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Collateral Damage: How EU Internal Policies Shape Crises and Conflict Abroad

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Abstract

Europe is increasingly affected by conflicts in its neighbourhood, but its ability to prevent and resolve them remains limited. This dilemma underlines the need for European foreign and security policy to make optimal use of tools, assets and resources available. The EU's main framework to do so, the Integrated Approach to Conflicts and Crises, emphasises traditionally external policy sectors such as diplomacy, defence and development cooperation, but neglects tools and policy sectors predominantly understood as internal. Conceptually, the EU has acknowledged the need to employ the entire range of tools and instruments in its whole-of-governance approach to conflict, but when it comes to implementation, internal policy areas are barely part of the equation. A few policy areas with obvious internal-external linkages such as migration, energy or climate are more advanced conceptually. However, a systematic integration of internal policy areas into the calculus of how EU policy impacts human security abroad remains absent.

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Introduction

The increasing complexity of the international environment and the intertwined nature of contemporary conflicts pose challenges to European foreign and security policy (EUFSP).¹ In order to effectively help prevent and resolve conflict abroad, EUFSP needs to make optimal use of tools, assets and resources available, which makes a whole-of-EU approach in the area of conflict prevention and -resolution particularly salient. The covid-19 pandemic has further underlined the risks of global diffusion and connectivity, reinforcing the case for a holistic foreign policy.² Hence, the double challenge of Europe being increasingly affected by conflicts in its neighbourhood while its own ability to prevent/resolve those conflicts remains limited underlines a need to optimise the impact potential of available policy making resources, tools and structures.³

Throughout the past decade, therefore, the EU has reinforced its efforts of bundling and harmonising its various policy tools across sectors, ranging from development cooperation and diplomacy over trade to defence. The underlying idea has been to put the entirety of the EU's policies and tools at the service of the same strategic goals. The main conceptual framework for a coherent and holistic engagement has been the Integrated Approach to External Conflicts and Crises.⁴

¹ Following JOINT overall framework, European Foreign and Security Policy is understood here as the entirety of external action by EU institutions and EU member states, although the focus here is mostly on EU institutions.

² Sven Biscop, "No Peace from Corona: Defining EU Strategy for the 2020s", in *Journal of European Integration*, Vol. 42, No. 8 (2020), p. 1009-1023, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07036337.2020.1852230>.

³ Federica Mogherini, the former High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission (HRVP), said that the EU's foreign and security policy needs to be further integrated and use a variety of strategies to adapt and respond to "an ever more connected, contested and complex world", and that these trends, if anything, "have deepened and have become more intertwined" in recent years. European External Action Service (EEAS), *The European Union's Global Strategy. Three Years On, Looking Forward*, June 2019, p. 8, <https://europa.eu/!Qf88CQ>.

⁴ The Integrated Approach addresses conflict "throughout all phases of the conflict – including protracted conflicts and crises – (multi-phase) in prevention, crisis response, stabilisation and longer-term peacebuilding, in order to contribute to sustainable peace". "The Global Strategy for the EU's Foreign and Security Policy identifies the Integrated Approach as the framework for a more coherent and holistic engagement by the EU to external conflicts and crises and promotes human security and thereby also increases the security of the EU and its citizens." Council of the European Union, *Council Conclusions on the Integrated Approach to External Conflicts and Crises*, 5413/18, 22 January 2018, p. 2, <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-5413-2018-INIT/en/pdf>.

Being geared at external impact, the Integrated Approach naturally emphasises traditionally external policy sectors such as diplomacy, defence and development cooperation, as the main tools for direct interventions to prevent and/or resolve conflict abroad. By contrast, tools and policy sectors traditionally understood as internal have mostly been neglected. Internal sectors, here understood as those policy areas that by their nature impact predominantly within the boundaries of the Union, include fields such as agriculture, justice and home affairs, monetary, competition, science, culture, environment, energy, financial or banking policies, including a vast array of single market regulations.

Despite frequent general references in official EU documents to internal policy areas with an external impact as among the policy areas to be included into a holistic and coherent external action, details and implementation of this aspiration have been lacking. Likewise, in the literature, while scholars have assessed how the EU has become a peacebuilding actor by deploying its external instruments for conflict management,⁵ there is a gap in analysis on how traditionally internal policy areas may shape, directly or indirectly, conflict abroad. For example, although the relationship between conflict and climate change/environmental degradation has been extensively researched,⁶ climate policy is not yet systematically part of the EU's Integrated Approach. Similarly, while the destabilising impact of agricultural subsidies on developing countries has been widely noted, these findings are not systematically included in the EU's holistic policy framework to conflict. While the impact of internal policy on conflict is generally understudied, internal regulations and their external impact have received greater scholarly attention, most notably through Anu Bradford's theory of the "Brussels effect", which describes the global spread of EU regulations by means of market forces.⁷ There is a lacuna, however, both in linking this regulatory power to conflict, and in tracing the non-regulatory external impact of internal policy areas.

⁵ Ana E. Juncos and Steven Blockmans, "The EU's Role in Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding: Four Key Challenges", in *Global Affairs*, Vol. 4, No. 2-3 (2018), p. 131-140, <https://doi.org/10.1080/23340460.2018.1502619>.

⁶ See also Tobias Ide et al., "The Past and Future(s) of Environmental Peacebuilding", in *International Affairs*, Vol. 97, No. 1 (January 2021), p. 1-16, <https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iaa177>.

⁷ Anu Bradford, *The Brussels Effect. How the European Union Rules the World*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2020; Alasdair R. Young (ed.), *The European Union as a Global Regulator?*, London/New York, Routledge, 2016; Marise Cremona and Joanne Scott (eds), *EU Law Beyond EU Borders. The Extraterritorial Reach of EU Law*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2019.

How effective is EUFSP in reconciling internal and external sectors, as well as the internal-external nexus within sectors, gearing them toward the shared goal of external conflict resolution and -prevention? This study contributes to this debate by assessing how EU internal policies and regulations have influenced the EU's contribution in pursuit of declared EU foreign policy objectives abroad, and how EU institutions have sought to factor relevant internal policy elements into their conflict prevention/resolution policies. To illustrate emerging patterns, the paper zooms into three exemplary sectors: agriculture, migration, and climate policy. In doing so, it finds that while efforts to streamline external sectors towards conflict-sensitivity are significant, such efforts remain rudimentary when it comes to internal sectors. Although establishing direct causal relationships is problematic without further in-depth research, evidence suggests that in contrast to declared intent, EU inter-sectoral communication and coordination is lacking, and adverse effects of EU policies on human security abroad are frequent.

1. The internal-external nexus: Conceptualisation, tools and implementation

The notion that EUFSP encompasses a broad range of policy areas for external action has been widely reflected in the literature.⁸ For example, EU enlargement, which has become a comprehensive process spanning multiple policy areas, has been instrumental in conceptualising EU multi-sector actorness.⁹ The relevance of sectorial policies to EUFSP – ranging from trade to climate,¹⁰ energy,¹¹ migration¹²

⁸ Stephan Keukeleire and Tom Delreux, *The Foreign Policy of the European Union*, 2nd ed., Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

⁹ Heather Grabbe, "European Union Conditionality and the 'Acquis Communautaire'", in *International Political Science Review*, Vol. 23, No. 3 (July 2002), p. 249-268.

