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# The European Union – an Expanding Security Community?

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### **The European Union – an Expanding Security Community?**

**Vincent Laporte**

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## About the Author

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## Abstract

This paper investigates why and how the geographical scope of the security community centered around the European Union (EU) is expanding. It starts from the assumption that the EU itself is a 'tightly-coupled mature pluralistic security community'. The analysis of the expansion of this peaceful area is based on the theoretical framework first designed by Karl Deutsch and later developed by Emmanuel Adler and Michael Barnett. Contrary to the logic of the adage '*si vis pacem para bellum*', I argue that the security community is expanding because the EU's own origins and self-perception are driven by an ambition to create lasting peace. The key mechanisms I explore are the EU's enlargement and neighborhood policies, which are best understood when analyzed against the concept of concentric circles: the regional EU-centered security community is a multi-speed security community, stronger at its core and weaker as it spreads towards its margins.

*One of the strengths of the EU is the way it brings its member states together, establishing a habit of co-operation and trust. We would like our neighbors to share more fully in that process.<sup>1</sup>*

## **Introduction: an ever wider peaceful Europe – from theory to practice**

“Never before in world history have a number of sovereign states, of which some were formerly mortal enemies, freely decided to collaborate within new institutions that are both supranational and intergovernmental, and to jointly exercise their sovereignty through an interstate and transnational process rooted in their civil spheres.”<sup>2</sup> This paper deals with the question why and how the geographical scope of the ‘security community’ which has the European Union (EU) at its core is expanding. I refer to the geographical area concerned – comprised of the EU and of its neighbors – as the ‘EU security community’, since I argue that it is the EU as a core which is progressively expanding its security community towards its peripheries.

Following the theoretical work of Deutsch,<sup>3</sup> as interpreted by Adler and Barnett, “[s]tates can become embedded in a set of social relations that can be properly understood as a community. Sometimes a community of states will establish pacific relations, sometimes a community will not. But those that do have formed a *security community*”.<sup>4</sup> Countries belonging to a particular security community do not use war (or the threat thereof) to settle their differences. The same scholars have developed a variety of typologies aiming at differentiating several kinds of security communities, based on the depth of their integration.<sup>5</sup>

Progressively built upon the desire to put an end to the succession of wars on the continent, the EU is today the institutional embodiment of the creation of a common identity for European states and populations. Integrated more and more deeply since World War II, the latter do not use, or threaten to use, collective violence to resolve their disputes, thus making the EU a ‘security community’. It is a ‘pluralistic’

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<sup>1</sup> W. Hague, “A bold offer to our southern neighbors”, *European Voice*, 14 April 2011.

<sup>2</sup> M. Telò, *International Relations: A European Perspective*, Farnham, Ashgate, 2009, p. 3.

<sup>3</sup> K. Deutsch *et al.*, *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area: International Organization in the Light of Historical Experience*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1957.

<sup>4</sup> E. Adler & M. Barnett, “A framework for the study of security communities”, in E. Adler & M. Barnett (eds.), *Security Communities*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 37 [emphasis added].

<sup>5</sup> See *ibid.* and Deutsch *et al.*, *op.cit.* For a summary, see V. Laporte, *The European Union, an Expanding Security Community?*, Master’s thesis, Bruges, College of Europe, 2011, pp. 6-12.

one because it is not governed by a single government and a fully shared set of rules. Moreover, the EU security community is in the 'mature' phase of its development because of the extent and nature of the interactions among its members. Finally, it is a 'tightly-coupled' one because of the existence of an overarching security-related policy cooperation. As a result, the EU itself can be classified as a 'tightly-coupled mature pluralistic security community'.<sup>6</sup>

Around the EU, a "European zone of peace"<sup>7</sup> has been developing. This is due to the fact that the EU's neighborhood has progressively become a successful security community, where states and populations have come to share common norms of behavior and understandings. Deutsch identifies such a phenomenon as "dependable expectations of peaceful change".<sup>8</sup>

I argue that the security community is expanding because the EU's origins and self-perception are driven by the ambition to create lasting peace. The key mechanisms I explore are the EU's enlargement and neighborhood policies, which are best understood when analyzed against the concept of concentric circles: the regional EU-centered security community is a multi-speed security community, stronger at its core and weaker as it spreads towards its margins.

