

**EUROPEAN
FOREIGN POLICY
SCORECARD
2016**



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Any mistakes in the texts remain the responsibility of the authors.

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Foreword

The Compagnia di San Paolo is one of the largest independent foundations in Europe and one of the main private funders of research in the fields of EU affairs and international relations. Over the past few years the Compagnia has consolidated its profile in these fields, working closely with organisations such as the German Marshall Fund of the United States and the Istituto Affari Internazionali.

We feel that it is important to support the emergence of a European political space, in which a truly European debate on the main issues facing the EU can be held. One of the greatest challenges the EU faces this year is the migration crisis. More than ever before, this crisis shows the importance of an open debate on foreign policy and the role of European member states, their actions, and institutions.

Strengthening our understanding of Europe's role in the world is crucial if we want to face up to its major challenges. It is against this background that the Compagnia di San Paolo has continued its cooperation with the European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR) on the sixth edition of the European Foreign Policy Scorecard. We highly value our ongoing relationship with ECFR and sincerely hope that this project will continue to intensify the dialogue among various European stakeholders.

Piero Gastaldo
Secretary General
Compagnia di San Paolo

Preface

We are pleased to present the sixth edition of the European Foreign Policy Scorecard. Following a turbulent year in which neighbourhood instability penetrated Europe's borders, and in which High Representative Federica Mogherini pushed forward her review of the European Union's Global Strategy, it is a better time than ever to evaluate the EU's foreign policy performance.

After five years of the Scorecard, we held our own review last year, asking colleagues, experts, and ECFR Council Members how we could improve our product and methodology. As a result, we have made some changes this year. The full methodology can be found online,¹ but the main changes are outlined below.

The Scorecard assesses the work of EU actors as a collective. In previous Scorecards, we have paid special attention to the role of member states and how they act within this collective, with the "leader" and "slacker" categories. However, it has come to our attention that we have perhaps paid insufficient consideration to the role of European institutions and what they have done. In this year's edition, we have therefore included a section in the introduction of each chapter highlighting the activities of the EU institutions in 2015.

When it comes to scoring the components, we have split the "outcome" score into two parts, giving five of the ten points for "strategy" and five for "impact". This is to enable us to evaluate policy in the absence of concrete results – something which is often inevitable in foreign affairs. We have attempted to judge whether a policy is well designed, as well as looking at its impact on the ground over the course of the calendar year. The possible scores for "unity" and "resources" remain consistent with prior years, with a possible total of five points for each.

Another change this year is that we have limited the number of issues for which we assign member states "leader", "slacker", or "supporter" status, in order to focus on the 12 pivotal foreign policy decision points of the year – two issues per Scorecard chapter. The number of "leader"/ "supporter"/ "slacker"

¹ "How do we grade?", European Council on Foreign Relations, available at <http://www.ecfr.eu/scorecard/2016/extras/methodology>.

questions has therefore been decreased from 28 last year to 12 this year. This means that although the totals of “leader”/ “slacker” rankings per member state are not comparable with those in previous years, the relative performance, and performance relating to the crucial dossiers, is.

As in previous years, we have altered the titles of some of the components to reflect the issues that were crucial in 2015. The structure of the Asia and China chapter is the most noticeably different, with a broader focus on the region as a whole.

We do our best to be balanced in the evaluations, but the goal of the Scorecard remains, as always, to provide a starting point for a discussion of EU foreign policy and what its institutions and member states have contributed to it. We therefore invite you to join the discussion on our website and via social media, using the hashtag #ECFRScorecard.

We look forward to the debate.

Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga and Robert Cooper
January 2016

Introduction

Over the last five years, ECFR's annual Scorecard has tracked the European Union's diminishing ability to influence its neighbours. In 2015, the story became one of their growing impact on the EU.

As refugee numbers spiralled through late summer and autumn, and Islamic State (ISIS)-coordinated terror attacks hit Paris and put Brussels on lockdown, the conflicts around Europe burned the continent's political elites and instilled fear in its societies. The arrival of over one million migrants created a dilemma in which the humanitarian obligation to give shelter to refugees is pitted against the limited capacities of EU states, both those on the geographical frontline – the external border – and those where large numbers of refugees want to settle.

In hock to authoritarian regimes

The EU's impotence in the face of instability outside its borders provided a reminder of the necessity – and the difficulty – of shaping a long-term, coherent, and strategic foreign policy to limit the impact of this turbulence at home. Europeans are fearful that their leaders are unable to manage the growing number of new arrivals. The fake Syrian passport found near the body of one of the suicide attackers in Paris on 13 November played straight into paranoia about the risk that terrorists could use refugee inflows as cover to enter the Schengen area. Evidence that asylum seekers were involved in the coordinated assaults in Cologne on New Year's Eve compounded unease about the scale of the integration challenge that parts of Europe now face.

As internal borders went up across the Union in the final months of the year, fewer and fewer leaders felt able to defend the once-sacred EU principle of freedom of movement (the noble exceptions being Germany's Angela Merkel, despite crushing domestic pressures, and France's François Hollande, despite the backlash after the Paris attacks). The hard-won deal on relocation of a mere 160,000 refugees from Italy, Greece, and Hungary unravelled, and only 272 had been relocated by the end of December. As the year drew to a close, six

Schengen countries had reintroduced border checks, and further limitations to freedom of movement looked likely. However, neither the financial nor the human resources to scale up external border control and get a handle on the crisis were forthcoming from member states or EU institutions.

The EU is dependent on the cooperation of the countries surrounding it to manage this crisis, with migration flows set to increase in 2016. Its neighbours are well aware of this. At both the Valletta summit on migration, held between European and African governments in November, and the EU–Turkey summit, which took place the same month, Europe’s leaders were clearly in the uncomfortable position of *demandeur*. They were forced to offer significant aid packages to secure support for managing Europe’s borders, with no way of ensuring that their partners would deliver on their side of the bargain. In a year which has seen significant backsliding on the rule of law and freedom of expression in Turkey, the EU was willing to put the prospect of advancing accession talks on the table with scarcely a mention of the Copenhagen criteria on democracy and human rights which prospective members must meet. This is reflected in this year’s Scorecard, where Europe’s support for the rule of law and human rights in Turkey was the second lowest-scoring component (see Table 2).

At the end of 2015, Europe’s influence on its neighbours continued to decline. The hope of surrounding Europe with a ring of friends has given way to a reality that it is surrounded by a ring of fire. This picture may worsen in the coming year: Lebanon, Jordan, and Turkey have taken in more than four million refugees between them, which entails deep structural challenges and could have an impact on longer-term regional stability.

But Europe’s influence slipped still further with regard to the great powers of Turkey and Russia. Indeed, their authoritarian governments are increasingly in a position to influence Europe, as its policymakers are forced to turn to them for cooperation. The failure to face the facts sooner – deluding ourselves that conflicts as complex as Syria and Libya would somehow burn themselves out without the need for sufficient diplomatic energy from Europe’s countries – may mean that EU governments now have to function on the terms of leaders such as Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Vladimir Putin who have taken a more realistic approach to (and in no small way been complicit in) the regional trend towards instability.

A more inward-facing Europe

The refugee crisis consumed almost all of Europe's political and diplomatic energy in the second half of 2015. The EU has the potential to make a difference in tackling both the symptoms and the causes of the refugee crisis: with sustained political attention to the issue, it could begin to address the conflict, instability, and lack of economic prospects in the refugees' home countries, and develop a strategy to harness the resources of other international actors to this end. But, in 2015, Europe did not rise to the challenge.

This stands in contrast to Europe's other main foreign policy focus of 2015. The EU played a pivotal role in the diplomatic triumph of the year – July's nuclear deal with Iran (which is covered in the two highest-scoring components in this year's Scorecard – see Table 1). The negotiations showed EU diplomacy at its best, with High Representative Federica Mogherini and her team taking a central role and the larger member states playing complementary parts.

However, no comparable level of diplomatic energy was applied to tackling the conflicts and instability that drive refugee flows into Europe. The deep divisions that appeared made it impossible to consider large-scale burden sharing or pooling of resources between member states. Although there was broad agreement that foreign policy strategies should be integral to the management of the refugee crisis – for Europe to tackle the causes of the refugee flow in source and transit countries, as well as dealing with arrivals – this aspect was slow to move forward. The long path between member states recognising the need for a new deal with Turkey on border control this summer, and actually holding the EU–Turkey summit in late November, is a case in point. Though the Turkey and Valletta summits achieved deals on managing migrant flows, there was little promise that they would have a significant impact on the crisis. And, while the Vienna Process of Syria peace talks got underway in the final part of the year, the EU and its member states were peripheral.

Table 1

HIGHEST-SCORING COMPONENTS BY ISSUE (2015)

| | Unity | Resources | Strategy | Impact | Total | Grade |
|---|-------|-----------|----------|--------|-------|-------|
| 15 – Diplomatic measures and sanctions against Russia | 4 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 18 | A |
| 47 – Relations with Iran | 4 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 18 | A |
| 58 – Relations with the US on Iran and weapons proliferation | 5 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 18 | A |
| 20 – Europe's diversification of gas-supply routes away from Russia | 4 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 17 | A- |
| 27 – Relations with the eastern neighbourhood on trade | 5 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 17 | A- |
| 14 – Climate change | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 16 | A- |
| 17 – Visa policies towards Russia | 4 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 16 | A- |
| 18 – Solidarity on European security | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 16 | A- |
| 28 – Visa liberalisation with the eastern neighbourhood | 5 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 16 | A- |
| 50 – Relations with the US on Russia and Ukraine | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 16 | A- |

On security, the failure of political will at the national level to translate into collective action at the EU level was laid bare after the November Paris attacks. Few states responded to Hollande's call for solidarity in the form of military support – via the invocation of the never-before-used Article 42.7 of the EU treaty – despite the clear demonstration that instability was not just on Europe's doorstep but had crossed the threshold. (Regional security in the Middle East and North Africa was the lowest-scoring component in this year's Scorecard – see Table 2.)

Military action alone does not constitute a strong foreign policy, but the unwillingness of so many member states to even countenance it is a bad sign for the future of European power. But if the Paris attacks were a wake-up call on the risks of Europe's declining investment in security over the past decade, the response does not seem to herald renewed foreign policy activism. The exception to this is Germany, which stands out as the only member state whose attitude to security underwent a major positive transition in 2015. Since Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea, Berlin has been increasingly willing to pull its weight in security terms.

The events of 2015 called the EU's very purpose into question. The crisis facing Europe illustrated its limits as a union of values, as a project for spreading stability, and as a club from which members derive mutual support in times of need. Indeed, for certain member states, the Paris attacks were a moment to take a step backwards on solidarity – as demonstrated by the speed with which Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia pulled out of their refugee resettlement commitments.

SELECTED RESPONSES TO FRANCE'S INVOCATION OF EU ARTICLE 42.7

Germany's parliament approved military action in Syria in December and committed to send reconnaissance jets and up to 1,200 military personnel, but stated that it would not join coalition air strikes. In the immediate aftermath of the attacks, Germany's interior minister had offered an anti-terror unit to France to help with domestic security, while **Austria** offered police intervention units.

The **UK** joined the US-led bombing campaign on Syria shortly after the attacks in Paris, launching its first air strikes in December. It also offered France the use of its Cyprus airbases, backed by the **Cyprus** government.

A number of states including **Sweden**, **Belgium**, and **Slovenia** committed to boosting their presence in countries such as Mali, Lebanon and the Central African Republic, where France has troops.

Finland and **Ireland** pledged solidarity to France and offered support, but ruled out the possibility of military assistance because both states practice a policy of neutrality.

The Netherlands and **Denmark** both considered joining air strikes in Syria, but neither have yet committed resources.

Other member states, including **Italy**, **Spain**, **Romania**, **Slovakia**, **Czech Republic**, **Lithuania**, **Bulgaria** and **Estonia** stated that they were ready to offer assistance to France on request.

Europe turned on its head

In 2015, Europe's habitual performance across the different sections of the Scorecard was turned upside-down. Over the past five years, the EU and its member states consistently performed best (or joint best) on multilateral issues and crisis management. In 2015, however, it had its worst-ever score on this issue (a C+) as member states flailed in their attempts to cope with the refugee crisis.

By contrast, EU–Russia relations have always been one of the most challenging policy areas for Europe, but this was the Scorecard's highest-scoring chapter in 2015, with a B+, while three of the ten highest-scoring components related directly to policy on Russia. Last year's edition praised the EU for a strong performance in coming together to impose sanctions on Russia in response to the Ukraine crisis. In 2015, the EU managed to hold this firm and principled line – renewing sanctions over the summer and linking them to the implementation of the Minsk agreement on the Ukraine conflict – in an even more challenging environment. In 2014, Russia was the number one problem the EU had to deal with; in 2015, it was just one among many. Yet member states stayed relatively united on this, even in the face of challenges such as Moscow's intervention in Syria.

The EU's unity on Russia was under increased pressure as 2015 came to a close – with member states such as Italy issuing strong warnings that EU policy will have to adjust to the new environment, where Russia has made itself an important player in the Syria conflict – but it stands as a demonstration of what Europe is capable of.

The fall of the elites and the paradox of German power

The EU's failure to formulate a strong foreign policy response to the crises of 2015 is due in part to the domestic politics consuming policymakers' attention. The public backlash across Europe over the negotiations for an EU–US free trade deal, the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), and the debate over the handling of the Greek financial crisis in the first half of the year, showed more clearly than ever that Europe's governments have to answer for their foreign policies at home.

Electorates are fearful of the wars, extremism, and economic meltdown they see both outside and at times inside their borders, and have little trust in the European project to provide answers. The traditional political elites have lost credibility, and citizens are turning to alternatives – political groupings to the left and right, which are often illiberal, nationalist, or anti-European integration. As part of this tide, Poland's November elections were won by the Law and Justice (PiS) party, which is sceptical not only of EU institutions but also of fundamental values such as judicial independence. The Danish referendum on their Justice and Home Affairs opt-out in December is also evidence of this trend. The UK government's entire European perspective is dominated by attempts to renegotiate their relationship with the EU and secure reforms that will be sufficient to convince eurosceptics that the EU can move in a positive direction (and to convince European colleagues that London has a positive agenda on Europe). France finished the year with the ruling Socialist party forced to withdraw from some local elections to tactically prevent the Front National profiting from the year's crises, through their populist, nationalist, and security-centric vision. This broader picture feeds into a vicious circle, since preoccupation with internal politics is a handicap on the capacity of European governments to seek collective solutions to today's crises.

The refugee crisis has also created a paradox of German power. The one consistent force keeping the European show on the road throughout 2015 was the leadership of Germany – specifically Merkel. This stand-out role is as much about the weak leadership by the other large states, which valiant efforts by medium-sized states such as the Netherlands and Sweden can only partially compensate for.

Through the Ukraine crisis and the Greek financial crisis, Germany was the decisive voice arguing that EU states had to accept tough compromises in the interests of Europe's longer-term stability. And, as the leader board in this year's Scorecard shows, Germany displayed leadership on eight of the 12 critical external policy challenges that the EU faced in 2015. But as the year wore on, Germany's ability to lead and carry other member states with it began to wane, though its economic strength meant that, as primary creditor in the Greek crisis, it was able to impose the austerity-centred response that it favoured. As the refugee crisis surged in late summer, and Merkel stood up to say that the EU had a moral responsibility and capacity to welcome refugees, it was clear that she was going to have to lead by example. Through late autumn, Merkel's message of openness came under severe attack across the German political establishment and even within her own party.

“LEADERS” AND “SLACKERS” AMONG EU MEMBER STATES

| TOP LEADERS | # of leaders rankings | TOP SLACKERS | # of slackers rankings |
|--------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| Germany | 8 | Lithuania | 3 |
| Netherlands | 5 | Poland | 3 |
| Sweden | 5 | Belgium | 2 |
| UK | 5 | Bulgaria | 2 |
| France | 4 | Croatia | 2 |
| Lithuania | 3 | Cyprus | 2 |
| Poland | 3 | France | 2 |
| Austria | 2 | Greece | 2 |
| Czech Republic | 2 | Malta | 2 |
| Denmark | 2 | Portugal | 2 |
| Estonia | 2 | Romania | 2 |
| Italy | 2 | Slovakia | 2 |
| Latvia | 2 | Spain | 2 |
| Bulgaria | 1 | UK | 2 |
| Finland | 1 | Czech Republic | 1 |
| Luxembourg | 1 | Estonia | 1 |
| Romania | 1 | Finland | 1 |
| Slovakia | 1 | Germany | 1 |
| Spain | 1 | Hungary | 1 |
| | | Latvia | 1 |
| | | Luxembourg | 1 |
| | | The Netherlands | 1 |
| | | Slovenia | 1 |

There has been a growing call among the EU policy community in the last five years for Germany to extend its leadership beyond budgetary issues, but now that it has taken on a leadership role on foreign affairs, justice, and home affairs, other member states have become wary. In the second half of 2015, Germany had to rely on hard power as well as soft power to push initiatives forward in the EU – such as threatening cuts in EU structural funding to countries that opposed the autumn refugee relocation deal, and overriding dissenters by pushing the issue to a qualified majority vote. These coercive tactics have led to growing uneasiness about German power among other member states, and resistance has mounted, with some refusing to implement the agreements. In this way, German power within the EU decision-making structure has been exposed as a paper tiger. This has implications across the spectrum of European policymaking. Though Germany may continue to use its considerable leverage within the Union to manage the refugee crisis, there

is a risk that it may focus on its own interests, and have less room to exert leadership on other European challenges.

The lack of support for Germany's new leadership role doesn't just come from the usual suspects among reluctant Europeans – although the UK's disavowal of Europe's crisis as someone else's problem has been striking, and the Orbán government's willingness to use violence and criminalisation to deter refugees from entering Hungary has been shocking. In 2004, the EU took in ten new member states which were keen through their first decade of membership to demonstrate their reliability as part of the European club. But 2015 has shown that almost all member states' attachment to the European project has limits: as the UK moves towards its referendum on membership, some Central and Eastern European countries (many of whom have had little experience with refugees in recent decades) are showing that they are willing to refuse compromise and raise the stakes in negotiations on the refugee crisis.

A Europe driven by member states

As the EU enters a year in which refugee flows are set to increase, Germany looks ever more isolated in its efforts to manage the domestic challenges of refugee reception and integration, and at the same time push Europe towards a more proactive foreign policy. Sweden, which faced even higher pressure per capita in terms of refugee arrivals than Germany in 2015, announced in November that it would reinstate border controls and could turn away migrants without travel documents. European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker has become increasingly vocal on the impossibility of a European response to the migration crisis without greater political will from the member states, while the larger members, including France and the UK, as well as High Representative Mogherini, are all unable or unwilling at present to drive a joint foreign policy response.

Germany's lonely position exposes a fundamental issue in the EU's structure: without powerful central institutions, there is no safety net for the Union. The trend of leadership coming from member states rather than Brussels – with Germany increasingly dominant – which the Scorecard has tracked for the past five years, became clearer than ever in 2015. As Germany carries too much of Europe's load on the refugee crisis, the EU itself becomes disproportionately exposed to the risk that Merkel's government could fall victim to growing domestic doubts. Many in the country felt that European support for Germany is insufficient, and that the price of integrating so many refugees is too high. If

Merkel were no longer able to play the central role in the European response to the crisis that has carried the EU so far, the Union would be even more vulnerable.

Member state leadership can mask the absence of Europe-wide political will, but ultimately cannot solve it. EU institutions have of course taken initiatives – perhaps most importantly the Commission’s December “Borders Package” proposals to beef up border agency Frontex and establish a European Borders and Coast Guard – but these have so far met with insufficient support and resources from member states. Efforts by the Commission and Council presidents to show leadership in pushing through the mandatory relocation deal in late summer were perceived by some member states as divisive, or as a case of the institutions doing the bidding of Berlin – as with the October Western Balkans Summit, which excluded many member states.

Table 2
LOWEST-SCORING COMPONENTS BY ISSUE (2015)

| | Unity | Resources | Strategy | Impact | Total | Grade |
|---|-------|-----------|----------|--------|-------|-------|
| 41 – Regional security in the Middle East and North Africa | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 4 | D+ |
| 37 – Rule of law, democracy, and human rights in Turkey | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 5 | D+ |
| 62 – Trade and investment with China | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 6 | C- |
| 40 – Rule of law, human rights, and democracy in the Middle East and North Africa | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 6 | C- |
| 2 – Response to refugee arrivals in Europe | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 7 | C- |
| 42 – Relations with Egypt | 3 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 7 | C- |
| 45 – Conflicts in Syria and Iraq | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 7 | C- |
| 49 – Conflict in Yemen | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 7 | C- |

Looking forward to 2016

One key issue to watch in 2016 is the question of how the EU will deal with Turkey in this new geopolitical environment, which has implications that go well beyond refugee inflows to Europe. Although EU states have already recognised the need to rethink how they work with Turkey – given its pivotal role in the conflicts plaguing the Middle East, and as a transit zone for migrants on the EU’s south-eastern border – the EU–Turkey summit was slow in coming together. Even after it took place, implementation, including delivering the aid package promised to Ankara, has been lacking.

Though EU states performed strongly on the Russia relationship in 2015, Turkey will challenge EU’s Russia strategy in the coming year, thanks to the deepening complexity of the Moscow–Ankara relationship in the last months of 2015. Other issues that will complicate Europe’s approach to Russia include the Syria conflict and relations with Iran post-nuclear deal. Mogherini’s Global Strategy Review, due to conclude by summer 2016, could help by providing a context to bring member states together to work through these upcoming challenges.

But despite the scale of the foreign policy challenges, there were positive signs towards the end of the year that the EU could muster the strength to rise to them. The COP21 climate change deal in Paris was a triumph for internationalism and for the EU’s ambition to tackle climate change. Despite major security challenges and a fearsome mountain of negotiation that had to be climbed, the conference showed that the global community is capable of coming together to face a common challenge. The standing ovation for Merkel after her defence of her refugee policy at her party’s annual conference in December showed the power of effective communication of policy to face down opposition. In France, the Front National did not win control of any regional assemblies in the December elections, in spite of the climate of fear after the November attacks on Paris, because the political establishment was willing to cooperate and make a tactical sacrifice in the face of the threat to shared values.

As the EU moves into a challenging year ahead, perhaps the first step along the road back to European power is for Europeans to rediscover their self-belief and focus on these achievements. It is only from this starting point that the embattled European project can be defended, drawing from the strengths which took the Union to its high point in the early 2000s, but which have increasingly lain dormant in recent years.

COMPONENTS BY ISSUE

| | 2011 | | 2012 | | 2013 | | 2014 | | 2015 | |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| | Score | Grade |
| MULTILATERAL ISSUES AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT | 12.9 | B | 12.6 | B | 12 | B- | 11.3 | B- | 11 | B- |
| RELATIONS WITH RUSSIA | 10 | C+ | 11 | B- | 10.2 | C+ | 11.4 | B- | 13.4 | B+ |
| RELATIONS WITH WIDER EUROPE | 9.5 | C+ | 10.3 | C+ | 10.8 | B- | 11 | B- | 11.5 | B- |
| RELATIONS WITH THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA | 10 | C+ | 10.3 | C+ | 10.5 | B- | 8.5 | C | 8.5 | C |
| RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES | 11 | B- | 11.7 | B- | 11.6 | B- | 13.1 | B | 13.1 | B |
| RELATIONS WITH ASIA AND CHINA | 9 | C | 9.7 | C+ | 11 | B- | 10.5 | B- | 10.2 | C+ |

Multilateral issues & crisis management

Overall grade

B-

Overall grade 2014 **B-**

Overall grade 2013 **B-**





Russia China US
10 6 3
 UN Security Council vetoes since 2006

€56 million:
 The 2015 budget for
 EU Operations Triton
 and Poseidon Sea

1.5°C
 Global warming
 target agreed
 at UN conference

ALL EU MEMBERS HAVE
 SIGNED THE ARMS TRADE
 TREATY. 26 HAVE RATIFIED

TOP TROOP CONTRIBU-
 TORS TO NATO FORCES
 IN AFGHANISTAN

US
6,800

GEORGIA
870

GERMANY
850

ITALY
829

2.1 million
 Nigerians
 internally displaced by
**BOKO
 HARAM**

160,000
 Refugees the EU
 agreed to relocate
 in 2 years

272
 Refugees relocated
 in 2015

FINLAND cut
development
aid by
40%
for 2016

European Development
 Fund for Somalia
 2008–2013 2014–2020
€422 million **€286 million**

1 million refugees
arrived by sea to
Europe in 2015.
Nearly 50%
were Syrians

JAPAN
GERMANY
THE UK
FRANCE

are the largest
 financial contributors
 to the International
 Criminal Court

EU TRAINING MISSION IN MALI
578 staff **€27.7** million cost **2** years
 UN MISSION IN MALI
12,893 staff **€923** million cost **1** year

THE UK PLEDGED UP
TO 300 TROOPS
TO PEACEKEEPING IN
SOUTH SUDAN

UK – 1st
G7 country to join
the AIIB

| | 2015 | 2014 | 2013 | 2012 | 2011 |
|--|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| REFUGEE CRISIS | C | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| 1- Response to the Mediterranean sea crisis | C+ | D+ | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| 2- Response to refugee arrivals within Europe | C- | D+ | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| 3- Humanitarian response to host and origin countries of refugee crisis | C | C | C+ | n/a | n/a |
| PEACEKEEPING | B- | C+ | B- | B- | B |
| 4- Mali and the Sahel | B- | C+ | B | C+ | n/a |
| 5- Nigeria and Boko Haram | C+ | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| 6- Somalia | B | A- | B+ | B+ | B+ |
| 7- Central Africa | C+ | C- | C+ | B- | B- |
| 8- Afghanistan | C | C+ | C+ | B- | C+ |
| KEY ELEMENTS OF THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM | C+ | B | B+ | B- | B- |
| 9- European policy at the UN (includes UNSC, GA, HRC and UN reform) | C+ | B- | B- | C- | C+ |
| 10- European policy in the G8, G20, and international financial institutions | C+ | B- | B+ | B- | C+/B- |
| 11- European policy on non-proliferation and the arms trade | C | A- | A- | B- | B |
| 12- International aid | C+ | B- | B/B- | B+ | B+ |
| INTERNATIONAL JUSTICE | B- | B- | B- | B+ | B+ |
| 13- European policy towards the ICC and international criminal tribunals | B- | B- | B- | B+ | B+ |
| CLIMATE CHANGE | A- | B | B- | B- | B+ |
| 14- Climate change | A- | B | B- | B | A- |

Throughout 2015, the EU's delegation to the UN pushed for UN reform and for a more comprehensive, less atomised European approach to the body. An important milestone was the September adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in which the EU delegation played an important framing role. When it comes to new multilateral institutions such as China's Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), which was founded in 2015, the EU did not coordinate sufficiently to maximise its potential to shape these institutions, although the decision of 14 member states to join the AIIB at the outset, without waiting for a joint European decision, meant that they formed a significant bloc within the new institution.

As the refugee crisis worsened in 2015, mutating into a domestic political problem for Europe's governments, the flaws in the EU's response became more obvious.

The EU vacillated over the scale and goals of humanitarian naval operations in the Mediterranean and was bitterly divided over the resettlement of refugees. The Union also made a strategic error in failing to contribute sufficient funds to United Nations humanitarian operations in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), resulting in cuts in rations and other relief to displaced Syrians that helped trigger the flow of refugees to Europe – though member states such as Denmark, Germany, and the UK increased aid to the region.

More broadly, a number of member states accepted the need to invest more in managing international crises, especially in Africa. While France continued to take the lead in fighting extremism in the Sahel, the Netherlands and Nordic countries kept peacekeepers in Mali. Germany and Ireland also committed to send personnel there, and the UK announced plans to send additional troops to South Sudan and Somalia. However, many crises received only sporadic European attention: while a Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) force helped stabilise the Central African Republic (CAR) in 2014 and early 2015, there are very few EU troops in the long-term UN operation there.

Some EU members would have liked to see more military activity in 2015. Italy, for example, lobbied hard for a UN peacekeeping mission in Libya early in the year, though most other EU members thought this was premature. France continues to complain about other European nations' limited role in African missions. Several EU members kept troops in Afghanistan in 2015 as part of a NATO mission to train the local armed forces, and an EU mission to train local police.

