giving them better access to its market in the short term, while allowing them more time to open their own markets to European products. At the same time, the EU is reforming its agricultural policy – and this too will benefit developing countries.

However, the EU often received contestations to its developmental credentials in trade matters. These critics relate mostly to the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) in general, and, more specifically, to the maintenance of its high agricultural subsidies, an issue which forces the EU to strike a balance between the protection of European farmers and the distortions in international trade. To face these criticisms, in view of the WTO ministerial Meeting in Hong Kong, the EU tabled in October 2005 what it called an “unprecedented offer”: «a 70% reduction in trade distorting agriculture subsidies, a 60% reduction on highest agriculture tariffs and an average of 46%, total elimination of export subsidies». However, the US and the G20 requested deeper cuts, «without offering in exchange clear indications of market opening in industrial products and services or even disciplining their own trade-distorting programs in agriculture This forced all the parties to go to Hong Kong with a lower level of ambition. Not surprisingly, the Ministerial Conference did not deliver great progress but avoided failure and left the door open to continue negotiations». This situation brought Peter Mandelson – Commissioner of the Directorate General for Trade – to harshly complain for the reputation that the EU has in this matter:

Few criticisms of the European Union have quite as much media currency as the caricature of a continent of coddled farmers and sky high farm tariffs. Europe's reputation for agricultural protectionism may have been deserved two decades ago, but it is time that the caricature caught up with the facts. Europe is the world's biggest importer of agricultural produce from the developing world. It takes almost all of Africa's agricultural exports and almost half of Latin America's. Under our preferential access schemes most of these goods enter the European Union completely free of any duty or quota. No other developed country extends the same openness to agricultural exports from the developing world. Close watchers of the Doha negotiation will have noted that it is not poor countries that are pushing for steeper cuts to Europe's agricultural tariffs - most of these countries already pay nothing at all - but highly competitive agricultural exporters like Brazil, the US and Australia. Preferential access is in some cases the only thing that allows poorer African countries to compete in Europe's huge market with competitive global farm exporters like Australia and Brazil. As Europe cuts its tariffs these countries will need help and time to adjust - and it can't happen overnight.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> [www.ec.europa.eu/tradeissues/index\\_en.htm](http://www.ec.europa.eu/tradeissues/index_en.htm) .

<sup>29</sup> «Forget the caricature; Europe is facing up to farm trade reform» – Speech by EU Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson, in the Australian Financial Review©, Melbourne, Australia, 31 August 2006.



As the former Head of the Delegation in Australia declared, when agricultural issues are at stake, EU representatives confront some “automatic reflexes” which are in a way colonising and misleading:

The CAP remains a source of irritation and triggers automatic reflexes in many Australians. Now, it is generally accepted that it is safer for a diplomat to abstain from expressing views on the host country's policies - and I have never had a problem with that. But in Australia I learnt that it was also safer to abstain from commenting even when our own affairs are involved. The EU is in fact a bit like an ambulance that becomes a free target but is not entitled to shoot back! <sup>30</sup>

It is probably the contested character of the policy sector which leads officials to simply not refer to the management of international trade among the substantive values of the European international presence. Of nearly 50 interviews, only three interviewees mentioned “a well organised trade” among the distinctive features of the international action of the EU (interview 05, 06, 07), while the others prefer not to confront the issue. For those officials having mentioned the issue in positive terms, the nature of the EU as a reliable trade partner is in no doubt: «we are not there to exploit anything; we are there to cooperate and in everybody’s interest. Trade and economic cooperation have the advantages that they normally benefit the both sides. You create jobs and employment, and therefore it promotes development. Therefore, I think we are seen as positive, good partners» (interview 05). For others, the issue is far more problematic, as is the case for this official:

I don’t think banana producers understood that they lost their job because they produce bananas cheaper than in any parts of the world... As they do not have the capacity of reform in other sectors, you can’t offer a means to gain an income at this moment, because the capacity to invest in another sector is not there... maybe in the long term, but not in the short... Those producing sugar by giving them higher prices than the world’s price, and you create employment, but you should reduce world market prices, so it’s useless to produce sugar in countries that are not compatible. You put all industries out of this job. And from the development side, is sometime better to pay a price that it’s higher, because they are not competitive, DG Trade would say that in the long term is better to stop. That’s the friction (interview 010).

## **6. THE EUROPEAN UNION AS A DEVELOPMENTAL ACTOR. LINKING PROSPERITY WITH HUMAN RIGHT AND DEMOCRATIC PROGRESS**

Près de la moitié des fonds destinés à aider les pays pauvres proviennent de l'Union européenne et de ses États membres, ce qui fait de l'Union le principal pourvoyeur d'aide dans le monde. Toutefois, une politique de développement ne se limite pas à la fourniture d'eau potable ou à l'amélioration du réseau routier, pour importantes que soient ces mesures. L'Union s'appuie aussi sur le commerce pour favoriser le développement en ouvrant ses marchés aux exportations des pays pauvres et en encourageant ceux-ci à intensifier les échanges entre eux. *Le commerce* et l'aide sont les deux piliers de la politique de développement de l'Union. Ils sont inséparables dans le cadre de la mission qui lui incombe d'aider les pays en développement à lutter contre la pauvreté et à s'intégrer dans une économie devenue mondiale.<sup>31</sup>

As we have seen, development and trade are two instruments which go hand in hand for the EU international strategy: «il y a longtemps que l'Union européenne a compris que le commerce peut stimuler la croissance économique et les capacités de production des nations pauvres. Dès 1971, dans le cadre de son «système de préférences généralisées» (SPG), l'Union a réduit ou supprimé les droits de douane et éliminé les contingents sur la plupart de ses importations provenant des pays en développement. En vertu d'un programme lancé en 2001, elle supprime actuellement les droits de douane sur l'ensemble des exportations des 49 pays les moins avancés (PMA), à la seule exception des armes. C'est pourquoi la stratégie de développement de l'Union se concentre aussi sur l'aide financière et technique afin d'améliorer les infrastructures physiques et sociales de base ainsi que le

<sup>30</sup> The EU-Australia Relationship: Reflections of a European Envoy – *National Europe Centre, ANU - 25 August 2005* – HE Mr Piergiorgio Mazzocchi, Ambassador, Delegation of the European Commission to Australia and New Zealand.

<sup>31</sup> L'UE et la politique du développement, in <http://www.delmr.ec.europa.eu/>.

potentiel de production des nations pauvres, tout en renforçant leurs capacités administratives et institutionnelles. Ce soutien peut aussi les aider à tirer parti des possibilités offertes par le commerce international et à attirer davantage d'investissements étrangers pour élargir leur assise économique».<sup>32</sup>

