

Deliverable 10.2

Working paper on overarching strategies

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1. Introduction

This deliverable 10.2 (DEL 10.2) is the second step of the transition to the recommendatory stage of the GLOBE project, as executed in work package 10, based on the previous analytical work of the project. In detail, DEL 10.2 seeks to identify the overarching strategies that might help the EU institutions respond better to global governance challenges. It uses a particular angle through which overarching strategies will be examined: policy coherence. In detail, this deliverable argues that the EU should coherently use its resources to reach well-defined goals to avoid the dissipation of resources and self-defeating policies when intervening in global governance. Managing the EU's extensive array of policy instruments that have an impact on this has been a persistent challenge for some time. More coherent interior structures would convert into more fruitful exterior action.

To grasp as far as possible the necessary mechanisms, we examine how the term coherence has been used in the EU and the relevant literature. Then, we examine how the concept of coherence has been analysed within the first part of the GLOBE project in the different work packages. In the next section, we add the results of an internal GLOBE survey about coherence in the EU, executed in the second part of the project. The results of these sections are the basis for section 5, where we recommend the best-tailored strategies for the EU.

2. Definition of Policy Coherence in the EU

The external relations of the EU have usually been performed through two different decision-making channels. First, the field of the exclusive competencies of the EU, such as external trade, development cooperation or humanitarian aid and prevention, which have been executed through the European Commission. Second, a bunch of other external actions, which followed the intergovernmental logic, were governed by the Council and the member states comprising the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) of the EU. This division in the decision-making of EU's external relations has been challenging ever since, and consecutive treaty revisions, which tried to overcome the problems resulting from this fragmentation, could not solve the existing fragmentation and coherence difficulties in EU foreign policy. Some new reforms, such as establishing the High Representative (HR) for the CFSP, introduced larger capacities for action but also aggravated the clash between the different centres. When the Treaty of Lisbon created the European External Action Service (EEAS) to support the HR (Article 27.3, TEU Lisbon), it came with immense costs during its establishment, which renewed the tensions along old dividing lines (Gebhard, 2017). However, this created a new situation regarding EU visibility and influence in bilateral foreign relations that would still require further adjustments and innovative coordination mechanisms.

Other things could be improved in how external action is framed, e.g. in the self-perception of the EU in global governance. When comparing itself to other IOs, EU staff emphasises that the EU has a comparative advantage compared to other actors such as the United Nations (UN) or the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). They point to the importance of their own operational and structural tools and the impacts they can realise when deciding to intervene. On the other hand, it is well-known that the functional fragmentation of the EU's institutional structures is the main problem for speaking with one voice in global affairs (Niemann & Bretherton, 2013). Therefore, the need for more institutional coherence is considered one of the biggest EU problems affecting policy coherence in the external dimension of EU action.

Within the EU's multi-level framework, policy coherence is considered an important goal in and of itself. A coherent EU action is expected to be compelling, legitimate and credible – and this requires a significant level of coherence, to avoid inconsistencies and internal conflicts. At the same time, the EU is a highly institutionalised international organisation in which different actors and institutions are involved in its internal governance, and this plays a role in challenging the efforts to align fully. Moreover, policy coherence can also be considered a matter of degree and needs to be achieved as much as possible, although a 100% probably would not be a realistic objective. In the end, the issue to consider is how to identify coherence issues and be aware of possible circumstances in which the risk of incoherence can have a serious effect on the EU as a global governance actor.

In the official documents of the European Union, coherence usually has an iconic meaning. Besides using terms such as “consonance”, “unity”, “continuity”, and “consistency”, also more powerful expressions are used, e.g. 'acting as a whole' and 'speaking with one voice'. All these expressions aim to achieve or at least come closer to an optimum level of EU integration.

Coherence in external action has been a habitual problem since the 1980s. When browsing the literature, we notice that the problem has been first acknowledged with Nuttall's (2000) seminal work, which gives an interesting overview of the development of the debate. Berteau (2005), Den Hertog and Stroß (2013), Gauttier (2004), and Hoffmeister (2008) have examined the concept from mainly a legal perspective, while Schroeder (2011) was the first to look at the EU external relations and the concept of coherence. Koenig (2016) looks at crisis management and how horizontal coherence can help in these cases, and Ahlström & Sjøfjell (2022) examine the relationship between the EU's policy coherence and global sustainability. Nonetheless, these publications have not triggered any more extensive debate, and the concept has remained intrinsically vague to this day in the academic literature.