¹⁰ Simon Schunz, *European Union Foreign Policy and the Global Climate Regime*, Brussels, P.I.E. Peter Lang, 2014 <https://www.peterlang.com/document/1067535>.

¹¹ Jeffrey Anderson, John Ikenberry and Thomas Risse (eds), *The End of the West? Crises and Change in the Atlantic Order*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 2008.

¹² Angeliki Dimitriadi, "Deals Without Borders: Europe's Foreign Policy on Migration", in *ECFR Policy Briefs*, April 2016, <https://ecfr.eu/?p=3590>; Natasja Reslow, "Horizontal and Vertical Diversity: Unintended Consequences of EU External Migration Policy", in *The International Spectator*, Vol. 54, No. 1 (March 2019), p. 31-44, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03932729.2019.1548840>; Alberto Tagliapietra, "The European Migration Crisis: A Pendulum between the Internal and External Dimensions", in *IAI Papers*, No. 19|12 (June 2019), <https://www.iai.it/en/node/10469>.

and regulations¹³ – has been increasingly appreciated.¹⁴ Studies more narrowly reviewing how the EU addresses conflict¹⁵ shifted from a traditional defence lens towards a multi-sectoral understanding of security,¹⁶ although the EU's defence lens *stricto sensu* has run on a parallel track, if not behind, the more multisectoral understanding of security in academia.

There is broad scholarly backing for the notion that the boundaries between the external and internal security, between foreign and domestic policy, are increasingly blurred, so that a clear distinction between external and internal policy sectors can no longer be drawn.¹⁷ The 2016 EU Global Strategy (EUGS) explicitly confirmed this integrated notion of human security,¹⁸ and stressed the need for the Union to systematically factor the external dimensions of internal policy into EUFSP planning.¹⁹ While some sectors, by their very nature, are geared towards external (foreign policy, development cooperation) or internal impact (justice and home affairs, internal market), others are both internal and external (migration,) or global (climate, cyber). Some sectors are predominantly internal but have a pronounced external dimension (energy, agriculture, culture).

¹³ Anu Bradford, *The Brussels Effect. How the European Union Rules the World*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2020.

¹⁴ Damro et al. show how the expanded focus on a broader understanding of security has in part been due to a shift from great power competition to transnational threats. However, with great power competition coming back to the fore, it is likely that a more traditional lens gains traction once more. Chad Damro, Sieglinde Gstöhl and Simon Schunz, *The European Union's Evolving External Engagement. Towards New Sectoral Diplomacies?*, Abingdon, Routledge, 2018.


¹⁵ Magnus Ekenren and Simon Hollis, "Explaining the European Union's Security Role in Practice", in *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 58, No. 3 (May 2020), p. 616-635; Alistair J.K. Sheperd, "The European Security Continuum and the EU as an International Security Provider", in *Global Society*, Vol. 29, No. 2 (2015), p. 156-174.

¹⁶ In practice, due to the types of competences the EU has, the Union's defense lens *stricto sensu* has run on a parallel track, if not behind, a more multisectoral understanding of security?

¹⁷ Ana Paula Brandão, "The Internal-External Nexus in the Security Narrative of the European Union", in *Janus.net*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (May-October 2015), p. 1-19, <https://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=413541154001>.

¹⁸ The EU uses a broad concept of human security, as first defined in the UN Human Development Report 1994. Since then, the concept has gained importance in relation to areas such as migration and climate change, while taking a back seat in the context of great power competition.

¹⁹ European External Action Service (EEAS), *Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy*, June 2016, p. 8-11, <https://europa.eu/!Tr66qx>.



The way some sectors traditionally understood as internal have expanded their external dimension through watershed political developments in recent years (for example, the boost of global health policy during the covid-19 pandemic) shows how fluid the internal-external balance of policy sectors can be. It is therefore unsurprising that EU institutions do not work with an explicit definition or distinction of internal and external policy areas. While a deterministic classification of external and internal sectors is here neither aspired nor useful, for the analytical purposes of this paper, internal policies are those which by their nature predominantly envisage impact within the boundaries of the European Union.

Acknowledging the relevance of EUFSP as a multi-sectoral undertaking, the silo nature of EU foreign and security policy has often been deplored.²⁰ The problem is perceived to be the frequent disconnect and incoherence between the various policy sectors, which pursue different, and at times contradictory, goals. Debates on resilience as a central concept among the EU's foreign policy objectives in its neighbourhood from 2016 onwards have sought to explore how the EU and its member states can break up those silos and the related compartmentalisation of EUFSP that prevent a truly coherent, joined-up action in EUFSP.²¹ If the disconnect between different external policy areas has been notable, the gap has been even wider between the internal and external aspects of EUSFP. Mainstreamed into EU policy speak since the EU Global Strategy, the internal-external nexus remains largely unfulfilled. Global Strategy penholder Nathalie Tocci sustains that “the internal-external nexus, endlessly cited on paper, has made some progress in practice, but in a highly asymmetric manner”, as traditional foreign policy actors have been keen to work with internal sectors, but less the other way round.²²

Whole-of-government approaches thrived in response to the changed international security environment following the end of the Cold War, in which complex, multi-dimensional conflicts required governments and international

²⁰ Richard Youngs, *The European Union and Global Politics*, London, Red Globe Press, 2021.

²¹ The rationale behind choosing resilience as the conceptual guiding star for EUFSP was partially the fact that the concept was already in use across the spectrum of policy sectors with traditionally differing visions and approaches – such as security and development – and that a shared lexicon would help facilitate a gradual bending of sectoral silos in EUFSP. See Nathalie Tocci, “Resilience and the European Union's Role in the World”, in *Contemporary Security Policy*, Vol. 41, No. 2 (2020), p. 176-194.

²² *Ibid*, p. 183.

institutions to ensure a more mature, systematic modus of co-ordination in which different strands of policy worked hand in hand toward the same goal.²³ Since 1996, when the EU first ventured into the field of conflict prevention and management, efforts in the European institutions to develop a whole-of-governance²⁴ approach to crises and conflicts have been on-going, maturing from a basic notion of a security-development nexus toward a full-fledged integrated approach encompassing internal and external policy and non-traditional security concepts.²⁵ From 2013, this EU process to achieve horizontal, cross-sectoral policy coherence was pursued under the heading of the “Comprehensive Approach”, the conceptual details of which were laid out jointly by the European Commission and the EU High Representative.²⁶

The 2016 EU Global Strategy widened this concept into the Integrated Approach to Crises and Conflicts, while describing EUSFP as a multi-dimensional, multi-lateral and multi-phased actor that strives for policy coherence across sectors, institutions, and time.²⁷ The Integrated Approach aims to mobilise a range of different instruments to manage and prevent conflict and crisis and tackle all their dimensions across sectoral boundaries. This so-called 3D-toolbox aspires to cooperation among multiple actors at local, regional and national level, and throughout all conflict phases (prevention, crisis management, stabilisation, reconstruction and state-building).²⁸

²³ Stefani Weiss, Hans-Joachim Spanger and Wim van Meurs, *Diplomacy, Development and Defense: A Paradigm for Policy Coherence, A Comparative Analysis of International Strategies*, Gütersloh, Bertelsmann Stiftung, 2010.

