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The European Union as an Actor in Global Education Diplomacy

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Abstract:

This paper seeks to offer a better understanding of the role and relevance of the European Union's (EU) external initiatives in the field of higher education as instruments of educational diplomacy and foreign policy writ large. It will do so by analysing relevant policy outcomes, by developing a clear definition of the concept of 'the EU as an actor in Global Education Diplomacy' and by testing its effects in the field of global higher education. The paper will offer a contribution to the ongoing debates on 'EU actorness' and a novel approach to the EU's impact in the fields of education diplomacy.

Background:

The soft power of an actor is shaped by the combination of public, cultural, scientific and education diplomacies it promotes abroad. At the intersection of cultural diplomacy, innovation and science diplomacy, education diplomacy can be used as a foreign policy tool by successfully exporting norms and values through initiatives like grants, student mobility, staff exchanges, or institutional and capacity building. This paper will explore the European Union's approach to promoting its interests and values through its own toolkit of education diplomacy. It will assess core initiatives and programmes in the context of the scholarly debate on "EU Actorness" and will contribute to a better understanding of the role of EU Education Diplomacy within the wider field of Cultural, Scientific and Innovation Diplomacy.

As an international actor, the European Union is constantly looking to conclude agreements with third countries that target a broad range of policy sectors, agreements that go beyond the pure commercial interest by having a 'conditionality core' built in, tying incentives that link humanitarian aid or market access to key norms and values such as democracy, human rights or the rule of law (Wulk, 2015). Using its economic clout as leverage to influence outcomes and shape behaviours on a sector-based approach has always been at the heart of the EU's foreign policy-making, and has thus raised its soft power capability (Nye, 2004). Such sector-based external relations aim to build in the medium and long-term alliances and networks between experts, stakeholders and governmental authorities within a specific policy area. This cooperation model could be used potentially to induce structural changes

in third countries by influencing the institutions involved, spilling over ultimately to the levels of policy making (Schimmelfennig, 2012). Some of the issues covered include migration, trade or agriculture, and the embedded clauses relate most of the times to the environment, energy security, culture, training and education, with a special emphasis on tertiary or higher education.

Historically, Europe has benefited from a long and prestigious tradition of excellence in education and scientific research. Intra-EU cooperation and mobility has been gradually developed through the Bologna Process and the creation of the ECTS system and the European Higher Education Area, and programmes such as Erasmus, Tempus, Erasmus Mundus, Marie Curie or Jean Monnet. Initially employed for domestic target groups, these programmes were progressively exported to other parts of the world. Since 1998, European Union Centres have been established at higher education institutions across the globe: 37 such centres now exist in universities in the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, South Korea, Singapore and Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macao and Russia. Their mission is to promote a greater understanding of the EU through curricular activities, research programmes and outreach.

Yet, so far there is still a lack of systematic research on assessing the impact of the EU's initiatives in this field, viewed within the wider context of the EU as an international actor. This paper seeks to fill this gap. The paper will be structured into two major parts: the first one will focus on conceptualizing the EU as an actor in global education policy and will contextualize this concept in the wider debates on EU Actorness and EU Approaches to Cultural, Scientific and Innovation Diplomacy. The second part will explore and apply this concept through the lens of EU educational policy development between the 1960s and today aiming to highlight its guiding specificities.

The European Union as an 'Actor in Global Education Diplomacy' and the 'EU Actorness Debate': Historical and Conceptual Context

This paper proposes to focus on an important but often neglected aspect of the EU's evolution as an international actor: namely its growing role as a major player in the field of

