

<b>Institution: University of Aberdeen</b>
<b>Unit of Assessment: UoA 21 Politics and International Studies</b>
<b>Title of case study: The EU as a Global Actor: Institutions, Strategy and Performance</b>
<p><b>1. Summary of the impact</b></p> <p>This case study focuses on the development of the European Union (EU) as a global political/security actor, particularly regarding the dynamic relationship between institution-building, strategic thinking, and policy performance. The impact involves the influence of Professor Michael E. Smith's research on EU foreign/security policy on current policy debates about the EU's future as a global actor, and on the broader issue of the EU's purpose in world politics. The EU is currently considering ideas about how to reform its ambitions in this area in light of the 2009 Treaty of Lisbon, providing a major opportunity for Smith's work to have an impact.</p>
<p><b>2. Underpinning research</b></p> <p>Smith's work on the EU extends back to the 1990s, supported at first by a US Fulbright grant to the EU and an Institute for Global Conflict and Cooperation/MacArthur Foundation grant. By analysing evidence about EU foreign policy outputs in the form of aggregate data and individual case studies, supported by extensive elite interviews, he has consistently demonstrated several key drivers behind the EU's global 'actorness': 1) EU foreign/security policy cooperation cannot be explained by realist arguments regarding external security threats or US pressure; 2) endogenous EU factors (such as norms, 'soft law,' and knowledge) are equally, if not more important, than exogenous factors; 3) institutional development involving 'bottom up' experiential learning is more important than 'top down' intergovernmental bargaining; 4) ideational factors ranging from European history to cultural values to an opposition to certain US foreign policies have played key roles; and 5) taken together, these changes, and the policies they produce, represent a nascent EU global or grand strategy in world politics.</p> <p>Several of Smith's works, including two award-winning articles, laid the foundations for the impacts discussed in this case study. His research monograph, <u>Europe's Foreign and Security Policy: The Institutionalization of Cooperation</u> (Cambridge University Press, 2003), is now a standard reference on the governance of EU foreign policy. In 'Diplomacy by Decree: The Legalization of EU Foreign Policy' (<u>Journal of Common Market Studies</u> 39/1), Smith showed that informal customs and norms of EU foreign policy were becoming not just institutionalised but also legalised, with important consequences for the EU's emerging constitutional order (best JCMS article of the year award). A year later, he produced another influential, and award-winning, article outlining the key elements of a theory of EU foreign policy: 'Toward a Theory of EU Foreign Policy Making: Multi-level Governance, Domestic Politics, and National Adaptation to Europe's Common Foreign and Security Policy' (<u>Journal of European Public Policy</u> 11/4). This article, which won JEPP's award for the most downloaded article of the year, attempts to incorporate not just core EU institutional factors in Brussels but also elements of the domestic politics of EU member states.</p> <p>In 2007, based on the track record above, Smith won a five-year (May 2008-April 2013) European Research Council (ERC) grant (no. 203613) for his project 'A European Approach to Conflict Resolution?'. This award, in the amount of one million euro, funded his research on the EU's expansion into global security affairs, through its new Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) operations and other policy tools. Smith began publishing his findings from this project in 2009, when he accepted an offer to relocate from the University of St Andrews to the University of Aberdeen. For this project, Smith has developed a theory of experiential institutional learning to demonstrate how the EU uses the CSDP primarily as a capacity-building tool in order to test and expand its capacities as a global security actor.</p> <p>A research monograph based on this project is nearing completion. However, several of Smith's publications funded by the ERC grant have already addressed the debate over the EU's legitimacy and effectiveness as a global political/security actor. He co-authored the first detailed analysis of the EU's counter-piracy naval operation to explain how the EU defines its security interests (in <u>Contemporary Security Policy</u> 30/3), followed by a comprehensive assessment of the state of EU foreign/security policy in the prestigious International Studies Compendium project after he moved</p>

**Impact case study (REF3b)**

to Aberdeen (reference #1). The EU's attempts to devise a more 'comprehensive approach' became part of the empirical evidence used by Smith to examine the role of learning in EU foreign policy; this argument appeared in an edited volume by Oxford University Press (reference #2). In 2011, Smith published an influential article on the emergence and implications of an EU 'grand strategy' in world politics (reference #3). This piece offered a conceptual framework to map and evaluate how various EU global actions serve particular EU interests. Moreover, while some scholars argue that the EU needs a grand or global strategy, Smith demonstrated that the EU already had such a strategy; the problem was in implementing it coherently through the EU's existing institutional framework.