My goal is to analyze the modalities through which this peace-prone environment is spreading throughout the European continent. In order to do so, I assess the reasons why the EU security community is an expanding one by addressing the motivations behind the EU's policies towards its neighbors. In this respect, I emphasize the peace-driven ambition of the 'founding fathers' of the European integration project and link it to the more pragmatic underpinnings of the EU's self-perception as a security actor in its neighborhood.

### **Reasons for the geographical expansion of the EU security community**

The geographical expansion of the EU security community aims at bringing long-lasting peace to the continent. It follows two complementary rationales: a conceptual one, as well as a pragmatic one.

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<sup>6</sup> For more details, see Laporte, *op.cit.*, pp. 26-31.

<sup>7</sup> E. Kavalski, *Extending the European Security Community: Constructing Peace in the Balkans*, London, Tauris Academic Studies, 2008, p. 4.

<sup>8</sup> Deutsch *et al.*, *op.cit.*, p. 5.

*The EU and peace promotion in its neighborhood – a conceptual perspective*

A recurring debate about the EU's motivations for action in its neighborhood is the 'altruistic' versus 'self-interested' actor dichotomy. Does the EU aim at promoting peace by shaping its neighborhood through peaceful and ideational processes or does it want to further its own preferences by using any available instruments, including coercive ones?

The EU as an altruistic actor

From the official rhetoric emanating from a number of EU documents, a strong commitment to export peace-prone practices to the neighboring countries can be distilled. As noted by Smith, "[t]he factors driving such heavy EU engagement in its neighborhood are fairly obvious ones, including [...] a shared sense of responsibility for repairing the Cold War split of Europe".<sup>9</sup> It seems that as an effective security community, the EU feels that it has a duty to help and show its neighbors how to interact peacefully. Following the idea that the European integration project was a revolt against Europe's own violent past,<sup>10</sup> one ought to see the geographical expansion of the EU security community as a way of fully implementing this ambition throughout the continent.

Nevertheless, the limits of such an approach need to be stressed. The idea that the EU behaves in a purely altruistic manner towards its neighbors, as suggested by the EU's official rhetoric, overlooks the fact security-related issues are deeply embedded in the Union's way of thinking. Moreover, the EU has put more emphasis on the development of peaceful interactions through a kind of 'hub-and-spoke' model, where the EU is at the center spreading the norms of 'good' behavior. Even though this argument will have to be nuanced, one can see in this logic – as well as in the limited promotion by the EU of regional cooperation initiatives of which it would not be part – a willingness to maintain control over the way in which these peaceful interactions evolve.

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<sup>9</sup> K. Smith, "Enlargement and European order", in C. Hill & M. Smith (eds.), *International Relations and the European Union*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 271.

<sup>10</sup> O. Waever, "Insecurity, security, and asecurity in the West European non-war community", in E. Adler & M. Barnett (eds.), *Security Communities*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 90.

## The EU as a 'peaceful hegemon'

An alternative explanation is the claim that the EU is actually expanding for its own benefit, as any given institutional setting has an inherent tendency to try to broaden its scope of action and influence. This notion is, in fact, corroborated by various statements in key EU documents, most notably in the 2003 European Security Strategy (ESS): "It is in the European interest that countries on our borders are well-governed. Neighbors who are engaged in violent conflict [...] on its borders all pose problems for Europe".<sup>11</sup> According to Ian Manners, the EU ought to be considered a "normative power":

Conceptions of the EU as either a civilian power or a military power, both located in discussions of capabilities, need to be augmented with a focus on normative power of an ideational nature characterized by common principles and a willingness to disregard Westphalian conventions. [The EU's] ability to shape conceptions of 'normal' in international relations needs to be given much greater attention.<sup>12</sup>