At least before 1980, the concepts of foreign policy coherence and cohesion were used simultaneously and usually referred to political solidarity and the benefits states could have if they cooperated in particular foreign policy matters. (Gebhard, 2017) Also, the term consistency has often been used in these debates. Scholars, such as Berteau (2005), tried to deal with this problem, arguing that coherence can be seen as a superior requirement for coordination and adjustment to the concept of

‘consistency’, which would require less demanding criteria. In this sense, coherence is considered a higher stage of harmonisation, which requires comprehensiveness, completeness, continuity—and consistency.

A more comprehensive approach towards coherence was developed by Gebhard (2017: p.103), who defines coherence as the “ambition and necessity to bring various parts of the EU’s external relations together, to increase strategic convergence and ensure procedural efficiency.” Gebhard's approach captures different coherence issues, focusing on the interactions of the EU's initiatives and actors operating in areas related to external relations. As a result, she considers these interactions can produce synergies between member states and the EU level (vertical), between the various institutions at the EU level (horizontal), but also within various strands of EU external action (internal) and between the EU and other actors (external).

In detail, vertical coherence refers to the expectation of coherence between the Member States and Union level or the ability to “speak with one voice” (Conceição-Heldt & Meunier, 2014, p.961). Vertical coherence is deliberated for its calculated and policy-related consequences. For example, daily practice vertical coherence has promoted the systematic trade of information between member state delegates, e.g. in Council working groups (Gebhard (2017, see also Baltag and Smith, 2015). Nevertheless, vertical coherence is one of the EU's most significant problems for European external action, including involvement in global governance, and one that cannot be easily addressed and solved.

Horizontal coherence deals with coherence across the EU's various external policies and objectives. When looking only at EU external action, however, horizontal coherence deals with strategic and technical concertation at the EU level, including the intergovernmental and supranational institutions of EU external action (Gebhard, 2017). Internal/intra-institutional coherence denotes coherence within and among the EU's different institutions and bodies, such as the European Commission, Council, European Parliament, or the last institution to be established, the EEAS. This coherence type concerns rigorous management in every EU's external relations field. Therefore, it is concerned with the internal functioning of the CFSP/CSDP and the actions of the Commission on the exterior.

External coherence deals with EU policy coherence in their interactions towards external actors. This can be the EU's major trading partners, such as the US, UK or China, multilateral organisations, informal global governance institutions, G20, or interactions with developing countries. This type of coherence relates to how the EU acts in front of third parties or within the global multilateral framework. Therefore, it is paramount for the EU's relationship with the UN, OSCE, and NATO or critical partners such as the USA or China. Gebhard (2017:112) argues: "Apart from having a pivotal impact at the operational level, external coherence is also determined by internal – vertical and horizontal – coordination processes. Any failure to coordinate positions and processes within the EU—be it among member states, within the Council or between the Council and the Commission—has a significant

impact on the EU's ability to perform towards other major actors and, thus, also on its credibility and reputation as an international actor.” These four dimensions of coherence in EU external action are not only intrinsically interlaced, but they also reinforce each other.

3. Coherence in GLOBE analysis

The coherence of EU external action and global governance involvement has been examined in three different GLOBE work packages. First, the work package on trade (WP3), then in the area of climate change (WP 5) and finally, in part on cross-cutting issues, which examined the ratification of an international convention, namely the Istanbul Convention on Action against violence against women and domestic violence (WP7).

In WP 3, Broude and Haftel (2020; 2022) examine the relevance of vertical coherence and how it influences global governance outcomes and enables global governance reforms. They focus on the global investment regime, which comprises thousands of international investment agreements and global arbitration institutions. Their contribution looks at the development of the regime. It pays particular attention to how the EU and its member states engage in the investment regime and the reform proposals to create a more coherent global investment regime. Concerning the latter, their work zooms in on the debates around states' regulatory space, how investment agreements potentially constrain it, and the EU's initiative to form a permanent multilateral investment court through the reform process led by the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law.