But, whereas the role of the Union as a global trade leader does not receive due attention in the declarations of delegates, development is one of the most quoted goals/principles recognised in the international presence of the Union. For many of them, the possibility to work for development has been the principal reason for their interest in the European Community. «I work in aid for development for a moral choice, and through the Commission, because I believe that unity allows us to have a more balanced position towards Less Developed Countries (LDCs), as it is not a vehicle of merely egoistic interests, but rests on a shared vision of the world» (interview 06). The Union development policy focuses on six domains: «the link between trade and development; regional integration and cooperation; support to healthy macroeconomic politics; transports; food security and lasting rural development; increase of the institutional capabilities (in particular, good governance and rule of law)».<sup>33</sup> The new agreements signed with LDCs in particular touch upon a strategy based on five pillars: «une dimension politique globale, la promotion des approches participatives, une concentration sur l'objectif de la réduction de la pauvreté, l'établissement d'un nouveau cadre de coopération économique et commerciale, et une réforme de la coopération financière».<sup>34</sup> This strategy is highly shared among delegates, and marks, in their view, a peculiarity of the European presence as a developmental actor. This overall strategy ties closely the pursuit of development to «the respect of human rights, democratic principles and rule of law, which constitute the essential elements of the partnership».<sup>35</sup> «L'Union soutient aussi l'auto-assistance et des stratégies d'éradication de la pauvreté qui permettent aux pays en développement de consolider le processus démocratique, d'étendre les programmes sociaux, de renforcer le cadre institutionnel, d'augmenter les capacités des secteurs public et privé et de mieux faire respecter les droits de l'homme, notamment l'égalité entre les hommes et les femmes. L'ensemble des accords de commerce et de coopération conclus entre l'Union européenne et les pays tiers comportent désormais systématiquement une clause relative aux droits de l'homme; le non-respect de cette dernière entraîne des pénalités automatiques se traduisant par une limitation de l'accès aux marchés ou par le gel ou l'annulation des projets d'aide». In the eyes of delegates, this relationship is not in doubt, and links the nature of the EU as a developmental actor with that of the EU as a pioneer of human rights and democratic reform throughout the world:

With Lomé there are contents and a precise will to promote real development. Since the first Lomé Convention, a choice has been done, which favours the co-management of funds; not merely the fact that there is a common signature of the conditions, but also for the foreseeable nature of the allocated resources for each countries, in light of neutral criteria. This allows Less Developed Countries to plan their development, on the basis of the resources they gain. But there is also a relationship based on the feeling that global stability is cut across by unbalanced distribution of resources, and that through a better distribution, we can transfer resources to the less advantaged. There is, then, a strategic content, a commercial content, an exchange of utilities, but above all a vision that I would call ethic, moral: the vision stemming from those values constituting the European space (interview 06).

Our values can be summarised in two or three points. First, you have cooperation, of course. Because, we have a lot of money, and they are expecting from the donors much support, sometimes they for the main policy strategy. The second is the respect and the experience Europe has in regional integration. I believe that in the next few years, ten years, even Latin America will have something similar; there it is still a novelty, but you have already an Union in Africa. They have an African Union, and we are supporting it, and it could be an excellent interlocutor. We have of course a third point, I insist once

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<sup>32</sup> <http://www.delmrt.ec.europa.eu/>.

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.delmrt.ec.europa.eu/>.

<sup>34</sup> L'UE et la politique du développement, in <http://www.delmrt.ec.europa.eu/>.

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.delmrt.ec.europa.eu/>.



again, is our experience in human rights, rule of law and the principles of Cotonou Agreement. So, we are the good messengers for this (interview 24).<sup>36</sup>

This positive picture is somehow questioned even in the official presentation of the Commission, as these values, which are at the core of the European external identity, are not always coherently pursued: «L'Union européenne et ses États membres consacrent plus de 30 milliards d'euros par an à l'aide publique aux pays en développement. Sur ce montant, environ 6 milliards sont octroyés par l'intermédiaire de l'Union. Celle-ci s'est engagée à faire passer le total annuel de 30 à 39 milliards d'euros d'ici 2006. Bien que les membres de l'Union, comme d'autres pays industrialisés, aient accepté l'objectif d'une aide annuelle correspondant à 0,7 % de leur PNB, seuls le Danemark, le Luxembourg, les Pays-Bas et la Suède l'ont atteint. Les autres pays se sont engagés à rattraper leur retard. La moyenne générale de l'Union, qui est de 0,34 %, est supérieure à celle des États-Unis ou du Japon». <sup>37</sup> Some delegates also underline the incoherence of the European actors in the pursuit of the high values they proclaim, and declare that, at times, the host countries perceive this also:

I think the principle is globalism, solidarity with the Less Developed and their people, peaceful solution of problems, democracy, good governance, human rights, I think all of these things are very important, sometimes they sound like empty slogans, and sometimes they sound like complete hypocrisy, because we often say things and we don't do them. But I mean, if you look at the EU, you look at it Member States, you say that they do represent certain basic values, that they may represent them imperfectly, and... sometimes we are hypocritical, sometime without even realising that we are, in many countries we urge upon them to reform their economies, but you look how difficult some of the governments of the Member States are finding to get reform passed in their own countries (interview 4).

Our values are solidarity, peace, human rights, democracy. But the Union is not always perceived as coherent on those fields. In a country like Zimbabwe this is a recurrent criticism. Maybe to the neighbour we did not impose any sanction for some non transparent elections. Well, this should not be an alibi for a country not to comply with our rules, and we have always to make a case by case analysis on the general trend of a country: it is not possible to compare. But, nonetheless, the country perceives strongly this incoherence (interview 15).

One interviewee, in particular, declares that the action of the Union changed progressively following the parameters imposed by other Intergovernmental Organisations, such as the IMF and the World Bank. This change altered the original vocation of the Union's development policy, in depriving it from "its soul":

Yes, our action before we went to Structural Adjustments was completely different from the one of the IMF. We weren't speaking with them, and DG I or DG DEV were saying: if the WB refuse that project, we'll do it! When the SA started to be "fashionable", we had big discussions with DG, cabinet, commissioner, and Fritz said "ok, we lost our soul". He was right. Well now, we are little dog of the WB and IMF, that's all. Even when we try to skip away, we are completely dominated from the IMF and the WB. That's a fact. In the same way, we are trying to influence the WB and the IMF, that's also true (interview 08).

As we have seen, the Commission is quite attentive in getting rid of its negative reputation, and in 2000 started a project of reform of its external aid which moves in the direction of a more efficient management and delivery of aid: «Responding to concerns about the effectiveness of aid programmes in general, the European Commission presented a major reorientation in the summer of 2000 of its development policy. This is designed to bring its internal organisation, procedures and

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<sup>36</sup> This is a widely spread opinion, obvious in many statements, for instance: « The main value is the hand we give to our partners, without asking nothing in exchange. For the most part, our aid is unredeemable. Then, we are able to give a neutral aid without anything back, with a little flag, which is the European ideal» (interview 23); «I think is the value of solidarity, from my experience: solidarity, through cooperation, through humanitarian aid, contacts with Non-Governmental Organisations. The history of the EU is a history of solidarity, when people start to understand what the EU is, that's what they perceive. Is not always the case, but I think it is solidarity and peace» (interview 18); «We represent humanism, attachment to a European, fair, social model, which tries to share with its new partners not merely some economic or financial functions. And I think we are perceived alike abroad as well» (interview 08).

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.delmr.ec.europa.eu/>.

methods up to international best practice and provide a new vision of its core objectives. Central to the new strategy are attempts to integrate developing countries into the international economic system, to encourage them in their efforts at regional integration, to use the EU's considerable expertise and financial means to provide a critical mass, as in the transport sector, and to relate more closely to what other donors are doing».