²⁴ Since the EU is not a government but a (partly) supranational body, it employs the term “whole-of-governance” instead of the commonly used phrase “whole-of-government”.

²⁵ The first EU document to raise such aspirations was the European Commission’s communication *The European Union and the Issue of Conflicts in Africa: Peace-building, Conflict Prevention and Beyond*, SEC/96/332, 6 March 1996, <http://aei.pitt.edu/4280>.

²⁶ European Commission and High Representative of the Union, *The EU’s Comprehensive Approach to Conflicts and Crises*, JOIN/2013/30, 11 December 2013, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ALL/?uri=CELEX:52013JC0030>.

²⁷ EEAS, *Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe*, cit.

²⁸ Loes Debuysere and Steven Blockmans, *Europe’s Coherence Gap in External Crisis and Conflict Management. The EU’s Integrated Approach between Political Rhetoric and Institutional Practice*, Gütersloh, Bertelsmann Stiftung, November 2019, <https://doi.org/10.11586/2019070>.

Following theoretical conceptualisation of and political commitment to the Integrated Approach in EU policy documents,²⁹ steps to operationalise it across EU institutions, headquarters and delegations have been implemented through a number of structures and procedures.³⁰ Most notable among them was the creation of a unit for policy coherence of the Integrated Approach under the crisis prevention umbrella within the European External Action Service (EEAS) Secretariat, the Directorate Integrated Approach for Security and Peace (ISP) in 2019.³¹ ISP has been tasked with ensuring a comprehensive, geopolitical vision of EU external action and its impact on crises in the work of the EEAS. It coordinates both policy responses and conflict prevention between the different sectoral units without an institutionalised co-ordination process. In practice this means that nothing happens automatically, and every co-ordination requires an active intervention by ISP.

In the case of imminent crises, Directorate ISP drives the common response by means of the EEAS Crisis Response Mechanism, launched in 2018. This is a loose but well-exercised mechanism that the EEAS employs to integrate and bring together all the services and institutions in Brussels together to achieve a common approach. In the case of an arising crisis or external relations emergency (for instance, a plane hijacking in Belarus), ISP assembles the relevant sectoral colleagues (EEAS, Commission services, delegations) in an ad hoc fashion to exchange information, prepare an inventory of actions and form a coherent approach. In some cases, an input document specifically drafted by the responsible country desk, the Political Framework for a Crisis Approach (PSCA), provides a shared understanding of the crisis, the common EU objective, and the tools available. Although the PSCA was deemed “extremely useful” for both EEAS and Commission colleagues, in Brussels and abroad, to help align their actions towards a common objective (for instance, in the Cabo Delgado conflict in Mozambique), it is not a default process for every conflict situation. This is partially due to insufficient capacities, partially because

²⁹ Council of the European Union, *Council Conclusions on the Integrated Approach to External Conflicts and Crises*, cit.

³⁰ Thierry Tardy, “The EU: From Comprehensive Vision to Integrated Action”, in *EUISS Briefs*, No. 5 (February 2017), <https://www.iss.europa.eu/node/1297>; Giovanni Faleg et al., *Report on EU Comprehensive Approach to Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding*, EU-CIVCAP Deliverable 4.3, 23 March 2018, https://eucivcap.files.wordpress.com/2018/03/eu-civcap_deliverable_4-3.pdf.

³¹ ISP replaced its predecessor, PRISM, in March 2019, in a more prominent and coherent positing within the EEAS.

the PSCA cannot be adopted in those cases where member states disagree on the basic parameters and objectives (notably on Libya). In other words, where member states disagree, there is no integrated approach.³²

In the field of prevention, ISP coordinates the EEAS' early warning system, the main tool for coordinated conflict prevention. In this process, around five priority countries per year are chosen which are considered to have a high risk to slip into conflict, based on a set of quantitative and qualitative indicators provided by the Joint Research Centre. The indicators in practice constitute a pre-selection of critical sectors as those sectors that are not among the indicators are dismissed as insufficiently relevant. Influential sectors such as trade are not usually part of the picture, as the analysis focuses on direct but not indirect impact indicators. Moreover, the tools brought into the early warning system are practically only external relations tools, as "these are the ones we control".³³

If mainstreaming conflict-sensitivity into external relations portfolios is challenging, internal sectors are absent in the work of ISP. There is no institutionalised linkage or regular contact between ISP and relevant Directorates General (DGs) such as Agriculture, Climate or Home Affairs. EU officials acknowledge that the disconnect of conflict prevention and resolution efforts to internal policy areas is a significant gap, given the considerable potential impact of these portfolios on human security abroad. At the same time, they point to the limited resources and mandate of ISP, which do not allow for a systematic monitoring of draft policies according to their impact on human security in third countries. Within the EEAS, as well as between EEAS and Commission, considerable resources are already being spent on efforts to coordinate external relations policies, with mixed success. Bringing in internal sectors at this stage is deemed theoretically desirable, but practically unrealistic in terms of both resources and process.³⁴

There is however an increasing awareness of the limitations of the current processes to deliver an integrated approach as outlined in EU policy documents. For the current 7-year budget cycle, ISP is devising an analysis of sixty countries with

³² Authors' interviews with European Commission and EEAS officials, June-September 2021.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

recommendations in various sectors and guidance on how EU agencies should plan their programming in a conflict-sensitive way. Such reports are however entirely consultative, and there is no process to make sure the relevant entities in the EEAS, Commission and Delegations read it, let alone take it into account. An increasing exception to this is the area of climate adaptation in third countries, which is gaining prominence in conflict prevention programming given that the Commission earmarked 30 per cent of its total resources in third in this area. But even here, despite the declared intention to reconcile EU climate with other foreign policy goals, no automatic or systematic process to screen EU climate policy under conflict aspects has yet been established.³⁵

After President Ursula von der Leyen's 2019 pledge for the EU's executive body to become "a geopolitical Commission" under her tenure,³⁶ a number of new working mechanisms and structures were introduced. This included the creation of the Group for External Coordination (EXCO), an internal coordination body meant to ensure coherence both within and between EU institutions. EXCO complements the external relations cluster in the college of Commissioners, the Commissioners Group for a Stronger Europe in the World (previously: Commissioners Group on External Action) chaired by the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Commission Vice-President (HRVP), currently Josep Borrell. With EXCO being mandated to be central in aligning the internal and external dimensions of the Commissions' work, this is the first time a specific body is in charge of coordinating all the Commission's external affairs aspects.³⁷ In practice, EXCO meets to prepare the weekly meetings of the college of Commissioners, as well as the Foreign Affairs Council, working towards alignment on external positions, both among EU institutions and among member states.

The institutional and procedural innovations of the von der Leyen Commission have thus brought improvements in policy coordination. But despite the combined efforts of EXCO and the Commissioners Group chaired by the HRVP, in practice it has

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ European Commission, *President von der Leyen's Mission Letter to Josep Borrell Fontelles*, 1 December 2019, p. 2, 5, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/commissioners/sites/default/files/commissioner_mission_letters/mission-letter-josep-borrell-2019_en.pdf.