Broude and Haftel (2022) focus on the role of the EU and its member states in reforming the global investment regime with a specific focus on the issue of state regulatory space. The current investment regime created international tensions on possible constraints on governments to develop public policy in environmental, energy, health, and human rights, constraining their state regulatory space. Following the 2009 Lisbon Treaties, policymaking on investment was included in the EU's Common Commercial Policy, which was initially conceived of as an exclusive competence that transformed the EU into a critical player in the international investment regime. However, EU member states challenged the exclusivity of the competence, creating multi-level tensions and constraints. Nevertheless, Broude and Haftel find that EU leadership is not significantly constrained, and the EU can put its "signature" on the regime for years to come" (Broude & Haftel, 2022) in terms of steering the debates on reform of the investment regime. Moreover, the investment regime constitutes an example where a significant degree of vertical coherence is achieved.

In the area of global climate governance (WP5), the EU has long positioned itself as a global governance leader. Kreienkamp et al. (2022) note in their contributions that this ambition has shaped the EU interactions with the UNFCCC and propelled the development of a vast body of EU policies, laws, and regulatory instruments in response to the rules developed within the climate change regime

complex and to steer rule-making at the international level. However, they also observe that EU climate policy has not advanced consistently over time, and policy outcomes have only sometimes matched the EU's climate leadership aspirations.

WP 5 aimed to understand this outcome by focusing on how multi-level interaction processes between the EU, its member states, and the international level have shaped climate policy development in the EU and explain when, why, and how non-incremental policy change has occurred. The different contributions of the WP5 found that European climate policy is an outcome of complex multi-level dynamics between EU and Member States and the EU and global level, which might enable policy innovation but can also lead to policy stagnation, contestation, and resistance. After integrating and applying a multi-level and multiple-streams theoretical framework, they show that the current internal set-up of the EU's decision-making provides "ample space for well-resourced veto players and 'policy obstructers'" (Kreienkamp et al., 2022, p. 16). As a result, the international influence of the Commission is primarily determined by power shifts within domestic political systems. Only when domestic policy preferences align and "opportunity structures" Kitschelt (1986) arise will the EU play a global leadership role. In this way, a lack of vertical coherence can influence global governance outcomes. However, their analysis is that the degree of vertical coherence within a policy area needs to be more straightforward and that the degrees vary across time and issues within a policy area, in this case, climate change.

In WP7, Ebetürk and Tokhi (2021) executed a study on the Istanbul Convention. They show significant differences in how European countries commit to the Convention. First, some ratify quickly, notably the Southern European states. Second, on average, most other states from Northern and Western Europe take longer to ratify the Convention. Third, Central and Eastern European (EES) states eschew ratification of the Convention. Not even half of eligible EES states have ratified the Convention. Based on their descriptive macro-level analysis of ratification patterns, Ebetürk and Tokhi (2021) formulate some propositions that help understand the differences and lack of coherence among European states. They focus on political and sociological explanations, drawing from comparative politics, human rights research, and political sociology. They argue that new forms of relationships between civil society and the state in contexts of democratic backsliding are essential to understand ratification patterns. The role played by the state in supporting or organising the contestation against the Convention is critical in many cases. Moreover, the government's refusal and delay in ratifying the Convention, especially in a highly institutionalised regional environment with many overlapping and interlocking human rights norms, severely undermines international efforts to build and implement consistent and effective protection of individual liberties. This degree of coherence affects effective international action and undermines global governance efforts in this area.

From the different case studies performed in the context of the GLOBE research, it emerges that policy coherence in external action and global governance is possible, and some previous experiences allow a clear understanding of what creates conditions for successful action. However, our findings also

illustrate how complex the quest for policy and institutional coherence within the EU can be in those cases where actors dispute policy goals and strategies. Actually, it appears that policy coherence difficulties are very much related to the nature of EU governance in different policy areas and sectors. To this purpose, we next discuss some institutional configurations at macro-sector levels that allow or prevent a much more intense level of policy coherence in external action. The macro-sector dimension emerges as the more relevant one for many issues of policy coherence and a place where most improvements can be made in the coming years, if not achieved. Still, the challenge of inter-sector EU coherence remains a much more complex issue that involves many complex institutional interactions and the participation of multiple political actors at different levels.