Overall, despite signs that Europe is growing more serious about addressing international crises – and a particularly striking policy shift by Germany, which committed forces to both the Middle East and Mali in late 2015 – EU members will have to increase their ambitions if they are to tackle the crises plaguing the Union's periphery. In a more positive development, France and the UK played a major role in containing the Ebola outbreak with broad UN support, and the UN and the World Health Organization (WHO) announced the end of the crisis in 2016.

Europe had a mixed year in terms of multilateral diplomacy. Russia regularly obstructed European initiatives at the UN Security Council, from delaying French efforts to prevent mass killings in Burundi, to blocking a British proposal to commemorate Bosnia's Srebrenica massacre. Moscow also vetoed a Netherlands-backed resolution for an international investigation into the

destruction of Flight MH17 over eastern Ukraine, and held up EU efforts to win UN authorisation for anti-trafficking operations in the Mediterranean.

By contrast, Russian diplomats engaged constructively with their EU and US counterparts during the Iran nuclear talks. There were glimmers of rapprochement over Syria, and some European diplomats believe that a general easing of tensions at the UN is possible. China notably avoided backing Russia on Srebrenica and MH17.

LEADERS AND SLACKERS ON MULTILATERALISM AND CRISIS ACTION IN 2015

International aid

Leaders: Bulgaria, Luxembourg, Sweden, the UK

Slackers: Belgium, Finland, the Netherlands

International aid budgets were under pressure in 2015 as EU members struggled to cope with the refugee crisis. Leaders increased their development and humanitarian aid budgets towards the 0.7 percent of GDP agreed under the Millennium Development Goals – or stayed above it – while slackers made major cuts.

Deployment

Leaders: France

Slackers: Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Greece, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia

Given the increasingly precarious security situation worldwide in 2015, a significant number of member states failed to contribute adequately – either in terms of troops or contributions to civilian missions abroad, including under the EU, NATO, UN, and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). France stood out as the only leader, thanks to its engagement in the Sahel and elsewhere in Africa, focusing on conflicts and areas of instability with broader implications for Europe's security. The slackers are those who relied on others for security rather than making significant contributions.

In other fields of UN diplomacy, European member states played a significant role in finalising the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in mid-2015. The Irish ambassador to the UN was central to forging the final agreement. However, some EU members, including the UK, were critical of the final set of goals, which have nearly 170 individual targets. Some major European aid donors – including Belgium, Denmark, and Finland – cut their aid spending in 2015, in part to free up cash for humanitarian assistance to the Middle East and North Africa. Spain likewise had to reduce its aid programmes in Latin America to free up resources for crises nearer home.

Nonetheless, 14 EU members, including the Union's biggest economies, signed up to join the Chinese-led AIIB in 2015, creating tensions with Washington. US fears that the AIIB represents a major challenge to its primacy in the multilateral system are probably overstated. But Beijing is expanding its role in multilateral affairs (President Xi Jinping pledged up to 8,000 troops for UN operations in September) and EU members are starting to adapt to this reality.

Underlining this, China was a key actor in December's climate summit in Paris. French officials invested heavily in making the meeting a success after the dismal failure of the 2009 Copenhagen summit, and coordinated closely with the US to secure a deal despite transatlantic differences over whether this should be a formal treaty. France enjoyed strong support from other EU members, although Poland remained openly sceptical. The result was an agreement in December that, while limited in scope, was an impressive diplomatic achievement.

European diplomacy was less successful in other fields. There was friction among member states at the five-year nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty review conference. Austria led a push for the elimination of nuclear weapons that won the support of 159 countries, but the UK, France, and other NATO members resisted the initiative. The conference eventually ended without any final statement due to splits over Arab calls for an urgent conference on nuclear disarmament in the Middle East (implicitly targeting Israel), facilitated by Finland and opposed by the US and the UK.

There were other signs of weakness in the international system. African states kept up their criticism of the International Criminal Court (ICC) – arguing that it focuses too much on the continent – and South Africa threatened to withdraw altogether. The EU has a clear interest in a strong ICC: for example, the court announced in 2015 that it would investigate crimes committed in the

2008 Russo-Georgian war. However, UN human rights officials have played a useful role in charting abuses in eastern Ukraine and Crimea, challenging Russia's propaganda over these regions.

The EU's greatest stake in the multilateral system now concerns the refugee crisis and the broader humanitarian catastrophe in MENA. Europe needs international agencies to manage the refugee issues more effectively "at source", while UN mediators are struggling to bring peace to Syria, Libya, and Yemen. It remains to be seen whether the EU will give these actors the financial and political support that they need to reverse the chaos of 2015, which showed that the EU lacked the capability and cohesion to manage major crises in its backyard.

EU INSTITUTIONS ON MULTILATERALISM AND CRISIS ACTION IN 2015

EU institutions – including the EEAS and the Commission's departments on migration and the neighbourhood (DG HOME and DG NEAR) – spent significant time on the search for a strategy to manage the refugee crisis facing Europe. However, a lack of sufficient political will from member states for a united European response (with the notable exception of those states on the frontline) meant that the effect was limited.

CSDP missions to train local security forces were ongoing in countries such as Afghanistan, the Central African Republic (CAR), Niger, and Mali (built up to full capacity in 2015), while EU Naval Force Mediterranean was renewed with a new anti-people-trafficking mission, Operation Sophia. On the security front, CSDP operations faced a threat from budgetary pressures, the preference by some member states to channel security policy via organisations such as NATO, and a failure to build the EU's collective capacity by sharing resources and expertise between member states.

1 RESPONSE TO THE MEDITERRANEAN SEA CRISIS

Frontline states and EU institutions increased resources to prevent deaths in the Mediterranean, but migrant flows grew and shifted routes.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|------------|------------|----------|-----------|
| Unity | n/a | n/a | 2 | 4 |
| Resources | n/a | n/a | 1 | 2 |
| Strategy | | | | 2 |
| Impact | n/a | n/a | 2 | 2 |
| Total/20 | n/a | n/a | 5 | 10 |

C+

2012 n/a 2013 n/a 2014 D+

Throughout 2015, the EU used naval and coast guard operations in the Mediterranean to attempt to discourage illegal crossings to Europe and prevent migrant deaths. At the year’s beginning, the emphasis was squarely on the former, after the Italian navy and air force’s Operation Mare Nostrum was replaced in October 2014 by the EU border patrol’s Operation Triton, which has a far smaller search-and-rescue capacity. However, the deaths of up to 900 people when a migrant ship went down in April 2015 triggered a recognition of the need to scale up search-and-rescue operations again. Even the UK government adjusted its position, after sticking firmly to the view that rescue operations acted as a pull factor. Italy and Greece continued to make significant contributions to search-and-rescue efforts throughout the year.

The EU Joint Foreign and Home Affairs Council approved a 10-point plan in April which boosted Triton with more funds and a wider area of operations; approved operation EU Naval Force Mediterranean (EUNAVFOR MED) – now renamed Operation Sophia – which is tasked with

seizing and destroying smugglers’ boats, though its impact has been limited; and established a new programme for the rapid return of irregular migrants coordinated by the EU border agency, Frontex.

The numbers coming across the central Mediterranean route to Italy reduced in 2015, but this was cancelled out by hugely increased pressure on routes through the Western Balkans, with arrivals in Greece, Hungary, Slovenia, and Croatia growing sharply in late summer and autumn. In November, the office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said it expected the year’s refugee inflows to the EU to top one million. Meanwhile, smugglers adapted to search-and-rescue operations, reducing prices and the quality of their vessels, resulting in boats sinking closer to the point of departure rather than reaching European waters. Lower prices made the trip affordable to more individuals, but no less risky: the International Organization for Migration (IOM) estimates that over 3,400 lives were lost in the Mediterranean in 2015.

2 RESPONSE TO REFUGEE ARRIVALS WITHIN EUROPE

There was a failure of solidarity for states overwhelmed by refugee arrivals, triggering a political crisis which threatens the European project.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|------------|------------|------------|----------|
| Unity | n/a | n/a | n/a | 2 |
| Resources | n/a | n/a | n/a | 2 |
| Strategy | | | | 2 |
| Impact | n/a | n/a | n/a | 1 |
| Total/20 | n/a | n/a | n/a | 7 |

C-

2012 n/a 2013 n/a 2014 D+

Over 1.5 million asylum seekers arrived in the EU in 2015, and the search for a coherent European approach that balances humanitarian needs with concerns over sovereignty has consumed huge amounts of political energy. The European project and its central principle of free movement are under severe pressure, and several countries have erected physical barriers on internal EU borders.

Germany and Sweden had the highest per capita intakes of refugees in 2015, and drove the call for burden sharing across Europe. Greece, Croatia, and Slovenia faced pressure on the EU's external border, as did Hungary, which erected fences around its perimeter and helped introduce xenophobic rhetoric into the EU mainstream. High-level EU officials such as Jean-Claude Juncker, Donald Tusk, and Frans Timmermans have been visible on the crisis, and the EU institutions have tried to drive policy forward, most notably with the Commission proposal in December to increase Frontex capacity and establish a European Border and Coast Guard.

A European approach to this crisis based on internal solidarity has proved elusive. The September deal to relocate 160,000 refugees from Italy and Greece created resentment in some member states, which objected both to the principle and to the way that it was forced through by a majority vote despite opposition by certain states. Fewer than 300 refugees had been relocated by year-end, and Poland, Hungary, Romania, and Slovakia had all pulled back from their commitments to burden sharing after the Paris attacks in November. There has been broader agreement on the need for cooperation with countries outside the EU to manage flows into the bloc and accept returned migrants, but Europe finds itself with few tools to ensure that partner countries deliver on their side of the bargain.

The EU has failed to internationalise the response to the migration crisis – the US accepted only 2,000 Syrians in 2015, while the Gulf states and China largely limited their support to aid.

3 HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE TO HOST AND ORIGIN COUNTRIES OF REFUGEE CRISIS

Some states adjusted aid programmes to support refugees in the region, but international support for the camps remained insufficient.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|------------|-----------|----------|----------|
| Unity | n/a | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Resources | n/a | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Strategy | | | | 2 |
| Impact | n/a | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| Total/20 | n/a | 10 | 8 | 8 |

C

2012 n/a 2013 c+ 2014 c

Insufficient international funding for food, shelter, and supplies in refugee camps in the Middle East in early 2015 was one of the triggers for the large numbers of people making the journey to Europe. This was despite the European Council announcing plans to target support to the “buffer states” where these camps are located, which are physically on the frontline in hosting refugees from the Syrian conflict and are vulnerable to wider regional instability.

There was an increase in European aid to camps in the region later in 2015, which had a limited humanitarian impact. The EU and its member states collectively allocated €939.5 million to support UNHCR and the World Food Programme in 2015 and 2016. Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, and the UK in particular have prioritised this. Many other member states did not increase aid to refugees in the region, reasoning that the pressures of refugee inflows within the EU left little scope for increasing overseas contributions.

Overall, international support for handling the refugee crisis in the Middle East in 2015 was not sufficient to put the camps in the region on a more stable footing, and has done little to stem flows to Europe. This is in part because funding for the camps remains at stopgap level, and refugees in the region face a life of limbo – often with no access to education, employment, or proper healthcare. The EU Regional Trust Fund for the Syrian crisis is a package of programmes supporting access to services worth €350 million. But the international community would need to significantly scale up support for efforts to tackle these major structural challenges before it could expect to see an impact in reducing the numbers of refugees arriving in the EU.

4 MALI AND THE SAHEL

European countries boosted their presence in Mali, but have not yet rooted out Islamist terrorist threats in the Sahel.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| Unity | 4 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Resources | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Strategy | | | | 3 |
| Impact | 2 | 8 | 3 | 2 |
| Total/20 | 10 | 13 | 9 | 12 |

B-

2012 C+ 2013 B 2014 C+

Mali was a source of ongoing concern to European governments in 2015, both as a haven for terrorists and as a potential conduit for migrants travelling to Europe. The north of the country remains unstable, although Algeria brokered a settlement between the government and Tuareg secessionists in June. Islamist extremists continued to operate in the north, and killed more than 40 UN peacekeepers in ambushes and improvised explosive device (IED) attacks. In November, terrorists killed 20 in an attack on the capital, Bamako.

While French forces kept up counterterrorist missions across the Sahel, the Netherlands and Sweden deployed attack helicopters, intelligence officers, and special forces in Mali under UN command. European forces sometimes found it difficult to work with less well-resourced African peacekeepers, but the arrival of a Danish commander in mid-2015 improved their confidence. Denmark is increasing its presence, while Ireland offered troops after the Paris attacks to take pressure off France. Germany, which is normally wary of

operations in Africa, pledged to send up to 600 troops to the UN mission in 2016.

The EU continued a separate mission training the Malian army (a growing range of EU members have become involved in this, including Germany and Spain). The Malian government, focused on asserting its sovereignty over the north, is often a difficult partner. Elsewhere in the region, France cultivated Francophone African governments to support its counterterrorist mission (Operation Barkhane) while collaborating with the US on intelligence gathering in Niger. Despite this growing military presence, al-Qaeda affiliates have been little affected, and there is disturbing evidence that large numbers of migrants have died trying to cross the Sahara, unnoticed by the international media.

Elsewhere in West Africa there was better news: the fight against Ebola, in which France and the UK were especially active, has largely succeeded. Côte d'Ivoire, where France still has a base, held smooth presidential elections just five years after a post-electoral dispute nearly precipitated a full-scale conflict.

5 NIGERIA AND BOKO HARAM

Europe's support for the battle against Boko Haram has been incoherent, but there are signs of progress.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| Unity | n/a | n/a | n/a | 2 |
| Resources | n/a | n/a | n/a | 2 |
| Strategy | | | | 3 |
| Impact | n/a | n/a | n/a | 3 |
| Total/20 | n/a | n/a | n/a | 10 |

C+

2012 n/a 2013 n/a 2014 n/a

At the beginning of 2015, Nigeria appeared to be on the brink of chaos. The Islamist militant group Boko Haram scored a series of victories early in the year, and presidential elections in March were widely expected to spark serious violence or even a civil war.

These worst-case scenarios were avoided. Under pressure from the UK and US, among others, President Goodluck Jonathan accepted defeat in the elections, handing power to Muhammadu Buhari in April. Buhari ramped up operations against Boko Haram, promising to defeat the group by the end of the year. While this proved impossible, the Islamists lost much of their territory inside Nigeria in 2015. They did, however, cause major disruption in Cameroon, Niger, and Chad.

France offered considerable diplomatic and military support to regional efforts to contain the threat, although a new multinational taskforce to fight the Islamists – made up of troops from the region – has been slow to take off. Germany has also invested in resolving the crisis, offering support to its former

colony Cameroon. The UK assisted the Nigerian military, but there were strategic differences between London and Paris over how to conduct the campaign.

Whereas France pushed in tandem with African states for strong UN political support, and potentially funding, for the proposed regional taskforce, the UK urged a more cautious approach. This reflected concerns about the human rights records of the contributing armed forces, as well as Nigeria's desire to control operations in its territory. The European Commission earmarked €50 million for the multinational force, but has yet to disburse it due to these disagreements. Buhari has been more open to international humanitarian assistance than his predecessor, and the EU released extra funds for Boko Haram-affected areas in the summer.

Despite the group's defeats, it has the potential to inflict further violence on Nigeria and its neighbours, and has aimed to build ties with Islamic State (ISIS). Stabilising northern Nigeria and its neighbours will require patience and large amounts of aid.

6 SOMALIA

Europe's contributions to security in Somalia are underpinning the country's gradual return to stability.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Unity | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Resources | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Strategy | | | | 3 |
| Impact | 7 | 6 | 8 | 2 |
| Total/20 | 15 | 14 | 16 | 13 |

B

2012 B+ 2013 B+ 2014 A-

Somalia made unsteady progress towards national elections slated for 2016. However, the president predicted that full-scale elections are unlikely to be feasible in the coming year, and there is no political agreement on exactly what form the process should take.

While the EU-funded African Union (AU) stabilisation force in the country (AMISOM) kept up pressure on the al-Shabaab Islamist rebels, the group remained able to mount terror attacks in the capital, Mogadishu. It also carried out raids in Kenya, including an attack on a university that killed 147 in April.

In June, al-Shabaab killed over 30 AU soldiers in an offensive near Mogadishu. Although the AU does not release full casualty figures, it continues to sustain high fatalities. However, the AU and UN expanded their presence more widely in Somalia. There is evidence that the national army, which is trained by an EU mission, is gradually growing more capable, although concerns remain about its human rights record.

The UK invested heavily in UN efforts to mediate the crisis (the former and current UN special representatives in Mogadishu are both British) and London guides the EU response to Somalia more generally. Offshore, Germany, Italy and Spain have sustained the EU's anti-piracy Operation Atalanta off the Somali coast, which contributed to an almost complete halt in hijackings in 2015.

Overall, the EU's direct and indirect contributions to Somali security continued to underpin the country's gradual return to stability in 2015. There were questions over Somalia's alleged misuse of EU funds given to AMISOM, and the European Commission announced a 20 percent cut in its funding to AMISOM personnel, starting in January 2016. Other donors, including China and various Arab governments, offered additional assistance to the AU and the Somali national army, potentially reducing the long-term financial burden on the EU, but also decreasing its leverage.

7 CENTRAL AFRICA

Central Africa is ridden with crises, and Europe's ability to assist is in decline.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Unity | 4 | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| Resources | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| Strategy | | | | 2 |
| Impact | 4 | 4 | 2 | 2 |
| Total/20 | 11 | 9 | 6 | 10 |

C+

2012 B- 2013 C+ 2014 C-

Central Africa faced multiple parallel crises in 2015. Violence continued in the Central African Republic (CAR), and the EU's military mission in the capital, Bangui, extended its operations until March 2015 in order to assist UN peacekeepers. It is generally judged to have boosted security, though only in a limited area, and there was a strong case for extending the mission further.

French and UN forces are still struggling to maintain order across the country, and both have been accused of sexual exploitation. There are only a handful of European personnel in the UN mission. While the Franco-UN presence may be enough to avert all-out collapse, and December's presidential elections were calm, the CAR is likely to remain highly unstable for the foreseeable future.

In neighbouring South Sudan, leaders grudgingly agreed a long-delayed and weak peace deal in August. This was brokered by African governments, the US, and China. Though the UK and Norway are still engaged in mediation efforts, and London has pledged engineers to the

UN mission to South Sudan (UNMISS), European influence in the country remains relatively limited.

France led efforts at the UN to raise concern over events in Burundi, where the president's decision to circumvent the constitution and run for a third term precipitated a failed coup and ongoing violence. In Brussels, Belgium and the Netherlands led a push to suspend some aid to Burundi over the crisis. Russia and China initially blocked serious action by the Security Council, but relented in the final quarter of the year as killings spiked. By year-end, violence was escalating again, and it appeared possible that an international peacekeeping force might deploy.

There are fears that an electoral crisis may also loom in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in 2016, if President Joseph Kabila defies term limits to seek a third term. As in South Sudan, however, the US is now the main Western actor in the DRC's politics, with Belgium, France, and the EU taking supporting roles.

8 AFGHANISTAN

Security is deteriorating, but Europe's role is marginal and policymakers want to move on.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|-----------|----------|-----------|----------|
| Unity | 4 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| Resources | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| Strategy | | | | 2 |
| Impact | 4 | 4 | 5 | 2 |
| Total/20 | 11 | 9 | 10 | 8 |

C

2012 B- 2013 C+ 2014 C+

The Taliban made significant military advances in 2015, inflicting severe casualties on the Afghan army and police, and briefly capturing the northern city of Kunduz.

This forced US President Barack Obama to delay plans for a military withdrawal. A number of European governments still have personnel in the country as part of a NATO mission to train local security forces (with Germany, Italy, and Romania the leading troop contributors, after the US), but Europe's political role in Afghan affairs is now marginal. Other actors, including China and Qatar, are increasingly involved in efforts to mediate. Pakistan convened talks between the Afghan government and the Taliban in July, with China and the US as observers, but no Europeans were involved.

The EU maintains a police training mission in Afghanistan. With nearly 200 international staff in the field in mid-2015, this remains a significant commitment under the CSDP, but is gradually approaching completion. The mission is

set to operate until the end of 2016, but reduced its role at the end of 2015, focusing on "strategic advice" to the Afghan police for its final year. The Afghan police have made significant progress in recent years (though this also reflects NATO training and bilateral programmes), but it is not clear that either the police or army will be able to hold up if the Taliban maintains its military pressure.

Afghanistan's continuing instability has been brought home to European, especially German, policymakers by the large numbers of Afghan citizens seeking asylum in Europe. They represent the second-largest group after Syrians, but have encountered an especially high level of scepticism. Germany, for example, has said that it does not view Afghans as valid refugees (with some exceptions such as those who worked for NATO) given their home country's relative stability. This unrealistic reading points to a broader desire among European policymakers to put Afghanistan behind them, but it is far from truly secure.

9 EUROPEAN POLICY AT THE UN

Facing Russian obstructionism at the UN, Europeans are plugging away at institutional reforms.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| Unity | 2 | 3 | 4 | 2 |
| Resources | 2 | 4 | 4 | 3 |
| Strategy | | | | 2 |
| Impact | 3 | 5 | 3 | 2 |
| Total/20 | 7 | 12 | 11 | 9 |

C+

2012 C- 2013 B- 2014 B-

European member states struggled to shape key political debates at the UN in 2015. They faced growing Russian obstructionism in the Security Council on issues extending beyond Syria and Ukraine. Moscow used its veto twice in August, blocking a British resolution commemorating the Srebrenica massacre, which took place during the Bosnian War, and blocking a proposal backed by the Netherlands for an international investigation of the destruction of Flight MH17 over eastern Ukraine. China abstained on both issues, suggesting growing displeasure with Russia's belligerence. However, Beijing and Moscow largely cooperated over the Syrian conflict and the crisis in Burundi (see Central Africa).

Germany made another push for a permanent seat on the Security Council in 2015 in cooperation with Brazil, India, and Japan. It made minor progress in General Assembly discussions, but China quashed the initiative to spite Japan. Italy, a longstanding opponent of Germany's claim, again played a prominent role in blocking it. France enjoyed greater success in gathering international support for a

moratorium on the use of the veto in mass atrocity situations, but the US, China, and Russia remain sceptical (the UK also has doubts, but edged towards the French position).

European diplomats continued to use the UN's human rights mechanisms to highlight atrocities in Syria and abuses in Ukraine. Lithuania took advantage of its temporary seat on the Security Council to press Russia on Ukraine, while Spain advocated for a Security Council resolution condemning the use of barrel bombs in Syria, although Russia ultimately prevented this from going to a vote. Outside the Council, Germany became increasingly vocal about the need for the UN to resolve its divisions on Syria, reflecting its rising engagement with global security issues.

Eastern European nations made progress in convincing others that the next UN secretary-general should come from the region (Latin America has also been pushing hard) and a growing number of candidates have emerged. However, it is not clear if any of them will be acceptable to both Moscow and the West.

10 EUROPEAN POLICY IN THE G8, G20, AND INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

EU members risked US wrath by joining a China-backed development bank, but are still focused on the TTIP trade deal.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| Unity | 3 | 4 | 4 | 2 |
| Resources | 5 | 4 | 4 | 3 |
| Strategy | | | | 2 |
| Impact | 4 | 7 | 4 | 2 |
| Total/20 | 12 | 15 | 12 | 9 |

C+

2012 B- 2013 B+ 2014 B-

Neither the G7 nor the G20 played a decisive role in international affairs in 2015. Germany hosted the G7 summit in July, which continued to exclude Russia over its aggression in Ukraine, and focused on development and climate issues. The November G20 summit in Turkey was overshadowed by the Paris attacks, but provided a platform for European governments to talk with Russia over Syria. While this was useful, Turkey's G20 presidency lacked notable independent initiatives.

Europe's relations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) continued to be defined by Greece. The Syriza-led Greek government aimed to minimise its dependence on the fund, culminating in a loan default in July. After the new bailout was agreed, however, IMF officials often appeared more lenient towards Athens than their EU counterparts. By year-end, Syriza once again seemed to be aiming to drive a wedge between the IMF and the EU – unintentionally pushing EU officials to reaffirm their faith in the fund.

The World Bank's tough internal reforms

were overshadowed by China's launch of the AIIB. Fourteen EU members signed up in the first quarter of the year, to the displeasure of Washington. Worried that China was challenging its multilateral leadership, the US targeted the UK for particular opprobrium. This backfired, leading EU members to state their openness to Chinese leadership in parts of the global system. The EU's engagement arguably pushed China to ensure that the AIIB's lending standards and governance structures are stronger than would otherwise have been the case, and the president of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) has talked about joint projects.

In the field of international trade, however, the US remained the primary focus for the EU as negotiations on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) deal ground on. The odds of an agreement before the end of the Obama administration remained uncertain by year-end. In the meantime, there was a growing consensus that the WTO, despite striking a deal on information technology in December, should end the stalled Doha round talks.

11 EUROPEAN POLICY ON NON-PROLIFERATION AND THE ARMS TRADE

The EU's differences over disarmament were made embarrassingly public, including at a nuclear non-proliferation conference.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| Unity | 4 | 4 | 4 | 2 |
| Resources | 4 | 4 | 5 | 2 |
| Strategy | | | | 2 |
| Impact | 3 | 8 | 7 | 2 |
| Total/20 | 11 | 16 | 16 | 8 |

C

2012 B- 2013 A- 2014 A-

The Iran deal was a clear success for European diplomacy on nuclear issues, but the EU faced significant splits over disarmament, on which there is no EU foreign policy consensus.

In May, the regular five-yearly Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) review conference in New York became a platform for intra-European disagreements, as Austria tabled a call for progress towards eliminating all nuclear weapons, garnering support from 159 countries. Many EU countries failed to sign up, including France, the UK, and other NATO members.

The conference was ultimately undermined by a push from Arab countries for an urgent summit to ban nuclear weapons from the Middle East. This was largely designed to embarrass Israel, and the US, UK, and Canada refused to accept it. In the absence of consensus, the conference produced no outcome document. This may have been a relief for Finland, which had been trying to facilitate the proposed meeting since the previous NPT review, with little success.

By contrast, technical work on the implementation of the Arms Trade Treaty – a shared priority for EU members in recent years – moved forward in 2015, with an agreement to establish the secretariat in Geneva. Debates on chemical weapons continued in the Security Council, centring on evidence of the repeated use of chlorine gas in Syria. Russia demonstrated greater flexibility on this issue than in the past, eventually agreeing to an investigatory mechanism to determine responsibility for these incidents. This was, however, largely negotiated bilaterally between Russia and the US as part of wider efforts by Washington to ease tensions.

Cyber issues featured increasingly prominently in arms control debates. The UK and China agreed to ban commercial hacking, and Berlin is working on a similar deal with Beijing. However, a robust multilateral framework against cyber-attacks remains a remote prospect for the time being.

12 INTERNATIONAL AID

European aid budgets are under financial pressure in the face of the need to deal with the refugee crisis.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Unity | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| Resources | 3 | 3 | 4 | 2 |
| Strategy | | | | 3 |
| Impact | 6 | 4.2 | 6 | 2 |
| Total/20 | 11 | 11 | 12 | 10 |

C+

2012 B+ 2013 B/B- 2014 B-

2015 was a landmark year for international development, at least on paper, as the UN General Assembly approved the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Many EU member states claimed part of the credit for this new set of targets. Spain was an early advocate of sustainable development, for example, while the UK was heavily involved in managing the UN process (sometimes alienating developing countries with its heavy-handed interventions). The Irish ambassador to the UN played a central role in guiding the General Assembly towards a final agreement. Despite this, some EU members, including the UK, are concerned that the final goals (involving nearly 170 individual targets) are overly broad and vague.

European governments struggled to keep their aid spending steady, especially given the need to divert cash to refugee support. Belgium, Finland and the Netherlands are among those that significantly cut international development budgets, although their spending was still relatively high. Italy and Spain tried to maintain

levels of aid, having already reduced their spending during the euro crisis, but Spain cut back its programmes in Latin America to prioritise the Middle East and North Africa. France, which also made heavy cuts during the crisis, kept spending roughly level in 2015, although it is likely to cut again in 2016.

Other donors including Germany, Luxembourg, Sweden and the UK managed to keep aid spending high. It is notable that Bulgaria, although not a major donor, made a push to increase aid to the Middle East as part of its response to the refugee crisis.