Finally, in 2013 Smith authored studies of two major new elements of EU foreign/security policy cooperation. One co-authored article examined the gestation and performance of the European Gendarmerie Force (reference #4), which seems to have created much confusion across the EU regarding the role of standing police forces in CSDP operations. The second article was part of a special symposium organised and edited by Smith for the Journal of European Public Policy on the EU's new European External Action Service (EEAS). Smith's contribution (reference #5) offered a critical analysis of the performance of the EEAS, arguing that a combination of intergovernmental and bureaucratic politics has seriously interfered with the effective functioning of this new body. In particular, the EU's development and security agendas have been in conflict since the EEAS was created, which undermines the EU's attempts to devise a 'comprehensive approach' to conflict prevention and resolution. Taken together, these publications provide a critical mass of theory-informed analysis, supported by original evidence, regarding the performance and potential of European foreign/security policy.

**3. References to the research**

1. Michael E. Smith, 'European Foreign Policy', in Steven B. Redd (ed.), Foreign Policy Analysis, a volume in the International Studies Compendium Project (Blackwell: 2010). Electronic copy held by University of Aberdeen.
2. 'Developing a 'Comprehensive Approach' to International Security: Institutional Learning and the ESDP', in Jeremy Richardson (ed.), Constructing a Policy-Making State? Policy Dynamics in the European Union (Oxford University Press: 2012). Electronic copy held by University of Aberdeen.
3. Michael E. Smith, 'A Liberal Grand Strategy in a Realist World? Power, Purpose, and the EU's Changing Global Role', Journal of European Public Policy 18/2 (March 2011): 144-63. This was a featured article on the JEPP website, and is now one of JEPP's top downloaded articles (downloaded over 2,800 times in less than three years). Part of REF2 submission.
4. Giovanni Arcudi and Michael E. Smith, 'The European Gendarmerie Force: A Solution in Search of Problems?' European Security 22/1 (January 2013): 1-20. DOI: 10.1080/09662839.2012.747511
5. Michael E. Smith, 'The European External Action Service and the Security-Development Nexus: Organising for Effectiveness or Incoherence?' Journal of European Public Policy 20/9 (October 2013): 1299-1315. Smith served as organiser and guest editor of a special symposium of four JEPP articles on various aspects of the European External Action Service; this was the lead article in the symposium. Part of REF2 submission.

**4. Details of the impact**

The EU is facing a major identity crisis, not only in terms of handling the 2008 financial/euro crisis but also in terms what the EU aims to achieve as a global actor. At the same time, the EU has steadily improved its foreign/security policy capabilities, so that it actually possesses a wide range of power resources to implement its goals. The 2009 Treaty of Lisbon was supposed to address this apparent incongruity between the EU's (underwhelming) global policy performance and its (overwhelming) economic resources, yet many observers agree that the Treaty has not performed very effectively in terms of raising the EU's international profile or making the EU more responsive to its 28 member states and its 500+ million citizens.

These problems have inspired much debate regarding the next steps for Europe, particularly in terms of whether to reform the Treaty of Lisbon. Smith's large body of research on the EU's global 'actorship' has informed this debate in several ways. Initially, the impact involved personal

conversations with dozens of high-level EU policy-makers. These conversations were not one-way interviews but intense exchanges of views about the EU's variable performance, and potential, as a global actor. Based on these conversations, and thanks to his five-year ERC grant, Smith began to consolidate his research into a coherent set of arguments to help shape the debate over the EU as a global actor. In November 2010, Smith was invited by the Belgian EU presidency to deliver a keynote speech at the Flemish Peace Institute on the topic of "Export Controls and the European Defence Market." At this event, Smith spoke to nearly 100 senior representatives of EU institutions, European defence firms, members of the press, and various think tanks. Based on his CSDP research, Smith argued that the EU was spending too much time on capacity-building without debating the larger question about what interests the EU is attempting to protect.

Following this workshop, Smith drafted a major article on this topic (reference #3 above) and the first detailed study of the European gendarmerie force (reference #4), which (along with the EU's counter-piracy naval operation) demonstrates the EU's expanding efforts to coordinate its civilian/economic instruments with its new military/policing capabilities. In addition to publicizing these works through a series of conference presentations and invited lectures, Smith also created a Twitter account in 2012 (with over 1,300 followers now) to share his views and to facilitate conversations with European policymakers, journalists, think tank representatives, academics, PhD students, consultants, and interested citizens.