global educational diplomacy. On its most basic level, educational diplomacy is the process, policy and institution of promoting educational initiatives, standards, institutions and values through the tools of diplomacy, i.e. through communication, representation and negotiation (Smith 2015; Koops and Macaj, 2015). In addition, we understand educational diplomacy to rely heavily on capacity-building (in terms of educational structures, programmes and competences), face-to-face exchanges, knowledge transfer and mobility schemes aimed at networking-building and even identity-formation. In the emerging scholarly literature, educational diplomacy is also often linked to the concepts of 'soft power' or 'public diplomacy' (Amirbek and Ydrys 2014; Wojciuk et al. 2015). In this light, the promotion of educational policies, educational institutions and systems as well as funding or exchange opportunities are seen as an important tool for advancing an actor's reputation and attraction abroad and is seen as a channel for spreading certain values and influence. In this sense, educational diplomacy becomes an important part of an actor's foreign policy tool-set. While research on state-based educational diplomacy is slowly emerging (common examples are, for example, the importance of the US or British education system for enhancing the influence and soft power of both countries worldwide, or the efforts by the Chinese government to increase its influence through, *inter alia*, Confucius institutes), research on the European Union's education diplomacy is still in its infancy. Yet, studying the role of the European Union in global education diplomacy is of interest for two interrelated reasons. First, despite only granted secondary competence in the field of education by the member states (who jealously guard the control of education policies), the European Commission managed to carve out an important role for itself in terms of international educational standardisation, academic exchanges, public diplomacy initiatives and capacity-building during the last three decades. Second, educational diplomacy should be viewed in the wider and more recent push of the European Union's External Action Service towards becoming a strong player in the field of cultural and scientific diplomacy (see, for example, the Global Strategy of 2016 and Trobbiani 2017). Educational Diplomacy can be seen as the linking element between cultural and scientific diplomacy as it supports the aim of both building people-to-people networks, increasing knowledge networks and promoting core values as well as institutional capacity-building.

On a more conceptual level, this section seeks to place the European Union's approach to educational diplomacy into the wider context of the debate on the European Union's evolution as an 'international actor'. Since the 1970s, scholars have attempted to understand the core nature, elements and impact of the European Union in foreign policy and the international sphere. As a result, the European Union has been conceptualised in various ways, reflecting different policy tools that were dominant or promising at a given period in time. Thus, in the early 1970s – during the beginnings of EC's first foreign policy attempts, Cosgrove and Twitchett (1970) introduced for the first time the concept of 'actorness' to describe the EC's capacities and policies in the international realm distinct and independent from the policies of its member states. By focusing on the evolution of the EC's and European Union's dominant foreign policy tools (diplomacy and crisis management during the 1970s, Civilian Power and Soft Power during the 1990s, the emergence of a military dimension and 'military actorness' in the early 2000s as well as Normative Power and Transformative Power in the first decade of the 2000s), scholars have sought to conceptualize the EU as a distinct international actor that seeks to influence the international environment. In this sense, the debate on 'the European Union as an International Actor' is closely linked to analyses of European Union foreign policy and different approaches to advance influence, cooperation and EU norms and values.

In the following section, we briefly review the growing literature on the EU as an international actor, identify the core elements of actorness and advance our definition of the European Union as an Actor in Global Educational Diplomacy.

The Actorness Debate

As mentioned above, since the early 1970s, the evolution of the European Union in foreign policy has also been accompanied by scholars seeking to understand, analyse and conceptualize the different elements, institutions and processes related to the EU's role in international relations. As a result, scholars have sought to explore the different aspects that were needed for the EU to become an 'actor' in its own right, i.e. an actor in foreign policy beyond the foreign policies of its member states (Cosgrove and Twitchett 1970; Sjöstedt 1977; Taylor 1982; Rummel 1990; Allen and Smith 1990, 1998; Hill 1993, 1998; Rhodes 1998; Peterson 1998; Jupille and Caporaso 1998; Ginsberg 1999, 2001; Bretherton