## **7. WHO ARE WE AND WHAT ARE WE NOT?**

We have seen that the Union is portrayed as an atypical foreign policy actor, whose identity is embedded in its choice to pursue a multilateral, multinational model of international actorness. Among officials, it is widely accepted that the main foundations of European presence are linked to its main goals: peace, prosperity, development, multilateralism, respect for human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

Officials feel European, they are part of a project, contribute, with different priorities and degrees of understanding, to the construction of a wholly original model both of regional integration and of the international system. Officials tend to see the Union as having high values, yet these are not necessarily the same, and the definition and ranking of objectives accounts for differences. There is a general claim to enhance the political role of the Union as a whole, but no single picture of what kind of stronger actor it should be. In order to depict how the EU as an international actor is pictured and defined, the recurring patterns present in the interviews have been employed. On this basis, a series of metaphors have been identified in order to describe what kind of international actor the EU appears to be:

### ***The Union as a “not into politics” actor***

This image, made clear by some officials' statements, sees the action of the Union as not influenced by bilateral and egoistic interests in the pursuit of its foreign policy. This underlines one of the most prominent effects of the non-national nature of its international presence: in contrast to the nation-states, there is no straightforward relationship between interests and external actorness, however the so-called common interest may be defined. The fact that the objectives that the EU declares to pursue are *milieu goals*, rather than *possession goals* (Wolfers, in Smith, 2003:107), is probably a further element which explains officials' affiliation to the Union: its political mission rests more on principles and objectives rather than on interests.

### ***The Commission and Union as a new model of an international system***

This image – which is definitely the most recurrent theme – stresses that the main foundation of the whole EU experience stems from its multilateral genesis. The European Union – which is the institutionalised result of a series of agreements among its members – is felt to promote an international system founded on the rule of law, and, as such, it is seen to be offering a normative path for the international system. This metaphor is clearly related to the previous one; it comprises a wide range of images of international actions and governance: the Union as a “non colonial” international actor, the Union bans war as an international means of resolving controversies, the Union does not possess an army... Most importantly, the Union's added value in the international scene derives from the example it presents as a model of regional cooperation, a model that is likely to spread both through the politics of enlargement and neighbourhood, and through its policies towards less developed countries (LDCs). The absence of *possession goals* on the part of the Union legitimises its aspiration to create a new model, following the objectives declared: respect for human rights, cultural tolerance, rule of law, international law. In the words of this official: «The Union is a vehicle to promote a way of working and problem solving. In giving an example of how to work, we are already transmitting a very important value... I mean, you cannot export the EU in all countries, but you can export a part of the ideal » (interview 01).

### ***The Commission and Union as a development actor***

A surprisingly important element in the officials' declarations is the role of the Union as a means of poverty reduction, solidarity, and development for LDCs. Many officials declare that they joined the Commission with an explicit goal to "make the difference" in matters of development, to quote the words of a young official. This element is truly important for officials, and is one of the most quoted goals that the Union pursues in the international arena, as «unity allows us to have a more balanced position towards LDCs, as it is not a vehicle of merely egoistic interests, but rests on a shared vision of the world» (interview 06).

Counting images of Europe within the sample, one realises that the element that characterises most officials' visions of Europe is the unique character that the European Union holds in the international arena. It is precisely the awareness of not being a state which makes the Union a new model for the international system. The Union, which is seen as an original model of regional integration, represents a new international actor, able to reconcile interests and ideas in the pursuit of its foreign policy. The other images follow as a further substantiation of this concept.

***Counting images of Europe***

The Commission and Union as a new model for the international system	20
The Commission and Union as a not-into-politics actor	6
The Commission and Union as a developmental actor	10

This element contributes to the definition of "being different from", in thus highlighting the content of the process of *othering*. With a healthy provocative spirit, Denzin and Lincoln (in Hubermas and Miles, 1994) underline how colonising the discourse of Other can be when trying to depict the constitutive features of an actor's identity: «often this speech about the "Other" is also a mask, a oppressive talk hiding gaps and absences [...]» (Hooks, 1990; 151-152, quoted in Denzin and Lincoln, 1994: 71). This, however, suggests that no clear definition of who the Other is could be given. Indeed, officials do not speak of such a concept, even though, being a "State" is identifiable in terms of difference, both in relation to the international subjectivity that it implies and in relation to the practices and modalities of action that it entails. "Others", in officials' discourses, are always blurred and seen in their complexity, as is the case for the self-definition. This statement concerns all the significant others which touch upon the self-definitions of the officials:

***The significant other "at home", the Member States***

Despite the officials' claim to have good relations with them abroad and to accept the institutional design of the Union, the Member States are seen as the relevant others which compose the "European group". In the words of some officials, the Commission has historically been designated as the "guardian" of the Treaty, the depositary of the common interest, and the genuine laboratory of the "new European men", while the Member States represent, at the same time, the principles and the frontier of the European experience. In this sense, in spite of the fact that many officials often refer to Member States as "our Member States", there are also signs of opposition and of general disapproval for the lack of advancements in CFSP matters.

***The most relevant other in the international system: the US***

In defining where Europe stands in the international system, some officials answered that Europe represents an "alternative to US unipolarism". However, in no case has there been a straightforward definition of the US as "the Other", in net conflicting terms.

When we speak about the global system in the new century, our relations with the United States are fundamental. The global challenges cannot be tackled efficiently if the EU and the US disagree. Let us not lose sight of the fact that the relationship between the United States and Europe constitutes the

world's strongest, most comprehensive and strategically most important partnership. There is much more that unites us than that divides us, in political, economic and societal terms. Consequently, we have a window of opportunity to reinvigorate the transatlantic relationship. Today's international problems are simply too complex to "go it alone".<sup>38</sup>

The US is always defined as an antagonist, but also as an ally: it is seen as a "model of democracy", but also as an alternative model of international actor. Above all, the war in Iraq and the "mission makes the coalition"-method proclaimed by the Bush's administration, contributed to the definition of the US as a unipolar actor in the international system, radically opposed to what the officials claim to represent, mainly multilateralism. This assumption also reveals the ambition to play a leading part in the international system, as a result of the major guarantees which the Union could provide as a global leader.

We became an alternative to US. And this is very strong in the countries where I lived: they felt it. We are a constructive alternative, I do not mean adversaries. A new view of the problem. I can give you an example. On free trade, the Americans normally have a menu, saying: take it or leave it, when they present partnership to third countries. We have another approach, a more constructive approach, in the sense, that we include processes that third countries build with us: we say, if you want to go in the direction of free trade, let's work together, we can give you expertise, we can support you with technical assistance and let's see the common and divergent points. And so, it's a stronger, more solid process. They see in us an alternative, with a different approach, a much more constructive approach, more elaborated approach. And that's way I am very proud to be part of this process of the EU (interview 24).

### ***The cultural other: Islam***

For those officials having worked in North Africa and the Middle East, the most commonly mentioned cultural other is Islam. Surprisingly enough, after the shock of September 11, there is no trace of cultural antagonism in the words of officials. Rather, according to one official, their position towards Islam can be synthesised in the following way: «we have to eliminate any sensation that there could be any type of contrast between the European or the western world, in a broad sense, and the Arab culture or the Muslim religion» (interview 53). Another confirms «as Patten said, we had to love them [*moderate Muslims*] and we did, and we do». Thus, in the officials' statements, the recipe in order to move towards a commonly defined "global threat" is not to fall into generalisations, but to give a hand and be inherently friendly, an element which is often presented as different from the US.

### ***The Other is in the past: the Soviet Union***

The only definition of a conflicting Other, in the interviews, has been an enemy of the past: the Soviet Union. For those officials with a long experience in the network, the Soviet Union constituted a "material other", in the sense that it has influenced the expansion of the network and, as such, the definition of the European living space. This is, indeed, the only entity that could be treated as an Other. Probably the climate of the Cold War made it easier than the present climate to identify an Other on a dichotomised basis.

The definition of the Others even if merely sketched, confirms the intrinsic centrality given to the condition of being a non-state actor on the international stage, an aspect which is profoundly linked to the unique role that this position entails.

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<sup>38</sup> "The European Union and the emerging world order", speech by José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, 7<sup>th</sup> ECSA (European Community Studies Association) World Conference, Brussels, 30 November 2004.