³⁷ European Commission, *The Working Methods of the von der Leyen Commission*, P(2019)2, 1 December 2019, p. 14, <https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/default/files/working-methods.pdf>.

proven difficult to overcome different cultures and mindsets, both among sectors and between the EEAS and the Commission. EU officials underline the difficulty of bringing sectoral colleagues to think in terms of external relations impact beyond their specific sectoral expertise, responsibility and comfort zone.³⁸ A recent study has also found that “efforts to tie together the different strands of external action [...] are hampered by a multitude of (f)actors, including a reluctance by the HRVP to intrude on [...] files managed by (fellow) Commissioners”.³⁹ Notably, there is no formal institutional linkage or coordination between EXCO and ISP. Designed not as a policy-making body but as a “nudger”, EXCO falls short of exercising a more comprehensive policy coordination function, for which it lacks both the mandate and the resources.⁴⁰

2. Illustrative sectors

To illustrate the above dynamics of the role of EU internal policies on external conflict prevention/resolution, we have a closer look at the external dimension of internal policies, tools and regulations in three exemplary areas: agriculture (by nature an internal sector), migration (both internal and external), and climate (a global sector with a strong internal regulatory component).

An assessment that seeks to fully understand both EUFSP’s current performance and potential to impact on inter-sectorial conflict prevention/resolution abroad needs to go beyond explicit EU policy coordination efforts and consider the full range of assets and obstacles to external conflict prevention/resolution produced by the EU’s internal policies. Such impact takes different forms: it can be direct (explicit external deployment of an internal tool) or indirect (external impact as a by-product of internal policy/laws/regulations). In a similar vein, its impact can be positive (asset to conflict prevention/resolution) or negative (obstacle to conflict prevention/resolution). Whereas explicitly deployed assets will naturally be geared

³⁸ Authors’ interviews with European Commission and EEAS officials, June-September 2021.

³⁹ Christophe Hillion and Steven Blockmans, *From Self-Doubt to Self-Assurance. The European External Action Service as the Indispensable Support for a Geopolitical EU*, Brussels, CEPS/SIEPS/FES, January 2021, p. 12, <https://www.sieps.se/en/publications/2021/from-self-doubt-to-self-assurance>.

⁴⁰ Authors’ interviews with European Commission and EEAS officials, June-September 2021.

towards decreasing conflict potential abroad, non-intentional side effects may negatively impact on ongoing conflicts or affect societal cohesion and human security in other ways that feed the potential for conflict and destabilisation.

2.1 Agriculture: Revamping an unsustainable model

A long-standing target of criticism from civil society and the broader development community,⁴¹ the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) has had a range of well-documented effects in third countries, including on food security, access to natural resources, jobs and markets, which in turn have been linked to social tensions and conflict. Growing EU demand for food, feed and bioenergy has been associated to adverse effects on third countries, such as land use change, biodiversity loss and environmental damage.

A 2018 report commissioned by the European Parliament's Development Committee concluded that, while some provisions of the current CAP can boost agricultural development of non-EU countries, they can also imply risks for sustainable development and food security in developing countries. Among the most imminent concerns, the report identified market-distorting effects (both internal and external to EU) of CAP subsidies; undesired effects of preferential market access for developing countries leading to local shortages and food insecurity; the difficulty of implementing climate standards without destroying the livelihood of small farmers abroad; as well as broader contradictions between CAP and EU climate and sustainable development goals.⁴² At the same time, the EP report stressed that due to the many factors involved, establishing direct causalities between CAP and socio-economic friction is often difficult to identify and revert.⁴³

The EP report's broader concerns about the compatibility of CAP with EU environmental and climate objectives are mirrored by broad scholarship (Matthews

⁴¹ See for example Concord Europe, *Common Agricultural Policy Reform Proposal 2020-2027. Recommendations on CAP and PCD*, Brussels, 2018, <https://concordeurope.org/resource/recommendations-for-common-agricultural-policy-reform-proposal-2020-2027>.

⁴² Maria Blanco, *The Impact of the Common Agricultural Policy on Developing Countries*, Brussels, European Parliament, 2018, <https://op.europa.eu/s/uZ93>.

⁴³ Ibid.

and Soldi 2019, Blanco 2018, Keijzer and King 2012). For these studies, CAP over the years has been responsible for the perpetuation of a food and agricultural model that creates a considerable share of EU carbon emissions, with negative environmental impact globally. Exports of European products, one study asserts, should therefore focus on high value-added products and not on mass-produced low-end food products that can destabilise developing agricultural economies.

Growing demand supported by CAP, agriculture and livestock intensification can be detrimental both environmentally and socio-economically, for example by contributing to land use changes, deforestation, the expulsion of smallholder peasants to the benefit of large landowners, and a worsening of food insecurity abroad.⁴⁴ If and where EU policies directly affect socio-economic cohesion in producer countries, they are incompatible with EU climate and sustainable development goals. Key criticisms highlighted by the literature are:

- *Market distortion*: The Everything But Arms (EBA) instrument creates exceptions for least developed countries to export duty free into the European food market. However, the latter is distorted by CAP, which pushes third countries to adapt their crops production choices and processes to EU special needs, which in turn has been linked to displacements of local population, and erosion of rural livelihoods and environmental damage. For example, the EBA initiative promoted a rapid expansion of the sugar sector in Cambodia, which was followed by thousands of evictions and a great impact on communities' livelihood.⁴⁵ At the same time, Commission officials underline how EBA's overall balance remains beneficial to partner countries, who remain keen on the preferential market access and would not like to see the policy revoked.⁴⁶
- *Dumping practices and competition* generated to local products by agricultural and food exports from the European Union have been among the most common criticisms for decades. Notable examples here include powdered milk and wheat exports to West African countries. EU officials affirm these kinds of

⁴⁴ Pascal Erard and Laurent Levard, "Les effets de la PAC sur les paysanneries des pays du Sud", in *Les Nouvelles de SUD*, No. 175 (Summer 2019), p. 1, https://www.coordinationsud.org/wp-content/uploads/NDS175_WEB.pdf.

⁴⁵ Alan Matthews and Rossella Soldi, *Evaluation of the Impact of the Current CAP on the Agriculture of Developing Countries*, Brussels, European Committee of the Regions, 2019, <https://op.europa.eu/s/u0gw>.

⁴⁶ Authors' interviews with European Commission and EEAS officials, June-September 2021.



distortions are largely a thing of the past, as today's main agrifood dumping sinners are found in the United States and Asia, while EU farming products are sold at global market prices, and higher production standards under the new CAP reform, if anything, are likely to make EU farming products less competitive on the world market.⁴⁷

- *Overproduction*: EU subsidy policies received harsh criticism for many years, as the EU's subsidies have in the past led to overproduction, with surpluses sold below production costs (34 per cent less for cereals and 13 per cent less for milk); a fact polemically illustrated by the image of the "butter mountain". Here too Commission officials underline that these reflect the realities of the 1980s and 1990s rather than current ones, as successive rounds of CAP reforms have ensured the policy no longer incentivises overproduction.⁴⁸

The points above illustrate decades of discussions about destabilising and distorting effects of EU agricultural policy both at home and abroad, including in countries in which the EU and its member states have been investing considerable time and resources on security, development and state-building. This highlights how the disconnect between internal and external sectors can produce counter-productive contradictions in EU policy to the degree one declared goal of EU external policy is directly undermined by another.