and Vogler 1999, 2006; Gänzle 2003; Varwick 2004; Solana 2005; Telò 2006; Jørgensen 2007; Brimmer 2007; Jopp and Schlotter 2007, Koops 2011, Koops and Macaj 2015). In this literature, we need to distinguish between two strands. On the one hand, those scholars that sought to provide an answer to the institutional question of ‘what exactly makes the European Union an Actor’ or in other words: which elements are needed for the EU to become an autonomous actor in international relations. On the other hand, those scholars that sought to provide an answer to the question of *what kind of actor* the EU essentially is in international relations. While the body of scholarship related to the first question focused on the institutions, capacities, processes and questions of coherence, impact and identity necessary for the EU to be seen as an actor in its own right, studies on the second question tried to focus on dominant policies that made the EU a distinct actor with a specific focus. When reviewing the entire evolution of this literature since the 1970s, it becomes clear that the answer to this question is rather context-specific and reflects the dominant policies of a given period and therefore changes according to the EU’s dominant policies at a given moment. Thus, during the 1970s when the EC slowly began to develop its role in international negotiations within the Kennedy Trade talks, the UN General Assembly or Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) scholars focused on the Commission’s role in negotiations (particularly in trade) and in the field of ‘civilian power’ based on international law and economic power (Cosgrove and Twitchett 1970; Duchene 1972, 1973; Sjostedt 1977). Given the international context of superpower détente and the repeated failure of the EC to develop its military dimension during the 1950s and 1960s, the EC carved out for itself a role in the non-military ‘civilian’ sphere, based on its economic and negotiation power. During the 1980s and in a period of heightened Cold War tensions and security risks, Hedley Bull argued for the need for Western Europe (he still denied that the EC in itself had actorness qualities in this field) to develop a more robust approach to military power (Bull 1982, 1983). This debate between the EU as a civilian power actor or a security actor resurfaced throughout the 1990s, against the backdrop of the EU’s development of the Common Security and Foreign Policy (CFSP) and in particular the EU’s inability to act decisively in the context of the Bosnian War from 1991 – 1995. As a result, Christopher Hill coined the concept of the ‘Capability Expectation Gap’ (1993, 1998) which problematized the gap between the expectations the EU generates in foreign policy and the actual lack of its (military) capabilities in this field. The debate between civilian and military

power lingered on during the late 1990s (especially in the context of the Kosovo War and the repeated inability of the EU to act decisively) and early 2000s until Ian Manners sought to demonstrate that the EU's core strength as an international actor was neither in the field of civilian tools only nor in the field of the military realm, but rather in the field of promoting norms and values through foreign policies and diplomacy as a 'Normative Power' (Manners 2002, 2006). In the context of the EU's historical enlargement in 2004 and its diplomatic foreign policy achievements of seemingly helping to transform Central and East European Countries on their journey from the post-Communist systems to democratic systems, scholars began to conceptualise the European Union as a 'Diplomatic Actor' (Keukeleire 2003), a 'Transformative Power' (Leonard 2005, Grabbe 2006) and the return of the 'Civilian Power' (Nicolaidis 2004, Telo 2006). With the onset of the EU's military dimension in the form of military operations under the umbrella of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP, since 2009 CSDP) scholars conceptualised the EU as a 'Soft Power Plus' (Haine 2004) or indeed a "Civilian Power with Teeth" (Schmalz 2005, 2008). Due to the EU's increasing cooperation with other international organisations under the new foreign policy goal of 'effective multilateralism' (Council 2003), scholars identified the EU as a comprehensive actor (Biscop 2004, 2005) or indeed an 'Inter-organisational Actor' (Jorgensen 2009, Koops 2011, 2012). In an attempt to place the evolution of the EU as an international actor in the wider context and seeking to uncover the main 'essence' of the EU's actorhood, Joachim Koops sought to conceptualize the European Union as an 'Integrative Power' (2011), highlighting that at every stage of the EU's evolution, the urge to promote internal and external integration and 'integrative power' (Boulding 1989) was advanced through different political, legal, military and normative tools. Finally, as a result of the 'diplomatic turn' in EU foreign policy in the wake of the Lisbon Treaty of 2009, which also foresaw the creation of the European Union External Action Service (EEAS) in 2010 and the reinforcement European Union diplomatic representation around the world, scholars began to take stock of the EU as a 'Diplomatic Actor' again (Koops and Macaj 2015).

Thus, the way the EU has been conceptualised as a 'distinct actor' in International Relations has always been in reaction to the international environment, historical specificities and dominant policy reactions by the EU at a given moment time. Our introduction of the concept of the 'EU as an Actor in Educational Diplomacy' follows this trend. It should be viewed in the context of the recent push to explore the EU as a