13 EUROPEAN POLICY TOWARDS THE ICC AND INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL TRIBUNALS

The EU struggled to defend the ICC from African criticisms, while the ICTY made progress on big cases from the former Yugoslavia.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Unity | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Resources | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Strategy | | | | 2 |
| Impact | 7 | 5 | 4 | 2 |
| Total/20 | 14 | 12 | 11 | 11 |

B-

2012 B+ 2013 B- 2014 B-

The International Criminal Court (ICC) continued to face questions over its approach, as African governments claimed that the court was too focused on their affairs. In June, Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir, who has been indicted by the ICC, avoided efforts by a local court to detain him on a visit to South Africa. Facing heavy criticism, South Africa threatened to withdraw from the ICC, while the chief prosecutor admitted that real progress on Darfur is unlikely. In November, Kenya tried to interfere politically with evidence used in the prosecution of its deputy president, but EU members and other governments blocked this manoeuvre.

Meanwhile, the ICC expanded its activities in 2015, announcing an investigation into crimes committed during the 2008 Russo-Georgian War and continuing to investigate possible crimes in Afghanistan. Palestinian officials, having joined the ICC in January, are building a case against Israel. Many EU members harboured doubts about the Palestinians' entry to the court, but did not try to stop the case. There was no progress on earlier French

efforts to have the ICC deal with Syria (which Russia and China oppose). Overall, the ICC appears to be gaining more independence, despite running the risk of further political rifts over both African and non-African cases.

The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) continued to work through a series of high-profile cases, including those of former Bosnian Serb leaders Radovan Karadžić and Ratko Mladić and Serbian hardliner Vojislav Šešelj. This has not been straightforward: there are claims of evidence tampering and a witness in the Mladić case was murdered in 2015. Nonetheless, the Karadžić hearings ended in October, and a verdict is expected shortly. Despite its flaws, the tribunal has succeeded in making a broad reckoning of crimes committed in the Balkan wars, thanks to strong political support from the EU. Demonstrating the ongoing sensitivity of these issues, in August Russia vetoed a British Security Council resolution that described the Srebrenica massacre as "genocide", at Serbia's request.

14 CLIMATE CHANGE

France led a successful European push for progress on climate change, delivering a better-than-expected deal.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Unity | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| Resources | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 |
| Strategy | | | | 4 |
| Impact | 6 | 5 | 6 | 4 |
| Total/20 | 13 | 11 | 13 | 16 |

A-

2012 B 2013 B- 2014 B

The climate change agreement signed in Paris in December represented the high point of European multilateral diplomacy in 2015. EU member states were keen to avoid a repeat of the disastrous 2009 Copenhagen climate talks. France devoted huge diplomatic capital to preparing for the summit, although differences with developing countries and the US often threatened to derail any serious bargain.

Member states were broadly united in support of France, although Poland remained particularly sceptical about the process, reflecting its heavy reliance on coal. The European Council settled on a strong common position in advance of the talks in September.

In the run-up to the final negotiations, there were open divisions between the US and France over whether the final agreement should be a legally binding treaty. While Paris argued for the strongest possible document, with the support of its EU partners, it eventually had to acquiesce to US demands that key elements of the text should be solely political, thereby avoiding a hopeless battle in Congress.

However, the US and EU were largely aligned in a final push for an agreement in December. The weeks before the summit were tense, as developing countries criticised Western positions on issues including financing for developing countries. The November Paris attacks created additional momentum for success, however. In the final talks, Washington was crucial to keeping China on board. EU members coordinated effectively to corral other partners: Germany ensured Russia's cooperation, while the EU as a whole launched a push to strengthen the deal. This group, which amplified the voices of victims of climate change such as the Marshall Islands, successfully pushed for relatively strong mechanisms for states to report on and review their carbon emissions after 2020, overcoming Chinese opposition.

The final deal, committing the world to keeping global warming below 2 degrees Celsius, was stronger than most observers had expected. There was widespread praise for France, even from sceptical nations, for bringing the process to fruition.

Russia

Overall grade

B+

Overall grade 2014 **B-**

Overall grade 2013 **C+**



16
29%

Drop in EU exports
to Russia in 2015

26%

Drop in EU imports
from Russia in 2015

24
RUSSIA'S PARLIAMENT VOTED **440-3**
TO BAN "UNDESIRABLE" FOREIGN ORGANISATIONS

15
Of the 13 provisions
in the Minsk II
agreement, 12 have
serious shortfalls
in implementation



23
Russia's Arctic military drills
in July 2015 involved:

38,000 soldiers

3,360 vehicles

110 aircraft

41 combat ships

15 submarines

25
Russia has the 2nd largest
number of cases pending against
it in the ECHR, after Ukraine.

18
Biggest EU member % increase
in defence budget (2015)

Lithuania: 50%

Poland: 20%

22
RUSSIAN AIR
STRIKES IN SYRIA
HAVE KILLED:

893

ISIS fighters

1,015

civilians

1,141

non-ISIS

opposition fighters

17
149

**RUSSIANS UNDER
EU ASSET FREEZES/VISA BANS**

21
The cost of living has
almost doubled in
Crimea since mid-2014

19
**5 OF THE 6 EASTERN
PARTNERSHIP STATES ARE IN
"FROZEN CONFLICTS"**

20
In 2015, Ukraine **DOUBLED GAS
IMPORTS** from Europe to **10.3
BILLION** cubic metres. It now
imports **50% MORE FROM THE EU**
than from Russia

| | 2015 | 2014 | 2013 | 2012 | 2011 |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| SANCTIONS, TRADE AND OVERALL RELATIONSHIP | A- | A- | B- | B | B |
| 15- Diplomatic measures and sanctions | A | A- | B+ | B+ | A- |
| 16- Trade with Russia | B+ | A- | B+ | B+ | A- |
| 17- Visa policies with Russia | A- | B+ | C+ | B- | B- |
| EUROPEAN SECURITY ISSUES | B+ | B- | C+ | B- | B- |
| 18- Solidarity on European security | A- | B+ | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| 19- Relations with Russia on protracted conflicts | B- | C+ | C | C+ | C+ |
| 20- Diversification of gas-supply routes to Europe | A- | C+ | C- | C+ | B- |
| 21- Crimea | B+ | B+ | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| COOPERATION ON REGIONAL AND GLOBAL ISSUES | B- | B- | B- | B- | C+ |
| 22- Relations with Russia on the greater Middle East | C+ | B- | B- | B | B- |
| 23- Relations with Russia on the Arctic | B+ | B- | B- | B | n/a |
| HUMAN RIGHTS AND GOVERNANCE | B- | C- | C | C | C- |
| 24- Human rights and rule of law | C+ | C- | C+ | C+ | C- |
| 25- Political freedom in Russia | B- | C- | C | n/a | n/a |

Russia's annexation of Crimea and invasion of eastern Ukraine in 2014 made clear to European governments that Russia is not a problematic strategic partner, but a strategic problem. Europe is still not entirely sure how to respond. Some member states call for constraints on Russia; others argue for a combination of sticks and carrots; and a third, limited group thinks that acquiescing to Russia's *faits accomplis* is inevitable. While Europe is united in seeing Russia's behaviour as problematic, there is no analytical unanimity on the drivers and goals of Russia's policy. This limits Europe's policy planning, makes it difficult to formulate a consistent long-term strategy, and has given rise to some – though so far minor – missteps.

The year started with an intensification of fighting in the Donbas, eastern Ukraine, that led to renewed mediation efforts by the Europeans (namely by Germany and France through the so-called Normandy format talks) and resulted in the Minsk II ceasefire agreement in February. The agreement did bring about some de-escalation on the battlefield – although only after the combined forces of Russian troops and “Donbas rebels” had taken the strategic junction of Debaltseve. But most provisions of the agreement remained unfulfilled long after the deadlines had passed. Fighting continued until early September, though on a reduced scale, and there were some incidents even after that. More importantly, the ability of this agreement to provide a path to

sustainable peace remains questionable. The document is near-unintelligible, especially on sequencing and timelines. Most glaringly, it sets the restoration of Ukraine's territorial control as the last step of the process, though this would entail holding local elections while foreign forces were present, which is hardly compatible with a normal political process. The often vaguely formulated text lends itself to multiple interpretations, which, as might be expected, are hugely divergent in Kyiv and Moscow.

In the absence of any alternative political process, the EU has stuck to the Minsk agreement and made it a centrepiece of its strategy for regulating the conflict. Despite the agreement's shortcomings, it is the only document that Russia and Ukraine have both signed, and so is the only opportunity to hold Moscow to its word. Europe made implementation of the Minsk agreement a condition for lifting sanctions against Russia, and so far has maintained the position that only full implementation – that is, Ukraine regaining control of its border – is sufficient. While the EU could do more to drive and shape the Minsk-related political process, this stance at least avoids the possibility that Russia might trade symbolic and reversible steps for the removal of sanctions and then continue destabilising Ukraine.

Meanwhile, the sanctions policy itself has worked fairly well. Many doubted the measures after they did not produce immediate results in 2014. However, sanctions usually work by cumulative effect – political as well as economic. The Russia sanctions were designed as a “slow squeeze”, to modify Russia's political behaviour without crashing its economic system. Given Europe's track record with Russia – Moscow got away with the Georgia war largely without consequences – Europe has done well this time, but will still need to demonstrate staying power for the sanctions to produce the desired outcome.

Economically, sanctions cost the Russian economy 1-1.5 percent of GDP a year according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), but the political costs, though more subjective and harder to measure, are probably more important. For now, Moscow has significantly scaled back its ambitions in Ukraine and the sanctions are probably one factor in this (developments in Ukraine are another). But Moscow needs more time to give up on its goal of retaining some leverage over Ukraine's decision-making.

Sanctions and the stalemate in eastern Ukraine may also have contributed to Russia's military intervention in Syria in the autumn. Moscow's aspiration to escape the deadlock by widening the context of its relations with the West was

a policy driver here, although not the only or even the main one. Moscow's other motivations can be found in the domestic context, in its stance against revolutions in general, and in its wish to preserve the Bashar al-Assad regime in Syria, which Moscow sees as a key both to the survival of the Syrian state and to its own presence in the country.

By the end of 2015, the refugee crisis and Islamic State (ISIS)-sponsored attacks against European targets had made resolution of the Syria crisis a political priority for Europe's governments. Moscow will not be an easy partner:

LEADERS AND SLACKERS ON RUSSIA IN 2015

SANCTIONS

Leaders: Estonia, France, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Sweden, the UK

Slackers: none

All member states put aside their differences and agreed to a renewal of sanctions against Russia twice in 2015, though country action on implementation varied and the EU finished the year with Italy showing wobbliness over the second renewal. Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Sweden, and the UK continued to push for a tough sanctions policy. Germany's contribution to keeping the EU united on sanctions was essential, though Berlin's simultaneous search for ways to engage Russia has created some unease among the countries that took a harder line. France deserves credit for cancelling the sale of Mistral warships to Russia.

SUPPORT FOR EASTERN PARTNERSHIP COUNTRIES

Leaders: Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden

Slackers: France, Germany

We asked what role specific countries played in maintaining or strengthening the EU's commitment to reform in Eastern Partnership countries, and to the Eastern Partnership policy itself. Six member states showed leadership in their support for a strong declaration at the Riga summit in May, and for ratifying and implementing Association Agreements with Georgia and Moldova. France and Germany attempted to water down the declaration in order not to irritate Russia.

European powers view the Assad regime as the root cause of the Syria crisis, while Moscow views the regime as an essential part of the solution. The EU's attempts to persuade Moscow to pressure Assad to relinquish power have been based on wishful thinking or a misreading of Russia's outlook, and are rooted in an absence of more realistic policies. Different perspectives and different priorities also limit the prospects of Europe and Russia forming an effective anti-ISIS coalition in Syria.

This also means that trade-offs involving Syria and Ukraine – much feared and talked about in Ukraine – would not produce the desired results. A token concession on Ukraine would not make Russia change its strategy in Syria, although it might pretend to. Nor, probably, would major concessions on Ukraine – such as accepting that it belonged in Russia's "sphere of influence" – but they would cause major turmoil in Ukraine, and place Russia's future relations with Europe on a dysfunctional foundation.

In terms of unity in its relations with Russia, the EU has done well despite differing views among member states. These differences manifested in December, when Italy protested against the rollover of sanctions and demanded a political discussion. This annoyed other member states, but Italy's request was in part the result of Germany's decision to endorse the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline, which would transport Russian gas to Germany, bypassing other countries – a policy which seems inconsistent with Europe's energy policies and with its efforts to bring Russia into a rules-based system. The lesson is obvious: unity takes solidarity, and solidarity ought to be a two-way street.

In the context of unity, the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the European Commission took some awkward steps in 2015, embodied in High Representative Federica Mogherini's Russia paper in January and Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker's letter to President Vladimir Putin in November. Both sent muddled messages, and betrayed a wrong-headed understanding of Russia's policy drivers and the view among some member states of sanctions as a box-ticking exercise, rather than a policy to achieve strategic goals.

In terms of strategy, Europe's policy on Crimea leaves something to be desired. While the EU maintains that it does not recognise Russia's annexation of Crimea, and Crimea-related sanctions will remain even when the Minsk measures are lifted, the EU should have a more comprehensive non-recognition policy.

In early 2016, the EU's search for the right balance of carrots and sticks in its relationship with Russia will continue, with the Minsk agreements, sanctions,

and Syria as obvious agenda items. In addition, Europe will be faced with the question of how to relate to the two Eurasian integration projects: the Russia-led Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) and the China-led “One Belt, One Road” initiative. Some European policymakers hope that starting talks with the EEU will make Russia amenable to cooperation with the EU on Ukraine as well as Syria; others fear that this would amount to legitimising Russia’s aggressive instincts, and ultimately disappoint both sides.

EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS AND RUSSIA IN 2015

Business as usual between the EU and Russia has been suspended since 2014, in response to Russia’s aggression in Ukraine. There are some sensible exceptions, such as cross-border cooperation on education through the Erasmus+ programme, and some dialogue on issues of mutual importance, for example on the Iran deal. But beyond that there is little regular interaction.

In January, the high commissioner’s paper on Russia explored the options for opening a positive conversation with Moscow alongside sanctions. Coming at the peak of fighting in the Donbas, this step was (correctly) deemed premature by the EU’s foreign ministers.

There is ongoing bilateral cooperation between Russia and many EU countries. France and Germany are holding talks with Russia (and Ukraine) through the Normandy format negotiations. This year, the Commission, via its trade department (DG TRADE), was involved in trilateral talks with Russia and Ukraine on the implementation of the EU–Ukraine Association Agreement and trade deal (AA/DCFTA). The Commission’s energy department (DG ENER) also facilitated negotiations between Russia and Ukraine on the follow-up to the “winter package” deal on gas supplies to Ukraine.

15 DIPLOMATIC MEASURES AND SANCTIONS

Europe stuck to sanctions on Russia, while using the Minsk process for mediation. Some cracks in unity emerged at year-end.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|
| Unity | n/a | n/a | 5 | 4 |
| Resources | n/a | n/a | 5 | 4 |
| Strategy | | | | 5 |
| Impact | n/a | n/a | 7 | 5 |
| Total/20 | n/a | n/a | 17 | 18 |

A

2012 n/a 2013 n/a 2014 A-

Europe has a threefold strategy for dealing with Russia's aggression in Ukraine. It uses diplomatic measures, sanctions, visa bans, and asset freezes as sticks; relies on the Minsk agreement as a diplomatic vehicle; and is searching for a carrot to encourage Russia to rejoin a cooperative Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)-based European order. On the latter front, cooperation with the Russia-led Eurasian Economic Union is being considered as a potential basis of a deal.

The EU was largely unified in adhering to the sanctions policy throughout 2015, as seen with the rollover of sanctions in the summer. Potentially dangerous cracks emerged towards the end of the year when Italy objected to another automatic rollover and demanded a political discussion. This, however, may have had less to do with disagreements on substance than with protest against Germany, which was seen as hypocritical for going ahead with the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline from Russia. In the end, sanctions were extended.

Most sanctions are linked to the implementation of the Minsk agreement, and the EU's position has been that only the full implementation – Ukraine regaining control of its eastern border – will result in these sanctions being lifted. Progress on implementation is slow: the shaky ceasefire is continuously violated, while OSCE monitors lack proper access to the conflict area and cannot verify that the agreed withdrawal of troops and weaponry is happening. As concerns implementation by Ukraine, Kyiv has started on some of the agreed legislative changes, including the first reading of constitutional reforms. Negotiations about the conditions for elections in the Donbas are underway and remain difficult. The Minsk process was supposed to conclude by the end of the year, but is set to continue well into 2016, as are sanctions.

Diplomatically, the Minsk process has been taking place in the framework of the so-called Normandy format, with Germany and France representing Europe.

16 TRADE WITH RUSSIA

Sanctions dominated EU trade policy on Russia, with some wobbles emerging towards the end of the year.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Unity | 5 | 5 | 5 | 4 |
| Resources | 4 | 4 | 5 | 4 |
| Strategy | | | | 3 |
| Impact | 5 | 5 | 7 | 4 |
| Total/20 | 14 | 14 | 17 | 15 |

B+

2012 B+ 2013 B+ 2014 A-

In 2015, EU–Russia trade relations were dominated by European sanctions and Russian countersanctions, with trade liberalisation talks placed on hold. The EU had seven trade disputes with Russia in the World Trade Organization (WTO) – a lot given that Russia is a relatively new member.

Europe largely demonstrated unity on sanctions, though Italy caused confusion in December. Some false steps, however, were made on the potential relationship between the EU and the Russia-dominated EEU. Certain member states – notably Germany – favour talks, in the hope that this could encourage Russia to accept an OSCE-based European order. However, major initiatives are unrealistic as long as Belarus, an EEU member, remains outside the WTO. Trade liberalisation would also run counter to sanctions. In addition, the EEU’s failure to function as a proper customs union, and its not entirely voluntary nature, raise questions about whether it is timely for Europe to engage. That confines the agenda to limited discussions on standards and procedures – low-level talks, unlikely to result in a political breakthrough.

Disputes about the EEU also resulted in missteps by EU institutions: a notable example being Juncker’s November letter that – because it was addressed to Putin and not to official EEU representatives, and was written without consulting EU countries – angered member states and ignored the nominally multilateral nature of the EEU.

Throughout 2015 the EU engaged in trilateral talks with Russia and Ukraine on the EU–Ukraine trade deal, due to enter into force in 2016. The talks aimed to address Moscow’s fears around the deal, but revealed that Russia’s concerns are political or related to perpetuating market dominance in Ukraine, and hence are not legitimate for the EU. Still, the talks demonstrated the limited usefulness of such engagement to EU members, and gave Ukraine time to make its economy less vulnerable to a trade war.

Russia’s “counter-sanctions” – bans on imports of agricultural products from Western countries – caused losses to European producers, and drove prices up for Russia’s consumers. EU–Russia trade declined 38.5 percent year-on-year between January and September.

17 VISA POLICIES WITH RUSSIA

For the second consecutive year, EU visa policy towards Russia consisted of visa bans against officials implicated in aggression against Ukraine.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Unity | 5 | 3 | 5 | 4 |
| Resources | 3 | 3 | 5 | 5 |
| Strategy | | | | 4 |
| Impact | 4 | 4 | 5 | 3 |
| Total/20 | 12 | 12 | 15 | 16 |

A-

2012 B- 2013 C+ 2014 B+

The overall dialogue on visa liberalisation between Europe and Russia has been frozen since 2014, and the main developments on visas relate to EU sanctions against Russian officials – which are closely tied to asset freezes. The EU policy of visa bans and asset freezes against Russian officials and entities began during Russia’s annexation of Crimea in March 2014. At the end of 2015, some 149 individuals and 37 entities were subject to such measures due to their part in actions that undermine or threaten the territorial integrity, sovereignty, and independence of Ukraine. This includes some individuals from Ukraine – Crimea, Sevastopol, Donetsk, and Luhansk – but mostly from Russia, including high-level policymakers considered to have been involved in the separation of Crimea and Sevastopol and in the separatist movements in eastern Ukraine.

In fact, most of the people sanctioned probably have little influence over Russian policymaking – which is increasingly concentrated in the hands of a tiny likeminded circle around Putin. At the

same time, Russian elites’ frustration with the restrictions is evident, and under certain circumstances this might contribute towards policy change.

The EU would benefit from clearer rules as concerns implementation of sanctions policy. For example, it is not entirely clear whether sanctioned personalities are allowed to attend multilateral meetings. That has resulted in some inconsistencies: Romania allowed sanctioned Duma speaker Sergei Naryshkin to visit the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation in Bucharest in November, but Finland did not allow a Russian delegation headed by Naryshkin to attend a meeting of the OSCE parliamentary assembly in July, earning scathing criticism from Moscow.

18 SOLIDARITY ON EUROPEAN SECURITY

Despite being distracted by multiple other crises, the EU successfully defended member states that are vulnerable to Russia.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|
| Unity | n/a | n/a | 5 | 4 |
| Resources | n/a | n/a | 5 | 4 |
| Strategy | | | | 4 |
| Impact | n/a | n/a | 5 | 4 |
| Total/20 | n/a | n/a | 15 | 16 |

A-

2012 n/a 2013 n/a 2014 B+

Russia's aggression in Ukraine prompted Europe to re-examine its own security arrangements. Mostly this is done in the NATO context – at the Wales Summit of 2014, members decided to significantly boost defence in Eastern Europe; a follow-up is expected from the Warsaw Summit in 2016. Much security assistance to the potentially vulnerable European NATO members – such as Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Poland – comes from the US on the basis of bilateral agreements.

The question of how to apply the 1997 NATO-Russia Founding Act remains a point of disagreement. The act forbids NATO from placing permanent troops on the territories of the new members if security conditions do not significantly alter. Eastern European states claim that the act should be null and void, on the grounds that Russia has violated it and altered the security situation, but some Western members, especially Germany, still want to uphold the letter of the act. The solution that has been found – to rotate the troops constantly and pre-position equipment – is by and large

satisfactory, although the border states would still prefer permanent positioning. Several European countries – Germany and the UK deserve to be mentioned – have promised to send or have sent troops to eastern areas. At the same time, Europe as a whole does not invest enough in defence – and this is a longer-term problem that needs to be dealt with.

The refugee crisis and ISIS-sponsored terrorist attacks in France shifted Europe's focus in 2015, making Syria a priority, and increasing tensions between Western and some Eastern member states over refugee inflows, but so far this has not affected EU determination to deter Russian aggression.

France deserves credit for cancelling the deal to sell two Mistral-class helicopter carriers to Russia in the wake of the Ukraine crisis.

19 RELATIONS WITH RUSSIA ON PROTRACTED CONFLICTS

Tensions continued in breakaway territories in the former Soviet space, while strained EU–Russia relations made conflict resolution seem remote.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Unity | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Resources | 3 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Strategy | | | | 2 |
| Impact | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Total/20 | 10 | 8 | 9 | 11 |

B-

2012 c+ 2013 c 2014 c+

No significant progress was made in 2015 on the resolution of frozen conflicts in the post-Soviet space, as events in Ukraine and then Syria dominated European and Russian foreign policy agendas. Five countries in the eastern neighbourhood have unresolved conflicts, where breakaway regions remain in a state of limbo. These protracted conflicts are a key part of Russia’s strategy to exercise influence in the neighbourhood and prevent NATO enlargement.

In Nagorno-Karabakh, a region located within the borders of Azerbaijan, fewer skirmishes were reported in 2015, after a spike the previous year. The Minsk Group (an EU-backed OSCE conflict-resolution mechanism) made no progress, faced with the intransigence of the parties: Azerbaijan and Armenia. With Moscow occupied by the crises in Ukraine and Syria, the only mediation talks involving both Armenian and Azerbaijani presidents were held in December, and delivered no concrete result. Moscow continues to sell heavy weaponry to both sides and is happy with the status quo, as it provides important leverage over both countries and thus the region.

The Geneva talks on the conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia – pro-Russian separatist regions of Georgia – continued throughout 2015 under the chairmanship of the EU, OSCE, and UN, but with no major breakthrough. An EU mission continued to monitor the boundary lines of the two breakaway republics, but had no meaningful access to the breakaway regions. Russia further consolidated its grip on South Ossetia by signing an “alliance and integration agreement” with the de facto authorities, which effectively legalises the entity’s integration with Russia. Russian forces pushed the administrative border 1.5 km further into Georgian-controlled territory to cover the Baku–Supsa pipeline. South Ossetia announced plans for a referendum on joining Russia.

In May, Ukraine’s parliament voted to suspend military cooperation with Russia, including a 1995 agreement giving Moscow military-transit rights in Transnistria – a breakaway region of Moldova. This raised fears in Tiraspol that Kyiv might be trying to blockade Transnistria and reignite the conflict.

20 DIVERSIFICATION OF GAS-SUPPLY ROUTES TO EUROPE

Member states took important steps to increase interconnectivity and decrease energy dependency on Russia.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|-----------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Unity | 3 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Resources | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| Strategy | | | | 5 |
| Impact | 4 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Total/20 | 10 | 7 | 9 | 17 |

A-

2012 c+ 2013 c- 2014 c+

A major development in European energy policy in 2015 was the creation of a strategy for a European Energy Union, first proposed in April 2014. The concept has evolved from its initial focus on threats to energy security to a fully-integrated internal energy market, tackling deficiencies in interconnectivity between the gas networks of EU member states. This would allow European countries to easily resell gas to one another, lessening their dependence on Russian-controlled pipelines.

Recent agreements to build gas interconnectors between Poland and Lithuania, Hungary and Slovakia, and possibly between Bulgaria and Greece, will help diversify these countries' gas supply. The year saw a revival in the regional approach to interconnectivity, with the creation of a number of high-level groups addressing the problems of regions in Europe that are vulnerable, relying heavily on gas from one supplier. Some of these groups include countries that are not part of the EU, such as the Western Balkans, or even of the Energy Community (a

grouping of EU and southeast European countries), such as Turkey.

Despite Russia's threats of gas cut-offs, Ukraine, with the EU's facilitation, has proved to be a reliable transit country, while reducing its own dependency on Russian gas. The Commission is closely monitoring another gas pipeline project, Nord Stream 2, which is meant to bypass transit countries from Russia to Germany, and is opposed by a number of Central and Eastern European countries.

The nuclear deal with Iran, the current energy surplus, as well as the installation of liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminals in new facilities across Europe have opened up some serious energy alternatives. The Commission has made energy a priority, including in bilateral relations between the EU and its neighbouring countries, most notably in the southern Mediterranean, Azerbaijan, and Central Asian countries.

21 CRIMEA

The EU does not recognise Russia's annexation of Crimea and has imposed sanctions, but it needs a clearer policy.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| Unity | n/a | n/a | n/a | 5 |
| Resources | n/a | n/a | n/a | 3 |
| Strategy | | | | 4 |
| Impact | n/a | n/a | n/a | 3 |
| Total/20 | n/a | n/a | n/a | 15 |

B+

2012 n/a 2013 n/a 2014 n/a

The EU stuck throughout 2015 to the line that Russia's annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol is illegitimate, and that it will not recognise it. However, the issue did not feature significantly on the EU's agenda during the year.

Life has been transformed on the ground in Crimea since Russia completed its takeover in 2015. The laws, currency, and even school curricula have changed. Most Crimeans have received Russian passports and re-registered their properties under Russian legislation. Economically, the situation is dire: the peninsula is isolated, and tourism is largely dormant, with links to Ukraine cut or risky to use. Handouts from Russia alleviate the situation a little. Crime and human rights abuses are rampant, with the indigenous Crimean Tatar population – who were not in favour of the takeover – often targeted, though arbitrary law-enforcement affects all groups.

The EU's ability to influence the situation on the ground remains limited. The EU has imposed two sets of sanctions that are

related to Crimea: in March 2014, the first set of sanctions against individuals was introduced, followed by a set of economic sanctions adopted in June 2014.

However, there is a need for a more comprehensive non-recognition policy that would include clear Crimea-related guidelines for a wider range of European actors – even if only in the form of recommendations. This should include a clear stance on visits to the peninsula: in 2015, a delegation of French MPs went to Crimea, as did some members of the European Parliament. In September, Italy's ex-Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi met with Putin there. While these visits probably do not constitute a formal breach of sanctions, they are clearly unhelpful, as they allow Moscow to claim that European policymakers are not boycotting Crimea.

The current sanctions regime also includes some important loopholes. Some European car producers have found ways to continue business in Crimea; and, of Crimea's big ports, some – for example, the port of Yalta – are not covered by sanctions at all.