At the same time, however, it must especially be noted that criticisms of CAP have often failed to thoroughly distinguish impact that is attributable to incoherent and/or morally questionable EU policy from the effects of bad governance and failure to reform economic models in developing countries, which are affected by, but not attributable to, EU agricultural policy. In addition, EU officials resent how many of the long-standing criticisms that parts of the polemic debate about CAP have focused on anecdotal and/or outdated evidence and suggested causal relations without the necessary data and scientific backing.⁴⁹

After years of critique about the CAP's failings, in 2018 the Juncker Commission published a proposal for the reformed CAP, meant to make the policy greener and

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid.



fairer. The proposal has met with significant backlash, both among environmental and development communities for whom it was not far-reaching enough, and from European farmers, for whom it went too far. Three years of backroom wrangling and fierce public debate later, in June 2021 member states approved a revised CAP for the EU's agricultural subsidy policy that claims 387 billion euro, nearly a third of the EU's 2021–2027 budget. At the time of writing, while greenlighted by member states, the controversial bill has yet to be voted upon by the European Parliament. Conceived to make EU agricultural policy “greener and fairer”, the degree to which the reform will ultimately improve the conflict-sensitivity of CAP abroad, however, remains uncertain.

The new CAP, officials say, is hoped to have a global regulatory impact as others adopt high production standards and labels in order to access the EU market. To the degree this takes place, adaptation costs for producers abroad will be significant. An assessment by the United States Department of Agriculture on the impact of the EU's Farm-to-Fork Strategy (which is part of CAP) on global economic and food security concluded that depending on the degree of worldwide adoption of the new EU rules, the decline in global agricultural production could amount between 1 and 11 per cent, while global prices would soar between 9 and 89 per cent. Rising food commodity prices and decreasing income, the study concludes, would soar food insecurity in 76 low- and middle-income countries, particularly in Africa.⁵⁰

While many of the long-standing criticisms of CAP have been taken into account in successive CAP reforms already, the new CAP reform is going to include a package of regulations that are likely to significantly impact on global agricultural production, trade, prices and income. Although EU institutions have spent a lot of energy in assessing the reform's impact within the EU, no similar effort has been done to project the reforms's impact on third countries, especially through the lens of conflict prevention.

⁵⁰ Jayson Beckmann et al., “Economic and Food Security Impacts of Agricultural Input Reduction Under the European Union Green Deal's Farm to Fork and Biodiversity Strategies”, in *USDA Economic Briefs*, No. 30 (November 2020), <https://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/pub-details/?pubid=99740>.

2.2 Migration: The human cost of securitisation and outsourcing

By its nature, migration is both an internal and an external policy area. The internal-external nexus of migration has been acknowledged in both academia and EU policy documents for decades.⁵¹ In the EU institutions, migration – which remains mostly member states' competency – is nonetheless clearly positioned as a predominantly internal portfolio, as attested by the very name of the DG that handles it: Migration and Home Affairs.

This has remained so even though the 2015–16 influx of refugees from Syria into the EU left no doubt over how neighbourhood security directly affects EU internal cohesion. At the time, the 2016 EUGS used the example of migration to underline the need for cross-sectoral policy coordination to “become more joined-up across internal and external policies” as migration in particular required “a balanced and human rights-compliant policy mix addressing the management of the flows and the structural causes”.⁵² As migration has been factored across EU policy documents as both a consequence and aggravator of conflict, key elements of migration policy have been integrated with internal policy structures, including in homeland security, border management, employment, culture or education.⁵³

Despite the clear-eyed view at the conceptual level and some positive measures of cross-sectoral integration, EU holistic aspirations did not pass the stress test that came with the 2015-16 migration influx and the internal cohesion crisis that followed. The sudden upsurge of arrivals led European governments to put larger sustainability and human security concerns aside and adopt a de facto externalisation approach to migration. The predominant goal of this course has been to stop irregular migration flows at all cost before they reach European shores, with significant impact on the internal capacities and conflict potential of countries of origin or transit in the Southern Mediterranean and the Sahel.⁵⁴ The fact that migration policy remains largely competence of the member states with

⁵¹ Bassam Tibi, *Europa ohne Identität? Leitkultur oder Wertebeliebigkeit*, München, Goldmann, 2002; Alberto Tagliapietra, “The European Migration Crisis”, cit.

⁵² EEAS, *Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe*, cit., p. 50.

⁵³ Roderick Parkes, “Nobody Move! Myths of the EU Migration Crisis”, in *Chaillot Papers*, No. 143 (December 2017), <https://www.iss.europa.eu/node/2189>.

⁵⁴ Alberto Tagliapietra, “The European Migration Crisis”, cit.

greatly varying interests and priorities in Africa has added another layer of difficulty to the challenge of making EU migration policies and practices conflict-sensitive.⁵⁵

The stress test of the 2015–16 migration crisis highlighted how outdated the EU’s migration and asylum rules were. The crisis could thus have been used by EU member states to adapt the bloc’s capacities, lead on refugee reception and balanced burden-sharing with partner countries, and systematically seize the economic opportunities of migration to mutual benefit to both EU and societies abroad. Instead, and in contradiction to formal discourse, European decision-makers saw migration as a fundamental threat to EU domestic cohesion that must be suppressed or contained far away. This one-sided perspective on migration does not just clash with the perceptions of partner countries south of the EU, which see migration as a multi-dimensional phenomenon, including as a source of income and development. It also stands in direct opposition to the EU’s theoretical aspiration of holistic external action, especially when it comes to conflicts. In Mali, for example, the EU continues to focus mostly on migration, to the point of viewing the ongoing conflict there merely as a factor that could drive migration. European governments routinely neglect the root causes of migration, leveraging their development aid to force governments in developing countries to keep their citizens at home, deploy security forces to stem the flow, and turn neighbouring states like Turkey, Lebanon or Libya into “giant migration buffers”.⁵⁶

A landmark step in direction of the externalisation of migration management has been the 2016 EU–Turkey deal on migration, by which Turkey agreed to keep irregular migrants on its soil in exchange for monetary and other incentives. This policy has resulted in the EU effectively outsourcing the irregular migration issue and the challenges related to it to a neighbouring country. Originally intended as an emergency measure, the success of the EU-Turkey deal regarding the immediate goal of bringing down arrivals was however quickly institutionalised. That same year the EU Migration Partnership Framework established similar outsourcing

⁵⁵ Rosanne Anholt and Giulia Sinatti, “Under the Guise of Resilience: The EU Approach to Migration and Forced Displacement in Jordan and Lebanon”, in *Contemporary Security Policy*, Vol. 41, No. 2 (2020), p. 311-335, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13523260.2019.1698182>; Pol Bargués and Jessica Schmidt, “Resilience and the Rise of Speculative Humanitarianism: Thinking Difference through the Syrian Refugee Crisis”, in *Millennium*, Vol. 49, No. 2 (January 2021), p. 197-223.

