

The European Union and the Arms Trade Treaty

An Example of the EU's Effectiveness in Multilateral Security Governance

A case study of the PhD project

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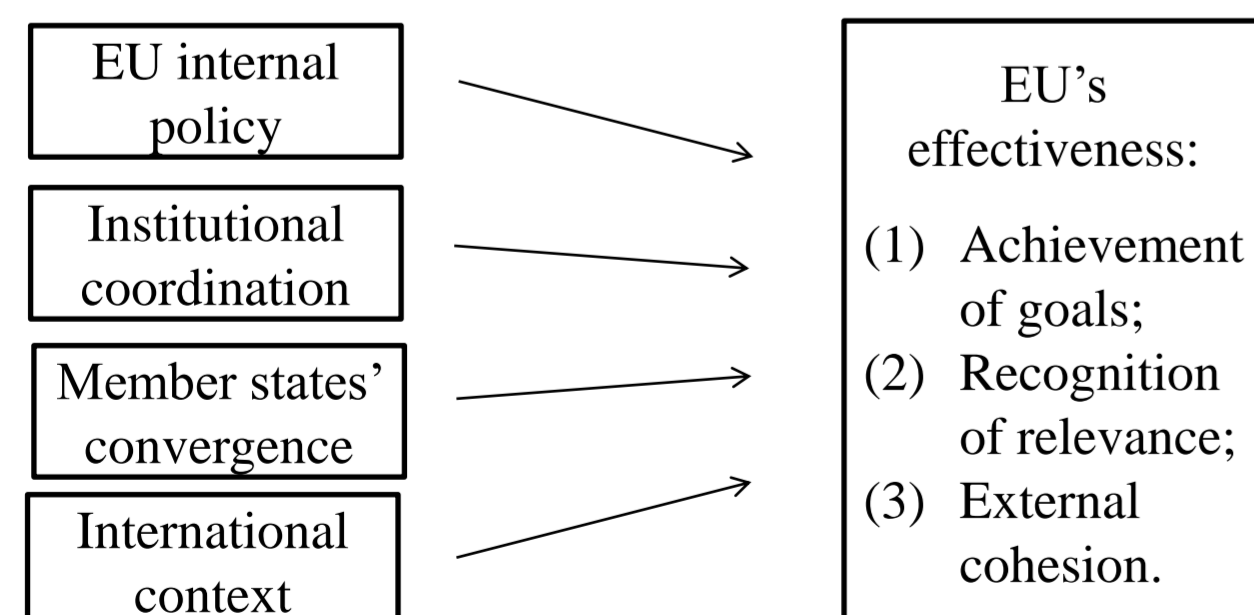
Introduction

“There are common standards for the global trade in armchairs but not the global trade in arms”, - the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon recently argued. On 2 April 2013 the UN General Assembly finally adopted a new multilateral agreement in the field of arms control – the Arms Trade Treaty – after almost seven years of negotiations.

The EU has emerged over the last decades as a provider of international peace, security and stability. At the same time, EU member states account for around 30 per cent of the arms transfers in the world. The question thus arises about the EU's role in the ATT negotiations.

Research Question and Design

The question which I addressed in my study reads as *to what extent and under what conditions can the EU be seen as an effective actor in supporting and promoting the ATT?* I singled out 4 independent variables and 3 indicators to measure EU's effectiveness.



The methodology of the research was based on the triangulation between the documentary analysis, interviewing and secondary literature review.

Findings

- Achievement of goals → **high/medium**

The EU performed relatively well with regard to fulfilling its purposes during the negotiations. It shaped the most important sections of the draft ATT, related to **scope**, **criteria**, **implementation** and **transparency**, according to its own vision. The only, yet important, point which was not achieved by the EU was the reference to the right of regional organizations to become parties to the ATT.



- Recognition of relevance → **low**

In terms of gaining support, the EU scored low during the ATT deliberations. **First**, the legal context of the EU's participation in the UN GA proved to be a constraining factor. The fact that the EU does not possess voting rights and has to rely on its member states in pursuing amendments did not add to the EU's image of a strong and effective player in the UN settings. **Second**, the EU was not able to win support of the main stakeholders – **Russia**, **China** and **India** – and convince these skeptical countries to sign up to the treaty.



- External cohesion → **high/medium**

The EU proved to be quite successful in projecting a single voice during the multilateral negotiations. With the exception of several instances, when **France** and **the UK** deviated from a common line, member states and EU institutions to a large extent acted as one whole at the final UN conferences leading to the ATT adoption.



Conclusions

The central argument put forward in this research is that overall the EU was an effective player during the multilateral negotiations on the ATT, but the degree of its effectiveness varies along different parameters. The EU scored relatively high in two out of three dimensions of effectiveness.

In terms of understanding the particular degree of the EU's effectiveness in the ATT case, all four identified independent variables contributed to its explanation, albeit to a varied degree and in a different direction.

As a next step, it would be certainly fruitful to engage in cross-area comparative case study of the EU's effectiveness. Such research could investigate whether the variables which proved to be detrimental for the EU's effectiveness in the ATT process hold similar explanatory value in the multilateral institutions dealing with environment, trade, or human rights.

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