‘Diplomatic Actor’ and in particular in the more recent context of the EU’s push towards establishing a role in Cultural, Scientific and Innovation Diplomacy. However, given the EU’s long-standing policies, wide-ranging initiatives and potential impact in the area of global educational policies (beginning in particular with the Erasmus schemes exactly 30 years ago), it is surprising that the actorness debate has so far bypassed the issue are of educational diplomacy and has so far not explored in a systematic fashion the EU’s role as an educational diplomatic actor. Thus, this paper seeks to make its own modest contribution to view Educational Diplomacy as an important element in understanding the EU’s evolution and influence as an international actor and distinct power. Educational Diplomacy (and its impact) also touches on various aspects outlined in the conceptual debate on actorness above. For example, educational diplomacy can have ‘transformative’ effects – underlining the link between the transformative power literature and the EU as a Diplomatic Actor in the field of Global Diplomacy. Similarly, it contains elements of civilian and normative power. In this light, the present paper seeks to provide food for thought and a mapping exercise that could be of interest to wider debates on the EU’s role and impact in international relations.

Elements of EU Educational Diplomacy Actorness

As mentioned above, apart from seeking to define *what kind of actor* the EU could be described as, scholars working in the field of exploring the EU’s international actorness have also sought to uncover the main elements required for a political entity (other than a state) to be an ‘actor’ in international relations. While a comprehensive analysis and review of this debate has been done elsewhere (see Koops 2011, pp 95 – 144), the following section briefly outlines the key elements identified by the literature on the EU as an international actor since the 1970s.

Essentially, the early and most basic definitions of core requirement for the EU to be an international actor consisted of a ‘minimum of autonomy’ from the member states and ‘the ability to perform significant and continuing functions that have an impact’ (Cogrove and Twitchett 1970: 14). In 1977, Gunnar Sjostedt provided a comprehensive theory of ‘actor capability’ of the EC and argued that to be an actor the EC needed a comprehensive ‘actor capability’ based on the ‘basic requirements’ of the ability to “articulate a set of general interests and specific goals for external actions within a community of interests and a

community pool of resources”, on strong decision-making and monitoring facilities and strong ‘action performance instruments’ which include particularly “a network of external agents and communication channels”, such as EC delegations and information offices in other countries and international organisations (Sjostedt 1977, 74 – 109). This work already foreshadowed much of the writing on the EU as a Diplomatic Actor, particularly the emphasis on communication and the importance of working through delegations, information offices and other international organisations – elements that are also important for the EU as an actor in educational diplomacy. Further studies on actorness, such as Allen and Smith’s concept of “presence” (1998), Hill’s ‘Capability-Expectation Gap’ and Ginsberg’s study on impact (2001) have added further elements of the definition of what it takes to be an international actor, namely ‘learning capacity’ and ‘resource mobilisation capacity’ (Allen and Smith 1998, 54-55), the “actual capabilities of the EC in terms of its ability to agree, its resources and the instruments at its disposal” (Hill 1993: 315) and having an ‘impact’ (Ginsberg 2001) on other member states or other international organisations. In a more comprehensive definition, Joseph Jupille and James Caporaso define four key elements of actorness: “external recognition” by other actors, “authority” in terms of competence to act, “autonomy” (especially from member states) and “cohesion” (1998). These elements were further developed by Mathias Jopp and Peter Schlotter (2007, 11 -12), which argued that an actor needs to have the following six minimum characteristics:

1. a general orientation towards shared values and principles
2. the capability to set political priorities and formulate consistent policies
3. the capability to interact effectively and coherently with other actors in the international system
4. the availability of political instruments and the capacity to utilize them
5. the legitimacy for reaching foreign policy decisions and for setting priorities
6. the recognition of one’s own status as an actor by other actors

Charlotte Bretherton and John Vogler (2006) defined actorness has a combination of ‘opportunity’ (the ideas and developments and the international system level), ‘presence’ (the “EU’s ability by virtue of its existence to shape the perceptions, expectations and behaviour of others”) and ‘capability’, which refers to “the internal context of EU external

action – the availability of policy instruments and understandings about the Union’s ability to utilize these instruments, in response to opportunity and/or to capitalize on presence” (ibid: 24). Both authors see “the ability to formulate effective policies”, the “shared commitment to a set of overarching values” and the “availability of appropriate policy instruments” (diplomatic, economic and military) as the key elements of an actor’s ‘capability’ (ibid: 29-35). This highlights the explicit influence of Gunnar Sjöstedt’s approach to ‘actor capability’ on Bretherton and Vogler’s conceptualization of *capability*.