⁵⁶ Roderick Parkes, “Nobody Move!”, cit., p. 9.

relationships with priority countries Ethiopia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal.⁵⁷ It has also been noted that the pact has led other countries in Europe's extended Southern neighbourhood to seek gain from establishing themselves as complicit partners in the EU's one-sided containment approach, with detrimental impact on human rights and human security.⁵⁸

Altogether, scholarly assessment of the external impact of recent European migration policy in EUFSP has been abysmal.⁵⁹ To be sure, the crisis mode of migration induced in 2015–16 established migration as a cross-cutting security issue and high priority both at the EU institutional level and in member states, and its inter-sectoral integration is more advanced than that of other policy areas. Despite experts' overwhelmingly negative assessment of the narrow security lens of European migration policy, in some cases criticism has been taken on board and notable efforts have been undertaken to reach such a holistic policy. For example, the EU's Sahel Strategy has been highlighted as a good practice for cross-sectoral policy coordination where EU migration policy has been factored into a larger joined-up strategy and action plan right from the start, with some positive impact on the crisis/conflict potential of that region.⁶⁰

In many other instances, however, European migration policy has been notably far from the goal of multi-dimensionality, with damaging and at times devastating effects on the conflict potential abroad. The European focus on curbing irregular migration and pushing for readmission has been undermining local economies by suppressing remittances, dismantling informal cross-border economies that many border communities rely on for their livelihoods and generating cost for

⁵⁷ Alberto Tagliapietra, "The European Migration Crisis", cit.

⁵⁸ Anne Koch, Annette Weber and Isabelle Werenfels (eds), "Profiteers of Migration? Authoritarian States in Africa and European Migration Management", in *SWP Research Papers*, No. 4 (July 2018), <https://www.swp-berlin.org/en/publication/profiteers-of-migration>.

⁵⁹ Roderick Parkes, "Nobody Move!", cit.; Alberto Tagliapietra, "The European Migration Crisis", cit.; Rosanne Anholt and Giulia Sinatti, "Under the Guise of Resilience", cit.; Human Rights Watch, *Towards an Effective and Principled EU Migration Policy. Recommendations for Reform*, June 2018, <https://www.hrw.org/node/319187>.

⁶⁰ Council of the European Union, *Council Conclusions on the EU's Integrated Strategy on the Sahel*, 7723/21, 16 April 2021, <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-7723-2021-INIT/en/pdf>; Bernardo Venturi, "The EU and the Sahel: A Laboratory of Experimentation for the Security–Migration–Development Nexus", in *IAI Working Papers*, No. 17|38 (December 2017), <https://www.iai.it/en/node/8696>.

readmission. Remittances make up a key share of GDP in many countries of origin in the Sahel and sub-Saharan Africa that these economies cannot afford to lose, and EU development aid amounts are too small to make up for those losses. This imbalance explains partner governments' unwillingness to cooperate on readmissions, which is often not a problem of capacity, as asserted by the EU, but a sheer economic calculus by already fragile economies.⁶¹

Numerous assessments by human rights non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have pointed to the detrimental effects of EU migration policy in third countries in terms of human rights and the rule of law, including the erosion of the right to asylum. EU border controls and the externalisation of border management to authoritarian and/or fragile African partner countries have led to, and indirectly tolerated, human rights violations by coast guards, smugglers and officials. In addition, the externalisation of migration management by means of large-scale refugee camps in countries such as Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon or Libya has been putting a considerable burden on the economic welfare and social cohesion of Southern Mediterranean countries, the potentially destabilising effects of which are well known to the EU.⁶²

In 2020, the Commission promised a fresh start for EU migration policy through a new holistic framework, the European Pact on Migration and Asylum. However, the proposal has been heavily criticised by experts and NGOs as old wine in new bottles, which once again prioritised securitised containment over human rights and sustainable development.⁶³ In terms of its potential impact on human security abroad, the controversial formula of making partner countries' access to development assistance, trade concessions, security assistance or visa facilitation conditional on these countries' cooperation on border management and readmissions, it has been argued, is taking the securitisation of EU migration policy to a new coercive level. According to some experts, the Pact is "so inward-oriented that it fails to recognize the policy implications of the dire state of forced

⁶¹ Alberto Tagliapietra, "The European Migration Crisis", cit.

⁶² Human Rights Watch, *Towards an Effective and Principled EU Migration Policy*, cit.; EuroMed Rights, *The New Pact for Migration and Asylum. The Global Impact*, Brussels, EuroMed Rights, May 2021, https://euromedrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/EN_4AnalysisPACT.pdf.

⁶³ EuroMed Rights, *The New Pact for Migration and Asylum*, cit.

migration globally”.⁶⁴ The pact moreover made few if any concessions to the fact that countries of origin and transit in the global South were hard-hit by the Covid-19 pandemic, making them more vulnerable socio-economically and thus more dependant on external assistance.⁶⁵

In sum, the area of migration has become illustrative of how efforts to foster resilience in one policy area can undermine resilience in others. The case of EU policy in Libya, overshadowed and defined in recent years by the pressing concern to bring down irregular migration figures to the detriment of larger human security concerns, has been a poster child of this distorted equation. While the EU declared to work both towards migration management and the building of a resilient Libyan state in parallel, in practice EU policies sacrificed the latter goal for the former. As of 2017, the EU, led by Italy, supported a policy by which different local authorities, some controlled by militia, were engaged and supported in exchange for their collaboration to contain migration. This approach of empowering local forces competing with the central government directly undermined the EU's other declared goal: empowering a functioning central state and strengthening an inclusive institutional matrix so that different local forces could be represented. The renewed outbreak of violence in 2018–19 in Libya in part also highlighted the incoherence of EU policy.⁶⁶

2.3 Climate: Mitigating external effects of the Green Deal

An analysis of the external dimension of the the area of environmental and climate policy must distinguish between the impact of climate change abroad on the one hand and the impact of EU climate policies and regulations on third countries on the other. In terms of the former, the EU clearly recognises climate change as a threat multiplier, exacerbating other causes of conflict, such as migration, food insecurity and access to resources, as well as a threat in its own right.⁶⁷ The link

⁶⁴ Kemal Kirişçi, M. Murat Erdoğan and Nihal Eminoğlu, “The EU's ‘New Pact on Migration and Asylum’ Is Missing a True Foundation”, in *Order and Chaos*, 6 November 2020, <https://brook.gs/352Yc1R>.

⁶⁵ EuroMed Rights, *The New Pact for Migration and Asylum*, cit.

⁶⁶ Nathalie Tocci, “Resilience and the European Union’s Role in the World”, cit.