22 RELATIONS WITH RUSSIA ON THE GREATER MIDDLE EAST

Russia surprised Europe by launching air strikes in Syria, while EU hopes of forming an anti-ISIS coalition were ill-founded.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Unity | 5 | 3 | 4 | 4 |
| Resources | 4 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| Strategy | | | | 2 |
| Impact | 4 | 6 | 4 | 2 |
| Total/20 | 13 | 11 | 11 | 10 |

C+

2012 v 2013 v 2014 v-

Towards the end of 2015, refugee flows and ISIS-sponsored terrorism made the crisis in Syria a policy priority for European member states. Governments differed on how to interpret Russia's air strikes in Syria, which began in early autumn. While many saw them as counter to Western policy and interests, others hoped that European countries could form a broad anti-ISIS coalition with Russia and others.

In reality, Russia's understanding of the causes of and possible solutions to the Syria crisis is diametrically opposed to Europe's. Russia sees Assad as a key part of the solution to the conflict; its air strikes support the regime and often target the moderate, non-ISIS opposition. ISIS has been hit more with rhetoric than with bombs, as Moscow sees a short-term interest in letting ISIS continue fighting anti-Assad opposition groups: it has been trying to eliminate the middle ground, so that the regime becomes the only alternative to ISIS.

Europe has for years been united around a policy based on wishful thinking: it has tried to persuade Moscow to force Assad

out, with no results. Now, many Western leaders have taken a step closer to Russia's position, agreeing that Assad's departure can happen "at a later stage". This made the Vienna peace process possible. Russia's air strikes on Syria prompted the West to open military de-confliction talks to avoid accidents in the air. These became more important after Moscow deployed S-400 missile systems, in effect establishing a no-fly zone over the country.

Moscow may hope that its action in Syria will force the West into a rapprochement that will have beneficial implications for Ukraine. Indeed, some Western leaders have called for an easing of sanctions to gain Russia's cooperation in Syria, but the EU's official position is to keep these issues separate.

The Syria crisis has also given new impetus to Europe's relations with Turkey. When Turkey shot down a Russian fighter jet, Europe worked to limit the damage and de-escalate the situation, while offering the necessary rhetorical support to its NATO ally.

23 RELATIONS WITH RUSSIA ON THE ARCTIC

The EU's hope to gain observer status in the Arctic Council was frustrated once again. Tensions with Russia have some impact on relations in the Arctic.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Unity | 4 | 5 | 4 | 4 |
| Resources | 4 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| Strategy | | | | 4 |
| Impact | 5 | 3 | 6 | 3 |
| Total/20 | 13 | 11 | 12 | 14 |

B+

2012 B 2013 B- 2014 B-

For many years, the EU has aimed to gain observer status in the Arctic Council – an intergovernmental forum on the Arctic region. Some of its member states – France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Spain, and the UK – have obtained observer status, while Sweden, Finland, and Denmark are members.

However, the EU's bid has been rejected several times. In 2013, it was blocked by Canada because of the EU's ban on trade in commercial seal products. The dispute with Canada was resolved in late 2014, and the EU hoped to get observer status at the April 2015 summit. However, the summit decided to suspend accepting new members for the time being.

Russia's military sabre-rattling has been visible in the Arctic: a major "snap exercise" was called at short notice in March 2015; another major drill took place in August.

The EU's economic sanctions towards Russia affect developments in the Arctic. The so-called sectoral sanctions, imposed

against entire Russian economic sectors since July 2014, include prohibitions on EU companies engaging in the direct or indirect sale, supply, transfer, or export of certain technologies for deep-water oil exploration and production, Arctic oil exploration and production, or shale oil projects. This affects major Russian companies, but also their European partners and stakeholders.

24 HUMAN RIGHTS AND RULE OF LAW

The human rights situation in Russia continued downhill, with the EU unable to stop the slide.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Unity | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Resources | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Strategy | | | | 4 |
| Impact | 2 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Total/20 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 9 |

C+

2012 c+ 2013 c+ 2014 c-

The most important development for human rights in Russia in 2015 was the December passage of a law that allows the country to ignore rulings from international courts – primarily affecting judgements from the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR). The law allows the Constitutional Court to rule international rulings unenforceable, with a motion from the president or government. The ECHR has been the only remaining source of justice for many Russian citizens: around 45,000 appealed to the court between 2013 and mid-2015. The move follows the ECHR’s 2014 ruling that Russia must pay €1.87 billion to former shareholders in the nationalised Yukos oil company.

Meanwhile, many Russian human rights organisations and other NGOs have seen their activities hindered by the 2012 “foreign agent” law that penalises organisations receiving Western grants. Prominent among the victims is Memorial – a respected research centre whose work focuses on human rights and history, including the history of Soviet repression. In November, the authorities accused Memorial of “undermining the

foundations of the constitutional order” – language that echoes some that is found in Memorial’s archives.

The law had an immediate impact on NGOs in Russia. By the beginning of December, the Ministry of Justice had registered 103 groups as “foreign agents”, with four additional groups registering themselves. Six NGOs were shut down by the Ministry of Justice. Another 27 chose not to register as “foreign agents”, resulting in fines for some. A further 29 NGOs received official orders to “eliminate violations”, and 54 received warnings not to violate the law.

In October, the State Duma accepted a law in the first reading that would significantly expand the use of force, including lethal force, against prisoners and detainees.

The EU is unable to affect these trends within Russia. Member states have given asylum to some Russians, while certain countries have also sheltered emigrating organisations or their branches. The EU’s human rights dialogue with Russia was suspended in 2014 as a result of Russia’s actions in Ukraine.

25 POLITICAL FREEDOM IN RUSSIA

Political freedoms in Russia continued their downhill slide, with many European organisations banned, but the EU could do little.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Unity | n/a | 4 | 4 | 5 |
| Resources | n/a | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Strategy | | | | 3 |
| Impact | n/a | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| Total/20 | n/a | 8 | 7 | 12 |

B-

2012 n/a 2013 c 2014 c-

In 2015, it became still more dangerous to be an opposition politician in Russia. In February, both Russia and Europe were shaken by the murder of the opposition politician Boris Nemtsov close to the Kremlin wall in central Moscow. The perpetrators of the murder were arrested, but those who ordered it remain at large. In January, a fabricated case against another opposition leader, Alexey Navalny, took a nasty turn when the court jailed his brother – who is also his business partner – which Navalny’s allies said constituted “taking relatives hostage”.

In May 2015, Putin signed the “undesirable organisation law”, a follow-up to the 2012 “foreign agent law”. The legislation gives prosecutors the power to declare foreign and international organisations “undesirable” and shut them down. Prominent institutions such as the Carnegie Moscow Center are at risk, as well as the local representatives of Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch. Several other international organisations, such as the National Endowment for Democracy and the

MacArthur Foundation, have already been shut down or left the country. In November, two foundations created by Open Society Foundations founder George Soros were banned in Russia.

New legislation restricts foreign ownership of the media: a law signed in January that bans foreigners from owning more than 20 percent of any media channel has prompted foreign investors to sell up, and threatens the remaining reputable publications, such as the business daily *Vedomosti* (which includes the *Financial Times* and Dow Jones among its owners). Private and independent TV channels such as Dozhd are struggling with a law that banned advertising on cable and satellite channels from 2015.

European governments and the EU have little power to affect the developments inside Russia, but are learning to support Russian organisations that have moved their activities to the West.

Wider Europe

Overall grade

B-

Overall grade 2014 **B-**

Overall grade 2013 **B-**



Ukraine and Georgia

28

2 Eastern Partnership countries recommended for VISA-FREE TRAVEL TO THE EU

\$1 billion was stolen from Moldova's banks - over 1/8 of GDP

26

Percent who think EU membership would be a good thing:

31

- Kosovo: 89%**
- Albania: 84%**
- Macedonia: 41%**
- Montenegro: 35%**
- Bosnia and Herzegovina: 30%**
- Serbia: 24%**

\$38 OIL PRICE PER BARREL IN DECEMBER 2015
- lowest monthly average since 2004

29

€3 BILLION EXTRA EU AID OFFERED TO TURKEY FOR SYRIAN REFUGEES

36



U K R A I N E C O N F L I C T

30

| | | |
|----------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| DEAD 9,000 | INTERNALLY DISPLACED 1.6 million | REFUGEES 1.1 Million |
|----------------------|--|--------------------------------|

There are **2.5 MILLION SYRIANS** in Turkey

39

Nearly **600,000 MIGRANTS** from the Middle East and North Africa **ENTERED SERBIA IN 2015**

32

55% of Turks want to join the EU (Spring 2015)

38

The Western Balkans' population is **4.3%** that of the EU

34

14 JOURNALISTS IMPRISONED IN TURKEY
Double the number at the start of 2015

37

20,000

35

CONVERSATIONS ALLEGEDLY ILLEGALLY **RECORDED** BY THE MACEDONIAN INTELLIGENCE SERVICES

DECEMBER 2015
Russia suspended trade pact with Ukraine



JANUARY 2016
EU DCFTA with Ukraine came into force

27

€645.5 million

.....
EU pre-accession funds to Kosovo (2014-2020)

33

| | 2015 | 2014 | 2013 | 2012 | 2011 |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| EASTERN NEIGHBOURHOOD | B+ | B+ | B- | C+ | C+ |
| 26- Rule of law, democracy and human rights in the eastern neighbourhood | B+ | B+ | B- | C | C |
| 27- Relations with the Eastern neighbourhood on trade | A- | B+ | B | A- | B+ |
| 28- Visa liberalisation with the eastern neighbourhood | A- | A- | B- | B- | B- |
| 29- Relations with the eastern neighbourhood on energy | B+ | A- | C | C | B+ |
| 30- Support for Ukraine | B- | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| WESTERN BALKANS | C+ | C+ | B | B | B |
| 31- Overall progress of enlargement in the Western Balkans | B- | B- | A- | B+ | B |
| 32- Supporting the Western Balkans on handling refugee flows | C | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| 33- Kosovo | B | B- | A- | A- | B+ |
| 34- Bosnia and Herzegovina | C+ | C | C | C | C |
| 35- Macedonia | C+ | C- | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| TURKEY | C+ | C | C | C | C- |
| 36- Bilateral relations with Turkey | B | C+ | C+ | C- | D+ |
| 37- Rule of law, democracy and human rights in Turkey | D+ | C- | C- | C- | C- |
| 38- Relations with Turkey on regional issues | C+ | C+ | C+ | B- | C+ |
| 39- Turkey and the refugee crisis | B- | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |

The Ukraine crisis remained a top foreign policy priority for the European Union in the first half of 2015. However, the Union's focus shifted when it became overwhelmed by the eurozone crisis, the refugee crisis, the war in Syria, and the fight against Islamic State (ISIS). Still, Russia's military action in Ukraine and intimidation of other neighbours continued to pose a fundamental challenge to the core principles of the European security order throughout 2015.

Germany and France led diplomatic efforts to find a solution to the crisis in Ukraine, and the EU maintained a united position on sanctions against Russia. Most importantly, it remained firm on its commitment to the Eastern Partnership countries, despite Russian attempts to divide the EU on this issue.

The first Minsk peace agreement on the Ukraine conflict remained unimplemented when the year began, as fighting continued in the Donbas. France and Germany tried to find a way out of the conflict, brokering the

Minsk II agreement in February. But even as the ceasefire supposedly entered into force, Russia and its proxies engaged in further military offensives. Fighting only halted in September (when Russia initiated its Syria military campaign), resuming in late October. Russia maintained a military presence in the Donbas throughout the year. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) played an important role in monitoring the ceasefire, though its access was restricted by Russia's proxies.

Some progress was made on implementing the political provisions of the Minsk agreement in 2015. The Ukrainian parliament passed amendments to the constitution to decentralise political power in a first reading in late August. Local elections that the Russian proxies had threatened to hold in the areas under their control (in contravention of Ukrainian law and the Minsk agreement) were cancelled.

The EU remained firm and united on sanctions policy against Russia. In July, the EU linked the future removal of sanctions on Russian economic sectors to the full implementation of the Minsk II agreement, and, at the end of 2015, the EU extended sanctions for another six months. The EU's unity on sanctions remained the backbone of a coherent, forceful, and principled policy on Russia and its breach of fundamental principles of international order. The coming year is likely to see calls for further engagement with Russia.

In the context of increased Russian pressure on the eastern neighbourhood, the EU and its eastern partners held a summit in Riga in May. The EU chose a middle way between giving in to Russian demands and further encouraging the European aspirations of Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova. A new version of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was presented in November. Its main focus was stabilisation, given the refugee crisis and the war in Syria. Nothing new was offered to the eastern neighbours that aspire to become EU members.

LEADERS AND SLACKERS IN 2015

UKRAINE

Leaders: Denmark, France, Germany, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Sweden

Slackers: none

Several EU countries stood out in their support for Ukraine's efforts to implement its reform agenda and deal with Russian aggression in the Donbas and annexation of Crimea. Denmark, Germany, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden were especially helpful on reforms, providing political as well as financial support. Germany, Poland, and Sweden also demonstrated leadership in their response to Russian aggression in the Donbas, and Lithuania was particularly active in the Security Council. France's presence in the Normandy format talks helped keep the southern members of the EU on board. Slovakia provided reverse flows to Ukraine through its energy crisis.

WESTERN BALKANS

Leaders: Austria, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, the UK

Slackers: none

EU member states' engagement with the Western Balkans also differed in intensity. The leaders here supported the Western Balkan states in their development, pushed for a strategic approach towards the region, or were particularly active.

The EU continued to support Ukraine's reform efforts through development and technical aid. Trilateral talks between the EU, Ukraine, and Russia on Moscow's concerns about the EU–Ukraine Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA) were held throughout the year. The EU stayed firm on its position that the DCFTA is a bilateral issue between the EU and Ukraine. Implementation began on 1 January 2016, and Russia reacted with trade sanctions. The EU also helped Ukraine to broker the “winter package”, a gas deal with Russian firm Gazprom for supplies over the winter. Negotiations were easier than in 2014, but after the electricity supply to Crimea was cut in November, Russia retaliated by cutting off gas, coal, and nuclear fuel supplies to Ukraine.

The five other countries of the eastern neighbourhood (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, and Moldova) continued on their different trajectories, with setbacks for Georgia and Moldova, countries that aspire to become EU members. Georgia remained a committed partner, but a government clampdown on an opposition television station called progress into question. In Moldova, the pro-EU government fell after a \$1 billion corruption scandal implicating the ruling parties. Azerbaijan further tightened its grip on civil society and imprisoned several activists. In December, talks began on an EU–Armenia agreement to replace the Association Agreement (AA) and DCFTA that Armenia rejected in 2013. In Belarus, Alyaksandr Lukashenka won the presidential elections for the fifth time. He pardoned political prisoners and allowed an unprecedented level of dissent during the election campaign, causing the EU to lift most sanctions against the country. Belarus continued its balancing act between the EU and Russia, but demonstrated some concern about Russia's new military assertiveness and Moscow's demands for an airbase on its territory.

Wider Europe remains pivotal for Europe's energy policy and efforts to diversify supply routes. The EU launched its Energy Union Framework Strategy in February, aimed at maintaining energy security for its members. Russia has not, however, given up on its plans to bypass Eastern Europe and access the Central European gas market directly, as shown by the launch of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline. In November, the European Commission stated that the project would not receive EU funding, and, by the end of the year, still had not determined whether it complied with EU rules.

The refugee crisis pushed the Western Balkans to the forefront of European politics. Its countries, notably Serbia and Macedonia, came under serious

strain from the inflow of refugees, particularly when neighbouring EU member states closed their borders. Some boxes were ticked in the enlargement process, but reform remained limited and was held back by political crises in several countries. The Berlin process for the Western Balkans remained important and led to another meeting in Vienna in August.

The refugee crisis also affected relations with Turkey and prompted the EU to step up its engagement and take a more pragmatic approach towards Ankara in order to buy its cooperation. The EU agreed to “re-energise” the accession process with Turkey while softening its emphasis on human rights and the rule of law, even as the situation in the country deteriorated. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan’s Justice and Development Party (AKP) won a solid majority in the November elections. The Kurdish peace process broke down in the course of the year and fighting between government forces and the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) militant group resumed, intensifying towards year-end. Furthermore, Russia’s military intervention on the side of Bashar al-Assad in Syria, and the subsequent downing by Turkey of a Russian plane, meant that Russia–Turkey relations dramatically deteriorated.

The wider Europe region will pose a major challenge for EU foreign policy in 2016. The EU still has to find an effective way to deal with a Russia that is increasingly unpredictable, is intent on pulling neighbours into its orbit, and seems to have lowered its threshold for use of force. Russia’s intervention in Syria has only complicated Europe’s “Russia problem”. The situation in Ukraine remains fragile and progress depends on Moscow. As in 2015, wider Europe will continue to be the central testing ground for EU foreign policy. From armed conflict in the Donbas to economic reform in Kyiv, from Russian pressure on Eastern Partnership countries to stalling reform in the Western Balkans and a new dependence on Turkey, events in the region will test Europe’s cohesion, its commitment to its values, and its ability to multitask.

EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS AND WIDER EUROPE IN 2015

Policy towards the Balkans was a highlight for EU institutions in 2015, with the entry into force of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) with Bosnia and Herzegovina in June, the signing of an SAA with Kosovo in October, and the opening of the first two areas, or “chapters”, of EU accession talks with Serbia. The EU and Turkey also agreed in November to open talks on economic and monetary policy, another important development in accession negotiations. Montenegro opened six chapters in 2015.

The Commission’s department for trade (DG TRADE) facilitated trilateral negotiations with Ukraine and Russia on the implementation of the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA) with Ukraine. DCFTAs with Georgia and Moldova were implemented during 2015, and the DCFTA with Moldova was extended to Transnistria in December.

The Commission’s department for energy (DG ENER) launched the Energy Union Framework Strategy in February, which represented an important step towards a single European energy market. In the same month, several member states set up a high-level Central Eastern and South Eastern Gas Connectivity working group, which aims to speed up the integration of gas markets in that region. The Eastern Partnership Platform on Energy Security was held in June; and the Commission facilitated trilateral talks on gas between Russia and Ukraine.

In May, the fourth Eastern Partnership summit was held in Riga, and the EEAS and the Commission presented the reviewed Eastern Neighbourhood Policy in November. Negotiations for a new agreement between Armenia and the EU were launched the following month, led by Mogherini.

26 RULE OF LAW, DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE EASTERN NEIGHBOURHOOD

The EU sought to differentiate between eastern neighbourhood countries, while progress by these countries was uneven.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Unity | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 |
| Resources | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| Strategy | | | | 4 |
| Impact | 1 | 4 | 8 | 3 |
| Total/20 | 8 | 11 | 15 | 14 |

B+

2012 c 2013 b- 2014 b+

At the Eastern Partnership summit in Riga in May, the EU and partners reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening rule of law, human rights, and democracy in the region. At the same time, the summit also agreed on greater “differentiation”, meaning tailor-made policies for each partner. This was taken a step further in November when the Commission presented its reviewed ENP, which defined values as one interest among many, and focused on stabilising the neighbourhood.

In Ukraine, the EU supported President Petro Poroshenko’s government to deliver on reform in key areas such as policing, though there is still some way to go in dealing with corruption, judicial reform, and the oligarchy. The state of democracy and respect for human rights overall improved in Ukraine, with the exception of Crimea and the areas controlled by Russia’s proxies, where the situation remained bleak.

In Moldova, a corruption scandal involving the theft of \$1 billion from the country’s banks led to popular protests and the fall of the government. The episode raised fears

that the country might veer away from its pro-European path. The EU joined other international donors in freezing budget support for the country.

Azerbaijan clamped down on civil and political rights and imprisoned several human rights defenders, journalists, and political activists. Georgia regressed on media freedom and judicial independence when the government sought to take over the influential opposition-controlled television channel Rustavi 2.

Both Ukraine and Moldova held local elections, which broadly met OSCE standards. After Azerbaijan restricted the number of OSCE election observers for the parliamentary elections in November, the organisation refused to send an observation mission.

Belarus took an important step ahead of its presidential elections by releasing all of its political prisoners, but the OSCE still noted significant problems in the vote. The EU lifted most sanctions from Belarus, however, and, for the first time in six years, held a human rights dialogue with Minsk.

27 RELATIONS WITH THE EASTERN NEIGHBOURHOOD ON TRADE

Europe took important steps towards securing free trade with Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine, but Azerbaijan and Belarus had their sights set elsewhere.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Unity | 4 | 4 | 5 | 5 |
| Resources | 5 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Strategy | | | | 4 |
| Impact | 7 | 5 | 5 | 4 |
| Total/20 | 16 | 13 | 14 | 17 |

A-

2012 A- 2013 B 2014 B+

Trade remained central to relations with eastern partners. The Commission successfully balanced flexibility with the need to take a firm position on conditionality on countries such as Ukraine and Armenia. A key question for 2016 will be whether the EU decides to engage with the Russia-backed Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), as Moscow hopes.

Trilateral talks between the EU, Ukraine, and Russia continued throughout 2015. Moscow's efforts to insert itself into the agreement or to postpone implementation failed, and implementation of the DCFTA trade deal with Ukraine began on 1 January 2016. In response, Moscow imposed restrictions on trade with Ukraine.

Trade between the EU and Moldova increased substantially, thanks to the DCFTA that entered into force in mid-2014. The growth rate of exports to the EU dropped in 2015 from the 30 percent seen the previous year, due to the corruption scandal and resulting political fallout. In December, the DCFTA was extended to Transnistria. Georgia began implementing

its DCFTA in 2015, though trade volumes with the EU did not rise dramatically. It did, however, attract foreign direct investment from China and others who want access to the EU market.

In December, the EU opened negotiations with Armenia on a new framework agreement that will replace the AA and the DCFTA that Yerevan decided not to ratify following its decision to join the EEU, under pressure from Moscow. Azerbaijan remained uninterested in a DCFTA, as the Chinese "One Belt, One Road" (OBOR) initiative provided alternative trade partnerships without demands for domestic reform. Consequently, EU trade with Azerbaijan sharply decreased in 2015.

Despite anxiety about Russia's new military assertiveness, Belarus's trade is still oriented towards Russia, with EU trade decreasing in 2015 compared to the previous year. The sanctions and counter-sanctions on Russia have made Belarus an important centre for smuggling European products to the Russian market.

28 VISA LIBERALISATION WITH THE EASTERN NEIGHBOURHOOD

Ukraine and Georgia took major steps towards visa-free regimes, despite pressures on the EU from the refugee crisis.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Unity | 3 | 3 | 5 | 5 |
| Resources | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 |
| Strategy | | | | 4 |
| Impact | 5 | 6 | 7 | 3 |
| Total/20 | 11 | 12 | 16 | 16 |

A-

2012 B- 2013 B- 2014 A-

The Commission continued to drive visa liberalisation with the eastern neighbourhood, which remains one of the areas where the EU performs best in the region. This is no small achievement, given the tremendous pressure placed on the EU by the refugee crisis.

In December, the Commission released the final progress reports for Ukraine and Georgia on the implementation of their respective action plans for visa liberalisation. The reports highlighted significant headway made by both countries. The Commission said that it would present draft legislation in early 2016 to grant the countries visa liberalisation. This will require the support of member states, some of which are sceptical about moving forward on this. Visa-free travel regimes for Ukraine and Georgia are of considerable symbolic importance, given their aspiration for EU membership.

The visa-free regime for citizens of Moldova possessing a biometric passport operated effectively. As of April, after the

first 12 months of visa-free access to the EU, about half a million Moldovans had visited the EU.

The EU's visa facilitation and readmission agreements with Armenia and Azerbaijan allow for cheaper visas and a simpler application process. The EU is expected to start talks with Armenia in 2016 on visa liberalisation.

Negotiations with Belarus on a visa facilitation agreement, which is always connected to a readmission agreement, are expected to conclude soon. European visa-liberalisation policy remained on track in 2015, although its political impact remains debatable.

29 RELATIONS WITH THE EASTERN NEIGHBOURHOOD ON ENERGY

The EU's attempts to ensure energy security for its members suffered a setback from the Nord Stream 2 initiative.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| Unity | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 |
| Resources | 2 | 2 | 4 | 4 |
| Strategy | | | | 4 |
| Impact | 3 | 3 | 8 | 4 |
| Total/20 | 8 | 8 | 16 | 15 |

B+

2012 c 2013 c 2014 A-

In February, the EU launched its Energy Union Framework Strategy in an effort to boost Europe's energy security, primarily by diversifying sources and integrating the internal energy market. The strategy provides the basis for a loose arrangement rather than a fully-fledged union. The project has come under pressure from measures by Russia to split the EU.

New controversies arose in 2015 after the announcement of Nord Stream 2: a pipeline intended to connect Russia to Germany, circumventing Eastern Europe. In November 2015, the Commission stated that the project would not receive EU funding since it undermined the security of supplies. By the end of the year, the Commission was still considering whether the project complied with the "third energy package" on ownership and competition. The new pipeline would challenge Ukraine's position as a transit country and deprive it of leverage and transit fees.

The controversy surrounding Nord Stream 2 spilled over into sanctions policy in December as Italy demanded a political discussion on renewal of sanctions, rather

than a simple rollover. This was in part motivated by the argument that Germany had been hypocritical in pushing for sanctions while agreeing to Nord Stream 2.

The EU successfully facilitated trilateral talks with Ukraine and Russia on the "winter package" of conditions for gas deliveries over the winter, including price and volumes. These negotiations were less acrimonious than in 2014, in large part because Russia needed the income. Ukraine said that it did not need Russian gas, thanks to reverse flows that came mostly from Slovakia. When electricity pylons to Crimea were sabotaged in November, Russia cut off gas supplies to Ukraine.

The EU continued to support Ukraine's energy sector reforms, which involved ending gas-price subsidies and opening domestic enterprises (including Naftogaz, the state-owned gas-delivery company) to private and foreign investment. There was progress in extending the Eastern Europe Energy Efficiency and Environmental Partnership (E5P) to recent members Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia, and Georgia.

30 SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE

The EU gave substantial assistance to Ukrainian reform efforts, while Germany and France took the lead on peace talks.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| Unity | n/a | n/a | n/a | 4 |
| Resources | n/a | n/a | n/a | 3 |
| Strategy | | | | 3 |
| Impact | n/a | n/a | n/a | 2 |
| Total/20 | n/a | n/a | n/a | 12 |

B-

2012 n/a 2013 n/a 2014 n/a

In 2015, the EU continued the strong support it has given Ukraine since Russia’s annexation of Crimea and military intervention in the Donbas. The Union remained firm in its support for the country’s territorial integrity and demands that Russia return Crimea and pull out of eastern Ukraine. The EU sanctions policy remained in place, and in July the EU linked the lifting of sanctions on Russian economic sectors to the full implementation of the Minsk II agreement.

Germany and France – rather than the EU as such – continued to play the lead role in brokering the Minsk agreement, while EU institutions and other member states were largely excluded from the peace process. Military support for Ukraine, in terms of hardware, predominantly came from the United States, but some EU members such as the UK, Poland, and Lithuania were involved in training or advising the Ukrainian defence sector.

To assist with economic and political reform, the EU committed to a multi-year €12.8 billion support package for Ukraine. Different EU states provided advice on economic reform, restructuring the energy

sector, administrative and judicial reform, and decentralisation.

The EU provided “macro-financial” assistance to Ukraine, intended to stabilise its financial and monetary systems. The Commission has given about €2.21 billion in loans since the crisis began in 2014, while a few EU members (Sweden, Germany, Poland, and Denmark) have provided bilateral loans. The deal between Ukraine and private creditors in August provided much-needed relief for Ukraine and helped promote macro-financial stability. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) was also helpful in revising its regulations to allow Ukraine to default on the \$3 billion “Yanukovych bond” paid by Russia to the then-Ukrainian president. Moscow subsequently took Kyiv to court.

Much European assistance to Ukraine was bilateral, with Germany and Sweden having the largest programmes. Finland and Eastern European states helped Ukraine provide for the internally displaced people from the Donbas.

31 OVERALL PROGRESS OF ENLARGEMENT IN THE WESTERN BALKANS

Western Balkan countries took important steps towards EU membership, but reform was often hampered by domestic political gridlock.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Unity | 4 | 5 | 2 | 2 |
| Resources | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 |
| Strategy | | | | 3 |
| Impact | 6 | 7 | 6 | 2 |
| Total/20 | 14 | 16 | 11 | 11 |

B-

2012 B+ 2013 A- 2014 B-

While important enlargement milestones were achieved during 2015, the countries of the Western Balkans made limited progress in their efforts to reform and move closer to the EU. Political gridlock between government and opposition in several countries held back reform. For most of 2015, the EU was largely focused on dealing with crises elsewhere. The refugee crisis, however, served as a sharp reminder of the interplay between stability in these neighbouring countries and the EU.