## 8. CONCLUSIONS: IMAGES OF EUROPEAN PRESENCE IN THE WORLD

“The European Union *is* a global player”, Commission officials have not doubts in this regard. In the first place, it is the champion of regional integration and multilateralism, as its foundations themselves witness the commitment for peace and unity in internal as well as international problems.

It is precisely its multinational structure and its claim for “unity in diversity” which reduce its international capability to act, in making it an atypical foreign policy actor. Not to be a state renders Europe less effective, but it also makes it better able to propose an alternative international system. The quality of the European presence is reflected in its efforts to contribute for a fair trade system and the development of a prosperous and democratic world system.

As we have seen, the official image of the European presence in the world stage and that given by the delegates are not always interchangeable. The Commission’s official image of Europe relies the most on Europe’s role as a trade champion and on the potential role that the EU could also have in foreign and security matters. In this sense, the Commission’s presentation of the Union seems to emphasise an image of the Union which relates to its potential power on the global stage. On the contrary, officials seem to put the emphasis on more “idealistic” values in portraying the international image of the Union.

In this sense, officials seem to believe that it is precisely the unique character of the Union as a global actor that can give rise to a different player in the global scenario. The three metaphors – the Commission and Union as a not-into-politics actor, the Commission and Union as a new model for the international system, and the Commission and Union as a development actor – show the awareness of the peculiar role that the Union has in the international arena. Many statements reported in this report recall the idea of representing a “strange entity”, something difficult to explain and to which many observers – including some Member States’ representatives – are not accustomed to. This element describes the awareness of not being a State and to represent, as such, a new model for the international system. The attempt to combine different national identities and interests brings about a form of mediation between these identities and interests, which allows the emergence of a *European way* to international actorness. In officials’ eyes, *Europeanness* in the international arena means being both a model of regional cooperation and being able to guarantee a more balanced system than individual States and not merely the incapacity to act on its own as a State could.

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FORUM ON THE PROBLEMS OF PEACE AND WAR  
GARNET - Jointly Executed Research Project 5.2.1

**THE EXTERNAL IMAGE OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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***The EU Viewed by the Others:  
drawing some conclusions***

**Lorenzo Fioramonti and Sonia Lucarelli**



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## 1. Introduction

As we have seen in the Introduction to this Survey, according to its self-representation the EU is a qualitatively different actor in world politics. The underlying assumption of this self-perception is that the EU, in its global actions, follows values, principles and approaches that are different from those of nation-states (especially the US, but also EU member states) and other international organisations (such as the international financial institutions, or other regional institutions, such as Mercosur, which are almost exclusively concerned with economic goals). This view is interestingly largely shared by the Commission's delegations worldwide (Carta 2007).

While investigating this alleged peculiarity, most scholars have looked mainly at issues such as global order, peace and constitutionalism (e.g. human rights, rule of law), evidencing elements of peculiarity (Bretherton & Vogler 2005; Keukeleire 2002; Lucarelli & Manners 2006; Manners 2002, Scheipers & Sicurelli 2007; Telò 2006; Whitman 1998), but also inconsistencies (Bicchi 2006; Panebianco 2006; K. Smith 2006). However, the EU's international actions in other policy sectors, such the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), are much more controversial and multi-faceted. Interestingly, these other policies are likely to be those that affect foreign citizens and governments the most and, in turn, those that play the most crucial role in shaping the external perceptions of the EU. Furthermore, most observers have focused their attention on the different foreign policy 'philosophies' between the EU and the US. In their overriding prominent interest in analysing the EU's international role vis-à-vis key counterparts such as the US, authors have missed out on how the EU is perceived by other societies, especially outside "the West". And yet, it is precisely these countries that constitute an important source of information on the EU's external image, as the EU claims to have adopted a different approach to the most significant geo-political and economic problems affecting the international system and see developing countries as the most heavily affected. In short, the existing literature in assessing to what extent the EU's self-perception is confirmed by performance, has forgot to ask the most crucial key informants (i.e. the targeted societies) what they think. Nor is such a gap overcome by other branches of literature, as the corpus of literature explicitly dealing with EU's external image is very small, fragmented and at an early stage.

This Survey on *The External Image of the European Union* aimed at filling such a gap, by looking at how public opinion, political elites, civil society organisations and the media view the EU in a sample of core countries in Latin America (Brazil), Asia (India, China and Japan), Africa (South Africa and Egypt), Oceania (Australia) and North America (Canada). These countries differ from a

multitude of points of view: some are former colonies, others are not; some are democracies, others non-democratic regimes; some are important countries in largely developing regions, others are Western countries outside Europe (Canada and Australia). All together, they are a relevant sample of non-European countries possibly affected by EU foreign policy, whose perception of the EU is politically relevant for the type of role that each of those countries is able to play in its own region and world-wide. To this country-sample, we added two transversal reports on civil society and Commission delegations. The first was mainly aimed at evaluating communalities and differences between European and non-European organised civil society groups; the second was designed to evaluate what is the perception of EU's role in the world that people working in the Commission delegations develop through their interaction with the host country.

In the remaining sections of this chapter, we will draw some conclusions from the work undertaken.

## 2. Substantive Findings: images of the EU

A first reflection regards the availability of sources. This study was aimed primarily at 'mining' the available information on how the EU is viewed in third countries and the result was that only limited information exists on the country's image of the EU both in terms of relevant opinion polls and articles in newspapers. This limited amount of information is a finding in its own right, as it reveals that the EU is not necessarily a 'hot' topic for non-EU countries and that the global role of the EU is a less relevant issue beyond European borders. Such a finding is confirmed by the limited presence of news on the EU on non-European media.

In substantive terms, the main results of the Survey can be summarised by: (i) condensing the results of each report (which is the case of the executive summaries of each report); (ii) extrapolating a set of prevalent images, which cut across the various reports; (iii) observing significant differences among the case studies.

A very synthetic overview of the Reports is provided in tables 1 and 2 below.

Table 1 – Summary of Perceptions of the EU in Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Egypt, India, Japan and South Africa

	<b>Public opinion</b>	<b>Political elites</b>	<b>Civil society organisations</b>	<b>The media</b>
<b>Australia</b>	Significant knowledge of the EU Mainly positive image	Elites' perception influenced by eminent bilateral relation with individual EU MSs (Britain)	Limited attention Important role in human rights but more coherence is deemed necessary	US prevails; EU virtually invisible Frame: mainly <i>political</i> , second economic, last social. Most prominent sub-