Finally, a strong trend in recent research on the EU’s role as an international actor focused on the constructivist dimension of the EU’s international identity and identity promotion (e.g. Manners and Whitman 2003). Manners and Whitman define international identity as “an attempt to think about how the EU is constructed, constituted and represented internationally” (2003: 383). Thus, the key aspect of identity and identity-formation is an important part of an international actor.

The European Union as an International Actor in the Field of Global Education Diplomacy

Following from the above discussion, we can define the European Union as an Educational Diplomacy Actor as an entity that has the capability, autonomy, authority and cohesion to develop instruments and policies (separate from its member states) that have an impact on other entities, both materially but also in terms of identity formation. Furthermore, as an educational diplomatic actor, the EU relies on communication channels and needs to mobilise resources that can be applied through the classical diplomacy tools of negotiation, representation and communication. In addition, transformative tools of ‘capacity-building’ play as much an important role as the more nuanced tools of soft power through the creation of norms, standards, values and ideas. It is with this working definition, that we attempt to further explore the role and fields of activities of the EU as an Actor in Global Education Diplomacy.

The European dimension of higher education: policy development and relevance

This section provides a comprehensive review of the evolution of EU educational policies since 1957 and external educational diplomacy since the Fall of the Berlin Wall. We seek to

demonstrate that as the EU developed educational policies as an important autonomous tool (in terms of enhancing also its actorness) it received at the same time strong push-back from member states (contesting EU actorness particularly during the 1990s). At the same time, the Commission managed to carve out a new role through educational programmes in terms of external capacity-building and transformative power towards the post-Soviet space. Thus, we seek to highlight the evolution from EU-internal focus of education policies to the external dimension of what then becomes 'EU Educational Diplomacy' trying to influence countries outside the EU and spreading values and norms through diplomatic actorness

Early Beginnings of EU-Internal Education Policies

Although educational policy has never been at the core of European integration in its early stages, and took later on its own rather parallel course from the standard decision-making process, it is worth mentioning that references of a 'vocational training policy' were embedded in the very founding treaty of Rome establishing the European Economic Community back in 1957. Article 128 instructs the Council to act on a proposal from the Commission to *"lay down general principles for implementing a common vocational training policy capable of contributing to the harmonious development both of the national economies and of the common market (EEC Treaty of Rome, 1957)"*. The ensuing Council decision of 1963 establishes ten principles that would guide the implementation of a common vocational training policy introducing *inter alia* the concepts of continuous formation (training and retraining), trainer and instructor training, and vocational exchanges through study seminars or study and stays at vocational training institutions (Council of the EEC, 1963).

University cooperation was considered to be one of the natural starting points. As early as 1969, the position of the European Parliament was that *"Europeanisation of universities is essential, as it is the foundation for a true cultural Community"* (European Parliament, 1969). Decades after the fundamental principle of freedom of movement was embedded in the Rome Treaty establishing the EEC, student and staff mobility in Europe remained very low, hampered by a myriad of practical barriers (such as compatibility, access, recognition).

It would still take more than a decade for a Council meeting on educational matters to take place. When this happened, however, education was finally given an institutional setting by the education ministers of the – then – 12 Member States, who outlined the principles for cooperation in educational matters. The four-point document confirms the need to institute European cooperation in the field of education and its progressive achievement, outlining seven priority spheres of action (Council of the EEC, 1974). The resolution called for coordination among higher education institutions and mutual recognition of diplomas, and the removal of any obstacles and social barriers to the free movement of teachers, students and research workers. Finally, the resolution sets up an Education Committee to foster action in these fields, bringing together representatives of the Member States and the Commission. Concrete actions to achieve substantial progress were followed-up with the 1976 Council resolution comprising the first action programme in the field of education (Council of the EEC, 1976). However, since education was such a sensitive topic, a top-down ‘community method’ would have been nothing but a recipe for disaster; instead, more could be achieved by cultivating cooperation between universities through joint programmes (such as the Joint Study Programme Scheme funded by the Commission) promoting mobility and supporting mutual recognition of diplomas between individual institutions (Neave, 1984).