Kosovo signed the SAA with the EU in October, meaning that all countries of the Western Balkans are now covered by an SAA. However, it suffered from political unrest, with the opposition protesting against agreements signed with Serbia. In Macedonia, a political dispute turned into a full-blown crisis after the opposition claimed the government had wiretapped 20,000 citizens, prompting the EU to step in to broker a deal. Macedonia saw deadly clashes between police and a Kosovo Albanian group. The SAA for Bosnia and Herzegovina entered into force in June, and the country's leadership

committed to the reform agenda, though the constitutional structure and a lack of political will continued to hamper progress.

Montenegro opened six new negotiating chapters in the accession process and was invited to become a NATO member in December. Russia termed this development an “openly confrontational step”. Serbia made some progress on its track towards EU membership, opening Chapters 34 and 35 (on relations with Kosovo). However, Belgrade avoided criticising or imposing sanctions on Russia, which could raise questions about whether it will be a disruptive force within the EU. Albania continued to implement the SAA one year after becoming an EU candidate country, but suffered from particular shortcomings on certain reform areas, such as public administration and judiciary, fighting corruption, and modernising the economy.

32 SUPPORTING THE WESTERN BALKANS ON HANDLING REFUGEE FLOWS

The refugee crisis placed the Western Balkans under great strain, and the EU failed to give sufficient support.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|------------|------------|------------|----------|
| Unity | n/a | n/a | n/a | 3 |
| Resources | n/a | n/a | n/a | 2 |
| Strategy | | | | 1 |
| Impact | n/a | n/a | n/a | 2 |
| Total/20 | n/a | n/a | n/a | 8 |

C

2012 n/a 2013 n/a 2014 n/a

The “Balkans route” running north through Macedonia and Serbia was the main transit route for refugees heading to the EU in 2015. The Balkans also continued to be a source of economic migrants to the EU. After Syria, Kosovo and Albania were the countries whose nationals applied for asylum in Germany in the largest numbers in 2015.

Macedonia and Serbia have come under serious strain as a result of the refugee crisis. To some extent these countries are victims of the EU’s handling of the situation, as Greece actively assisted the flow of refugees into Macedonia, and Croatia, Slovenia, and Hungary closed their borders or restricted entry to refugees heading north. The refugees transiting through Macedonia and Serbia strained already overstretched institutional capacities to breaking point. The domino effect of closed borders also caused bilateral tensions in the region.

The EU has focused its efforts in the Balkans on financial assistance and the establishment of “hotspot” reception centres in the region. In November, the

EU convened a mini-summit that included Balkan countries. This produced promises of greater coordination and information sharing but also financial and technical assistance. There was no effort to include the countries of the Western Balkans in institutional mechanisms to deal with the crises, such as the refugee relocation mechanism.

As winter closed in, the humanitarian situation in the region deteriorated further, with concerns about the fate of refugees and their impact on an already troubled social and political landscape. At the end of 2015, Serbia and Macedonia closed their borders to all migrants except those from Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria.

33 KOSOVO

The EU continued to provide substantial aid to Kosovo, but the lack of clarity on its status continued to harm stability.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Unity | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| Resources | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 |
| Strategy | | | | 2 |
| Impact | 8 | 9 | 6 | 4 |
| Total/20 | 16 | 17 | 12 | 13 |

B

2012 A- 2013 A- 2014 B-

EU-facilitated talks between Kosovo and Serbia resumed in February after a ten-month hiatus, due to delays forming a government in Prishtina. High Representative Federica Mogherini, like her predecessor, has engaged personally in mediation between the two sides. This resulted in several agreements in 2015 on, among other things, the judiciary, telecoms, and the establishment of the Association/Community of Serb majority municipalities.

The agreements sparked a political crisis in Kosovo, as the opposition considered that the agreements undermined Kosovo’s independence. There were violent protests and several instances of tear gas being used in the Assembly itself. In November, Kosovo’s constitutional court suspended the implementation of the agreement on municipalities pending a full examination of its legality.

The signing of the SAA in October was a significant step for Kosovo on its path to accession. The SAA is expected to enter into force in the first half of 2016, once the European Parliament gives its

consent. The Commission recommended in December that Kosovo receive visa liberalisation once it meets a further eight criteria and takes measures to stem the flow of economic migrants to the EU. This may also happen in early 2016.

In 2015, the EU continued to dedicate substantial resources to Kosovo in terms of financial aid, making it one of the top recipients of EU assistance in the world. The EU Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX) is also the largest civilian Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) mission, with a staff of 1,500.

Notwithstanding the resources dedicated to Kosovo, the EU still remains split on its status eight years after the declaration of independence. The lack of full clarity on this issue at an international level is detrimental to the country’s stability and development, as evidenced by the violent protests, and detracts energy from the real issues of reform in the region.

34 BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Bosnia continues to suffer from institutional paralysis, but the new reform initiative is showing some results.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Unity | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 |
| Resources | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Strategy | | | | 2 |
| Impact | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Total/20 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 9 |

C+

2012 c 2013 c 2014 c

Twenty years after the end of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the country continued to suffer from longstanding institutional paralysis. Nonetheless, there was some progress on the EU's new initiative, launched in 2014 under German and British leadership, which stresses socio-economic reforms over institutional and constitutional reforms.

Under the initiative, the Bosnian leadership committed itself to reforms, which opened the door for the SAA to enter into force in June 2015, despite Bosnia and Herzegovina not having implemented the constitutional amendments ordered under the European Court of Human Rights' Sejdić-Finci ruling. In July, Bosnia and Herzegovina adopted the reform agenda, focusing on judicial, public administration, and socio-economic reforms. The EU has set meaningful progress in implementing the reform agenda as a condition for considering Bosnia and Herzegovina's membership application, planned for 2016.

However, Bosnia's accession track may be endangered by the referendum plans

of the leadership of the Republika Srpska, the Serb part of the country. In July, the Republika Srpska National Assembly decided to hold a referendum on whether the state-level judiciary has jurisdiction over the entity. Several members of the Peace Implementation Council, including the EU and member states, made a statement saying that such a referendum would be a direct challenge to the legitimacy of the Dayton Agreement and the authority of the high representative. Russia refrained from adding its voice to the statement.

Tensions surfaced during 2015 in the context of the 20th anniversary of the Srebrenica massacre. In July, Serbian Prime Minister Aleksandar Vučić was attacked in Bosnia and Herzegovina when visiting the commemoration ceremony. The Bosnian leadership subsequently travelled to Belgrade and met with Vučić. Russia also vetoed a UN Security Council Resolution referring to the Srebrenica massacre as a genocide.

35 MACEDONIA

The EU intervened to broker a solution to a political crisis, while Macedonia came under pressure from the influx of refugees.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|------------|------------|----------|----------|
| Unity | n/a | n/a | 3 | 3 |
| Resources | n/a | n/a | 2 | 2 |
| Strategy | | | | 2 |
| Impact | n/a | n/a | 2 | 2 |
| Total/20 | n/a | n/a | 7 | 9 |

C+

2012 n/a 2013 n/a 2014 c-

A major political crisis erupted in Macedonia as demonstrators took to the streets in Skopje to protest against Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski's government, following a scandal over wiretapping of citizens. The EU – represented by Commissioner Johannes Hahn and several MEPs – intervened to broker a deal between the main political parties.

The agreement included a commitment from the Social Democratic Party to return to parliament, which it had boycotted since the 2014 elections. It also included provisions on power sharing, terms for an investigation into the wiretapping controversy, new elections in April 2016, and a list of priority reforms, with clear deliverables that the EU expected from the government. At the end of the year, it was unclear whether the agreement between government and opposition had the potential to defuse the country's political crisis.

Macedonia was shaken by a violent incident on its border with Kosovo in May. Clashes between Macedonian police

and a Kosovo Albanian armed group left eight police officers and 14 gunmen dead. Macedonian authorities charged 30 people with terrorism after the clashes. Leaders called for calm and emphasised that the clashes should not be seen as inter-ethnic.

In 2015, Macedonia became a focus of EU attention as the flow of refugees intensified. Initially, the authorities facilitated the movement of refugees entering the country from Greece on their way to northern Europe. But as borders started closing to the north, Macedonia imposed restrictions on those who could enter the country.

No progress was made in the year on the dispute over Macedonia's name, with Greece arguing that the name belongs to a Greek province. Greece continued to block the opening of EU accession negotiations with Macedonia and membership of NATO.

36 BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH TURKEY

The EU strengthened relations with Turkey, buying cooperation to stem the flow of refugees by “re-energising” the accession process.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| Unity | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| Resources | 2 | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| Strategy | | | | 3 |
| Impact | 2 | 3 | 4 | 2 |
| Total/20 | 7 | 9 | 10 | 13 |

B

2012 c- 2013 c+ 2014 c+

EU–Turkey relations underwent a substantial shift in 2015, primarily as a result of the refugee crisis and Turkey’s role as a host and transit country on the EU’s border. The Council and the European External Action Service (EEAS) had stepped up their engagement with Turkey even before the crisis, but the inflow of refugees at Europe’s borders added new and urgent momentum.

In October, a confident President Erdoğan paid a long-awaited visit to Brussels, and in the same month German Chancellor Angela Merkel travelled to Ankara to offer money, progress on the accession process, and visa liberalisation in exchange for help on the refugee crisis. This came just two weeks before the second round of elections in Turkey, in which the ruling AKP won a decisive victory.

At the EU–Turkey summit in November, leaders agreed to “re-energise” the accession process and hold summits twice a year, open Chapter 17 on economic and monetary policies, and move forward on visa liberalisation in 2016. Turkey is

expected to implement the readmission agreement by June 2016 – which covers the return of nationals of each country who are irregularly present in the other – and a visa-free regime could take effect by October 2016. The EU also agreed to give Turkey €3 billion in aid to deal with refugees.

Whether promises on accession can be delivered will depend to a large extent on whether there is a breakthrough in talks on the reunification of Cyprus in 2016. This would lead to Nicosia unblocking the opening of several chapters with Turkey. Since accession negotiations opened in 2005, 14 chapters have been opened and, of these, one has been provisionally closed.

In other areas of cooperation, the High Level Energy Dialogue and Strategic Energy Cooperation was launched in March 2015. There were also preparatory steps to upgrade the Customs Union, with formal negotiations to begin in 2016.

37 RULE OF LAW, DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN TURKEY

The EU muted its criticism of Turkey on democracy and human rights to win cooperation on the refugee crisis.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Unity | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 |
| Resources | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Strategy | | | | 1 |
| Impact | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Total/20 | 7 | 7 | 7 | 5 |

D+

2012 c- 2013 c- 2014 c-

The EU’s interest in Turkey’s democratic standards and human rights record appeared to wane as the transactional politics of dealing with the refugee crisis came to dominate EU–Turkey relations. This reduced interest coincided with a worsening of the situation in Turkey in terms of the rule of law, democracy, and human rights.

In January, an enquiry into a massive corruption case involving senior figures in government was suppressed. The government repeatedly placed bans on social media sites and clamped down on media freedom, with a number of high-profile journalists put on trial. Ankara adopted an “internal security law” that extends the power of security forces to suppress civil unrest.

The Commission’s progress report on Turkey highlighted diminishing freedoms of the press and assembly and of the independence of the judiciary. However, the declaration from the EU–Turkey summit in November made no mention of the Copenhagen criteria for accession

to the EU or of civil and political rights, despite calling for a “re-energised” accession process.

Besides the shift in relations due to the refugee crisis, the AKP’s decisive victory in the second round of the Turkish elections in November further emboldened Erdoğan’s government. Draconian security measures were taken against Kurdish activists ahead of the second round of elections, including the detention of many figures affiliated with the Kurdish Peoples’ Democratic Party (HDP). The government’s renewed military campaign against the PKK served to bolster the nationalist vote.

The EU urged Turkey’s new government to restart the Kurdish peace process, following the end of the ceasefire in July, and prioritise the restoration of judicial independence and basic rights. The EU also endorsed the expansion of university education in Kurdish and the launch of Kurdish broadcasts for children.

38 RELATIONS WITH TURKEY ON REGIONAL ISSUES

Turkey actively supported efforts to oust Assad while also fighting the Kurds, but its focus on ISIS was limited.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| Unity | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 |
| Resources | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Strategy | | | | 2 |
| Impact | 4 | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| Total/20 | 11 | 10 | 9 | 10 |

C+

2012 B- 2013 C+ 2014 C+

Turkey joined the international coalition against ISIS in 2015, although Turkey's targeting of the group was limited. Much of its military engagement has instead focused on fighting the Kurds. Turkey has been accused of profiting from trade in oil and weapons with ISIS, though Ankara has firmly rejected these allegations.

Intelligence cooperation between France, Germany, the UK, and Turkey intensified during 2015, and focused on potential ISIS recruits travelling into Syria and fighters travelling into Turkey and on to the EU. Cooperation became particularly important for the EU following the Paris terrorist attacks in November.

Turkey continued to support anti-Assad rebel groups in Syria and took part in the talks on Syria during the second half of 2015. Turkey's downing of a Russian fighter jet caused relations with Russia to deteriorate substantially, which further complicated efforts to find a solution to the Syria conflict. Russia took a range of counter-measures against Turkey, including sanctions. NATO came out in support of its ally but called for calm.

The peace process with the Kurds broke down in July as fighting resumed between government forces and the PKK, which remains on the EU's list of terrorist organisations. The PKK was largely motivated by the government's reluctance to pursue pro-Kurdish reforms, and by disagreements on the format of the peace talks. Ankara subsequently carried out military strikes against the Kurds in Iraq and south-east Turkey.

Thanks to positive domestic political developments on both sides of the Cyprus conflict, UN-brokered talks resumed in May. Substantial progress was made in the negotiations during the second half of 2015 and numerous observers expressed optimism that an agreement on reunification could become a reality in 2016. By the end of 2015, however, it was clear that numerous thorny issues remained. Turkey supported the resumption of talks and took some positive steps, such as completing a fresh-water pipeline to the island and expressing willingness to allow access for Greek Cypriots.

39 TURKEY AND THE REFUGEE CRISIS

The refugee crisis shifted the balance of power between the EU and Turkey, propelling the EU to seek a deal.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| Unity | n/a | n/a | n/a | 2 |
| Resources | n/a | n/a | n/a | 4 |
| Strategy | | | | 3 |
| Impact | n/a | n/a | n/a | 2 |
| Total/20 | n/a | n/a | n/a | 11 |

B-

2012 n/a 2013 n/a 2014 n/a

During 2015, the EU came to regard Turkey – the host of some 2.5 million Syrian refugees – as central to dealing with the refugee crisis. The crisis has shifted the balance of power between the EU and Turkey and made the relationship a much more transactional one. As a result, Ankara has been able to extract concessions from the EU in return for its cooperation on stemming the flow of refugees into the EU.

At the EU–Turkey summit in November, a joint action plan was adopted in which Turkey committed to taking steps to help stem the inflow of refugees to the EU. These included policing the border and coordinating with neighbours, as well as improving the lives of refugees in Turkey by, for example, giving them access to education and work permits. The previous ban on refugees working in Turkey had been a major “push” factor.

Less than 24 hours after the summit ended, Turkish coast guards arrested 1,300 migrants and several suspected smugglers in a major crackdown on the

Aegean coast – one of the main points of entry into Europe for refugees. But later in the year, EU member states called on Turkey to do more. By the end of 2015, between 2,000 and 3,000 people were still coming from Turkey to Greece on a daily basis.

The EU and Turkey also agreed at the summit to apply the readmission agreement, making it easier for the EU to repatriate Turkish nationals who have illegally entered the EU. The EU undertook to maintain a system of protection for Turkish Kurds seeking asylum, even if Turkey received safe country status.

The EU has remained ambivalent towards Turkey’s calls for the establishment of “safe zones” in northern Syria where refugees could be resettled. Russia’s deployment of S-400 missiles in Syria made it effectively impossible for Ankara to set up the zones.

Middle East and North Africa

Overall grade

C

Overall grade 2014

C

Overall grade 2013

B-



€100 million

EU aid package offered to Libyan unity government

43

€200 million

Financial assistance package from the EU to Tunisia in 2015

44

EGYPT AND QATAR

both purchased
24
French
Rafale jets

48

In February,
6 EU countries
closed their
YEMEN embassies

49

UK aid for the Syrian crisis since 2012:

£1.1 billion

It is the 2nd biggest bilateral donor worldwide, after the US

41

158

SAUDI ARABIAN
EXECUTIONS
IN 2015
– the highest number in almost 20 years

830

IRANIAN
EXECUTIONS
IN 2015
(by November)

40



5,000

EU citizens fighting with ISIS and other extremists (estimated)

1,800 from France
760 from the UK
760 from Germany
470 from Belgium

45

EGYPTIAN PRESIDENT
ABDEL FATTAH EL-SISI
VISITED 6 EU MEMBER
STATES IN 2015

42

EU MEPs voted
525–70
to issue guidelines on
labelling goods from
Israeli settlements

46

October
2013
|
December
2015
23
EU FOREIGN
MINISTERS
visited
IRAN

47

| | 2015 | 2014 | 2013 | 2012 | 2011 |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| REGIONAL ISSUES | D+ | C- | C+ | C | B- |
| 40- Rule of law, human rights, and democracy in the MENA region | C- | C | C+ | C | C+ |
| 41- Regional security in the MENA region | D+ | D+ | C | n/a | n/a |
| NORTH AFRICA | C+ | C | C+ | B- | B- |
| 42- Egypt | C- | C | C+ | B- | C+ |
| 43- Libya | C+ | C- | B- | B- | B+ |
| 44- The Maghreb | B- | B- | n/a | C- | C+ |
| LEVANT | C | C | C+ | C | C |
| 45- Syria and Iraq | C- | C- | D+ | C | C |
| 46- Israel and Palestine | C+ | B- | B+ | C+ | C- |
| GULF | B- | B- | B+ | B- | C+ |
| 47- Iran | A | A- | A | B- | B- |
| 48- Relations with Gulf Cooperation Council states | C+ | B- | B- | n/a | n/a |
| 49- Yemen | C- | C- | B- | B- | n/a |

The Middle East and North Africa was the venue for a great European success in 2015, in the Iran nuclear deal, but also significant failure, as state breakdown and extremism worsened.

The military-led response to the threat posed by Islamic State (ISIS) points to a renewed European focus on the so-called war on terror at the expense of the difficult political steps necessary to address core structural problems underlying the crisis, including with respect to Europe's allies in the region. This was particularly clear in Europe's response to the Syrian conflict, which is profoundly affecting the continent in terms of refugee flows and terror attacks, but which continue to lack a united and coherent response from the EU and member states.

On the positive side, European governments played an important role in finalising July's nuclear deal with Iran, in a process headed by EU High Representative Federica Mogherini. The settlement came after a decade of Europe pushing a dual diplomatic and sanctions strategy, with the risk of collapse and a descent into conflict permanently hanging over the talks. Europe played a constructive role helping Washington and Tehran get the final deal past domestic hurdles. European governments, and the EU especially, have been keen to use the deal as a gateway to broader conversations on MENA regional issues.

LEADERS AND SLACKERS ON MENA IN 2015

DE-ESCALATION OF CONFLICTS IN THE REGION

Leaders: Germany, Italy

Slackers: none

The situation in the Middle East in 2015 was complicated significantly by the involvement of regional actors playing out their rivalries. There were few EU efforts in the year to defuse these rivalries as a contribution to managing the conflicts in MENA, though Italy's activities in Libya were noteworthy, as were German attempts to strengthen Europe's role in promoting diplomatic solutions in Syria and Yemen.

HUMANITARIAN AID IN RESPONSE TO THE REFUGEE CRISIS

Leaders: Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, United Kingdom

Slackers: Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain

The European Council has repeatedly called on Europe to prioritise humanitarian aid to countries in the region that are hosting refugees. The leaders gave significant bilateral support (and contributions to EU packages) as a proportion of their GDP to countries on the frontline in the refugee crisis, including Turkey, Jordan, and Lebanon. The slackers, meanwhile, did not provide sufficient support to these refugee host countries compared to their means.

Elsewhere, and also of positive note, the EU stepped up support to Tunisia, the lone standard bearer of the Arab uprisings, which faces growing domestic challenges and has played an important role in the Libyan peace process. Europe also maintained significant – albeit insufficient – financial support to Syria's neighbours in an attempt to help them manage the burden of the refugee crisis.

But these positive developments were increasingly sidelined by the spectre of regional implosion and the rise of extremist forces. Following the November Paris attacks, European member states fell back on an intensified securitised

focus on ISIS, even though this is failing to deliver significant gains. Despite European involvement in the anti-ISIS military campaign in both Iraq and Syria, the group remains entrenched on the ground, has expanded its physical presence across the region, notably into Libya, and launched a series of devastating attacks in the wider MENA region and Europe.

Even as European governments welcomed the nuclear deal as positive for the wider Middle East, it had the effect of intensifying regional tensions, with Saudi Arabia in particular viewing it as part of a Western pivot away from the Gulf and as a means of empowering Tehran. In response, Riyadh doubled down in Syria against the Iran-backed Assad government, as well as initiating a new intervention in Yemen aimed at dislodging the Iran-backed Houthi movement. This has been accompanied by deepening violence in Libya and authoritarian entrenchment in Egypt. Across the region, order is threatened by the spread of ungoverned spaces where extremism thrives, as well as the rise of non-state actors, whether Kurds, or Sunni or Shia militias, with clear implications for European interests.

The threat that the region's conflicts could spill over into Europe – brought painfully home by the Paris attacks, and by hugely increased migration flows – is now the key driver of European thinking. However, as Europe has turned its focus to the security sphere – with Paris and London adopting an “ISIS-first” strategy – it has failed to devote equal attention to the political dynamics behind the group's rise. In particular, there is a need to address the Syrian and Iraqi civil wars, including by taking a tougher stance towards regional allies. While many member states acknowledge the need for those involved in the conflict – both directly and indirectly – to moderate their ambitions and prioritise taming underlying conflicts, they have been unwilling to push their regional partners in this direction.

France and the UK in particular have been constrained by a desire to keep Gulf allies on board. More than other member states, France's relations with the Gulf deepened in 2015, reflected in lucrative arms contracts and in President François Hollande's invitation to attend a Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) leaders' summit. The result has been ongoing French and British support for more maximalist Gulf positions on Syria, to the detriment of necessary pragmatism, as well as material backing for the Saudi-led war in Yemen – despite the humanitarian cost, the creation of new space for extremists, and the desire of some European states and the EU high representative to forge a path towards mediation.

This unwillingness to use European influence to de-escalate conflicts – by challenging regional allies to dial down their aims, and questioning their problematic methods of pursuing them – extends across the region. It includes Libya, which represents an increasingly pressing threat to regional security as civil war gives ISIS room to expand and gives people smugglers a pathway to Europe. Despite the EU's commitment to UN peace efforts, member states have been unwilling to call out Egypt and the Gulf states for their negative roles. In Egypt, Europe offered increased legitimacy to President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi through significant economic deals, in France and Germany's case, rather than challenging him on a deepening authoritarianism that is fuelling a dangerous insurgency. Member states made little effort to voice concerns during Sisi's visits to European capitals, including London.

The EU has not shown any greater commitment to progress on Israel/Palestine, where developments continue to trend against the prospect of a two-state outcome. The EU issued guidelines for labelling products made in Israeli settlements, but failed to launch any serious pushback to Israel's vitriolic response. Europe has long sought a seat at the top table on the peace process, but, though the US offered greater space for European initiatives in 2015, the EU failed to step up.

Towards year-end, in the face of widening regional deterioration and the growing ISIS threat, European member states started moving towards greater pragmatism on Syria, as Germany and the EU high representative prioritised the need to de-escalate the crisis over the immediate ambition of removing President Bashar al-Assad. Europe took part in renewed diplomatic activity, specifically the US–Russian-led Vienna talks. The talks brought together all regional actors for the first time, including Tehran, and offer one of the few paths towards progress in addressing the conflict. But, despite occupying a quarter of the seats in Vienna, Europe failed to deploy its influence to wield any real leverage, and remains excluded from the high table.

If Europe is to help defuse the series of MENA crises that threaten its interests in 2016, it will need to take a lesson from its own playbook. Diplomatic deal-making with Iran on the nuclear issue, based on a strong European consensus, a sense of strategic purpose, and – critically – the pragmatic pursuit of feasible goals, shows what hard-nosed politicking can achieve. Europe will need to extend this approach to the Syria talks and beyond, including Libya and Iraq, if it is to assume an effective role in delivering regional de-escalation and consolidating a united front against ISIS.

EU INSTITUTIONS AND THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA IN 2015

The region's major diplomatic success of 2015 was the finalisation of the Iran nuclear deal in July, in talks chaired by the high representative. The EEAS also had an ongoing role in supporting mediation efforts in Libya and Yemen, but remained on the sidelines of the Syria conflict – though Mogherini was a participant in the Vienna talks.

On Syria, the EU's main focus was providing financial support for the humanitarian crisis. In December, the EU Regional Trust Fund for the Syrian crisis announced the launch of the biggest ever single EU response package, worth €350 million, to support the country's refugees in Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Turkey. EU funding mechanisms active in Syria and surrounding countries included the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights, the Instrument Contributing to Stability and Peace, the Instrument for Pre-Accession, and the Development Cooperation Instrument.

The Commission's humanitarian aid department, DG ECHO, is also currently active in Algeria/Western Sahara, Iraq, Palestine, and Yemen. In North Africa, the EU dispersed €180 million in bilateral assistance to Morocco and €200 million to Tunisia, and pledged €100 million to Libya.

In November, the Commission published a review of the European Neighbourhood Policy, setting out the EU's approach to countries to its south and east. The review signalled a more hard-headed approach to the MENA region, prioritising security and stability. It recognised that "more for more" policies, which offered closer collaboration to countries that carried out political and institutional reform, had failed to incentivise reforms beyond the aspirations already held by the region's governments, and called for a greater focus on the EU's interests and on local ownership. There was an increased focus on migration, but the message on what states such as Tunisia – at a crucial crossroads in its reform agenda – could expect, was unclear.

Also in November, the EU published guidelines on the labelling of products from Israeli settlements, but did little to push back against Israeli efforts to discredit Europe's non-recognition of settlements and to divide member states over the issue.

40 RULE OF LAW, HUMAN RIGHTS, AND DEMOCRACY IN THE MENA REGION

Human rights and democracy slipped down the agenda as Europe confronted a deepening security crisis.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Unity | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| Resources | 2 | 3 | 3 | 1 |
| Strategy | | | | 1 |
| Impact | 4 | 3 | 3 | 1 |
| Total/20 | 8 | 9 | 8 | 6 |

C-

2012 c 2013 c+ 2014 c

As security concerns dominated the EU's approach to MENA, democracy and human rights were largely discarded as a policy consideration. The EU stepped up support to Tunisia, the lone survivor of democratic transitions in the region, though not to the degree warranted by the country's importance. By contrast, the EU appeared somewhat more focused on seeking a diplomatic solution to Syria's destructive conflict. In Yemen, too, the EU took steps to end a conflict that has claimed many civilian lives, but the UK and France's support to the Saudi campaign, despite some cases of indiscriminate bombing of civilian areas, undercut these efforts.

Egypt continued to stand as a major indictment of EU claims that democracy and human rights are central to its Southern Neighbourhood policies. The regime held many thousands of people under laws criminalising political speech or protest, or after unfair trials. EU pressure may have contributed to the release of some journalists and activists,

but the public message was one of largely uncritical engagement, with President Sisi receiving the endorsement of German and British hospitality. Morocco continued to be treated as a favoured partner of the EU, despite intensifying its crackdown on independent journalists and human rights organisations in 2015.

Some EU member states protested against human rights abuses by Saudi Arabia. Sweden's foreign minister caused a temporary diplomatic rupture by criticising a flogging sentence imposed on a pro-democracy activist and halting arms sales, while the UK withdrew from a contract to train Saudi prison guards. The nuclear deal with Iran opened the way for more intense EU engagement with the country; there have been discreet conversations about human rights and the death penalty, but for the most part issues of regional security and economic ties took priority in European ministries.