⁶⁷ Niklas Bremberg, “EU Foreign and Security Policy on Climate-Related Security Risks”, in *SIPRI Policy Briefs*, November 2019, <https://www.sipri.org/node/4945>.

between environmental degradation and conflict⁶⁸ has long been acknowledged and reflected in the formulation of EU climate policies, including most recently in the European Green Deal, an ambitious policy package launched by the Commission in late 2019 laying out a comprehensive European roadmap for reaching carbon neutrality by 2050.⁶⁹

The systematic linking of the effects of climate change as triggers and aggravating factors of conflict is slowly finding its way in policy practice. EU delegations have started to implement a more holistic approach, including for example reforestation and agricultural reform in their conflict prevention/resolution strategies in conflict-prone areas. However, EU special representatives working in conflict affected areas are not specifically tasked to address climate-related security risks, for instance in the Sahel or the Horn of Africa. At the same time, the EEAS unit working on climate security is not adequately equipped to be attentive to conflict prevention or peacebuilding concerns. There is a need for a more explicit strategy, more training and more information sharing across institutions.⁷⁰

European awareness of the effects of climate change and environmental degradation in the neighbourhood, however, are not matched by an equally strong awareness – and structured action – of the impact of the EU's own ambitious internal climate policy package beyond the EU's borders. The implementation of the Green Deal is expected to remake the European internal market and industries and contribute to transforming the global energy regime, with potentially game-changing repercussions on countries dealing with the EU, in particular the EU's closest trading partners. The transition to a socio-economic model that is environmentally sustainable implies transition costs that will be primarily born by specific sectors of the global economy. Although the Green Deal acknowledges the socio-economic vulnerabilities connected to its climate targets and aims to take concrete steps to mitigate such risks, the package has been widely criticised for not

⁶⁸ Vally Koubi, "Climate Change and Conflict", in *Annual Review of Political Science*, Vol. 22 (2019), p. 343-360, <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-050317-070830>; Joshua Busby and Nina von Uexkull, "Climate Shocks and Humanitarian Crisis: Which Countries Are at Risk?", in *Foreign Affairs*, 29 November 2018, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/node/1123404>.

⁶⁹ European Commission, *The European Green Deal*, COM/2019/640, 11 December 2019, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52019DC0640>.

⁷⁰ Niklas Bremberg, "EU Foreign and Security Policy on Climate-Related Security Risks", cit.

going far enough in ensuring an inclusive and just transition. Crucially, while this debate has been vivid in terms of social justice *within* the EU (notably in discussing the Just Transition Mechanism, the Green Deal's main climate justice instrument, aimed at ensuring solidarity between member states), surprisingly little discussion has taken place at EU level about how to tackle the socio-economic repercussions of the Green Deal *outside* of the EU, including neighbouring regions.⁷¹

To be sure, European institutions have begun to acknowledge the potential of detrimental effects of the EU's environmental policy package abroad. But as the Green Deal package moves forward, there is no indication that beyond generic policy statements, the EU is systematically factoring in the peace/conflict-impact of internal climate legislation into its policy practice. The 2019 Green Deal Communication laconically stated that "careful attention will have to be paid when there are potential trade-offs between economic, environmental and social objectives".⁷² The 2021 Communication on Green Diplomacy went further, explicitly acknowledging that the external impact of the Green Deal package could lead to destabilisation in third countries, especially in the EU neighbourhood, and suggested specific cooperation packages to help mitigate those effects and help those countries manage the energy transition.⁷³ A recent relaunch of the EU's partnership with its Southern neighbours put assistance to manage the energy transition as one of the pillars of the partnership. It also pledged to help increase partners' resilience to climate change "by reinforcing our action on adaptation in particular in key vulnerable sectors such as agriculture and water".⁷⁴ It failed, however, to explicitly contemplate the indirect impact of the Green Deal, including the internal regulatory components of it, could have on Southern neighbourhood economies.

⁷¹ While general debates on the external impact of the Green Deal at large are scarce, there are a few notable exceptions such as debates on the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), which has been discussed in both internal and external terms.

⁷² European Commission, *The European Green Deal*, cit., p. 4.

⁷³ Council of the European Union, *Council Conclusions on Climate and Energy Diplomacy. Delivering on the External Dimension of the European Green Deal*, 5263/21, 25 January 2021, <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-5263-2021-INIT/en/pdf>.

⁷⁴ European Commission and High Representative of the Union, *Renewed Partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood. A New Agenda for the Mediterranean*, JOIN/2021/2, 9 February 2021, p. 3, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52021JC0002>.

Key points of concern regarding the external impact of the Green Deal include:

- *Social tensions in rentier states*: The climate targets and policies set out in the European Green Deal will pull the rug from underneath oil/gas rentier state regimes in the European neighbourhood. As the EU gradually reduces its carbon footprint, oil and gas producing countries especially will lose a major source of income which – in the case of rentier states such as Algeria or Libya – will potentially undo their entire social contract, leading to social tensions and potentially violent upheaval. This is unless rentier states use the next decade to implement the far-reaching economic reforms aimed at diversifying the economy that almost all of them have routinely evoked since the sharp drop of the oil price in 2014. Across the Middle East and North Africa, the double challenge of creating jobs for an exploding youthful population and the outlook of losing the number one source of government revenue will lead the region toward renewed upheaval, unless decisive economic reforms are enacted. However, given that in several MENA countries, rentier state's hydrocarbon income sustains regime survival, it is unsurprising that the drive for reform has routinely ebbed away once oil prices recovered. While gas exporters in the EU neighbourhood are most vulnerable, oil producers will most certainly also feel the increased price volatility as the EU gradually reduces its share of global consumption.⁷⁵
- *Conflict impact of the carbon border adjustment mechanism*: The Green Deal aims to reduce the risk of carbon leakage (European companies relocating to countries with less restrictive carbon policies) by means of an updated EU Emissions Trading System including a new carbon border adjustment mechanism (CBAM), to make sure the price of imports reflect their carbon content. These built-in precautionary measures, however, would mainly benefit EU citizens, and it is unclear to which degree they are suitable to buffer adverse economic effects on societies beyond the EU, including in conflict-prone areas.⁷⁶
- *Resource exploitation in conflict areas*: The transition to clean energy is conditioned on large-scale investment into renewable energy technologies, which in turn require harvesting and using resources such as metals that

⁷⁵ Simone Tagliapietra, "The Impact of the Global Energy Transition on MENA Oil and Gas Producers", in *Energy Strategy Reviews*, Vol. 26 (November 2019), Article 100397, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.esr.2019.100397>.

⁷⁶ Mark Leonard et al., "The Geopolitics of the European Green Deal", in *Bruegel Policy Contributions*, No. 4/21 (February 2021), <https://www.bruegel.org/?p=40941>.

are particularly present in sub-Saharan Africa, including some conflict-prone countries and regions.

At the same time, it has been argued, Green Deal tools and regulations may benefit human security abroad, for example:

- *Extending economic and industrial opportunity.* Research in environmental peacebuilding has shown that environmental policy can help to mitigate conflict and build peace.⁷⁷ Some elements of the Green Deal could have a positive impact by easing conflict risk factors, largely under the premise that governments and societies abroad come along with the EU in its green transition, thereby extending the economic and industrial opportunity inherent in the deal beyond Europe's borders.
- *Increased climate ambition through carbon border adjustment.* The other side of the carbon adjustment mechanism argument is that a CBAM would push other countries to adopt similar environmental legislation – a climate “Brussels effect” benefitting all. As the EU increases carbon pricing internally and the risk of climate leakage increases, CBAM would not only protect EU companies from unfair competition, but could also potentially raise incentives for both legislatures and companies in third countries to increase their climate ambition for ease of access to the EU market.⁷⁸ The far-reaching climate targets formulated by the Green Deal set the updated ETS proposals' ambition and scope (including the maritime sector, road transport and buildings, all fossil fuel combustion and waste incineration). That said, the quality of governance and inherent political instability in the European neighbourhood makes such a flexible legal adaptation highly unlikely.
- *Boosting sustainable investment via Green Taxonomy.* Another example of the is the new EU Green Taxonomy (2020),⁷⁹ a tool to point investors towards sustainable economic activities. It introduces a labelling system for sustainable investments by providing definitions on which economic activities qualify as

⁷⁷ Tobias Ide et al., “The Past and Future(s) of Environmental Peacebuilding”, cit.