The 1980s became a turning point in European educational policy-making. With the demise of the late-1970s ‘Eurosclerosis’, fresh drive for advancing European integration brought back the idea of relaunching European higher education cooperation at the same time as the EU established itself as a ‘civilian power’ through economic and diplomatic cooperation and the promotion of the international rule of law. Following-up on a request of the 1976 Council resolution, the Commission established in 1980 the Education Information Network in Europe (Euridyce), aimed at facilitating European cooperation in the field of lifelong learning by providing information to its members, and producing relevant studies on issues of common interest. Arion, a programme facilitating study visits to other countries by school managers and administrators enabled genuine people-to-people contacts for decision-makers in higher education, driving the idea of advancing EU awareness and identity-building through enabling the creation of networks. PETRA, or the “Community action programme for the vocational training of young people and their preparation for adult and

working life” was adopted in 1987 by the Council, giving all young people the opportunity to have a one or two-year of vocational training in addition to compulsory education (Council, 1987); a similar programme, “Youth for Europe” offered initial training for young people and youth exchanges. Several other like programmes on vocational training such as Lingua, Commett (university-enterprise cooperation), FORCE or Eurotecnet were introduced alongside, to allow the European Commission to advance its internal soft power and identity-building.

Yet perhaps the most significant achievement was the launching of the “European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students” (Erasmus) programme in 1987. Building on the experience of vocational training programmes, the Commission issued a proposal in December 1985 to develop the most ambitious programme for student mobility, with a proposed budget of 175 million ECU (European Currency Unit) and a target of 10% of students in the first three years (1987-1989). Due to fundamental disagreements over its legal basis and budget, 18 months of tough negotiations ensued (European Communities, 2006). The programme was finally adopted following the Council decision of 15 June 1987, and subsequently renewed, becoming (three decades later) the flagship of European educational exchange programmes. Here the European Commission underlined the actorship criteria of resource mobilisation and impact through coherent policies, taking advantage of the international cooperation opportunities. In its original design, the programme envisaged three main areas of action: university cooperation through network development, inter-university collaboration through programme development, financial assistance for mobility schemes, and support for recognition of qualifications for study periods completed in another state (Council Decision 327, 1987).

A European dimension in higher education was an old echo of all policy initiatives, with a long-standing endorsement from universities across Europe: as early as the 1948 the European Congress in The Hague called for dedication to the study and research of the European integration process at university and regional level. The Commission’s response came in 1990 with the introduction of the Jean Monnet action, a programme aimed at developing and enhancing the teaching of European integration by supporting the introduction of Chairs, Centres of Excellence and permanent courses and modules in

European integration history, law, business studies, and political science. This initiative would allow the EU to spread awareness, the norms and values as well as a certain level of EU-identification in target countries through dedicated institution-building and communication.

The growing competence of the Commission in educational matters at the end of the 1980s was unavoidably met with an equally growing fear from the member states of losing their own prerogatives in a matter deemed to be of national competence (Martens et al., 2004). The spirit of Art. 128 of the Rome Treaty would eventually give way to the subsidiarity spirit of the Maastricht Treaty in the early 1990s with Art. 126 and 127 putting back the national educational system in the lead, and going as far as excluding harmonisation, and limiting to QMV-based recommendations (Art. 126(4), TEU, 1992). Here, the EU faced for the first time serious push-back and a challenge to its autonomy vis-à-vis the member state – a key requirement for actorness.

The limits of the ‘community method’ called for creative solutions, and towards the end of the 1990s this solution came to be known as the Sorbonne Declaration, paving the way for an ‘open method of coordination’ (OMC) in European higher education. Education ministers from four European countries (France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom) gathered in Paris in May 1998 to issue what became known as the ‘Sorbonne Declaration’ committing themselves to the creation of a European Area of Higher Education and extending the invitation to other European states to join this objective (Sorbonne Declaration, 1998). What became known as the ‘Bologna Process’ was formalised only a year after when 29 education ministers from European countries seized the momentum and signed the Bologna Declaration pledging to integrate European higher education systems along the lines of competitiveness, comparability and compatibility. This would be achieved by taking concrete steps along six objectives established in the Bologna Process: i. degree recognition, ii. two-cycle systems, iii. establishing the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), iv. promoting mobility, v. cooperation in quality assurance, and vi. promoting European studies. Furthermore, a follow-up meeting would take place every two years to advance the agenda and evaluate progress. In 2001 the European Commission was invited to join as full member, and the Council of Europe as observer, allowing the EU to play an important role in

enhancing its reach as an educational diplomatic actor. For the first time, the Communiqué includes a point on the importance of enhancing the attractiveness of European higher education to students from Europe and other parts of the world (Prague Declaration, 2001). In parallel, the European Council issued the bold Lisbon Strategy to deal with the challenges of the new millennium by making the European economy the world's most advanced knowledge-based economy by 2010, an endeavour that even though largely failed to materialise, gave an impetus nonetheless, as it managed to download some of its provisions onto the parallel OMC process.