41 REGIONAL SECURITY IN THE MENA REGION

As the MENA region descended into chaos, Europe lacked a coherent strategy beyond reaching for the chequebook.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|------------|----------|----------|----------|
| Unity | n/a | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Resources | n/a | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Strategy | | | | 0 |
| Impact | n/a | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| Total/20 | n/a | 8 | 5 | 4 |

D+

2012 n/a 2013 c 2014 D+

Regional chaos and the resulting refugee flows precipitated an existential crisis for the EU in 2015. The Council recognised that Europe should address the issue by working to stabilise countries of origin and transit. But, beyond throwing money at the problem, no coherent strategy has emerged. Member states prepared to engage diplomatically or militarily did so unilaterally, while the majority preferred to build fences in an attempt to prevent spillover.

The Commission and some member states (with the UK in the lead) contributed generously to the support of Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries. There is discussion of up to €3 billion being made available to Turkey for its cooperation in managing the flow of migrants to Europe, and a €1.8 billion trust fund for Africa – where many refugees originate – was promised at the Valletta summit in November. However, there was no consensus on diplomatic or military action on this issue. The EU’s Operation Sophia, a new anti-trafficking operation off Libya, looks toothless.

Five member states are bombing ISIS in Iraq; France extended strikes to Syria, as did the UK, while Germany is providing military support. A handful of others are providing military assistance to the Kurds or Iraqis. But the air campaign has helped open the door to Russian intervention, without noticeably “degrading” ISIS – which retaliated savagely against Russia and France.

To the south, where European action could be particularly effective, member states largely ignored the conflicts in the Sahel and beyond, with the honourable exception of France. Modestly useful work continued in Somalia; but three advisory Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions in the Central African Republic (CAR), Niger, and Mali were tokenistic. France has 3,000 troops in the Sahel; the Dutch and Swedes have contributed to the United Nations in Mali. Most other Europeans prefer to leave the job to the UN and the African Union, even as the UN is pleading for thousands more peacekeepers: European pledges at the September leaders’ summit in New York were dwarfed by China’s promise of 8,000.

42 EGYPT

While Egypt's crackdown continued and its economic prospects weakened, the EU increasingly accepted the regime as a security partner.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Unity | 4 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Resources | 3 | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Strategy | | | | 2 |
| Impact | 5 | 3 | 3 | 1 |
| Total/20 | 12 | 9 | 8 | 7 |

C-

2012 B- 2013 C+ 2014 C

There was little change in Egypt's political trajectory, but there was a shift in its relations with Europe, as diplomatic contacts with the regime increasingly returned to normal. While the EU remained notionally committed to Egypt's transition to democracy, the priority of its largest member states was to bolster security and economic ties with the country.

Egyptian President Sisi visited Germany, Hungary, and the UK, while French President François Hollande attended the opening of a new channel in the Suez Canal, and many EU member states attended a high-profile development conference in Egypt. This growing engagement did not reflect any moderation in Sisi's crackdown on political opponents and civil society. The government maintained its repressive stance, and the carefully timed amnesty for activists before Sisi's visit to the UN General Assembly was followed by further arrests.

EU policy on Egypt reflected the perceived value of the country's regime as a security partner at a time of spreading regional conflict and growing terrorist threats to

Europe. Yet Egypt under Sisi, while not in a full-blown crisis, is far from stable. The insurgency in Sinai continues unabated, led by a jihadist group that has declared its allegiance to ISIS, and terrorists showed they could strike in the tourist centre of Sharm el-Sheikh and in Cairo. Fringe elements of the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood movement appeared to drift further towards violence.

European businesses were involved in major deals in Egypt's energy sector and arms sales, while wider EU hopes of supporting economic renewal in the country appeared to weaken. Sisi's faith in a few spectacular "mega-projects" was an inadequate substitute for a more complete economic vision that would provide jobs and improve living conditions. Long-delayed parliamentary elections finally took place, but the low turnout of 28 percent reflected scepticism about prospects for meaningful change. Egypt shows little sign of positive progress, and European policy does not extend beyond a reactive acceptance of the status quo.

43 LIBYA

Europe helped prevent escalation of the conflict but did not pressure its regional allies, while peace remained elusive and ISIS expanded.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| Unity | 4 | 4 | 2 | 4 |
| Resources | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Strategy | | | | 3 |
| Impact | 5 | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| Total/20 | 11 | 11 | 7 | 10 |

C+

2012 B- 2013 B- 2014 C-

Europe aimed to help establish a national unity government in Libya in order to stabilise the country in the face of chaos, government collapse, and ISIS expansion. The EU and relevant member states sought a single partner with whom to carry out anti-smuggling operations, as the refugee crisis became a major impetus for Europeans urging Libya’s factions to share power.

Europeans supported UN-led negotiations under Special Representative Bernardino León and his successor, Martin Kobler. No significant disunity emerged among member states, although Libya was rarely a top priority. Effective coordination began between relevant member states, the EU, and the US under the “P3+5” format, including formally upholding the arms embargo on Libya, despite flagrant violations by regional allies and their heavy pressures on Europe to support competing sides of the conflict. Together with the US, Europe had an important role in denying Libyan factions access to financial resources and preserving the independence of Libyan economic institutions. These measures created incentives for major factions to join the talks.

The European External Action Service (EEAS) took the lead in working with city councils, both on a separate “municipal track” of UN peace talks, and to deliver humanitarian aid. Some member states followed up in support of local governance initiatives, particularly the Netherlands and Italy. The UK mobilised support for the unity government and convened a conference on coordinating assistance programmes, although this was put on hold pending the formation of a unity government in Tripoli.

To shore up Western, regional, and Russian support for political dialogue, Italy convened an international conference in December. This created the necessary external pressure for an agreement under UN auspices, but has not yet led to the formation of a unity government. Meanwhile, ISIS expanded its control in central Libya, the UN deal has been challenged, and refugee flows have continued unabated. The stabilisation of the country proved elusive, and Europeans rarely put pressure on their regional allies to de-escalate the conflict.

44 THE MAGHREB

The Maghreb countries avoided outright crisis, but look precarious; the EU should find better ways to promote long-term stability.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|------------|------------|-----------|-----------|
| Unity | n/a | n/a | 4 | 4 |
| Resources | n/a | n/a | 2 | 3 |
| Strategy | | | | 3 |
| Impact | n/a | n/a | 5 | 2 |
| Total/20 | n/a | n/a | 11 | 12 |

B-

2012 C- 2013 n/a 2014 B-

European relations with the Maghreb are stronger than with the rest of the region: these countries remain free from widespread disorder and seek to deepen their engagement with the EU. Nevertheless, the countries are, in different ways, precarious; Europe's aim to reinforce their stability and encourage broad economic and political reform to make the state more responsive to popular concerns will require further work.

In February, Tunisia elected a coalition government that brought together secularist and Islamist parties. However, terrorist attacks in Tunis and Sousse undermined the fragile tourism industry, threatening to worsen the difficult economic picture. Unemployment and deprivation could encourage the drift of young Tunisians towards Islamist groups, and much of the state remains unreformed. The EU has stepped up its support for the country, and should increase this further in 2016.

Algeria is a puzzling partner for the EU. Driven by the force of economic necessity, due to falling energy prices, the country's elites seem increasingly to recognise the

need for reform. But the opaque political system has so far blocked change, and power struggles ahead of the anticipated exit of President Abdelaziz Bouteflika consumed much attention. Algeria is keen to engage with the EU on energy and counterterrorism, where it feels it can enhance its standing, but broader reform efforts seem to be off the table until the political leadership changes, and the country's problems are mounting. European – in particular French – cooperation on the Algeria-backed peace agreement in Mali represented a rare achievement.

The EU has an easier relationship with Morocco. King Mohammed VI's government is eager to work with Europe on security, economic development (including renewable energy), and some political questions. But the country's reform agenda is limited, and it recently cracked down on freedom of expression. Member states are not eager to press Moroccan authorities on human rights when terrorism and migration are priorities; while the country currently seems stable, the EU should beware of assuming that popular consent for its political order is guaranteed.

45 SYRIA AND IRAQ

Europe remained marginal, driven by an ISIS security perspective even as the situation demands a more realistic political approach.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Unity | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Resources | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Strategy | | | | 1 |
| Impact | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Total/20 | 8 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

C-

2012 c 2013 D+ 2014 c-

Five years into the Syrian conflict, and over a year after ISIS swept across north-west Iraq, Europe is facing a more direct threat from ISIS than ever, as well as the influx of hundreds of thousands of refugees. Europe's stated goals – the defeat of ISIS, a political transition away from Assad, and more representative government in Iraq – all remain elusive.

Until the refugee crisis hit in summer 2015, Europe's response was almost entirely conceived through an anti-ISIS lens. Belgium, Denmark, France, the Netherlands, and the UK have all taken part in air strikes in Iraq, while France and the UK are also now bombing in Syria (with Germany providing military support). While there have been symbolic victories in Kobane, Tikrit, and Ramadi, ISIS controls approximately 70 percent of what it held when the campaign began, highlighting the disconnect between military action and realities on the ground, notably the ongoing failure to address the core political drivers of the conflict and secure effective ground partners. Meanwhile, ISIS has strengthened its international presence,

most notably for Europe with the devastating November attacks in Paris.

The growing ISIS threat and the refugee crisis have pushed attention back to addressing the core problem, but Europe has little meaningful leverage and continues to play a secondary role. While it joined the Vienna Process in October, it was excluded from the core quartet driving the initiative. Towards year-end there was movement towards a more realistic European position, including on the Assad question and engagement with Iran. France and the UK are slowly hinting at more pragmatic stances, while Germany has played a relatively vocal role on this issue. But there remains a distinct lack of a coherent European strategy.

Europe also played a secondary role in Iraq, where political progress faltered. While Europe provided security sector support, and participated in air strikes, serious engagement with the weak Baghdad government was lacking and attention was increasingly concentrated on the Kurds.

46 ISRAEL AND PALESTINE

Europe wasted the opportunity to take a greater role in peace efforts, while Gaza again slipped off the agenda.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|----------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| Unity | 3 | 4 | 3 | 2 |
| Resources | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 |
| Strategy | | | | 2 |
| Impact | 3 | 6 | 4 | 2 |
| Total/20 | 9 | 14 | 11 | 9 |

C+

2012 C+ 2013 B+ 2014 B-

Despite unprecedented White House support for a stepped-up EU role, 2015 was a missed opportunity for Europe to fill the diplomatic vacuum left by the US's reassessment and decision to step back from its own peacemaking efforts.

There were signs of limited activism by individual member states, focused on ways to manage the fallout from failed negotiations and the 2014 Gaza war. The Quintet – UK, France, Germany, Italy, and Spain – met regularly with the US, but with little clear purpose.

Europeans remained fixated on strategies for reviving negotiations, including appointing a new EU special representative and proposing a UN Security Council resolution. They sought to encourage greater Arab participation through an expanded international quartet (the UN, US, EU, and Russia) or an international support group. But little has been done to rigorously assess why such efforts have previously proven unsuccessful, or identify areas where Europe's policy tools could be more effectively deployed. A lack of broader strategic vision was compounded by divisions within Europe and the failure

of the EU high representative to forge a coherent approach.

The EU's biggest failure was on Gaza, which again slipped off the agenda. The EU and member states contributed €400 million of the €542 million pledged in donor support for the Strip, but did little to develop an effective reconstruction mechanism, or loosen Israeli restrictions on movement and access. Confronting a paralysed Palestinian leadership and President Mahmoud Abbas's unwillingness to make progress on Gaza or reconciliation with Hamas, the EU has been hampered by adherence to its no-contact policy with Hamas, despite diplomats in Brussels and member states recognising this as flawed.

The Commission finally issued guidelines on labelling Israeli settlement products, despite opposition from Israel. The EU and large member states, however, have not done enough to push back against Israeli efforts to discredit Europe's non-recognition of settlements, divide member states, and slander the EU with unfounded accusations of anti-Semitism.

47 IRAN

The nuclear deal with Iran was a major success for Europe, opening the path to engage in diplomacy on other regional issues.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Unity | 5 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Resources | 4 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Strategy | | | | 5 |
| Impact | 3 | 9 | 7 | 4 |
| Total/20 | 12 | 18 | 16 | 18 |

A

2012 B- 2013 A 2014 A-

Europe fulfilled its primary objective on Iran by reaching a nuclear deal as part of a multilateral platform. While the US led the final efforts, Germany, France, and the UK (the EU3) were broadly unified throughout negotiations, with some last-minute exceptions aimed at securing post-deal leverage. The EU high representative will be acting coordinator for the Joint Commission established to oversee the deal's implementation.

Europeans unanimously backed the deal, adopting a Council resolution. The EU3 in particular openly encouraged domestic forces inside Tehran and Washington to endorse the deal, and cooperated with the US to present a common position to sceptical regional allies.

A secondary objective for Europe was to engage with Iran on a broader scale, especially on regional issues and trade. While Iran's human rights record remained a concern for Europe, there was no meaningful engagement on this. After July's deal, EU3 foreign ministers and the EU high representative made separate visits to Tehran focused on regional conflicts, and underscored the importance

of Iran taking part in negotiations on Syria. Most EU member states have also sent their foreign ministers to Tehran to expand bilateral relations. The EU's recently formed Iran Task Force has been charged with outlining a pan-European strategy towards the country, including engagement on human rights.

Close to 200 European trade delegations have reportedly visited Iran since the 2013 interim deal. The Commission will ensure that trade is compliant with the easing of sanctions, and together with the EU3 has pressed the US Treasury for clarification on how US secondary sanctions will continue to impact European companies.

President Hassan Rouhani cancelled planned trips to Italy and France after the November Paris attacks. These would have been the first visit to Europe by an Iranian president in over a decade, and have been rescheduled for early 2016. Going forward, Europe's key objectives on Iran will be to ensure the successful implementation of the nuclear deal, deepen engagement on regional security, and use Iran's energy resources to diversify Europe's supply.

48 RELATIONS WITH GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL STATES

European policy was marked by a focus on commercial gain and an unwillingness to hold frank conversations on regional issues.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|------------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| Unity | n/a | 3 | 3 | 2 |
| Resources | n/a | 3 | 3 | 2 |
| Strategy | | | | 2 |
| Impact | n/a | 5 | 5 | 3 |
| Total/20 | n/a | 11 | 11 | 9 |

C+

2012 n/a 2013 B- 2014 B-

European policy towards the GCC is guided by the pursuit of commercial gain and the need to deepen strategic partnerships in the context of growing Gulf assertiveness in the region, particularly on the part of Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Qatar, as well as the fight against ISIS. In 2015, Europe’s aims were pursued almost exclusively at a bilateral level, with France and the UK – the key European interlocutors – often unwilling to allow the EU greater space in the Gulf.

France saw the strongest development of its relationship with GCC states, as President Hollande become the first Western leader to attend a GCC leaders’ summit, and Paris secured over \$15 billion worth of Gulf-linked arms contracts. While the UK fell behind on contracts, it continued to deepen its own Gulf ties, including through the establishment of a naval base in Bahrain, funded by the Bahraini government, and an intelligence-sharing agreement with Qatar.

France’s partnership is largely the result of its strong support for Gulf positions in the region (as well as the Gulf’s wish

to demonstrate discontent with the perceived lack of US backing). Like London, Paris has been unwilling to hold more frank exchanges where interests diverge – in terms of the Gulf’s aims and local allies in trouble spots such as Yemen, Libya, and Syria – for fear of jeopardising economic and strategic relations, a card which was strongly played by Saudi Arabia and the UAE in particular. This unwillingness to question the Gulf states’ policies was reinforced by the need to reassure the Gulf that the Iran nuclear deal does not presage a broader shift towards Tehran. UK and French support for the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen was driven by these motives.

This support has often come at the expense of wider European unity, as some member states’ desire for diplomatic outreach on Yemen was blocked by Paris and London. Europe’s leverage is weak, as shown by the Gulf’s assertive pursuit of its regional interests, and this positioning has hampered Europe’s ability to address crises unfolding on its borders.

49 YEMEN

Europe failed to form a united position on Yemen, as civil war erupted and regional powers backed rival sides.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|
| Unity | 4 | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| Resources | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| Strategy | | | | 2 |
| Impact | 5 | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| Total/20 | 12 | 11 | 7 | 7 |

C-

2012 n/a 2013 B- 2014 C-

In 2015, Yemen's celebrated and internationally backed post-Arab Spring transition collapsed into civil war, creating yet another crisis in the region. While a number of European diplomats have shown some leadership, on the whole the EU and member states failed to act decisively to pressure both sides to bring the conflict towards a political solution. Efforts to return Yemen to a political track – the stated aim of the EU and all member states – collapsed, while the war has accelerated the collapse of the economy and exacerbated the longstanding security vacuum.

This owed in part to a shortfall in resources – and in unity. With attention diverted to other regional issues, from the Iran deal to the rise of ISIS and the crisis in Syria, Yemen was often overshadowed. Member states at times gave conflicting messages on the conflict. Notably, the UK and France's strong support for the Saudi-led coalition has been at odds with statements by officials from the EU and other member states – particularly Germany and the Netherlands – that have pushed

for a stronger European diplomatic role in resolving the conflict. In that regard, both the UK and France largely mirrored the US in their reluctance to express disagreement with the actions of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states, in part due to a desire to reassure longstanding allies in the wake of the nuclear deal with Iran.

As one of the few key actors to be viewed positively by all sides, the EU has a great potential to serve as a broker in Yemen. But internal divisions and a lack of focus have diminished Europe's leverage, stifling efforts to support UN mediation efforts and broker talks.

United States

Overall grade

B

Overall grade 2014

B

Overall grade 2013

B-



MORE THAN 150,000 PEOPLE
IN BERLIN TOOK PART IN A PROTEST
AGAINST TTIP IN OCTOBER

54

1%

50

ESTIMATED DECREASE
IN RUSSIA'S GDP DUE TO
EU/US-LED SANCTIONS

£30 billion
UK exports to the US

55

(January–August 2015)

– it is the UK's biggest export partner

57 COUNTRIES
are founding members
of the China-led AIIB

59

Percentage of the
population that considers **IRAN**
AN ENEMY:

58

Germany 6%
UK 13%
US 38%

2014

71%

2015

49%

OBAMA'S
CONFIDENCE RATINGS
IN ISRAEL

56

Air strikes in Iraq and Syria under
Operation Inherent Resolve:

57

US: **7,551**

The rest of the coalition: **2,231**



5 NATO members

51

Estonia
Greece
Poland
UK
US

met the defence
spending target of 2%
of GDP

US DRONE STRIKES
(selected countries, 2004–2015)

52

421

PAKISTAN

108

YEMEN

18

SOMALIA

15 YEARS OLD

53

Age of the EU–US Safe Harbor data-security
agreement when it was **INVALIDATED** IN 2015

| | 2015 | 2014 | 2013 | 2012 | 2011 |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| COOPERATION ON EUROPEAN SECURITY ISSUES | B+ | B+ | B- | B- | B- |
| 50- Relations with the US on Russia and Ukraine | A- | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| 51- Relations with the US on NATO and Eastern Europe | B | B+ | C | C+ | C- |
| 52- Relations with the US on counter-terrorism | B+ | B+ | B+ | B- | B+ |
| 53- Relations with the US on intelligence cooperation and counter-terrorism | B+ | B+ | C- | n/a | B+ |
| TRADE LIBERALISATION AND OVERALL RELATIONSHIP | B+ | B | B- | B- | B- |
| 54- Relations with the US on trade and investment | B | B+ | A | B+ | B- |
| 55- Relations with the US on Brexit and Grexit | B+ | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| COOPERATION ON REGIONAL AND GLOBAL ISSUES | B- | B | B- | B | B |
| 56- Relations with the US on migration and refugees | C+ | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| 57- Relations with the US on the Middle East | C | B- | B- | B+ | B+ |
| 58- Relations with the US on Iran and weapons proliferation | A | A- | A | A- | A- |
| 59- Relations with the US on Asia | C+ | C+ | B- | B- | n/a |

In 2015, Europe experienced both the costs and the benefits of the United States' shifting global priorities. Most importantly, it paid a price for relying on the US to protect its interests in the Middle East. Europe has long looked to the US as a guarantor of stability in the region, but President Barack Obama has limited US engagement, largely because he does not believe that instability in Syria threatens US interests in a way that merits the costs of a greater intervention, or that such an intervention would be likely to succeed. This reduced role was not matched by increased European engagement in the region, particularly in Syria.

The result is that the EU had limited protection against the threat that the Syrian civil war poses to its vital interests. The most visible outcomes were the massive refugee flows in the autumn, and the Islamic State (ISIS)-coordinated terror attack in Paris. Europe now finds itself relying on the US at a time when many Americans are questioning whether stabilising the Middle East is possible or worth the cost. The inconvenient truth may well be that US interests are simply not at stake in the region to the degree that Europe's are.

The Syrian civil war and the resulting spillover look set to worsen in 2016. In the absence of any coordinated plan from the US to influence events there, the great challenge for European diplomacy over the next five years will be to influence the US to act in a way that also advances the EU's interests. So far, the US

has concentrated mostly on the Russia angle in its diplomacy on Syria and has marginalised Europe. Unfortunately, there is little sign that the EU has a clear sense of what US policy would advance its strategic interests, let alone how to persuade Washington to adopt it.

The EU and US are more in sync on Russia and Ukraine. Germany fashioned and led a consensus within the EU to maintain sanctions against Russia while pursuing a diplomatic solution, and the US not only accepted the European bid for leadership, but also welcomed and facilitated it. The US has been a firm backer of sanctions and helped boost the impact of the EU's sanctions regime. The US was an observer, not a participant, in the Normandy format negotiations that resulted in the Minsk II ceasefire agreement. Due in part to European insistence, the Obama administration rejected domestic pressure to provide military assistance to the Ukrainian government. Nevertheless, Europe does rely on the US to bolster NATO's collective defence clause – Article 5 – and to reassure the organisation's members in Eastern and Northern Europe. Fortunately, Washington's commitment to NATO has been solid.

On the negative side of the ledger, US positions have, at times, had harmful effects on European diplomacy. Some US diplomatic initiatives, such as Secretary of State John Kerry's May visit to Sochi, Russia, sent counterproductive signals to Moscow, which could have proved catastrophic for diplomatic efforts on the Ukraine crisis. By contrast, the hawkishness of the US domestic debate on Russia may have encouraged Europe to take a softer stance to prevent escalation.

With the 2016 election nearing, the next president will likely be someone who reasserts US leadership on the world stage. This could include acting more unilaterally on Russia and Ukraine, if the conflict flares up again.

Meanwhile, it was a year of negotiation on other fronts. The talks on Iran's nuclear programme came to a successful conclusion. The deal was unpopular in the US, but the Obama administration won enough support on Capitol Hill to prevent its failure, and the agreement stands as a major win for transatlantic cooperation. There will be differences about how to approach Iran in the years to come, with the US moving towards containment and EU member states and institutions seeking broader cooperation.

The negotiations on the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) – a planned free trade agreement between the EU and the US – are proving difficult and are unlikely to be concluded in 2016. The upcoming change in admin-

LEADERS AND SLACKERS US CHAPTER

TTIP

Leaders: Austria, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, the UK

Slackers: none

Because the ongoing negotiations on the TTIP trade deal are led by the European Commission, the value-added from national governments is largely from arguing the TTIP case at home, in order to keep the process on track. Austria, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and the UK worked especially hard to communicate the advantages of TTIP to a sceptical public.

AIIB

Leaders: none

Slackers: none

The EU's response to the creation of China's Asia Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) represented a critical moment in the transatlantic relationship in 2015. The US, fearful of the Chinese initiative to create the new institution, exercised some diplomatic pressure on EU states not to get involved. In the end, 14 states joined ahead of the AIIB's launch, and this was not coordinated at EU level. Since there was no EU discussion or position on joining, member states cannot be characterised as leaders or slackers on this issue. The UK announced its intention to sign up without consulting other EU states, in an attempt to extract first-mover advantage, which irritated many, including other EU states planning to join, international partners who were trying to shape the institution before joining, and the US.

istration is likely to lead to a shift in the US position, regardless of whether a Democrat or a Republican is elected. This, along with all of the pressures of the new president's first year, could see the negotiations drag on to 2017. Success by the end of 2016 would require accelerated progress in negotiations, beyond what we have seen to date.

The European Court of Justice's invalidation of the 2000 Safe Harbor agreement, which provided safeguards for the transfer of data between the EU and the US, led to increased uncertainty for businesses, and calls to renegotiate it in accordance with the court's demands.

In 2015, the US played an active role in encouraging the eurozone to keep Greece as a member and in pushing the United Kingdom to stay in the EU. This involved diplomatic interventions on the side of Italy and France during the Greece crisis and statements on Brexit, including ruling out a separate trade deal with the UK if it leaves. These interventions reflect a growing concern in the US that the coherence and integrity of the EU is at risk from populist forces, especially in Eastern and Central Europe.

Taking a step back, a dramatic shift in the agenda of EU–US relations has taken place in recent years. The US has complained for decades about Europe failing to share the burden of leadership, but now there is a different form of burden distribution. The US is relatively insulated from the costs of sanctions, refugees, and terrorism, while Europe is in the firing line. In the coming years, the question will be whether Europe can take on more responsibility for its own security, and, if it succeeds, whether the US is comfortable accepting this. If Europe does not or cannot do more, it will be up to the US to decide whether to deepen its engagement in Europe, and on what terms.

EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS AND THE US IN 2015

There is no EU–US cooperation framework agreement in place, which is rare in bilateral relations between the two. Instead, the agenda is driven by summits, where working groups and other initiatives are launched. This makes the cooperation architecture quite flexible and pragmatic. Because of the importance of the US as a partner for EU countries, almost every department or directorate general (DG) in the Commission has a division on transatlantic relations.

One of the priorities in 2015 was the ongoing negotiation on TTIP. Led by the Commission's trade department, DG TRADE, this process was given a boost by the successful conclusion of negotiations on the US's Pacific Rim trade deal, TTP. The talks remained on course, though progress was slower than initially hoped. Since the eventual deal will need to be signed off by all member states, and there are various special relationships on defence, the economy, and so on to be taken into account, member state input is very important. Another crucial aspect of member state cooperation is communication with populations about the dangers and benefits of TTIP since public scepticism is growing across Europe.

Apart from trade, security is one of the most important strands in EU–US cooperation. After the Snowden leaks, the EU–US “Umbrella Agreement” on data protection, led by the Commission's justice department, DG Justice, was a great milestone. The European External Action Service (EEAS) organised the fourth annual transatlantic symposium on the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy in April. In June, the initial US–EU Security and Development Dialogue was held – a quadrilateral exchange between the US foreign affairs and development assistance agencies, the EEAS, and the Commission's department for development and cooperation.

50 RELATIONS WITH THE US ON RUSSIA AND UKRAINE

The EU led the diplomatic effort on Ukraine, with the support of the US.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| Unity | n/a | n/a | n/a | 4 |
| Resources | n/a | n/a | n/a | 4 |
| Strategy | | | | 4 |
| Impact | n/a | n/a | n/a | 4 |
| Total/20 | n/a | n/a | n/a | 16 |

A-

2012 n/a 2013 n/a 2014 B+

The management of the Ukraine crisis has been a significant success for European relations with the US (whether it has actually produced an effective policy on Ukraine is a separate debate). Germany fashioned and led a consensus in the EU to maintain sanctions and pursue a diplomatic solution to the crisis. The US welcomed and facilitated the EU's bid for leadership, announcing its sanctions shortly after. This stands in stark contrast to previous European security crises, where the US took the lead and Europeans were compelled to follow suit.

The centrepiece of European diplomacy in 2015 was the Normandy format (talks between France, Germany, Russia, and Ukraine), which led to the Minsk II ceasefire agreement in February. The fact that the US remained an observer enabled European leadership in a way that might not have been possible had it joined as a formal member. The agreement was imperfect, but full compliance served as an important transatlantic metric to judge when sanctions could be lifted.

However, there were some bumps along the way. The election of the Syriza party in Greece in January raised the prospect of a pro-Russian government seeking to disrupt European unity on Ukraine, though this danger did not materialise in the end. The EU remained united and extended its sanctions in June, though by the end of the year Italy was seriously calling the prospect of renewal into question. Russia's intervention in Syria and the terror attacks in Paris raised the question of whether sanctions on Russia could be eased in exchange for its cooperation on the Middle East. The US firmly opposed any deals of this kind, as did many European governments.

In early 2015, the question of whether to provide lethal military assistance to the government of Ukraine became a topic of debate in the US. An expert report signed by former Obama administration officials recommended such a policy, but the administration opposed it, partly because of diplomatic pressure from Germany and the EU.