⁷⁸ Pascal Lamy, Genevieve Pons and Pierre Leturcq, “Greening the European Union Trade Policy. The Economics of Trade and Development”, in *Jacques Delors Institute Policy Papers*, No. 145 (December 2019), <https://institutdelors.eu/en/publications/verdir-la-politique-commerciale-de-lue-2-aspects-economiques-2>.

⁷⁹ European Parliament and Council of the EU, *Regulation (EU) 2020/852 of 18 June 2020 on the Establishment of a Framework to Facilitate Sustainable Investment, and Amending Regulation (EU) 2019/2088*, <http://data.europa.eu/eli/reg/2020/852/oj>.

environmentally sustainable, aiming to mitigate greenwashing and market fragmentation, and help shift investments towards environmental sustainability, all of which should in principle benefit local communities.⁸⁰ For all its positive potential, the green taxonomy also provides an example for adverse effects of otherwise beneficial EU climate policy. In the EU bioenergy policy for example, green taxonomy can provide a fig leaf to non-conflict-sensitive policies. European companies' run to acquire cheap agricultural land in developing countries, especially in Africa, can reduce locals' access to vital land and water resources, and may lead to an increase in land concentration to the detriment of smallholder farming practices. Despite this, the EU green taxonomy has classified bioenergy as green, hence sustainable, illustrating inherent tensions between the EU's climate and broader sustainability goals.

In 2021, the Council/HRVP explicitly acknowledged and enumerated the potential security risks of the Green Deal in the neighbourhood.⁸¹ Emerging debates on EU climate diplomacy, geared towards more systematically align EU policies on climate with foreign and security goals and vice versa, are steps towards greater policy coherence, although they remain in the early conceptual stages, let alone implementation.

⁸⁰ A first set of rules was approved on 21 April 2021 and formally adopted on 4 June 2021. A second act for the remaining objectives will be published in 2022. Further details on the EU Green Taxonomy see European Commission website: *EU Taxonomy for Sustainable Activities*, https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/banking-and-finance/sustainable-finance/eu-taxonomy-sustainable-activities_en.

⁸¹ “[T]he energy transition, pursued at the requisite pace, will have a significant impact on societies, economies and geopolitics globally, transforming existing economic and trade patterns. While the transition is an opportunity for a shift towards sustainable growth, creating new jobs, and will ultimately benefit all countries, it could – in the medium-term – have adverse impacts on some, notably those dependent on the export of fossil fuels, including in the EU's broader neighbourhood. EU and Member State foreign policy and external action will need to anticipate such geopolitical and security challenges, by promoting as well as supporting the development of socially just economic and energy diversification plans, and providing, where necessary, targeted support to the most affected in order to support the transformation of their economies.” See Council of the European Union, *Council Conclusions on Climate and Energy Diplomacy*, cit., p. 8.


3. Conclusion: Do internal policies live up to their potential?

Conceptually, the EU has acknowledged the need to employ all policy tools and instruments at its disposal, including internal, in a co-ordinated, joined-up fashion, in order to effectively face the challenges of conflict prevention and -management abroad. Policy documents over the past decade have systematically and coherently laid out the bloc's commitment for a multi-sectoral whole-of-governance approach at EU level, and the need to reconcile external and internal policy has consistently been stressed.

The gap between declared intent and implementation is wide, however. Conceptual detail on the external impact of internal policy areas and guidance on how to implement the internal-external nexus in EU policy have remained scarce. EU inter-sectoral response to acute external security crises remains ad hoc and patchy as there is no standing crisis response platform, as Directorate ISP coordinates EU crisis response on a case-by-case basis.

While implementation of the EU's whole-of-governance approach to conflict has been advancing slowly in joining up external policy areas, internal policy areas are so far barely part of the equation. A few policy areas with very obvious internal-external linkages such as migration, energy or climate appear more advanced at least conceptually, but a systematic integration of internal policy areas into the calculus of how EU policy impacts human security abroad is absent.

The three exemplary sectors reviewed above, while adding nuance, illustrate this study's overarching conclusion that a genuine EU multi-sector actorness in conflict prevention/resolution will not materialise as long as multi-sectoral policy directives are not consequently developed and implemented and to some degree unavoidable contradictions between different sectoral objectives are not systematically tracked and meaningfully mitigated. Although more research will be needed to trace the external conflict impact of EU internal policy areas, available evidence suggests that these shortcomings are especially pronounced in sectors predominantly geared at domestic impact, as these remain largely outside the classical realm and institutional circuit of European external action.




Debates around the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy have revealed the shortcomings of the Union's agricultural model, its incompatibility with EU development and climate goals and even, indirectly, its potentially negative implications for the effectiveness of EU crisis management/resolution efforts. EU migration policy has become a poster child of how efforts to foster resilience in one policy area can undermine resilience in others. In the context of the Green Deal, although mitigating potentially adverse effects of EU climate policy is emerging as a new major field of action for EU policymaking, these efforts are still in their early stages.

The disconnect between EU domestic policy areas and their external impact is especially pronounced with regard to regulations, the norm-setting dimension of the EU that cuts across all internal sectors. The significant global impact potential of the single market rule-book on other countries' societal cohesion contrasts with its footnote-treatment in the debate on European inter-sectoral policy coherence. Debates on the Brussels effect have made clear that the power of regulations is a greatly under-used and under-studied impact asset, especially when it comes to streamlining EU leverage towards geopolitical influence. Systematic research on both the socio-economic and geopolitical impact of EU regulations beyond the EU's borders, and the ways it could be weaved into an integrated approach to external action, will be pertinent.

Some scholars have suggested that the EU's institutional setup and division of competencies is incompatible with its own aspiration of pursuing an integrated, multi-sectoral approach to crises and conflicts.⁸² The current arrangements in the EEAS and the Commission explicitly geared at co-ordinating implementation of an integrated approach in EU external action are insufficiently empowered, politically, financially and structurally, and hence ill-equipped to screen EU policies, programming and regulations across sectors to make sure they are developed in a conflict-sensitive way. Even when allowing that the bending of institutional and sectoral silos is a slow process that advances by iteration and generational

⁸² Loes Debuysere and Steven Blockmans, *Europe's Coherence Gap in External Crisis and Conflict Management*, cit.



change, and that the integrated approach is best viewed as a “guiding star”,⁸³ this process is facilitated – or obstructed – by mandates, budgets, structures and processes, all of which must reflect the ambition of the political vision they set out to fulfil.

⁸³ Authors’ interviews with European Commission and EEAS officials, June-September 2021.

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