4. Sector perspectives on policy coherence in the EU

To assess the coherence difficulties the EU faces at the macro-sector level, we focus on several sectors that have been examined in detail in the GLOBE project. To this purpose, a survey was sent to the work package leaders of the WPs 3-7, requesting them to answer the following questions that would summarise the results obtained in the sector-focused research they performed in the GLOBE project:

- a) *“Do you consider that enhancing policy coherence in global governance is the leading EU goal to shape the future of global governance? Do you think this should be? Under which circumstances?”*
- b) *“Would potential EU policy incoherence undermine EU efforts to influence the future of global governance? Detail why and how.”*

a) Trade

GLOBE scholars examining the WP3 on trade have applied Gebhardt’s framework to this area, which allows for identifying different types of incoherence that need to be monitored/addressed. The problem of vertical coherence is less of an issue for EU trade policy because trade policy is an exclusive competence. This already creates a significant degree of coherence. Nonetheless, the problem of sheer incoherence did not entirely disappear. This was also exemplified in debates on ratifying the CETA agreement, which a Belgian regional government opposed.

In terms of horizontal coherence, EU trade policy must strive to ensure a balance. They have to balance trade-specific objectives such as trade liberalisation and broader EU policy objectives arising from treaty commitments and commitments to sustainable development, labour and human rights, security, and foreign policy. In this area, several coherence gains can be made since trade policy is increasingly engaging with other policy objectives, including development, climate, and human rights policies. Especially concerning development cooperation policy, further coherence can be pursued to

generate global results since the EU strives to pursue sustainable objectives through instruments such as GSP or bilateral agreement. Coupling development cooperation with trade issues might generate these gains.

Due to various institutional and organisational factors – including different mandates, competencies, cultures, instruments, and objectives – internal EU power struggles can lead to "turf wars", which undermine internal coherence. The latter is essential concerning several trade instruments (agreements, GSP) on which the different institutions might propose different preferences.

External coherence refers to coherence vis-à-vis external actors. Here the risk of incoherence can relate to applying different standards to different actors, for example, less stringent labour rights commitments in bilateral agreements for one partner compared to another.

b) Global Finance

In financial governance, vertical coherence within the EU is ensured by the preeminent role of the European Central Bank (ECB). The ECB can show a single EU voice in some international organisations, particularly the BIS and related committees (i. e., the Basel Committee), where it is a member and shareholder. ECB is also a member of the Financial Stability Board (FSB), where global financial governance is articulated more comprehensively. Member states participate in these international organisations, making coordination a continuous requirement (that the internal system of governance established by EU member states' central banks facilitates). However, there are some international organisations in which only states participate, and ECB or other EU agencies do not have a natural form of participation. For example, the ECB has an observer status in the International Monetary Fund (IMF) but is not a member (nor the EU) – it only participates in some executive board meetings when it is invited. In the OECD or the Group of 20, the ECB participates as a member of the EU delegation - which also ensures internal coordination. Most possibly, this is an area in which policy integration with the EU allows a more unmistakable single voice in global governance, compared to other sectors where institutional fragmentation is evident. This does not prevent those discrepancies among member states that are often essential and create significant policy tensions, but existing institutions allow them to process them internally.

c) Climate Change

Enhancing policy coherence in global governance is the leading EU goal to shape the future of global governance. The Communication from the Commission on the "European Green Deal" (European Commission 2019) focuses on the EU's strategy to address climate change and environmental challenges, including by implementing the United Nations' 2030 Agenda and the sustainable development goals. The European Green Deal seeks coherence across national policies that implement

and reinforce EU measures while simultaneously articulating the EU's ambition to shape global policy through bilateral and multilateral channels, particularly the United Nations, the G7, the G20, and the WTO.

In the context of climate change and considering broader trends of regime fragmentation, policy coherence is essential to effective global governance (Coen et al., 2022). Misaligned or conflicting policies across domains, such as climate change and biodiversity, risk undermining progress in each of these domains (e.g., Kreienkamp 2021). The UN SDGs provide a practical albeit underutilised integrative framework in this regard. The EU can promote policy coherence on the global level, both by promoting institutional links between other IOs and by encouraging other countries to pursue greater policy coherence domestically. However, policy coherence should not mean policy homogeneity. For instance, climate policies in low-income countries will look very different from those in the EU. Holistic and cross-sectoral approaches will be essential across all institutional and geographical settings, but policies must also be responsive to context.