Taking this into consideration, one could then be tempted to view the EU as a 'peaceful empire'. However, this might prove to be a contradiction in terms. In light of historical experiences, it is difficult to conceive of an empire's geographical expansion as being peaceful. The way out of this conceptual deadlock is straightforward: if the notions of normative power and empire are combined, the contradiction fades away. As suggested by Petiteville, the concepts of 'soft power' and 'attractive power' brought together by Nye are of particular relevance in this respect.<sup>13</sup> The point here for the EU is to exert its power of attraction towards its neighbors through the norms and values which constitute its '*raison d'être*'. According to Nye, the EU – as a symbol of the unification of Europe – carries in itself an important degree of legitimacy as a 'soft power'.<sup>14</sup>

I believe that to a certain degree the EU acts in a self-interested way when expanding its security community towards its neighbors, who are receptive to the

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<sup>11</sup> European Council, *European Security Strategy – A secure Europe in a better world*, Brussels, 12 December 2003, p. 7.

<sup>12</sup> I. Manners, "Normative Power Europe: a contradiction in terms?", *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 2002, vol. 40, no. 2, p. 239.

<sup>13</sup> See F. Petiteville, "Le rôle international de l'UE et la théorie des relations internationales", in F. Mérand & R. Schwok (eds.), *L'Union européenne et la sécurité internationale : Théories et pratiques*, Genève, Bruylant-Academia, 2009, p. 65.

<sup>14</sup> See J. Nye, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics*, New York, Public Affairs, 2004, pp. 6 & 77.



EU's intentions and tend to welcome them. On this point, one should nevertheless bear in mind the risk for the EU to find itself entrapped by what Kennedy referred to as "imperial overstretch".<sup>15</sup> Following this logic, there is an inherent pattern in the geographical expansion of an empire. The problem arises when this expansion exceeds the absorption capacity of the empire. If one is to see the EU as such, then opening the debate of imperial overstretch makes sense – particularly with regards to the enlargement process, as pointed out by Winkler when assessing the risk of formally integrating Turkey into the EU.<sup>16</sup>

However, this additional difficulty can be overcome by looking at the EU as a peaceful empire 'by invitation': the EU's neighbors seek and welcome their integration within the EU security community. Given the fact that the EU is the dominant economic and political power on the European continent, it is indeed possible to describe the EU as a 'peaceful hegemon'. This brings us back to Adler and Barnett who suggest that "social learning frequently occurs through a communicative exchange *in the context of power asymmetries*".<sup>17</sup> The result of this intellectual construction leads me to finally share Balfour's opinion:

Inconsistency remains one of the major setbacks in the EU's self-portrayal as a principled actor. The literature on the subject assumes a dichotomy between principles and interests [...], an assumption that hides an implication that principles would reflect some 'genuineness' of the EU whereas interests would be inherently 'selfish'. [...] [T]his dichotomy appears tenuous, and the relationship between 'principles' and 'interests' should perhaps be challenged or seen on a continuum.<sup>18</sup>

### *The expansion of the European integration project – an empirical perspective*

This sub-section addresses the reasons underpinning the geographical expansion of the EU security community to its neighbors through a more pragmatic approach. As such, it logically brings my analysis closer to the subsequent section, analyzing the mechanisms of this expansion. Both enlargement and neighborhood policies are means to respond to security-related historical evolutions.

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<sup>15</sup> See P. Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Power from 1500 to 2000*, New York, Random House, 1987.

<sup>16</sup> H.A. Winkler, "Wir erweitern uns zu Tode", *Die Zeit*, no. 4602, 2002.

<sup>17</sup> Adler & Barnett, *op.cit.*, p. 45 [emphasis added].

<sup>18</sup> R. Balfour, "Principles of democracy and human rights", in S. Lucarelli & I. Manners (eds.), *Values and Principles in European Union Foreign Policy*, London, Routledge, 2006, p. 115.