These efforts coalesced at a major event in May 2013 at the Swedish Institute of International Affairs at the final meeting of the European Global Strategy (EGS) project, an initiative launched by the Swedish foreign minister (Carl Bildt) in cooperation with the foreign ministers of Poland, Italy, and Spain. The idea was to initiate a 'track two' think tank-led process to inform 'track one' policymaking at the Council of the EU meeting regarding the 10th anniversary of the European Security Strategy (scheduled for December 2013), and to broaden the debate beyond the 'big three' EU member states (France, Germany, and the UK). Four leading European think tanks directed the project (the Swedish Institute of International Affairs, the Instituto Affari Internazionali, the Polish Institute of International Affairs, and the Real Instituto Elcano), supported by input from other associated think tanks, foreign policy institutes, and academics across Europe.

At this event, Smith gave a PowerPoint presentation to over 50 academics, diplomats, and policymakers from across Europe based on his work. Afterwards, his presentation was praised as one of the most important interventions made during the meetings of the EGS process, and copies of his presentation were requested by several participants. Later the EGS organisers publicly thanked Smith through their Twitter account, and the final EGS report used Smith's three-level organising scheme (internal/home, regional/neighbourhood, and global levels of action), juxtaposed against three core sets of interests: security interests, economic interests, and - equally important - the projection of EU values. This scheme was explicitly based on Smith's grand strategy article noted above, and it provided a useful way for the EGS participants to visualise and evaluate how the EU currently ranks its strategic priorities.

In particular, the final EGS document placed as much emphasis on internal EU economic issues as on external political matters, and it prioritised the 'neighbourhood' (rather than the global sphere) as the key focus of EU foreign policy, as Smith had suggested. Strategy is not only about priorities but also about the relations between those priorities (i.e., coherence), and the EU cannot hope to increase its influence at the global level without simultaneously enhancing its internal effectiveness and legitimacy. Moreover, Smith argued that the EU should lead by example and attempt to build support for its foreign policies among European citizens, rather than only among officials in Brussels. Following the EGS meeting, Smith was invited by the European Council on Foreign Relations to expand upon his thinking about EU global strategy as a guest contributor to their website blog, in order to help publicise the official release of the EGS report two weeks later. Thanks to his input, and on the recommendation of the director of the Swedish Institute of International Affairs, Smith was invited to speak at a follow-up event (September 2013) on European Global Strategy at the Riga Process Workshop, organised by the German Marshall Fund, the Latvian Transatlantic Organisation, and the Latvian Foreign Ministry. He was also invited to give oral and written evidence to the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Finnish Parliament

(September 2013) on the same topic, to help Finland prepare for the December 2013 Council of the EU meeting on European security/defence.

#### **5. Sources to corroborate the impact**

1. Flemish Peace Institute/Belgian EU presidency defence conference (November 2010):  
[http://www.flemishpeaceinstitute.eu/get\\_pdf.php?ID=315&lang=EN](http://www.flemishpeaceinstitute.eu/get_pdf.php?ID=315&lang=EN)
2. Director, Swedish Institute of International Affairs.  
A member of the EGS workshop who will confirm Professor Smith's presentation and the influence that his ideas had on the development of the final document.
3. Executive Director, Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation, Sweden A member of the EGS workshop who will confirm Professor Smith's presentation and the influence that his ideas had on the development of the final document.
4. Executive Advisor, Policy Planning Office, Spanish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation  
A member of the EGS workshop who will confirm Professor Smith's presentation and the influence that his ideas had on the development of the final document.
5. Editorial Director, European Council on Foreign Relations A member of the EGS workshop who will confirm Professor Smith's presentation and the influence that his ideas had on the development of the final document.
6. Managing Partner, ThinkTank, Poland  
A member of the EGS workshop who will confirm Professor Smith's presentation and the influence that his ideas had on the development of the final document.
7. Michael E. Smith, 'Time to Get Real About the European Dream - and the American One'.  
European Council on Foreign Relations blog:  
[http://www.ecfr.eu/blog/entry/time\\_to\\_get\\_real\\_about\\_the\\_european\\_dream\\_and\\_the\\_american\\_one](http://www.ecfr.eu/blog/entry/time_to_get_real_about_the_european_dream_and_the_american_one)
8. 'Instruments and Roadmaps for a European Global Strategy' conference (March 2013):  
<http://www.europeanglobalstrategy.eu/nyheter/events/instruments-and-roadmaps-for-a-european-global-strategy> .
9. Final EGS report, 'Towards a European Global Strategy' (May 2013):  
<http://www.ui.se/eng/upl/files/91693.pdf>