From EU-Internal Policies Towards EU-External Policies: The Emergence of EU Educational Diplomacy

An event of great political magnitude would shift the pattern in educational programme development at the end of the 1980s. The fall of the Berlin Wall created new political realities in Central and Eastern Europe to which the EEC would need to give proper response. The conclusions of the presidency of the European Council acknowledged that need, and prepared the foundations for a new programme targeting precisely this newly liberated part of Europe (European Council, 1989). The Council picked this up as early as May 1990, when it established a 'trans-European mobility scheme for university studies' – TEMPUS (Council Decision 90/233/EEC). The rationale for creating a completely new programme framework and not opening the existing ones to Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) was based on the conviction that specific needs could be better served with dedicated financial support (European Commission, 2006). Here, quick decision-making related to resource mobilisation underlined the EU's actorness in the beginnings of these policies.

The idea behind TEMPUS was to reform higher education systems in CEE by encouraging structured cooperation between EEC and CEE higher education institutions through consortia, and joint curricula development in prioritized subject fields. Parallels can be seen here to the concept of the EU as a 'Transformative Power', utilizing capacity-building and resources within the context of the international 'opportunity' of cooperation with the post-Soviet space. In subsequent years, the programme was renewed and geographically expanded, indicating growing influence and reach of EU educational diplomacy in the near

abroad. While the initial 10 CEE countries became members of the EU and could no longer benefit from the programme, Tempus was gradually introduced to the former Soviet space, the Western Balkans, the southern neighbourhood, Russia and Central Asia. After the 4th Tempus programme (2007-2013) it was included in the Erasmus+ framework.

Building on the Erasmus programme, and trying to address some of the perception imbalances among European universities, the European Commission invoked in 2002 Art. 149(3) of the TEU (Nice consolidated version) stipulating that “the Community and the Member States shall foster cooperation with third countries and the competent international organisations in the field of education” to put forward a proposal to set a new programme aimed at improving cooperation with third countries in higher education: Erasmus World. The ambition was clear and underlined the expansion of actorness not only through states, but also through an inter-organisational dimension.

The new action would address the emerging needs to higher education in Europe by ensuring that it acquires a degree of attractiveness in the wider world in line with the aims of the Bologna Declaration (Commission, 2002). Following a year of negotiations with the European Parliament and the Council the new programme was established “for the enhancement of quality in higher education and the promotion of intercultural understanding through cooperation with third countries”, under a slightly different name: Erasmus Mundus (Decision OJ L 345, 2003). Successful negotiations by the Commission highlighted the importance of internal and external diplomatic elements: the ability to negotiate successfully internally, in order to enhance its impact in the field of educational diplomacy externally. The programme envisages four priority actions: master’s courses offered by a consortium of at least three universities in three different European countries, scholarships (again at master’s level) for students and scholars coming from third countries, partnership support for third country higher education institutions and measures enhancing the attractiveness of Europe as an educational destination. For the first time an educational initiative of the European Commission was not attaching an exhaustive list of countries eligible to join the programme, signalling a departure from the ‘Eurocentric’ approach that had dominated the previous decades and the beginning of a new exploratory phase (European Commission, 2006) at the global level. The programme was renewed for a second

phase (2009-2013) and had its scope extended to include the Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Window scheme and cooperation with industrialised countries.