## The EU as an inherently expanding project – the experience of enlargement

Creating a 'European zone of peace' was at the core of the ambition of the 'founding fathers' of the European integration project, which, from an institutional perspective, led to the creation of the EU.<sup>19</sup> In this respect, the integration process remains incomplete as long as it does not incorporate all 'European states'.<sup>20</sup> The point here is straightforward: enlargement has always been considered to be the most efficient mechanism to pacify interstate relations on the European continent.

Consequently, the expansion of the EU security community drives enlargement. These two elements – the deepening of the integration process and the widening through successive enlargements – ought to be seen as mutually reinforcing. As stated in the ESS,

Europe has never been so prosperous, so secure nor so free. The violence of the first half of the 20th Century has given way to a period of peace and stability unprecedented in European history. [...] Successive enlargements are making a reality of the vision of a united and peaceful continent.<sup>21</sup>

## The EU as a regional security actor – the Western Balkans experience

It is, however, not only through successive enlargements that the EU has been trying to expand its security community. It is here necessary to distinguish between the expansion of the EU *per se* (only through enlargements) and the expansion of the security community, which has the EU at its core.

Through mechanisms that will be explored in the next section, the EU is expanding its security community in a way that is coherent with its willingness to act and to be perceived as a regional security actor. The development of the EU's involvement in the Western Balkans is the best example for the claim that the EU's actions are based on a mix of the two abovementioned conceptual approaches which, ultimately, enable it to be a regional security actor.<sup>22</sup> I chose the case of the Western Balkans to illustrate my argument because the situation there during the 1990s provides the

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<sup>19</sup> See Laporte, *op.cit.*, pp. 19-22.

<sup>20</sup> One could then link, *in fine*, the expansion of the EU security community to the enlargement of the EU itself – with reference to Article 49 TEU: "Any European State which respects the values referred to in Article 2 and is committed to promoting them may apply to become a member of the Union".

<sup>21</sup> European Council, *op.cit.*, p. 1.

<sup>22</sup> For a detailed analysis, see Kavalski, *op.cit.*, pp. 118-154.

'worst-case scenario' – both in terms of geographical proximity and intensity – of a succession of armed conflicts at the doorsteps of the EU. This experience turned out to be a dramatic failure for the EU and marked a turning point in its action and rhetoric towards its neighbors. Therefore, I argue that the Western Balkans was the region where the EU had – and still has – the strongest motivation to expand its security community. As expressed in the ESS, "Europe still faces security threats and challenges. The outbreak of conflict in the Balkans was a reminder that war has not disappeared from our continent".<sup>23</sup> Moreover, this is a case highlighting the EU's pragmatic rationale since, in its other peripheries, the EU's motives for action are only weaker forms of the same.

In sum, the EU security community tries to expand both in ideational and pragmatic terms. The European Union perceives itself as both a normative power and a peaceful hegemon, thus translating its quest for peace in logics which are at the roots of its successive enlargements and of its willingness to act as a regional security actor in its neighborhood.

### **Mechanisms of the geographical expansion of the EU security community**

This section analyzes how the EU security community is expanding. It aims at answering the 'how' part of my research question. This study will. In order to take into account the different degrees of integration of the neighboring countries within this security community, several case studies, from the most to the least integrated EU's neighbors, are necessary: the Western Balkans, Turkey, the eastern part of the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP), and finally the southern one. This will enable me to look at the tools, patterns, but also limits of this expansion.