	Economic power Protectionist power	Important but not Australia's most imp partner  Negative images prevail (trade barriers). Positive images refer to EU unity; human rights policy	Leading environmental agent	frame: international conflict management, anti-terrorism; constitution, enlargement, environment.
<b>Brazil</b>	Limited knowledge, but growing  Appreciation varies according to level of education	Strategic opportunity  Both economic partner and rival  Relevant impact on the international system	Promoter of environmental sustainability  Neoliberal actor	Economic power (trade).  Political attention is mainly devoted to "domestic" transformation
<b>Canada</b>	Scarce sources  Positive image  Call for more EU to counterbalance US	Positive views linked to environment, social policy (education and research); political-diplomatic initiatives  Negative images linked to CAP  No attention from political parties	Promoter of environmental sustainability	Little attention to EU  Most focus on institutional dimension  Internationally, economic dimension prevails  Political dimension focuses on human rights, EU in the Middle East.
<b>China</b>	Positive view not correlated with age / education	Strategic opportunity  Development-friendly  Supporter of multilateralism / multipolarism  Appreciation of soft security  Negative appreciation of EU's human rights policy  "Complementarity" EU - China	N/A	Little coverage  Essentially <i>political</i> and <i>economic</i> actor  Appreciation: neutral to positive
<b>Egypt</b>	Few sources available  Important partnership, yet regional partnership is preferred  Higher expectations	Possible counterbalance to US  Economic opportunity but also constraint  EU policy is security-driven  Criticism of EU's human rights & democracy conditionality	Potential human rights & democracy promoter (yet not for Muslim Brothers)	Security seeker  EU's economic "protectionism" (CAP) is criticised  Counterbalance to US  Appreciation of the integration experience  Lack of mutual understanding EU - Egypt  Criticism of EU's human rights & democracy conditionality
<b>India</b>	Poorly known actor	Supporter of multipolarism  Security seeker  Strategic opportunity  A protectionist market  EU – India shared values	Promoter of environmental sustainability  Neoliberal & protectionist (CAP) actor	Little known actor and unclear entity  Economic & political power, but by far second to US  Various references to EU's human rights policy, aid policy, soft security (largely

				positive images) Security seeker
<b>Japan</b>	Random surveys Ambivalent and controversial findings	Similar security priorities, democratic values, and economic visions Japan- EU  EU model of environmental protection  EU study object'	Invisible partner for NGOs  More appreciated by business community	EU mainly economic actor, but political focus in crucial years (enlargement, Iraq war, etc.)
<b>South Africa</b>	Less known actor and viewed as ineffective	Model of regional integration  Strategic opportunity  A protectionist market	Neoliberal actor in foreign policy  A social model internally	Little known actor

Table 2. Images of the EU in Commission delegations and among Civic Society Organisations

<b>Social movements, trade unions and NGOs</b>	<p>Similar framing of the EU among European and Non-European civil society. Similar attempt at creating 'another' Europe, more democratic, peaceful, ecologist and social.</p> <p>Ambivalent picture of a powerful political community with both a hegemonic but also a socially transformative and democratic aspiration.</p> <p>Overall criticism of the EU as a neoliberal economic power.</p> <p>Non European NGOs dealing with non-economic issues, such as human rights, women rights and peace, regard the EU as a potential ally to bring transformation for the better (human rights and democratisation).</p> <p>Non-Europeans criticise European NGOs for their little democratic credentials</p>
<b>Commission delegations</b>	<p>The foundations of the EU international presence are considered to lay on the lessons drawn by its history.</p> <p>The element that characterises most officials' image of the EU is the unique character that the European Union holds in the international arena. Yet the EU's peculiar structure is recognised to be a constraint to EU coherence.</p> <p>The EU is considered a champion of the multilateral method, an actor that pursues "higher goals" through its trade relations (human rights, development, institutional building, poverty reduction, etc).</p> <p>The Union is mainly described through three metaphors: a new model for the international system, a not-into-politics actor, and a developmental actor.</p>

Tables 1 and 2 offer a snapshot of the various 'images' which emerge from the Survey reports. However, the reports offer plenty of details not only regarding the similarities but also the differences within and across countries. The next section discusses this in greater detail.

- *A less known and less debated actor for public opinion and the media* - Despite the fact that the EU flag is regularly displayed in all EU delegations and is printed in thousands of booklets

and brochures (from film festivals to music concerts subsidised by EU development cooperation programmes), it appears that in general very few people have an idea of what the EU is and, even less, what its policies, motives and goals are. The degree of knowledge of the EU seems to be very much dependent on the level of education and societal position. Furthermore, the knowledge of Europe is frequently related to the relationship with individual European countries, particularly in the case of former colonies, as we have seen in the case of India, for instance.

Furthermore, opinion surveys show a low degree of knowledge of the EU, particularly among citizens in Southern countries (i.e. all countries of the sample but Australia, Canada and Japan) and media reviews point to a lack of debate around the EU in the press and, in those countries where data is available, on radio and television media. For instance, political analysts and media experts in India and South Africa have highlighted how seldom the EU features in the mass media and how it is poorly understood by the broad public. As stated in the India report (Fioramonti 2007), several commentators opined that a certain form of mutual disinterest between Europe and India is longstanding (with the exception of the UK), although several attempts have been made at the institutional level (e.g. between the European Commission and the Indian government to facilitate dialogue among business groups) to bridge this cultural gap. Nevertheless, India remains a country deeply influenced by American culture and, in spite of new prospects generated by a common Erasmus programme, the bulk of Indian students look to the US to further their studies and professional careers (Lisbonne-de Vergeron 2006, p.25). In China, South Africa and Brazil, only a minority of citizens know enough about the EU: respectively 23% of Chinese in 2001 had an opinion about the EU (World Values Survey 2001), while the figure in South Africa was 45% (Afrobarometer 2002) and in Brazil 43% (Latinobarometro 1995-2004 as analysed by Lagos ed 2004). However, while in South Africa (Afrobarometer 2002) citizens are more familiar with international institutions such as the UN, the World Bank, the WTO or regional institutions such as the African Union, in Brazil the EU is more known to citizens than other institutions such as NAFTA and the WTO (Lagos ed 2004).

Rather peculiar is the case of Japan, where public opinion surveys show that knowledge of the EU is rather widespread among the population (only a small minority of about 15-20% had no opinion in 1998 and 2005), although only a small majority (51%) felt affinity with Western European countries (Japanese government survey 2003; see also Chaban and Kauffman 2007), while the same percentage of respondents was not able to assess whether relations between Japan and the EU were useful or not (Bertelsmann Survey 2005; see also Chaban and Kauffman 2007).

As Bayoumi reports with respect to Egypt (2007), opinion polls show that 60% of Egyptians believe in the efficiency of EU-Egypt cooperation (Soltan et al. 2001).<sup>1</sup> The few existent opinion polls aimed at testing the Egyptians' knowledge of Europe tend to look at individual European countries rather than the EU. In this respect too, the degree of knowledge is not high: a 2005 poll by the title of "Arab Western Relations" shows that knowledge of France is rated "very good" by 4.6% respondents, "considerable" by 34.8%, and "limited" by 69.9%. Corresponding rates for the UK are: 5.4%, 32.8% and 67% (Soltan et al. 2001). Despite this limited knowledge, in terms of importance or priority, Europe ranks very well whereas in terms of favourability it comes after the Arab world. However, to the question "what is *the best orientation* for Egypt in its relations with neighbouring areas?", only 18% replied "Europe and the Mediterranean countries", while 34.3% replied "Middle East" and 93.3% "The Arab region" (Soltan et al. 2001).

In other cases, the limited attention to the EU can be clearly explained in terms of its geographic distance and the limited visibility of EU policy with respect to that of other core powers such as the US. In general, there is a closer knowledge of some core European states than the EU as such, particularly in the case of former colonies (e.g. in India of the UK).

- ***Not a world power for the public*** - It appears that, in general, only a minority of those citizens that have an opinion about the EU perceive the latter as being an effective or credible actor at the global level. For instance, in South Africa only 15% of citizens believe that the EU is an effective actor (Afrobarometer 2002). Similarly, when asked to assess the contribution of global actors towards democracy, development, peace and free trade, only a small minority of Brazilian citizens (ranging between 12% in the case of 'development', and 22% in the case of 'democracy') believe the EU is the most effective actor, whereas for instance the US is believed to be slightly more effective (with the only exception of peace promotion, for which the EU is seen as the best promoter by 22% of citizens vis-à-vis 17% for the US ) (Lagos 2005). Interestingly, when only the views of people with higher levels of education (i.e. university degree) are analysed, Brazilian opinion polls reveal that in the eyes of better educated people, the EU is a much more effective contributor to global peace, free trade, democracy and development than the US (with percentages ranging between 29% and 53% for the EU and dropping for the US to between 7% and 21%) (Lagos 2005). An interesting case, in this regard, is that of China. While only 30% of citizens had some confidence in the EU in 1990, this figure had grown to 40% in 2001 (World Values Survey 1990, 2001) and, in 2004, 77% of Chinese who had an opinion about the EU believed that the EU's

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<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately this poll did not test the Egyptians' knowledge of the EU/Europe.

role in world affairs was mainly positive (Program on International Policy Attitudes/Globescan 2004). Moreover, in the Chinese case, the general rule that higher education implies higher appreciation of the EU (clear in the case of Latin American countries – Lagos 2004) does not apply (Poletti, Peruzzi, Zhang 2007).