Potential EU policy incoherence would undermine EU efforts to influence the future of Global Governance. A holistic approach is essential for effectively implementing the European Green Deal. This means we need much deeper connections between traditionally relatively siloed institutions and domains (e.g. energy, trade or agriculture). Internal incoherence across these domains is likely to translate into external incoherence, as policy siloes produce different expectations about the role of the EU in global governance and the policies it should push for on the global stage. Coherence in terms of concerted goal-setting also matters. In climate negotiations, the EU's influence has been more decisive when member states could speak with the same voice. For example, during COP-15 in Copenhagen, the fact that "Europe spoke with many different voices" has been highlighted as one of the reasons why the EU was sidelined during critical parts of the conference (Hedegaard in Haug & Berkhout, 2010).

d) Security

In the security field, vertical coherence can sometimes be an obstacle in the EU's foreign policy and approach to global governance. GLOBE research has found that: "The EU is still working to override its "split personality syndrome" (Blavoukos & Bourantanis, 2011, p. 171) and to reach a unique position in the place it wants to occupy as a security actor in the relationship with NATO in the context of great power competition. Hence, that challenge is a key obstacle to developing a sound EU-NATO relationship (Simón, 2019, pp. 1–6), including how to define the EU's stand and how that can be compatible with NATO. It must be borne in mind that the EU constitutes an actor in its own right and an arena for its member states to articulate and project their particularistic interests. In fact, "there have been discrepancies between member states to EU and NATO when prioritising which security provider should carry out a specific mission." (Sánchez Cobaleda, 2020, p.78). However, we cannot say, based

on existing research, whether this is the leading EU goal to shape the future of global governance. Some elements that may be useful to reflect on are the Commission's attention to cross-cutting issues and the attention to strategic forecasting and integrating research capabilities of different EU bodies (e.g., through European Strategy and Policy Analysis System (ESPAS)) as a sign of willingness to pursue policy coherence. Also, cross-cutting and nexus issues in security, such as climate change or digitalisation, are essential. For example, the EU cannot effectively address migration, health, and development, without tackling climate change. In this sense, policy coherence is necessary. Some policy areas have, overall, obvious security implications. For example, this is the case with the security-development nexus.

It is possible that horizontal and vertical incoherence undermine EU efforts to influence the future of global governance. However, it is not sure whether this would always be the case – it would likely vary significantly by issue area. This would require additional research to verify. For example, in the security field, in some cases, policies may conflict with each other and can therefore undermine EU efforts. Moreover, some of the key political priorities of the COM are in conflict, for example, how to balance "A Europe fit for the digital age" with "A new push for European democracy" and "An economy that works for the people".

5. Recommendation stage

Under most of the thinkable settings in the EU, all these four types of coherence will only be achievable if we expect a reach of 100% regarding their consistency, integration and harmonisation. Independent of the cooperation mechanisms in the EU institutions, its structural character is habituated by path dependencies, which will not disappear. Furthermore, there will always be factors that the legal and institutional framework will not be able to dominate, such as international influence, member state positions and actors' interests and preferences. Therefore, the interactions between actors and between several policy components of EU external relations will be influenced by enduring fluctuations.

To meet the goal of ensuring greater coherence, the EU should strengthen vertical coherence and coordination between EU member states, recognising that even in areas of non-exclusive competence, the EU can play a more important role in global governance if EU member states can speak with 'one voice' in global governance settings. With well-designed instruments, the EU is likely to benefit from long-lasting trends of a higher level of intergovernmental organisations' autonomy from their member states, especially in sectors where this trend is particularly relevant.

Based on the theoretical and practical discussion in the sections above, we recommend further exploring the following strategies for the EU in considering a major role in global governance settings, which will be included in the EU strategy book:

- GLOBE research has confirmed that speaking with 'one voice' is crucial to building a powerful global governance actor. Moreover, strengthening coherence will generate strategic gains on the global stage, making the EU more influential and capable of participating in global policy design from the earlier stages. Therefore, we recommend **strengthening internal coherence and coordination between EU Member States in different policy areas. This recommendation will appear as strategy 14 in the EU strategy book (DEL 10.4).**
- Besides that, GLOBE research has also found that the proliferation of global governance institutions has led to, and will continue to, increased fragmentation, which can limit the system's ability to produce and distribute global public goods. However, because of its substantial involvement in global international organisations, the EU can effectively support a larger role in coordinating global governance institutions and global policies by developing a long-term strategy to strengthen the coherence of global policymaking. Therefore, we recommend promoting instruments aimed at **addressing fragmentation in global governance. This recommendation will appear as strategy 15 in the EU strategy book (DEL 10.4).**



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