Geographically, I limit my study to the countries that are considered to be neighbors of the EU and for which diplomatic relations with the EU and its member states are stable. The latter element *de facto* excludes Belarus, Syria, Libya and Algeria – countries that were supposed to join the ENP framework but have, so far, not agreed to any Action Plan with the EU. I consider these four countries to be outside the EU security community – or at least at its furthest margins. Russia was originally thought to be part of the ENP, but opted out of this policy. I therefore exclude Russia from my

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<sup>23</sup> European Council, *op.cit.*

study and thus avoid the debate over the possible existence of a security community 'from Vancouver to Vladivostok'.<sup>24</sup>

At the other end of the spectrum, I will not examine in great detail the situation of the non-EU countries that have joined the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) – Switzerland and the three non-EU members of the European Economic Area (EEA) (Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein). As these four states are also parties to the Schengen Agreement, I argue that they are almost on an equal footing with the twenty-seven member states of the EU, in the sense that they are at the core of the EU security community. As a result, this study focuses on the candidate and potential candidate countries, as well as the countries being integrated in the framework of the ENP.

Concerning the timeframe of my analysis, I will mainly focus on the post-2004 period because this year corresponds to the first phase of the Eastern enlargement as well as to the operationalization phase of the ENP. Moreover, the objective of my case studies-based approach is to show through which mechanisms the EU security community expands. This will be relevant in order to assess the different depths of this 'multi-speed' security community. I emphasize the 'differentiation' aspect characterizing the EU's approach. Finally, I will remain at a macro level of analysis and I will simply refer to more in-depth studies when available and necessary.

### *Candidates and potential candidates – the enlargement methodology*

As put forward in the ESS Implementation Report: "Within our continent, enlargement continues to be a powerful driver for stability, peace and reform".<sup>25</sup> In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the peace-prone tools at work throughout the enlargement process mechanism, this section examines the cases of the Western Balkans and of Turkey.

#### The Western Balkans – the 'good neighborly relations' criterion

Since the collapse of the former Yugoslavia, stability in the Western Balkans has been of primary concern to the EU. The outbreak of the 1999 Kosovo crisis proved to be a

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<sup>24</sup> This paper does not take into account the role played by NATO in the formation, development and expansion of the contemporary European zone of peace.

<sup>25</sup> Council of the European Union, *Report about the implementation of the European Security Strategy – Providing security in a changing world*, Brussels, 11 December 2008, p. 6.

turning point in this respect. Today, the countries of the region<sup>26</sup> are brought together by the EU in the framework of the Stabilization and Association Process (SAP), with the implementation of individual Stabilization and Association Agreements (SAAs).<sup>27</sup> The path towards accession to the EU itself is at a different stage for each of these countries, ranging from the upcoming accession of Croatia in 2013 to the membership applications of FYROM, Serbia, Montenegro and Albania<sup>28</sup>, without forgetting but also to the 'potential candidate' status of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo.

My argument concerning the integration of the Western Balkans into the EU security community is that the EU has developed two main tools, as emphasized in the ESS Implementation Report: "throughout the region, co-operation and good neighborly relations are indispensable", the latter being a specific kind of conditionality.<sup>29</sup>

The EU used the mechanism of conditionality for all of its enlargements. However, it was more clearly defined at the 1993 Copenhagen European Council and has subsequently been tightly monitored in the build-up to the 2004/2007 Eastern enlargement. The so-called 'Copenhagen criteria', which applicant countries have to meet before joining the EU, concern "[t]he stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities; the existence of a functioning market economy as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union".<sup>30</sup> Conditionality is seen as the key instrument for enlargement, encouraging stability, reforms and development.

In the specific case of the Western Balkans countries, the EU has insisted upon an additional aspect of political conditionality.<sup>31</sup> Its scope goes beyond that laid out at

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<sup>26</sup> Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia, Montenegro, FYROM and Albania. For Kosovo, negotiations on a possible Stabilization Tracking Mechanisms are still ongoing.

<sup>27</sup> The case of Kosovo is more problematic in this respect. Negotiations on a 'Stabilization Tracking Mechanism' started in 2003 and are still ongoing. The EU is divided on the way forward since some EU member states not recognizing Kosovo's independence. The SAAs with Serbia and Bosnia-Herzegovina have been signed but have not yet entered into force. These two countries benefit, however, from Interim Agreements.

<sup>28</sup> Albania applied for EU membership in 2009 but is not yet considered as 'candidate country'.