If only a small portion of the population perceive the EU as a world power today (an average of 13% in Brazil, India, China and Japan; 24% among US citizens), the picture is not much brighter when asked to rank world powers 14 years ahead: only about 15% of the population in the first group of countries; still 24% in the US.<sup>2</sup> Despite this limited role attributed to the EU, the majority of citizens held a positive view with regard to a stronger cooperation between their countries and the EU / Europe<sup>3</sup> (74% of the sample, with Japan scoring the least 46% and China scoring the highest 96%) (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2006).

- ***A strategic opportunity and a trade giant for the elites*** – A key issue for political elites and the media is the EU's might as a trade giant and a source of foreign direct investment, especially in fast-growing or developing economies. By and large, the main image the EU casts of itself has to do with its economic might. For Indian, Chinese, South African and Brazilian elites, the EU is a strategic opportunity for development and economic growth and is mainly described as a trade partner and the biggest market in the world. Likewise, economic linkages between these countries and the EU are by far the most common issues presented by the media. This is, for instance, particularly evident in the Brazilian case. Also, in the case of Japanese media, the EU is mainly a commercial actor and the recent enlargement has been regularly presented as an important trade opportunity for the country (Chaban and Kauffman 2007). The same applies to Brazil and India.

The Chinese view of the EU as an economic actor is permeated by the perception that the EU offers vast opportunities both as a source of foreign direct investment and as a partner for technological cooperation. As noted by Poletti, Peruzzi and Zhang (2007), in official documents, 'complementarity' is the word that is most often used to define relations between Chinese and European economies.

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<sup>2</sup> Interestingly enough, though people in Europe have a stronger image of the EU's world status with comparison to Other countries in the sample (49% in France, 53% in the UK, 75% in Germany), there is no expectation of a growing international role for the EU (opinion poll *World Powers in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Europe's Global Responsibility* – see Bertelsmann Stiftung 2006).

<sup>3</sup> The question being: "Should your country strengthen its cooperation with the European Union/Europe?"



Finally, it must be noted that even the Egyptian press has strengthened its (usually limited) interest in the EU in conjunction with the launch of the European Neighborhood Policy and EU-Egypt negotiations within this framework since mid-2005.

- *A security seeker* – According to the analysis conducted in the reports, the EU is often associated with peace-making processes and security concerns. This is mentioned in Egyptian opinion polls on what people think of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership, but emerged also from the analysis of Egyptian newspapers, particularly of *Al Ahram*, whose op-eds are generally related to the political role of the EU in the Middle East as a whole, with a specific focus on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, rather than on the partnership framework (Bayoumi 2007; Ebeid 2004: 6). At the same time, it must be noted that Egyptian opinion polls reveal that the EU's efforts to cooperate with its Southern Mediterranean neighbours are not perceived as an attempt to help these neighbours to solve their problems but as a security measure to avoid such problems overflowing into Europe (Bayoumi 2007; Gad Emad, 2001).

In the Indian press, the EU is often mentioned as an important actor in the peace process in Jammu-Kashmir and Sri Lanka. Indian newspapers also praised the pro-democracy role played by the EU during the Nepalese crisis in early 2006 and featured various pieces describing the diplomatic attempts of the EU to avoid direct confrontation in Iran and North Korea. This 'image' of the EU is also shared by Indian political elites who, in their official speeches, regularly refer to the EU as an ally in the fight against terrorism and a promoter of global security (Fioramonti 2007a).

As noted by Fioramonti, in 2001-2002 the EU was regularly mentioned by the South African media in relation to the Zimbabwean crisis, although in this case the tones were critical as the EU (and especially, countries like the UK) was seen as having contributed to the escalation of the Zimbabwean crisis. In Brazil, the EU was broadly viewed (Lagos 2005) by the general population as one of the global actors that contribute most to international peace (after the UN, but before the US), although the press tends to privilege the image of the EU as an economic actor.

In 2006, a crossnational survey conducted in Canada showed that national political and bureaucratic elites view the EU as an important actor in addressing global threats such as migratory pressures,

environmental disasters and macroeconomic instability and less relevant in responding to challenges such as war and terrorist attacks (Croci and Tossutti 2007).<sup>4</sup>

- ***A supporter of multilateralism or at least multipolarism*** – Political elites frequently view the EU as a key player in a future multipolar world (which refers to the number of powers) and frequently also as a champion of “multilateralism” (which refers to coordinating national policies in groups of three or more states *on the basis of certain principles of ordering relations*<sup>5</sup>). Among others, this is particularly evident in the official discourse of Indian, Brazilian and Chinese political elites.

As clearly stated in the China report in this volume, reference to multilateralism as a shared concern of the EU and China is very frequent in China. The same element is recurrent in Brazilian political elites’ discourse but with more emphasis on “multipolarism”. Interestingly, this perception is shared across the political spectrum. In the programme of one of the main opposition parties, *Partido do Movimento Democrático Brasileiro* (PMDB), it is stated that “the creation of the European Union [...] will be conducive to the creation of a multipolar order” (PMDB 2005 quoted in Poletti 2007). In this context emphasis on multipolarism should be read both as a counterbalance to the US leadership and as a world order in which Brazil could gain its place among the great powers. References to the important role of the EU in safeguarding multipolarity (and multiculturalism) are also frequent in India (Fioramonti 2007a).

It must be noted that the whole issue of “multipolarism” and “multilateralism” is intertwined with the official discourse about common values (especially, among Indian political elites) and is often presented in response to a current international system dominated by the US. Such a type of discourse (which is particularly recurrent in the public statements regarding the Strategic Partnerships with China, India and Japan) is definitely permeated by rhetoric and is rather difficult to gauge to what extent the multipolar / multilateral role of the EU is genuinely appreciated by non-European political elites. Moreover, what is understood as ‘multilateralism’ is affected by political culture and rhetoric. For instance, in China multilateralism is viewed as a way to safeguard the UN system and state sovereignty against unilateral policies, whereas in the EU case it is a practice of

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<sup>4</sup> It must be noted that the overall estimated response rate of the survey (7.5%, equivalent to 94 responses) is too low to be considered representative of Canadian elites in general. Nevertheless, these figures can provide useful insights in the analysis of this chapter.

<sup>5</sup> This is John Ruggie’s demanding definition which is not simply limited to coordination in international organisations but to the acceptance and implementation of *shared principles* (Ruggie 1992). According to Caporaso (1992), multilateralism is an organising principle distinguished from other forms by three properties: indivisibility of scope (both geographic and functional) over which costs and benefits are spread; generalised principles of conduct; and diffuse reciprocity.

coordination that goes beyond state power and has largely changed the very concept of sovereignty. While both sides claim to pursue multipolarity and multilateralism, the degree to which these claims imply similar preferences and result from similar underlying logics is therefore questionable. As Shambaugh warns us “given China’s centuries old realist perspective on interstate affairs, one should not read into China’s vigorous endorsement of European multilateralism a similarly firm commitment on Beijing’s part” (Shambaugh 2007: 32). In this respect Shambaugh uses the telling concept of “cognitive dissonance” (Shambaugh 2007).