51 RELATIONS WITH THE US ON NATO AND EASTERN EUROPE

The US continues to play a critical role in NATO and in reassuring its eastern and northern members.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| Unity | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| Resources | 2 | 2 | 4 | 4 |
| Strategy | | | | 3 |
| Impact | 5 | 4 | 8 | 3 |
| Total/20 | 9 | 8 | 15 | 13 |

B

2012 c+ 2013 c 2014 B+

The one part of the Russia–Ukraine crisis where the EU was ill-equipped to take the lead was on bolstering deterrence in Eastern and Northern Europe. It is here that the US played a leading role.

In 2015, the US expanded Operation Atlantic Resolve (OAR), which is intended to reassure NATO’s eastern members by bolstering the US and NATO presence there, including training initiatives in Eastern Europe. However, the 2016 fiscal year budget request for the European Reassurance Initiative, which provides funding for OAR, dipped slightly. The US commitment to bolstering NATO’s mutual defence clause, Article 5, looks set to increase with debate underway about the permanent stationing of troops in Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia.

Montenegro was invited to join NATO in 2015, but expansion to Georgia is unlikely due to concerns about Russia’s reaction. There are signs that Sweden and Finland are reconsidering their position on NATO membership. In any event, the US and NATO continue to deepen their engagement with both Stockholm and Helsinki.

Washington is concerned about the ramifications of rising anti-European, populist forces in Central and Eastern Europe. The illiberal and quasi-authoritarian government of Hungary has long been a problem for the EU, but the recent election of the Law and Justice (PiS) party in Poland complicated matters further and increased US engagement to bolster democratic standards. Meanwhile, Eastern European states are nervous about Nord Stream 2, a Russian gas pipeline to Germany that could circumvent Eastern Europe, increasing their dependence on Russian oil firm Gazprom, while depriving Ukraine of approximately \$2 billion in transfer fees. The fears of dependence may be overblown, however, as Germany could quickly resell gas to the east if necessary. Nevertheless, the US has been receptive to Eastern European concerns and publicly expressed its doubts about the pipeline.

Defence spending was less of a point of tension in transatlantic relations in 2015 than in previous years, as European nations increased their own capabilities in the face of multiple threats.

52 RELATIONS WITH THE US ON COUNTER-TERRORISM

EU–US cooperation on terrorism increased in line with the heightened threat posed by ISIS.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Unity | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Resources | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Strategy | | | | 4 |
| Impact | 6 | 7 | 7 | 3 |
| Total/20 | 12 | 14 | 14 | 14 |

B+

2012 B- 2013 B+ 2014 B+

The threat of terrorism to Europe and the US rose dramatically in 2015 as ISIS departed from their focus on the “near enemy” in Syria and launched attacks further afield, including in Paris. The attacks put the anti-ISIS fight at the top of the domestic agenda on both sides of the Atlantic.

After the Paris attacks, France invoked Article 42.7 of the EU treaty (the solidarity clause) instead of Article 5 of NATO (the mutual defence clause). Many in the US had speculated that France might invoke Article 5, but the French government felt that enlisting NATO could complicate efforts to secure Russian cooperation in the war against ISIS. Moreover, there is already an anti-ISIS coalition that NATO has no formal part in. France and the UK cooperated with the US (and the other members of the UN Security Council) to pass a Chapter VII resolution (2249) against ISIS in the aftermath of the attacks on Ankara, Beirut, and Paris.

Following the Paris attacks, French President François Hollande called on the

international community to join military strikes against ISIS. While Obama did not substantially change his Syria strategy, the US has stepped up its role by pledging increased coordination with French efforts, the commitment of more special forces, and the opening of a southern front in Syria against ISIS’s stronghold of Raqqa. Obama’s rhetoric has continued to reflect reticence and restraint – he pledged “sustained support” abroad and greater prevention at home.

The EU and the US also deepened their dialogue on security cooperation, including revisiting sensitive topics such as passenger-name registries. The US adjusted its visa waiver programme to exclude Europeans who have visited Iraq or Syria in the past five years. Meanwhile, earlier in the year, the US relaxed its policies on responding to kidnapping to allow for dialogue – but not negotiations – with terrorists, and also opened the door for private payment of ransoms.

53 RELATIONS WITH THE US ON INTELLIGENCE COOPERATION AND COUNTER-TERRORISM

Invalidation of the EU-US data-sharing agreement resulted in urgent renegotiations, while outrage over US surveillance died down.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|------------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| Unity | n/a | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| Resources | n/a | 2 | 4 | 4 |
| Strategy | | | | 3 |
| Impact | n/a | 2 | 7 | 4 |
| Total/20 | n/a | 6 | 14 | 15 |

B+

2012 n/a 2013 C- 2014 B+

The most important development on intelligence cooperation in 2015 was the October decision by the European Court of Justice (ECJ) to invalidate the Safe Harbor agreement, a 15-year-old data transfer pact. Safe Harbor provided rules and safeguards by which European and US companies, including Google and Facebook, could transfer data – from payroll information to internet search histories – between servers in the two regions. Among the ECJ’s objections to Safe Harbor were the lack of channels for EU citizens to contest how their data was used, and the ability of US companies to self-certify their compliance with the regulations.

The EU and the US have been negotiating an updated agreement since the Edward Snowden revelations of 2013, but this became vastly more complicated and urgent following the ECJ’s decision, which set a January 2016 deadline to meet its requirements. Fundamental disagreements remain on the broader question of how to balance privacy and surveillance. The ECJ’s decision has

provided the EU with increased leverage in the negotiations: if they fail, there could be a more fragmented approach to transferring data to the US, with each European country setting their own rules for data transfer. It is also possible that other corporate data-transfer systems and arrangements could be struck down, using the ECJ’s decision as a precedent.

Meanwhile, the furore over the Snowden revelations abated somewhat in 2015. Part of the reason had to do with the increased threat from ISIS, which served as a reminder of the necessity of intelligence sharing. Another part had to do with a period of introspection, especially in Germany, about how European intelligence agencies function (often outside the standards Europeans insist on for the US) and the degree to which they are dependent on US intelligence collection. The US view is that the ISIS threat largely vindicates their position on mass surveillance. It remains to be seen how the change in political climate will affect the Safe Harbor negotiations.

54 RELATIONS WITH THE US ON TRADE AND INVESTMENT

Faster progress is needed in the TTIP trade talks if a deal is to be reached under the Obama administration.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Unity | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| Resources | 4 | 5 | 4 | 4 |
| Strategy | | | | 4 |
| Impact | 7 | 9 | 7 | 2 |
| Total/20 | 15 | 18 | 14 | 13 |

B

2012 B+ 2013 A 2014 B-

The negotiations on TTIP continued throughout 2015, though obstacles emerged. Based on the current rate of progress, it looks unlikely that an agreement will be reached by the end of 2016 despite both sides' stated intent to achieve this.

Regulatory standards and Investor-State Dispute Settlement (ISDS), a system to allow investors to seek compensation for decisions by foreign governments that violate their rights under a trade deal, remain key sticking points between US and European negotiators. In July, the European Parliament issued a resolution supporting TTIP but rejecting the inclusion of ISDS in the deal. In September, the Commission proposed a new "Investment Court System" to replace ISDS.

The view in the US is that the Volkswagen emissions scandal may make an agreement more likely by vindicating the US position that its regulations are superior to Europe's. However, many in Europe believe that the scandal further undermines trust in the ability of governments to regulate industry, and could increase opposition to TTIP.

However, there have been positive developments. The Trade Promotion Authority (TPA) legislation, which was widely considered a necessary precondition for TTIP, was approved by Congress in June. The debate on TPA largely centred on the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), but also applies to all trade agreements submitted to Congress over the next seven years, including TTIP. TPP negotiations were successfully concluded in autumn 2015. The reception was muted, with Democratic and Republican frontrunners criticising the agreement. Nonetheless, hopes are high that it will be ratified.

If an agreement is not reached by the time the next US administration takes office, the incoming president is likely to take a fresh look and make further demands, some of which may diverge from the Obama administration's position. A Republican administration would take a tougher line on regulation, while a Clinton administration may seek to enlarge the scope of the agreement. US Trade Representative Michael Froman acknowledged in December that a window of opportunity would close when Obama leaves office.

55 RELATIONS WITH THE US ON BREXIT AND GREXIT

The US is playing a small but important role in debates about the future of the eurozone and the EU.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| Unity | n/a | n/a | n/a | 2 |
| Resources | n/a | n/a | n/a | 5 |
| Strategy | | | | 3 |
| Impact | n/a | n/a | n/a | 4 |
| Total/20 | n/a | n/a | n/a | 14 |

B+

2012 n/a 2013 n/a 2014 n/a

It is difficult to discern a unified EU position on what it wants from the US on internal issues such as British membership of the EU and Greek membership of the eurozone. Certainly, the government of British Prime Minister David Cameron has made clear that it would prefer the Obama administration to stay out of its debate on EU membership, while German Chancellor Wolfgang Schäuble resisted US intervention during the Greek crisis.

Nevertheless, it is fair to say that the EU has an interest in remaining whole and that it would broadly welcome US policies that advance this objective. It is also true that the US has actively worked to keep the UK in the EU and Greece in the euro. Through these actions, the US has played a positive role in helping the EU to manage its internal crises.

The Obama administration sees its role in the Brexit debate as being to discredit any notion of an anglospheric or transatlantic relationship as a substitute for EU membership. In October 2015, the Office of the US Trade Representative ruled out

a bilateral trade deal with the UK if it left the EU. Obama has publicly discouraged Brexit, and senior White House officials have participated in “track 1.5 meetings” – involving both officials and civil society – in the UK, where they made their opposition to Brexit clear.

The US played the role of mediator in the Grexit crisis, sometimes to the chagrin of creditor nations such as Germany. During the crisis this summer, the US encouraged Greece and Europe to reach an agreement that would keep Greece in the eurozone through conversations with Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, as well as German Chancellor Angela Merkel and other European leaders including France’s Hollande, in an effort to rally support for a negotiated settlement.

US interventions in these internal EU debates have largely been consistent with the interests of the EU, and have therefore positively affected their course.

56 RELATIONS WITH THE US ON MIGRATION AND REFUGEES

Efforts to internationalise the refugee crisis have proven difficult as the US domestic politics on Syria become toxic.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|------------|------------|------------|----------|
| Unity | n/a | n/a | n/a | 2 |
| Resources | n/a | n/a | n/a | 3 |
| Strategy | | | | 2 |
| Impact | n/a | n/a | n/a | 2 |
| Total/20 | n/a | n/a | n/a | 9 |

C+

2012 n/a 2013 n/a 2014 n/a

The refugee crisis hit the EU hard in autumn 2015. As detailed elsewhere in this Scorecard, EU nations took dramatically different approaches to the refugee crisis, with Germany opening its gates while several Eastern, Central, and Southern European countries took a tougher line. However, the EU has sought to internationalise the problem and persuade other nations, including the US, to help – both individually and through the UN.

In response to the deteriorating situation in Syria, the US announced that it would increase the number of refugees it accepts from around the world to 85,000 in 2016 and 100,000 in 2017, although only 10,000 would be admitted immediately from Syria. This number could fall due to a lengthy and arduous application and vetting process, made all the more difficult by toxic domestic politics. This number will not alleviate the pressure on European countries. Even if the target is reached, it will still be dwarfed by the numbers arriving in Germany, and Europe in general. The primary challenge still lies in

tackling the source of the problem, where little progress has been made.

The aftermath of the Paris and San Bernardino, California, terror attacks had a negative effect on the US refugee debate as it swung firmly against taking in large numbers of refugees from Syria, although the administration has strongly defended its position. Refugee policy was traditionally an area of bipartisan agreement, and its politicisation will jeopardise funding and the necessary support required on Capitol Hill. For their part, US officials and experts are alarmed by the impact of the refugee crisis on European politics and are particularly concerned that it could result in the departure of Merkel as German leader.

57 RELATIONS WITH THE US ON THE MIDDLE EAST

Europe is paying a heavy price for outsourcing its Middle East strategy to the US.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| Unity | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 |
| Resources | 4 | 3 | 3 | 2 |
| Strategy | | | | 2 |
| Impact | 6 | 5 | 5 | 1 |
| Total/20 | 14 | 12 | 12 | 8 |

C

2012 B+ 2013 B- 2014 B-

EU policy towards Syria, including cooperation with the US on the conflict, has failed. For several years, the EU has effectively outsourced management of this crisis, which is vital to its own security, to another country with less of an interest in it. The result is that the situation has dramatically worsened and is now destabilising Europe in two ways – through refugee flows and attacks by ISIS. The Obama administration remains wary of becoming more engaged in the Syrian civil war, partly because it is less vulnerable to its effects.

In 2015, the US, France, and the UK all ramped up operations in the “Global Coalition to Counter ISIL”. However, there is virtually no prospect of Western nations sending in large numbers of ground forces, meaning that hopes are pinned on Sunni forces that may never materialise.

The US response to the Syrian conflict is a major issue in the presidential election. Most of the serious candidates are committed to doing more – no-fly zones, safe zones, special forces, and ramped-up air strikes – although all have stopped

short of committing large numbers of ground forces. European preferences on how the EU can contribute to crafting and implementing an effective strategy are absent from this discussion.

The Vienna Process peace talks have made little progress, but are the only real opening in over two years. Vienna is led by the US and Russia. The US sees Europe as divided and unhelpful, and has tried to marginalise its role. France and others worry that the US is caving in to the Russian position, giving a greater role to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, and that the Russians may impose an agreement.

Meanwhile, after the collapse of the US-led Israel/Palestine peace process in 2014, the EU missed the opportunity to assume a more active role, despite EU High Representative Federica Mogherini proposing an “international support group”. The US sees little reason to restart the talks until there is a greater prospect of success.

58 RELATIONS WITH THE US ON IRAN AND WEAPONS PROLIFERATION

The negotiation of the nuclear deal was a success, but divergence between the US and the EU is expected on implementation.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Unity | 4 | 4 | 5 | 5 |
| Resources | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Strategy | | | | 5 |
| Impact | 8 | 9 | 7 | 3 |
| Total/20 | 17 | 18 | 17 | 18 |

A

2012 A- 2013 A 2014 A-

Talks led by the E3+3 group (the US, France, the UK, China, Russia, and Germany) came to a resolution with a landmark deal – the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) – on the Iranian nuclear programme. This brings transatlantic efforts to reach a negotiated settlement with Iran to a successful conclusion.

The transatlantic alliance was the foundation for the diplomatic strategy. The EU and the US imposed tough sanctions beyond those mandated by the UN Security Council, and remained aligned throughout the negotiations despite attempts by Tehran to drive a wedge between them.

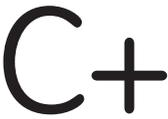
However, transatlantic unity is unlikely to be maintained, at least not to the same degree, in the implementation phase. The deal is unpopular in the US, and there are concerns in Europe that Congress could introduce sanctions against Iran over human rights abuses and regional aggression, which could have an impact on Europe.

All major Republican presidential candidates have promised to repudiate the

deal if elected, leading to fears in Europe that a re-introduction of sanctions on Iran could have effects on European trade and investment. However, in private circles, senior Republican foreign policy experts acknowledge that the structure of the deal is such that they would need to abide by it. Unilateral rejection would give Iran an excuse to breach the terms and would likely destroy the international consensus necessary to re-impose sanctions.

Presidential candidate Hillary Clinton endorsed the deal, but called it imperfect and promised to be tough on implementation and to seek to contain Iran’s regional ambitions. This points to a significant difference in how the EU and the US perceive relations with Iran going forward. The US leadership has stressed the importance of the deal for containing Iran’s nuclear potential, whereas European leadership has cast the deal as opening a “new chapter” in relations with Iran based on cooperation. The EU and member states have had more political space to reach out to Iran due to severe domestic constraints on Tehran and Washington.

59 RELATIONS WITH THE US ON ASIA

| | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--|
| EU members acted alone to build ties with China, much to the annoyance of the US. | | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |  2012 B- 2013 B- 2014 C+ |
| | Unity | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | |
| | Resources | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | |
| | Strategy | | | | 2 | |
| | Impact | 7 | 7 | 5 | 3 | |
| | Total/20 | 12 | 12 | 10 | 10 | |

In 2015, European and US views and interests in Asia diverged significantly. At the EU level, Europe sought to cooperate with the US on Asia, but member states' commercial incentives meant that China could play a game of divide and conquer.

The US opposed the creation of the China-led AIIB and lobbied European nations, and East Asian allies, not to join until China provided assurances about standards of governance. European nations did not have a unified position on the bank. After extensive bilateral contacts with China, the UK became the first European country to join and others swiftly followed. The British move was widely perceived as an attempt to curry favour with China. The Obama administration responded with an off-the-record comment by a senior official that accused Britain of “constant accommodation” of China.

In the months that followed, the Obama administration was roundly criticised at home and in Europe and Asia for opposing the AIIB on principle. In fact, the 14 EU states that joined did play a constructive

role in shaping the governance of the institution. Nevertheless, the dispute revealed a significant transatlantic divergence on approaches to China, with the US viewing China primarily through a strategic lens and EU countries seeing an opportunity to develop bilateral trade and investment ties with Beijing. The episode culminated in a state visit to the UK by President Xi Jinping, which was heralded by the British government as opening a golden era in UK–China relations, but was widely criticised in the US.

The transatlantic disagreement over China is not primarily about this divergence between the EU and the US, but about the decision of EU member states to go it alone. The allure of Chinese investment is such that this trend is likely to continue in 2016.

Asia and China

Overall grade

C+

Overall grade 2014 **B-**

Overall grade 2013 **B-**



65
EU OPTED TO DOUBLE
FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR
ASEAN INTEGRATION TO
€170 MILLION

INDIA

64
ORDERED
36 RAFALE
FIGHTER JETS
FROM
FRANCE

66 14 EU member states joined the AIIB

63
Progress on EU-Asia FTAs in 2015:

- Deal with Vietnam
- Negotiations with Japan
- Opened negotiations with the Philippines

61
700

INDIAN
GENERIC
DRUGS
BANNED
BY THE EU
IN 2015,
STALLING
EU-INDIA
FTA TALKS

68
1 EU field office opened
in Seoul to investigate

HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN NORTH KOREA



60
5 Asian countries
High
Representative
FEDERICA
MOGHERINI
visited in 2015

67
CHINA AND THE EU called on
developed countries to fulfill promise
to raise \$100 BILLION A YEAR
to mitigate CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACT
on developing countries

62
China became the 1st
non-EU country to pledge
a contribution to the
Investment Plan for Europe

| | 2015 | 2014 | 2013 | 2012 | 2011 |
|--|-----------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| EU STRATEGY TOWARDS THE ASIA REGION | B- | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| 60- EU institutions' approach towards Asia | B | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| 61- EU coordination with member states on Asia | C+ | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| TRADE AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS | C+ | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| 62- Trade and investment with China | C- | B | B+ | B- | B- |
| 63- Trade and investment with the rest of the region | B | B- | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| SECURITY | C+ | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| 64- Conventional security and relations with Asia | C | C+ | B- | B | n/a |
| 65- Comprehensive security and relations with Asia | B- | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| GLOBAL GOVERNANCE | C+ | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| 66- Relations with Asian partners in multilateral institutions | C+ | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| 67- Relations with Asian partners on energy and climate change | B+ | n/a | n/a | n/a | n/a |
| 68- Rule of law and human rights in Asia | C | C | C | C | D+ |

The EU's China policy was marked by an increased fragmentation and impoverishment in 2015, alongside a strategic push for engagement with the rest of Asia.

Competition between member states in relation to China intensified in the course of the year, in the context of insufficient EU leadership and a Europe-wide appetite for Chinese capital. Economic interests and the wish for Chinese investment came at the expense of other foreign policy items, and EU member states fought for Chinese attention and funds, showing little restraint in their public statements and bilateral initiatives. The decision by several European states to join the China-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) – a development bank set up to finance infrastructure projects in Asia – was a prime example of these trends. It exemplified both the return of intra-European competition for Chinese political favours and the lack of coordination – both between EU institutions and within the high-level EU leadership – in proposing a coherent response to China's initiative.

The issue of coordination will emerge again as China deploys its "One Belt, One Road" (OBOR) initiative to build infrastructure across Eurasia – the cornerstone of its approach to integration of the region. The EU and its member states therefore need to harmonise their response to China's initiative by proposing

a vehicle to bridge Europe's need for investment with China's willingness to invest if they want to avoid another situation in which member states act out of self-interest, lacking unity. The stakes are particularly high given the size of China's planned investments in Eurasia.

Member states' prioritisation of economic issues in their relationship with China means that other items of the EU's foreign policy towards Beijing had limited backing. For example, only a handful of member states demonstrated an active engagement with China in 2015 on human rights, despite a considerable worsening of the situation on the ground. In general, EU member states' disengagement on non-economic issues resulted in a de facto impoverishment of the EU's potential for action.

Fortunately, climate change and the environment has become such an important issue for Beijing that it is willing to engage in a dialogue with the EU. But progress was more difficult on other issues of sensitivity to China, where the EU lacks the coordinated support of member states. For example, members have paid limited attention to the deterioration of maritime security in Asia, limiting the scope and impact of EU efforts on this issue in 2015. In particular, the EU and its member states remained silent when a UN tribunal in The Hague accepted the Philippines' case regarding territorial disputes in the South China Sea. The EU's response to the ruling in 2016 will be a test of its commitment to an international rules-based order.

However, one positive evolution in EU–China relations should be underlined. China showed an increased willingness to cooperate with the EU on international security, as part of its broader shift to become more active in global governance. This was exemplified by Beijing's role in facilitating the nuclear deal with Iran, and by its increased involvement in peacekeeping missions across the world. The question of a Chinese role in the Middle East, amid multiplying attacks on Chinese citizens abroad, is increasingly important for Europeans affected by the refugee crisis and by the threat of terrorism.

EU policy towards the rest of Asia was less divided at the member state level than its China policy. Most member states backed the EU's initiatives in terms of trade and investment, welcoming free trade agreement (FTA) negotiations with Asian partners and increased economic ties. Thanks to these efforts, the EU and Vietnam signed a trade deal in December.

LEADERS AND SLACKERS ON ASIA AND CHINA IN 2015

ECONOMIC RELATIONS WITH ASIA

Leader: Germany

Slackers: The UK

Since Asia has some of the world's largest emerging markets, it is in the interest of EU member states to develop a common strategy on questions of trade, investment, and financial governance in the region. In 2015, governments struggled to find a common approach – they were deeply divided on China and displayed limited commitment and sometimes diverging interests on the rest of Asia. However, Germany stood out for actively supporting FTAs with Asian countries at the EU level. In contrast, Malta and the UK both openly prioritised their bilateral relations with China over a coordinated European approach.

HUMAN RIGHTS IN CHINA

Leaders: Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden

Slackers: Estonia, France, Lithuania, Poland, Spain, the UK

Respect for freedom of expression – particularly academic and journalistic freedom – worsened in China in 2015. However, this issue has not been a priority for EU member states. Commitment to the issue was so mediocre that the “leaders” were those who merely took a consistent human rights stance towards China, raised the issue at the bilateral level, or supported NGOs operating in the country. The seven slackers, meanwhile, chose financial benefits over values in their dealing with Beijing at important junctures in the year.

At the EU level, the new high representative displayed an interest in the continent, visiting five Asian countries in 2015. This was accompanied by a reassertion of the Union's strong turn towards ASEAN last year, including on maritime security. However, the EU's position on tensions in the South China Sea – which intensified with China's island building in 2015 – did not advance significantly. The EU raised the issue in international meetings, but remained committed to neutrality, calling for moderation, compliance with the rules-based international system, and the resolution of disputes through dialogue and peaceful means.

Efforts to build cooperation with China, South Korea, Japan, and ASEAN on traditional and non-traditional security fields continued throughout the year. There is no European coordination of arms sales to Asia, despite export control rules at the EU level, and these sales continued to be the main vector through which Europe affects the region's security.

Relations with India were perhaps the weakest point of the EU's foreign policy towards Asia in 2015. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Germany, France, and the UK in 2015, but a planned visit to Brussels in May did not take place because of a lack of response from the EU. Whether the European presidency's schedule was indeed too crowded to accommodate Modi, or whether Mogherini was reluctant due to India's continued detention of two Italian marines (accused of killing two Indian fishermen in 2012), an important chance was missed to strengthen economic – and potentially political – cooperation. This deadlock solidified following the Commission's ban on hundreds of the country's generic drugs in July, which caused trade talks to stall again.

Climate change was the one area where EU member states and institutions spoke with one voice and acted unanimously in 2015, deploying significant resources towards obtaining tangible results and an ambitious agreement at the December COP21 climate conference in Paris.

EU INSTITUTIONS AND ASIA AND CHINA IN 2015

High Representative Federica Mogherini travelled repeatedly to Asia in 2015. She visited South Korea and China in May and Malaysia in August, and attended the EU–Japan summit in May, together with European Council President Donald Tusk and European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker. Other major meetings attended by Mogherini included the Shangri-La Dialogue security conference and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum’s annual ministerial meeting, held in Malaysia in August.

In 2015, the EU named a special representative for Central Asia after more than a year of hiatus. An EU–Central Asia High Level Security Dialogue was held, with a view to updating the 2007 Strategy for Central Asia. The EU signed a Cooperation Agreement on Partnership and Development (CAPD) with Afghanistan – the first official framework governing EU cooperation with the country.

The Commission’s trade department (DG TRADE) continued to work on FTAs between the EU and Asian countries. Negotiations succeeded with Vietnam, and are ongoing with Thailand and Malaysia, as well as India and Japan. The Council agreed to launch negotiations with the Philippines.

In September, the EU held a bilateral summit with South Korea, and a High Level Economic and Trade Dialogue with China, where investment plans and the Asian Investment Infrastructure Bank (AIIB) were discussed. In June, an EU–China Summit took place in Brussels, celebrating the 40th anniversary of EU–China diplomatic relations, and was followed by a joint statement on climate change.

The EU leadership repeatedly raised human rights issues with China in public and private contexts. Special Representative for Human Rights Stavros Lambrinidis travelled to China in November, visiting Beijing, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, and Hong Kong. The European External Action Service (EEAS) was highly active on human rights issues with the rest of Asia, continuing its joint efforts with Japan at the UN on human rights in North Korea, and engaging with Pyongyang through the 14th session of their political dialogue in April. The EEAS held several rounds of human rights dialogues, with Vietnam in January and December, with ASEAN in October, and with China in November.

60 EU INSTITUTIONS' APPROACH TOWARDS ASIA

The EU actively re-engaged with Asia, despite a proliferation of internal and neighbourhood crises.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| Unity | n/a | n/a | n/a | 2 |
| Resources | n/a | n/a | n/a | 4 |
| Strategy | | | | 4 |
| Impact | n/a | n/a | n/a | 3 |
| Total/20 | n/a | n/a | n/a | 13 |

B

2012 n/a 2013 n/a 2014 n/a

New High Representative Federica Mogherini visited no fewer than five Asian countries in 2015, following a slow year in 2014 due to EU elections. She gave an indication of the direction she wished EU diplomacy on Asia to take under her lead, declaring repeatedly that the EU should be not only an economic partner but also a security partner to Asia. Whether this is a response to growing tensions in the region around territorial disputes, or to repeated calls from several Asian partners for greater EU engagement in the region, concrete commitments so far have been limited, and mostly focused on connectivity, dialogue, non-traditional threats, and the use of international law to resolve disputes.

The EU stepped up its engagement with ASEAN, after both sides had in 2014 stated their wish to move towards a “strategic partnership”. The EEAS and the Commission published a joint statement with proposals intended to enhance practical cooperation. It highlighted maritime security, and made an implicit call for EU accession to the East Asia Summit. The Council echoed this statement at its June meeting,

but maritime security only rated a passing mention at the meeting compared to non-proliferation and non-conventional threats. When the UN-backed Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague ruled that it would hear the Philippines’ case against China over maritime disputes in the South China Sea, the EU failed to comment, despite the fact that it has made international law the crux of its position on the disputes.

Strikingly, the EU’s 2015 Asia focus has not included India. With stalled trade talks and a shortage of high-level visits, the relationship seems to be hostage to a legal case between India and Italy over Italian marines accused of killing two Indian fishermen. Brussels found no time for an EU–India summit during PM Modi’s European visit. It is said that high-level contacts will resume in 2016, although neither side seems committed to breaking the deadlock.