At the end of the 2007-2013 cycle, the European Parliament and the Council adopted a new programme framework merging seven previous programmes and boosting a 40% of the combined budgets. 'Erasmus+' (2014-2020) would become the flagship of all Union action in the field of education, training, youth and sport. It would include inter alia "education and training at all levels, in a lifelong learning perspective, including school education (Comenius), higher education (Erasmus), international higher education (Erasmus Mundus), vocational education and training (Leonardo da Vinci) and adult learning (Grundtvig)" (Art. 1(3) Reg. 1288/2013). Furthermore, Art. 4 of the same regulation states that "the Programme shall include an international dimension aimed at supporting the Union's external action, including its development objectives, through cooperation between the Union and partner countries". This was the first strong statement that education diplomacy was an important pillar of EU foreign policy and vital for promoting European values. European educational policy making started with modest aims in the early days of the Rome Treaty and pursued both institutional and informal avenues, and, while Eurocentric at first, it managed to develop a global approach in a comprehensive policy framework, building up the EU's actorness in the field of global education policy.

Ad Hoc Bottom Up Approaches: Model European Union Simulations

An important tool for advancing awareness of European Union policies and the difficulties of cooperation between EU member states in core policy areas has been the emergence of so-called "Model EU Simulations" (Guasti, Munro and Niemann 2015). Borrowing its concept from worldwide "Model United Nations Simulations" where groups of high school or university students represent a country and have to defend a negotiation position on certain policy issues, Model EU Simulations have become a popular educational tool across Europe, the US and other parts of the world for teaching and training students in an applied manner the core principles, frameworks and 'ways of doing things' in an EU-policy context. Even though most initiatives are not funded by the European Commission by default (although organising institutions can apply for funding under several EU educational programme schemes), MEU simulations have helped to advance an EU educational

diplomacy agenda by heightening awareness and in some cases even identity-building outcomes among young people (Runz 2015). The Model EU Simulation organized by the State University of New York (SUNY) and European partner universities, for example, brings together each year 150 students from the US and European countries to not only advance knowledge of European institutions, issue areas and policies but also to foster transatlantic understandings, exchanges and networks. In this way, awareness of the European Union, core policy challenges and values are advanced through network-building and face-to-face diplomacy. While selected simulations receive EU funding (particularly through the Jean Monnet project funding schemes) the majority of Model EU Simulations are not directly funded by European Union institutions and therefore represent an interesting example of bottom-up initiatives that contribute to the wider goals of European Union Educational Diplomacy.

Inter-organizational Dimension – how does the EU influence OECD, UNESCO in global education policies

A further dimension of European Union Educational Diplomacy lies at the inter-organizational level. The European Union increasingly plays a significant role in interacting with other international organizations and entities engaged in shaping international educational policies. The most prominent example is the way in which the European Commission interacts with the OECD in the field of educational standardisation across Europe. In addition, the European Union increasingly cooperated with UNESCO in educational policies and the Council of Europe. This dimension of inter-organizational influence and impact will require further research in the context of mapping and understanding the wider institutions influence of the European Union as an Educational Diplomatic Actor.

Conclusion and Future Research Agenda

This paper started off with a two-fold aim: to be a genuine mapping exercise for EU educational policy development from the old times of the Rome Treaty until today. By doing

so, its distinctiveness could be exposed, along with its incremental advances in the realm of European education: from the shy attempts of a common vocational education policy, to the present-day bold initiatives of higher education capacity building or the establishment of an EU Centre network at top universities around the world. Its flexible *modus operandi* allowed it to shift when member states backing became problematic (in such a delicate policy area) yet it successfully managed to ride the intergovernmental wave that led to the Bologna Process and shaped what is today the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Skilful internal negotiations by the European Commission allowed the Commission to build up EU actorness in the field of global education diplomacy vis-à-vis the member states. Furthermore, and building on the success of the Erasmus programme, it positively managed to push the European boundaries of student and staff exchanges, and reach a global scholarly audience. And though doing so, the EU is revealed as an entity that has the capability, autonomy, authority and indeed cohesion to develop own policies, instruments and communication channels that can in turn impact other entities and influence their identity formation. There are several aspects this mapping exercise have highlighted that perhaps are worth further exploration. Among them, (two rather opposed approaches) the impact of the top down higher education capacity building initiatives in the European neighbourhood on higher education institutional reform, and the effects of the bottom up Model EU simulations on identity formation among young students. These, and indeed many others exposed above, deserve a deeper investigation to better understand the nature and the manifold effects of the EU's actorness in global educational diplomacy and the wider world.

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