- ***Model of regional integration*** – A similar difficulty applies to the EU as a model of regional integration. There exists a significant amount of political speeches and official documents that focus on the example set by the EU as the first successful case of regional integration (e.g. in India, Brazil and South Africa). In this regard, it must be noted that the political elites of most of these countries have indeed specific interests in supporting regional integration processes in their own geographic spheres of influence (particularly Brazil and South Africa, but also India).

In the case of Egypt, the experience of European integration is often presented in the press “as an exemplary experience of integration and as the most reasonable and realistic alternative to the failing pan-Arab projects.” (Bayoumi 2007; see also Nafie 2004). There is no agreement among the public and the elites, however, on how this possibility could be realised. If we look at opinion polls detecting preference over possible partners of economic regional integration frameworks, the rating of the EMP among the sample drawn from the general public was 12.5% compared to 17.8% for integration with Mashreq countries, 19.8% for Arab free Market, 25.6% for integration with Arab and Muslim countries, 10.8% for integration with Turkey and Iran. Within sectoral elites, the EMP scored better with a favourability rating of 28% ranking second best among the media sample and 38% among the business sample (Soltan et al 2001).

It is interesting to acknowledge that in the case of Japan the analysis conducted by Natalia Chaban and Marco Kauffmann (2007) on *The Daily Yomiuri*, *The ASAHI Shimbun*, and *The Nikkei Weekly* (years 2004 - 2006), revealed that by far the largest number of news articles regarding the EU deal with European internal affairs (145 out of 371 articles reviewed) and most of them highlighted EU enlargement as a positive example of the peaceful benefits of regional cooperation and, perhaps, an example to follow in Asia.

- ***A neoliberal actor abroad but a social model at home*** – As far as civil society organisations are concerned, it must be noted that in some of the countries surveyed (i.e. Brazil, India and South Africa) the economic discourse about the EU’s global role is influenced by anti-neoliberal

sentiment and the EU is often described as a global actor characterised by a neoliberal foreign policy agenda, which forces developing countries to open up their markets and implement privatisation policies.

According to a common declaration of several South African civil society organisations (including the South African Council of Churches), the EU demands free trade, privatisation, labour deregulation and investment liberalisation (particularly through the Cotonou Agreement) while deluding Africa with ‘unilateral but false offers’ such as the Everything But Arms agreement.<sup>6</sup>

Although perceiving the EU as neoliberal in its external relations, many civil society organisations (especially, trade unions and some social movements) distinguish between the EU’s external relations, which in their view are based on a neoliberal agenda, and the EU’s internal policies, which are still shaped around the traditional European social model based on subsidisation and social security. For instance, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), which is the main labour federation in South Africa and a fierce critic of the EU-South Africa trade agreement, observes that the EU views social security as a ‘productive factor in the economy’ rather than a ‘squandering of wealth’ (Fioramonti 2007b).

The contradiction between the EU as a neoliberal actor in foreign policy and a social actor within its borders is not limited to civil society organisations such as NGOs, trade unions and social movements but can also be found in the discourses of some political elites, particularly in Brazil and South Africa. In this regard, however, political rhetoric seems to play an important role as most of these speeches are directed to local constituencies and might serve the purpose of blaming the implementation of liberalisation and privatisation policies on the EU and other international actors, rather than on the government itself.

In general, though, references to the European social model are mostly confined to some occasional speeches of political figures in developing countries and civil society groups (especially trade unions), while there is almost no evidence of such an image being reflected in the media and public opinion polls.

- **A *protectionist actor*** – Somehow related to the neoliberal-social contradiction highlighted above, the image of the EU as a protectionist market is very common among politicians, trade

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<sup>6</sup> Source: <http://www.aidc.org.za/?q=node/view/174>

unionists and business organisations in developing economies (particularly in Brazil, India and South Africa) and in the civil society sector across all countries. In this regard, the main critical target is the EU common agricultural policy and the various non-tariff trade barriers that, in the eyes of many non-European countries, distort international trade and bring about negative consequences for emerging markets. Political elites and business groups criticise the EU for promoting free trade abroad when implementing protectionist policies at home. For instance, Brazilian President Lula da Silva described the EU as a “great protectionist agricultural power” (Lula da Silva 2003a quoted in Poletti 2007).

Similar observations are shared by business organisations in Brazil and India. Interestingly, some analysts have argued that in Indian business circles “there is much more criticism of Brussels than of Washington for blocking progress towards the more free trade world that Indians generally proclaim best suits their own long-term interests, especially in the WTO arena.” (Lisbonne de Vergeron 2006: p. 6). Even in the case of Japan, the press reported criticism of the unfair European protection of agriculture and fishing, perceived as damaging to the Japanese economy.

Trade unions and local NGOs see the EU’s agricultural policy as another component of the longstanding unfair practices imposed on Africa, Asia and Latin America by the former colonisers and reclaim a system of fair trade (rather than free trade), in which protectionist policies are admissible only when applied to developing economies in order to bridge the development gap with Europe. Criticisms of the EU’s agricultural policy reinforce the portrait of the EU as a global actor characterised by double standards and inconsistencies. In certain cases (e.g. South Africa), this remark is often associated with the colonial past of Europe and its hegemonic role in most parts of the world.

- ***The EU as a model of (global) environmental protection*** – This image is less widespread than others but worth mentioning as it is rapidly growing, particularly as a reaction to the EU’s activism in pursuing the Kyoto protocol on climate change; this is particularly the case in better-off countries (like Canada, Australia, Japan, but also India). However, among NGOs worldwide the EU is also criticised for adopting neoliberal policies which *de facto* compromise sustainable development (Andretta & Doerr 2007). The results of the Survey point to a rapidly growing expectation of a leading role of the EU in the protection of global environment, particularly on how to tackle global warming.

- ***The EU as a (possible) counterbalance to US hegemony*** – Contrary to expectations, our analysis did not highlight a significant difference in the external perceptions of the EU with comparison to the US (particularly as far as trade is concerned). However, in some cases the EU has emerged as a possible counterbalance to the US’s hegemony.

A 2004 survey of more than 23,000 people in 23 countries found that citizens in 20 states would see it as mainly positive if Europe became more influential than the United States in world affairs (Program on International Policy Attitudes/Globescan 2004). Of all the countries included in this article, the survey was only conducted in Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, India, Japan and South Africa. According to this survey, in all countries, citizens hold rather favourable views about a more influential role of the EU vis-à-vis the US in world affairs. The only two exceptions are India and Japan, where, it should be noted, the majority of citizens did not take part in the survey. In Japan, for instance, although only 35% of citizens would favour a stronger European influence in world affairs, those who view it negatively only account for 13%. Although India also shows the lowest percentage of positive responses, according to our analysis the view of the EU as a counterbalance to the US is present in the public discourse and in the media (Fioramonti 2007a). As for Egypt, according to our research, in the media the “EU ranks second in volume of coverage after the US, but the tone is definitely more positive in the national and opposition press”(Ebeid 2004: 6, quoted in Bayoumi 2007). Similar observations are common in the Chinese political discourse and the press, with its emphasis on the EU and China as champions of multilateralism. Finally, it is interesting that when the Japanese media highlights similarities between EU and Japanese approaches to conflict prevention and democracy promotion in Iraq, it does so by emphasising differences with the US strategy in the area (Chaban and Kauffman 2007). A call for more EU “soft power” also comes from organised civil society movements worldwide, particularly as far as Southern NGOs dealing with democracy and human rights are concerned.