61 EU COORDINATION WITH MEMBER STATES ON ASIA

Europe's Asia policies suffered from fragmentation and a strong economic bias from many member states.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|------------|------------|------------|----------|
| Unity | n/a | n/a | n/a | 2 |
| Resources | n/a | n/a | n/a | 3 |
| Strategy | | | | 2 |
| Impact | n/a | n/a | n/a | 2 |
| Total/20 | n/a | n/a | n/a | 9 |

C+

2012 n/a 2013 n/a 2014 n/a

While the EU's Asia policy was fairly active in 2015, policy objectives and initiatives on the region became increasingly fragmented between member states, and between member states and EU institutions.

Some of this is linked to a silo effect among Commission departments – the directorates general (DGs). While the new Commission was designed to encourage coordination and a more strategic approach, it is still not clear how trade objectives and external relations are reconciled, for example, as illustrated by the case of the Commission's ban on Indian generic drugs in the midst of trade negotiations. Another factor may be that mushrooming crises in and around the EU have set back policy coordination with more distant partners.

These crises meant that a number of EU member states concentrated diplomatic efforts closer to home, and focused on their economic interests in their dealings with Asia – notably, but not only, China. For some, this included weapons sales and therefore hard security cooperation. For others, economic interests were mainly managed through bilateral visits.

Compared to member states, EU institutions pursued a more diverse and values-based diplomacy on security, human rights, and climate change. Member states' relative lack of interest in these issues meant less diplomatic support, but led to de facto unity on a majority of non-economic and non-China-related items on EU's Asia agenda.

Regarding China, however, fragmentation and competition between member states increased in 2015. Most member states backed Brussels on its Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) negotiations with Beijing. However, some made efforts to be China's "best partner" in Europe, while the UK undercut the Commission by expressing support for an EU–China FTA. This fragmentation was also visible in the process of accession to the AIIB. US public diplomacy was botched on this issue, but Europe highlighted its own disunity, suggesting weakness when faced with potential Chinese funding. This has damaged the EU's capacity to act collectively in an area that is key to global governance.

62 TRADE AND INVESTMENT WITH CHINA

EU member states competed fiercely and openly for Chinese investment and attention.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|
| Unity | 3 | 5 | 3 | 1 |
| Resources | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 |
| Strategy | | | | 1 |
| Impact | 4 | 6 | 6 | 1 |
| Total/20 | 11 | 15 | 13 | 6 |

C-

2012 B- 2013 B+ 2014 B

In terms of EU unity on trade and investment with China, 2015 was a bad year. The UK led the disunity, showing little restraint in its statements and bilateral initiatives. But it was not alone in this, and the case of the AIIB showed how hard it still is for the EU to build a coordinated response when China is involved.

There is a risk that the competitive atmosphere between member states could hinder the development of a collective approach towards possible investment in Europe through China’s “One Belt, One Road” (OBOR) initiative. However, Beijing announced at the EU–China summit that it would contribute to the European Fund for Strategic Investments (EFSI) via OBOR. The partners made a series of other agreements in the framework of the initiative, including on an EU–China Connectivity Platform.

There was evidence in 2015 that China has concluded that it can stall the EU on key negotiations, while moving ahead with member states either bilaterally or in groups of its choosing. For example,

China once again hosted the 16+1 forum (with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe – CEE), which produced a series of investment announcements, including proposals to include the forum in the OBOR initiative and to set up a \$3 billion fund to finance projects in the region. This came on top of frequent bilateral meetings between CEE and Chinese officials, and the signing of agreements with Hungary and Poland on OBOR. Beijing is reportedly lobbying for similar formats with Nordic and Mediterranean countries.

Meanwhile, China’s excess capacity in some industrial sectors had consequences for Europe. At the end of the year, the Commission again set in motion an anti-dumping action on solar panels – this time on the grounds of state subsidies rather than low prices. The EU also finally won its anti-dumping case against China on steel tubes. The coming year will be key for EU competition policy towards China, as the debate on market economy status will have consequences for anti-dumping actions and government subsidies.

63 TRADE AND INVESTMENT WITH THE REST OF THE REGION

Trade talks with Vietnam and Japan moved ahead, while progress with India remained stalled.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| Unity | n/a | n/a | n/a | 3 |
| Resources | n/a | n/a | n/a | 4 |
| Strategy | | | | 3 |
| Impact | n/a | n/a | n/a | 3 |
| Total/20 | n/a | n/a | n/a | 13 |

B

2012 n/a 2013 n/a 2014 B-

The EU pursued bilateral FTA talks with several Asian partners in 2015, specifically Vietnam, India, Japan, Thailand, and Malaysia. The European Council also agreed to start negotiations for an FTA with the Philippines.

Japan pressed for a conclusion to FTA talks by the end of the year, and six new rounds of negotiations took place. However, the reservations expressed by EU Trade Commissioner Cecilia Malmström about the deadline were borne out. With the signing of the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) in October 2015, the window of opportunity has closed and Japanese negotiators will have to wait for the ratification debate in the US Congress before they make further progress. Of all FTAs currently under negotiation, the Japan–EU agreement gathered the most support from member states, and was considered the most promising. However, it is a tough undertaking, as Japan’s need for partnership is balanced by domestic sectoral and lobby interests.

While the EU may not have much leverage over Japan (or China), it has proved that it

does with Vietnam. In December, the two reached an agreement on an FTA, including financial services and government procurement. Evidently, Vietnam’s strategic isolation, relative to China, leads it to seek greater interdependence with partners outside the region.

In comparison, negotiations between the EU and India, which have been ongoing since 2007, lacked substantial progress in 2015. Germany was the only member state to publicly support the FTA, while others saw India’s protectionist attitude as an obstacle, with little to be gained from the deal. However, India’s fast growth and population dynamics make it a key partner.

Support for FTAs with Asian countries was variable among member states. EU members support the Union’s trade initiatives overall, but ASEAN countries remain too limited as partners for member states to support EU negotiations with them as actively as those with Japan, for example. Nevertheless, the pro-trade attitudes of EU members mean that the EU has benefited from much leeway in its negotiations.

64 CONVENTIONAL SECURITY AND RELATIONS WITH ASIA

EU statements on a security partnership with Asia did not translate into changes to its traditional policies towards the region.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|------------|------------|------------|----------|
| Unity | n/a | n/a | n/a | 2 |
| Resources | n/a | n/a | n/a | 2 |
| Strategy | | | | 2 |
| Impact | n/a | n/a | n/a | 2 |
| Total/20 | n/a | n/a | n/a | 8 |

C

2012 B 2013 B- 2014 C+

The EU remained committed to not taking sides on Asia’s territorial and maritime disputes, calling for compliance with the rules-based international system. Despite this, neither the EU nor any of its member states explicitly commented on the decision by an international court in The Hague to hear the Philippines’ claim against China. In 2015, the EU’s practical involvement on this issue was limited to organising training and capacity-building exercises with ASEAN countries on maritime cooperation and security.

However, EU officials did make statements on Asia’s maritime disputes in 2015. EU representatives raised the issue at an April G7 meeting, despite Chinese efforts to avoid this, and Mogherini twice publicly expressed concern on the subject. Member states are near-unanimous in refraining from expressing opinions on sovereignty on these maritime disputes, but there is a divide between those who view this as neutrality and those who think that supporting legal arbitration is paramount.

At their June summit, the EU and China announced their willingness to develop defence and security cooperation. The coming year could see enhanced collaboration in new areas of common interest, including support for peace and security in Africa. Europeans will have to decide whether they want China as a stakeholder in UN peacekeeping operations, and whether they see a role for the Chinese military, which has signed a basing agreement in Djibouti.

Some member states collaborated directly with Asian counterparts on traditional security matters. France and the UK signed defence cooperation agreements with Japan that, interestingly, give Tokyo a say in dual technology transfers to third nations – such as China. The UK and China started exploring the potential for cooperation in the protection of nationals overseas. In the absence of an EU policy on arms sales to the region – beyond the embargo on China – France, Germany, the UK, and the Netherlands increased sales to Asia, making the EU its second-biggest weapons supplier after the US.

65 COMPREHENSIVE SECURITY AND RELATIONS WITH ASIA

While Europe increased security cooperation with China, Japan, and South Korea, cooperation with India was lacking

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| Unity | n/a | n/a | n/a | 3 |
| Resources | n/a | n/a | n/a | 3 |
| Strategy | | | | 3 |
| Impact | n/a | n/a | n/a | 3 |
| Total/20 | n/a | n/a | n/a | 12 |

B-

2012 n/a 2013 n/a 2014 n/a

A key success of EU engagement with China in 2015 was the nuclear deal with Iran. Beijing consistently supported the deal, remaining engaged with negotiations despite not being fully satisfied with certain aspects of the final agreement.

Meanwhile, the EU and China agreed to reinforce cooperation against transnational crime by increasing contacts between Europol and China's Ministry of Public Security. China pushed to develop cooperation against terrorism with several member states, especially France following the November attacks. But this is controversial given China's practice of linking terrorism with separatist movements in Xinjiang province. To her credit, Mogherini expressed concern about China's expulsion of a French journalist who had criticised government policy towards the Uyghur ethnic group in Xinjiang. But, as on other issues, the UK broke ranks, and its chancellor visited Xinjiang without mentioning the issue.

Oddly, the EU has no strategic dialogue with India, a major partner with an important stake in Afghanistan and similar views on it, a shared goal for reintegrating Iran,

and concern over maritime security. There is a certain complacency over India in the Union, matched by India's lack of interest in the EU. This contrasts with a robust European interest in weapons sales to India.

The EU increased its cooperation with South Korea and Japan in 2015, in the context of crisis-management operations. It also agreed to enhance political dialogue on foreign and security policy at ministerial level with Japan. In May, the second ASEAN–EU High Level Dialogue on Maritime Security included exchanges on piracy lessons, maritime surveillance, and port security, and produced agreements to enhance dialogue on disaster relief and promote capacity building.

The EU's training to members of the ASEAN Regional Forum on preventive diplomacy and mediation, launched in 2014, was expanded in 2015. The EU committed to more than double its support for ASEAN's institutional set-up and community building. The EU conducted dialogues on cybersecurity with Japan and India, and held the 14th EU–North Korea political dialogue in Pyongyang in June.

66 RELATIONS WITH ASIAN PARTNERS IN MULTILATERAL INSTITUTIONS

Europe was deeply fragmented in the rush to join China's new infrastructure bank, but had a positive influence on the body.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|------------|------------|------------|----------|
| Unity | n/a | n/a | n/a | 1 |
| Resources | n/a | n/a | n/a | 2 |
| Strategy | | | | 2 |
| Impact | n/a | n/a | n/a | 4 |
| Total/20 | n/a | n/a | n/a | 9 |

C+

2012 n/a 2013 n/a 2014 n/a

In 2015, China created a new multilateral financing institution, the AIIB, to address the infrastructure investment gap in Asia. Despite attempts by the Commission's economics and finance department (DG ECFIN), the Council, and some member states (notably Germany) to organise an EU-level discussion on the AIIB and coordinate a common course of action, national decisions to join the bank were highly fragmented.

Due to the difficult and lengthy process of organising a coherent EU response to the AIIB, the UK, France, Germany, and Italy began a dialogue among themselves. But the UK broke ranks, unilaterally declaring its intention to join the bank. France, Germany, and Italy responded by issuing a joint statement soon after London's, and became founding members. Other EU member states decided to join the AIIB independently, and often out of national interest rather than the interests of the Union as a whole. In total, 14 EU member states joined the new bank as founding members.

Consultation was minimal at the EU level. But while members failed to make a united accession decision, which would have been of great symbolic significance, they did follow Brussels's lead after accession, agreeing to speak with one voice about the significance of the AIIB, and about the EU's role in the bank's establishment and operations.

Overall, while the process was highly fragmented, the EU's involvement in the AIIB should not be considered as a complete policy failure, as it transformed the AIIB into a truly multilateral institution – in a significant departure from the original plans – because of EU participation.

67 RELATIONS WITH ASIAN PARTNERS ON ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

European governments showed strong unity on climate change, working to push China and other Asian countries ahead of the Paris conference.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| Unity | n/a | n/a | n/a | 4 |
| Resources | n/a | n/a | n/a | 3 |
| Strategy | | | | 4 |
| Impact | n/a | n/a | n/a | 3 |
| Total/20 | n/a | n/a | n/a | 14 |

B+

2012 n/a 2013 n/a 2014 n/a

In terms of Europe’s unity and effectiveness on climate change, 2015 was a good year. The COP21 Paris climate conference helped focus the policy of the EU and its member states on this issue, providing a clear deadline and goal to work towards. Climate change was high on the EU’s agenda throughout the year. Mogherini mentioned it during each of her visits to Asia, as did senior EU officials at the ASEAN–EU’s Senior Officials’ Meeting in July.

The Commission was central to EU efforts on this issue, as were EU delegations in Asia, which carried out local initiatives and outreach. The EU also worked actively with various Asian countries, maintaining pressure on Pakistan and Malaysia throughout the year and in the run-up to the conference.

Member states also participated in these efforts. France was most active, as host of the climate conference, and made numerous high-level visits to Asia, including – notably – China. Beijing, which will have a central role in implementing the Paris agreement, as the largest producer of

carbon emissions globally, remained committed to the goals it endorsed in its November 2014 joint statement with the US, reasserting them during Prime Minister Li Keqiang’s official visit to Paris in July.

The EU and China also published a joint statement on climate following their summit, which even went beyond the previous year’s US–China statement, as the EU garnered agreement from China to aim for an “ambitious and legally binding agreement” at the Paris conference. Although this did not result in a more specific commitment at the conference, it was a major and welcome difference from the US’s negotiating stance on climate change. China’s engagement in the process was likely motivated by internal pressure for a more sustainable economic model as well as by external calls for increased climate engagement.

68 RULE OF LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN ASIA

Member states provided meagre support for EU human rights initiatives on China, but were more unified on the rest of Asia.

| | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 |
|-----------------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| Unity | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Resources | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| Strategy | | | | 2 |
| Impact | 2 | 4 | 3 | 2 |
| Total/20 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 |

C

2012 c 2013 c 2014 c

The EU consistently worked to promote human rights in Asia in 2015. The special representative for human rights, Stavros Lambrinidis, visited China in November, and the EU conducted human rights dialogues with China in November and ASEAN in October. The Union deployed an election observation mission to Myanmar for the November elections. It issued strong statements on the deteriorating human rights situation in China, on Pakistan’s reinstatement of the death penalty after the 2014 Peshawar school attack, and on executions in Japan, Singapore, Indonesia, and Taiwan, as well as on the sentencing of political opponents or human rights activists across the region. The Indian government tightened its control over the media and NGOs, particularly after Modi’s election, which might be a concern for EU human rights policy in coming years.

Regarding China, the disconnect between EU-level and member state policy continued in 2015. While human rights remains one of the EEAS’s official priorities on China, most member states were reluc-

tant to raise the issue directly with Beijing. Smaller member states justified their position by arguing that they are too small to make any difference, while some larger member states argued that “private and discreet” discussions behind closed doors were more useful, or simply stated that they were not interested or committed to engaging with China on the topic.

In general, member states’ human rights policies on China were restricted by economic considerations, and European leaders refrained from directly criticising the country on human rights. Most often, human rights policy was outsourced to the EU or to third parties such as the UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC), or to civil society, NGOs, and media outlets throughout Europe, which unfortunately have a limited impact on Chinese policy. The increased need for Chinese engagement on international crises (Ukraine and Syria, among others) may also have played a role in discouraging European policymakers from taking action on this front.

Tables



| Unity (out of 5) | Resources (out of 5) | Strategy (out of 5) | Impact (out of 5) | Total (out of 20) | Score Grade |
|---------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------|
|---------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------|

MULTILATERAL ISSUES AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT

| | | | | | | 10.9 | B- |
|-----------------------|--|---|---|---|---|------------|----------|
| Refugee crisis | | | | | | 8.3 | C |
| 1 | Response to the Mediterranean sea crisis | 4 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 10 | C+ |
| 2 | Response to refugee arrivals within Europe | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 7 | C- |
| 3 | Humanitarian response to host and origin countries of refugee crisis | 2 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 8 | C |

| | | | | | | 10.6 | B- |
|---------------------|------------------------|---|---|---|---|------|----|
| Peacekeeping | | | | | | | |
| 4 | Mali and the Sahel | 4 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 12 | B- |
| 5 | Nigeria and Boko Haram | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 10 | C+ |
| 6 | Somalia | 4 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 13 | B |
| 7 | Central Africa | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 10 | C+ |
| 8 | Afghanistan | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 8 | C |

| | | | | | | 9.0 | C+ |
|---|--|---|---|---|---|-----|----|
| Key elements of the international system | | | | | | | |
| 9 | European policy at the UN (includes UNSC, GA, HRC and UN reform) | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 9 | C+ |
| 10 | European policy in the G8, G20, and international financial institutions | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 9 | C+ |
| 11 | European policy on non-proliferation and the arms trade | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 8 | C |
| 12 | International aid | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 10 | C+ |

| | | | | | | 11.0 | B- |
|------------------------------|--|---|---|---|---|------|----|
| International justice | | | | | | | |
| 13 | European policy towards the ICC and international criminal tribunals | 4 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 11 | B- |

| | | | | | | 16 | A- |
|-----------------------|----------------|---|---|---|---|----|----|
| Climate change | | | | | | | |
| 14 | Climate change | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 16 | A- |

RELATIONS WITH RUSSIA

| | | | | | | 13.4 | B+ |
|--|--|---|---|---|---|-------------|-----------|
| Sanctions, trade and overall relationship | | | | | | 16.3 | A- |
| 15 | Diplomatic measures and sanctions | 4 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 18 | A |
| 16 | Trade with Russia | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 15 | B+ |
| 17 | Visa policies with Russia | 4 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 16 | A- |
| European security issues | | | | | | 15 | B+ |
| 18 | Solidarity on European security | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 16 | A- |
| 19 | Relations with Russia on protracted conflicts | 4 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 11 | B- |
| 20 | Diversification of gas-supply routes to Europe | 4 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 17 | A- |
| 21 | Crimea | 5 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 15 | B+ |
| Cooperation on regional and global issues | | | | | | 12 | B- |
| 22 | Relations with Russia on the greater Middle East | 4 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 10 | C+ |
| 23 | Relations with Russia on the Arctic | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 14 | B+ |
| Human rights and governance | | | | | | 10.5 | B- |
| 24 | Human rights and rule of law | 4 | 1 | 4 | 0 | 9 | C+ |
| 25 | Political freedom in Russia | 5 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 12 | B- |

RELATIONS WITH WIDER EUROPE

| | | | | | | 11.5 | B- |
|------------------------------|--|---|---|---|---|-------------|-----------|
| Eastern Neighbourhood | | | | | | 14.8 | B+ |
| 26 | Rule of law, democracy and human rights in the eastern neighbourhood | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 14 | B+ |
| 27 | Relations with the Eastern neighbourhood on trade | 5 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 17 | A- |
| 28 | Visa liberalisation with the eastern neighbourhood | 5 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 16 | A- |
| 29 | Relations with the eastern neighbourhood on energy | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 15 | B+ |
| 30 | Support for Ukraine | 4 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 12 | B- |
| Western Balkans | | | | | | 10 | C+ |
| 31 | Overall progress of enlargement in the Western Balkans | 2 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 11 | B- |
| 32 | Supporting the Western Balkans on handling refugee flows | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 8 | C |
| 33 | Kosovo | 3 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 13 | B |
| 34 | Bosnia and Herzegovina | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 9 | C+ |
| 35 | Macedonia | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 9 | C+ |
| Turkey | | | | | | 9.7 | C+ |
| 36 | Bilateral relations with Turkey | 4 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 13 | B |
| 37 | Rule of law, democracy and human rights in Turkey | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 5 | D+ |
| 38 | Relations with Turkey on regional issues | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 10 | C+ |
| 39 | Turkey and the refugee crisis | 2 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 11 | B- |

MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

| | | | | | 8.5 | C | |
|------------------------|---|---|---|---|-------------|-----------|----|
| Regional Issues | | | | | 5.0 | D+ | |
| 40 | Rule of law, human rights, and democracy in the MENA region | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 6 | C- |
| 41 | Regional security in the MENA region | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 4 | D+ |
| North Africa | | | | | 9.6 | C+ | |
| 42 | Egypt | 3 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 7 | C- |
| 43 | Libya | 4 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 10 | C+ |
| 44 | The Maghreb | 4 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 12 | B- |
| Levant | | | | | 8.0 | C | |
| 45 | Syria and Iraq | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 7 | C- |
| 46 | Israel and Palestine | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 9 | C+ |
| Gulf | | | | | 11.3 | B- | |
| 47 | Iran | 4 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 18 | A |
| 48 | Relations with Gulf Cooperation Council States | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 9 | C+ |
| 49 | Yemen | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 7 | C- |

| Unity (out of 5) | Resources (out of 5) | Strategy (out of 5) | Impact (out of 5) | Total (out of 20) | Score Grade |
|---------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------|
|---------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|----------------|

RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES

| | | | | | 13.0 | B |
|--|---|---|---|---|------|----|
| Cooperation on European security issues | | | | | 14.5 | B+ |
| 50 | Relations with the US on Russia and Ukraine | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | A- |
| 51 | Relations with the US on NATO and Eastern Europe | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | B |
| 52 | Relations with the US on counter-terrorism | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | B+ |
| 53 | Relations with the US on intelligence cooperation and counter-terrorism | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | B+ |

| Trade liberalisation and overall relationship | | | | | 13.5 | B+ |
|--|---|---|---|---|------|----|
| 54 | Relations with the US on trade and investment | 3 | 4 | 4 | 2 | B |
| 55 | Relations with the US on Brexit and Grexit | 2 | 5 | 3 | 4 | B+ |

| Cooperation on regional and global issues | | | | | 11.2 | B- |
|--|---|---|---|---|------|----|
| 56 | Relations with the US on migration and refugees | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | C+ |
| 57 | Relations with the US on the Middle East | 3 | 2 | 2 | 1 | C |
| 58 | Relations with the US on Iran and weapons proliferation | 5 | 5 | 5 | 3 | A |
| 59 | Relations with the US on Asia | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | C+ |

RELATIONS WITH ASIA AND CHINA

| | | | | | 10.0 | C+ | |
|--|--|---|---|---|------|----|----|
| EU strategy towards the Asia region | | | | | 11 | B- | |
| 60 | EU institutions approach towards Asia | 2 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 13 | B |
| 61 | EU coordination with member states on Asia | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 9 | C+ |

| Trade and economic relations | | | | | 9.0 | C+ | |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|---|---|-----|----|----|
| 62 | Trade and investment with China | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 6 | C- |
| 63 | Trade and investment with the rest of the region | 3 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 13 | B |

| Security | | | | | 10.0 | C+ | |
|-----------------|--|---|---|---|------|----|----|
| 64 | Conventional security and relations with Asia | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 8 | C |
| 65 | Comprehensive security and relations with Asia | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 12 | B- |

| Global governance | | | | | 10.3 | C+ | |
|--------------------------|--|---|---|---|------|----|----|
| 66 | Relations with Asian partners in multilateral institutions | 1 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 9 | C+ |
| 67 | Relations with Asian partners on energy and climate change | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 14 | B+ |
| 68 | Rule of law and human rights in Asia | 1 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 8 | C |

CLASSIFICATION OF MEMBER STATES

Unless otherwise stated, member states are supporters

| | MULTILATERAL ISSUES | | RUSSIA | | WIDER EUROPE | |
|-------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|--|---|---------------------|--|
| | Development and humanitarian aid | Overseas troop deployment | Maintaining a strong and united sanctions policy | Commitment to Eastern Partnership countries | Support for Ukraine | Strengthening EU engagement in the Western Balkans |
| Component | 12 | 9 | 15 | 30 | 30 | 31 |
| Austria | | | | | | leader |
| Belgium | slacker | slacker | | | | |
| Bulgaria | leader | slacker | | | | |
| Croatia | | slacker | | | | |
| Cyprus | | slacker | | | | |
| Czech R. | | slacker | | leader | | |
| Denmark | | | | | leader | |
| Estonia | | | leader | leader | | |
| Finland | slacker | | | | | |
| France | | leader | leader | slacker | leader | |
| Germany | | | leader | slacker | leader | leader |
| Greece | | slacker | | | | |
| Hungary | | | | | | |
| Ireland | | | | | | |
| Italy | | | | | | leader |
| Latvia | | | leader | leader | | |
| Lithuania | | slacker | leader | leader | leader | |
| Luxembourg | leader | slacker | | | | |
| Malta | | slacker | | | | |
| Netherlands | slacker | | leader | | | leader |
| Poland | | slacker | leader | leader | leader | |
| Portugal | | slacker | | | | |
| Romania | | slacker | leader | | | |
| Slovakia | | slacker | | | leader | |
| Slovenia | | | | | | |
| Spain | | | | | | |
| Sweden | leader | | leader | leader | leader | |
| UK | leader | | leader | | | leader |

| Component | MENA | | UNITED STATES | | ASIA AND CHINA | |
|-------------|--|---|-------------------------------|--|---|--|
| | Quelling regional rivalries in Middle East | Humanitarian response to the refugee crisis | Support for TTIP negotiations | Responding to the US upon joining AIIB | Promotion of common EU strategy on trade and investment | Response to China's human rights situation |
| Component | 41 | 3 | 54 | 54 | 62 and 63 | 68 |
| Austria | | | leader | | | |
| Belgium | | | | | | |
| Bulgaria | | slacker | | | | |
| Croatia | | slacker | | | | |
| Cyprus | | slacker | | | | |
| Czech R. | | | | | | leader |
| Denmark | | leader | | | | |
| Estonia | | | | | | slacker |
| Finland | | | | | | leader |
| France | | | leader | | | slacker |
| Germany | leader | leader | leader | | leader | leader |
| Greece | | slacker | | | | |
| Hungary | | slacker | | | | |
| Ireland | | | | | | |
| Italy | leader | | | | | |
| Latvia | | slacker | | | | |
| Lithuania | | slacker | | | | slacker |
| Luxembourg | | | | | | |
| Malta | | slacker | | | | |
| Netherlands | | leader | leader | | | leader |
| Poland | | slacker | | | | slacker |
| Portugal | | slacker | | | | |
| Romania | | slacker | | | | |
| Slovakia | | slacker | | | | |
| Slovenia | | slacker | | | | |
| Spain | | slacker | leader | | | slacker |
| Sweden | | | | | | leader |
| UK | | leader | leader | | slacker | slacker |

Acronyms

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| AIIB | Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank |
| ASEAN | Association of Southeast Asian Nations regional group |
| AU | African Union |
| BIT | Bilateral Investment Treaty |
| CAPD | EU–Afghanistan Initial Cooperation Agreement on Partnership and Development |
| CEE | Central and Eastern Europe |
| CSDP | The EU's Common Security and Defence Policy |
| DCFTA/FTA | Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement/Free Trade Agreement |
| DG ECFIN | European Union Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs |
| DG ENER | European Union Directorate-General for Energy |
| DG HOME | European Union Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs |
| DG NEAR | European Union Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations |
| DG TRADE | European Union Directorate-General for Trade |
| E3+3 | The group of countries leading diplomatic efforts with Iran: France, Germany, the United Kingdom, China, Russia and the United States |
| E5P | Eastern Europe Energy Efficiency and Environmental Partnership |
| EBRD | European Bank for Reconstruction and Development |
| ECHR | European Court of Human Rights |
| ECJ | European Court of Justice |
| EEAS | European External Action Service |
| EEU | Eurasian Economic Union |
| EFSI | European Fund for Strategic Investments |
| ENP | European Neighbourhood Policy |
| EULEX | European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo |
| EUNAVFOR MED | European Union Naval Force – Mediterranean |

| | |
|---------------|--|
| GCC | Gulf Cooperation Council |
| ICTY | International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia |
| IMF | International Monetary Fund |
| IOM | International Organization for Migration |
| ISIS | The Islamic State militant group |
| NPT | Non-Proliferation Treaty on nuclear weapons |
| OBOR | China's "One Belt, One Road" initiative |
| OSCE | Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe |
| SAA/AA | European Union (Stabilisation and) Association Agreement |
| SDGs | Sustainable Development Goals |
| TPP | Trans-Pacific Partnership trade deal |
| TTIP | Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership trade talks |
| UNHCR | United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees |
| UNHRC | United Nations Human Rights Council |

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