## **2.2. Differences within the sample**

The most significant cognitive gap evidenced by the Survey is between the perceptions identified in the report on Commission delegations and all other country reports. The images emerging from the study of Commission Delegates broadly confirms the EU’s self-representation, as discussed in the introduction to the survey. With the exception of a certain degree of criticism of the constraints of the pillar system and multilevel governance of the EU, Commission Delegates view the EU as a force that strives to better the world, far less self-interested than traditional state actors and possibly constrained in its efficiency only by its peculiar institutional structure. In none of the countries in

the sample did we find a similar enthusiastic view of the EU, although some other positive perceptions were not uncommon.

Although many similarities can be found in the country reports, the most striking differences are worth mentioning. Amongst them, we find that:

- In some countries, an economic image of the EU prevails on a political one (South Africa), while in others, the EU is mainly reported as a political power (Japan - 37% vs 15% of the sample newspaper news), although, as the authors of the Japan report recognise, data may have been influenced by the timespan considered, during which there was an uncommon attention to political issues (enlargement, Constitution, ...).
- While some criticism is widely shared among the countries in the sample (e.g. regarding EU agricultural subsidies), others are largely limited to Southern countries and NGOs worldwide (European included), such as the EU as a neoliberal empire. This can be easily explained by the fact that the EU shares a faith in the benefits of economic liberalisation only with the more economically advanced countries of the sample, definitely less affected by trade liberalisation. It is interesting to observe that some of the criticisms of Southern countries reach Europe via local and transnational NGOs.

Overall, some differences are attributable to country specificities such as (i) the presence (or not) of a European colonial past (which has been very important in the case of India); (ii) the regional and (possibly) global role of the country; or (iii) similarities of political values (e.g. in a culturally distant country such as Japan, not only do elites point to similarities in EU and Japanese approaches to world politics, but 51% of people interviewed in a Government Poll in 2003 affirmed that they felt affinity to Western European countries (Chaban & Kauffman 2007 appendix II).

There are also differences among target groups within countries. For instance:

- The EU tends to be better known among elites and civil society organisations rather than in public opinion as a whole.
- In some cases (Japan) the EU emerges as a “study object” for a sort of policy benchmarking: what does the EU do to cope with greenhouse effects? how does it deal with nuclear power?
- In other cases (India and South Africa), political elites view the EU through the lens of political rhetoric, while civil society organisations criticise the EU as a post-colonial and neoliberal power although appreciate its concern for the environment.
- The EU tends to be perceived as a ‘world power’ uniquely among elites (both political and business) and in the media, as exemplified by the comparison between leaders’ discourses and

the replies to the survey *World Powers in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Chaban & Kauffman 2007, tables 4-6). In the discourse of most civil society organisations, the EU is seen as a world power insofar as it replicates patterns of domination and supremacy that these organisations refer to as ‘post-colonial’ or ‘imperialist’.

#### **4. Conclusions: Way Forward and Policy Recommendations**

Our research has shown how a stringent research design is necessary in order to “decode” in a correct way the information available. In our case, as far country reports are concerned, we have used opinion polls as indicators of the general citizens’ perception; official documents were the primary sources of information on the elites’ perceptions; as for civil society organisations, we have mainly used official documents and statements as reported in websites and newspapers; the media was a target group in its won right. Primary research, based on systematic interviews and questionnaires, was the main source of information for the transversal reports on NGOs and social movements and for European Commission delegates, although in the first case additional sources were also used.

The research also demonstrated how it is fundamental to interpret sources such as media analysis and leaders speeches in the specific country political language. Country specificities are highly relevant and should be taken in due consideration when analysing the information available. For instance, a call on multilateralism in the Chinese case definitely has a different meaning (in substance, a way to maintain the sovereign state system as guaranteed by the UN Security Council) to a similar call in the South African case (a supporting voice for a system of global governance by cooperating powers and international institutions). For this purpose, a close cooperation between country experts and EU scholars is fundamental. In our case, the cooperation between the Survey researchers and external experts provided highly valuable insights.

In the end, this research has demonstrated that, despite the limited amount of information available, if there is a solid research design, much can be inferred on the subject of what the others think of the EU, by analysing open sources such as newspapers, available opinion polls and official documents and statements available mainly on the web. However, it also made clear that a full fledged research project on the Others’ view would highly benefit from significant financial resources so as to construct sources where they are not available and to standardise research on those available.



In particular, a comprehensive research programme on this topic would need to be integrated with:

- Specifically-designed opinion polls in each of the target countries. For this purpose an agreement with regional pollsters such Latinobarometro, Afrobarometer and Asiabarometer could be sought so as to insert a set of questions in the various waves of regional opinion polls;
- A set of semi-structured interviews with elite leaders from: (i) government and opposition; (ii) MPs; (iii) civil society movements; (iv) intellectuals; (v) business.
- A systematic and ongoing content analysis of the main newspapers in each country;
- A systematic and ongoing content analysis of TV news and political debates in each country.

It must be stated, however, that such an academic work, however precise, cannot substitute a more direct role by the European Commission, particularly through its delegations, in establishing a more direct relationship with various constituencies in countries beyond its boundaries. We believe that some of the activities listed above could be successfully undertaken by EU Delegations. We think that, from a policy point of view, this research should be seen as a needs assessment by local stakeholders that the EU could take up in drafting its Country Strategy Papers and other policy documents that would benefit from more substantial input by local constituencies.

The image of the delegates' perception of the EU role in the world and of how it is externally perceived, proved to be definitely too distant from the external images that we found at work. This is rather surprising since the Commission delegations have the unmatched privilege of presence on the field that should enable them not only to shape information campaigns targeted to the country in question, but also to produce assessments of the EU's image in the country. As for the overall Commission, it would definitely be good policy to reach ad hoc agreements for the inclusion of questions on the EU in nation-wide or region-wide opinion polls such as the Asia barometer or the African barometer etc. In other words, the Commission, together with academic researchers should put in place a joint effort to evaluate which are the prevalent external images of the EU, what is their origin and how they can be influenced. We also think that one of the reasons why the EU is not a popular topic for public opinion is that, at this stage, the EU lacks a 'cultural' image. Although European culture (from cinema to sport and art) is widely appreciated by citizens around the world, it appears that the EU has not been very successful in capitalising on the existing cultural message of Europe. Following the example of other superpowers (such as the US) that make inroads in the global public through their film industry, TV programmes, cultural production and sports' events, the EU should also understand that its political and societal values should be

communicated not only through policy documents and declarations, but also through more popular channels able to reach those segments of the global population that do not have the resources or the willingness to access more 'sophisticated' information.

Finally, the analysis on the external image of the EU should not be limited to how the EU is perceived in non-European countries, but should develop research strategies so to evaluate if and how such external images influence the internal process of identity formation among the Europeans. What do European citizens know of how the others see them and their institutions? How does the European media depict such an external reputation of the EU?<sup>7</sup> Those are questions which are usually neglected by both research on EU political identity and research on the external image of the EU. On the contrary, we believe that filling this gap is fundamental for the analysis of the process of formation of the EU as a full-fledged political actor.

We wish for this Survey to indeed represent the first step of a full fledged Research Programme on the external image of the EU that could help politicians and academics think about the role of the EU in the world beyond self-perception.

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<sup>7</sup> We made a first effort of this type in Fioramonti & Lucarelli 2007.

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