<sup>29</sup> Council of the European Union, *op. cit.*

<sup>30</sup> European Council, *Conclusions of the Presidency*, SN 180/93, Copenhagen, 21-22 June 1993.

<sup>31</sup> T. Freyburg & S. Richter, "National identity matters: the limited impact of EU political conditionality in the Western Balkans", *Journal of European Public Policy*, vol. 17, no. 2, March 2010, p. 265. Cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia is also part of this political conditionality.

Copenhagen and includes criteria such as “the fight against corruption, social and cultural rights, and *good neighborly relations* among states”.<sup>32</sup> As summarized by Trauner, and as part of an update of the SAP (1997) and of the Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe (1999), this last additional criterion is obviously rooted in the EU’s ambitions to restore peace in the region and to promote regional cooperation.<sup>33</sup> The Western Balkans are today much more integrated into the EU security community framework than they were a decade ago. Once again, I emphasize the fact that the Kosovo crisis was crucial in this evolution.

Turkey – the ‘elephant in the room’?

Moving further South East from the EU, Turkey constitutes a real challenge for the argument according to which the EU is successful in expanding its security community. Its tense relations with Greece – mainly over the Cyprus issue – as well as problematic relations with Armenia, could lead one to think that the EU security community will reach its limit before crossing the Bosphorus. However, I consider that these tensions are unlikely to eventually turn into an armed conflict.<sup>34</sup> Several EU policies towards Turkey are also enabling the country to engage in a more peaceful way with its neighbors. In addition to the key ‘carrot’ of the perspective of EU accession, Turkey already benefits, for example, from a Customs Union Agreement, which aims at integrating EU and Turkish markets.<sup>35</sup> The rules covering the movement of people are, however, much stricter than those applying to a majority of Western Balkan countries, thus limiting the people-to-people interactions between the EU and Turkey. In addition, the debate over a possible Turkish accession to the EU has been harmful for the development of a stronger EU security community in the region. This

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<sup>32</sup> O. Anastasakis, “The EU’s political conditionality in the Western Balkans: towards a more pragmatic approach”, *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, vol. 8, no. 4, December 2008, p. 367 [emphasis added].

<sup>33</sup> F. Trauner, “From membership conditionality to policy conditionality: EU external governance in South Eastern Europe”, *Journal of European Public Policy*, vol. 16, no. 5, 2009, pp. 778-779.

<sup>34</sup> A deep analysis of this issue would exceed the scope of this paper. Nevertheless, it suffices to point to the fact that both Turkey and Greece are members of NATO and thus already embedded in a set of institutional settings providing them with strong incentives to settle their bilateral disputes peacefully.

<sup>35</sup> Since 1996, most goods can circulate freely between Turkey and the EU. However, this customs union does not cover agriculture, services or public procurement.

problem can be apprehended through the suggestion made by some EU leaders and scholars to create a so-called 'privileged partnership'.<sup>36</sup>

Turkey, as a Western-oriented, secular state with [...] a significant geostrategic position appeared to be a natural partner for the Community. The natural dilemma for the European elites, a dilemma which has been evident right from the beginning and has been carried on to the present day, is whether to treat Turkey as a natural "insider" or an important "outsider" in the context of the on-going European integration project.<sup>37</sup>

This 'insider' versus 'outsider' controversy touches upon Turkish accession to the EU *per se*. Nevertheless, it should clearly be considered as a secondary aspect of Turkey's integration with the wider EU security community. And yet, Turkey's integration with the EU security community is not as deep as that of the Western Balkans, even though Turkey is already a candidate whereas some Western Balkans countries remain only potential candidates. This fact diminishes the importance of the candidate versus potential candidate dichotomy in the framework of my analysis. The relevant distinction is the geographical one I suggested by separating Turkey from the Western Balkans.

#### *ENP countries – integration without accession?*

As summarized in the ESS, the integration of candidates and potential candidates with the core of the EU security community

increases our security but also brings the EU closer to troubled areas. Our task is to promote a ring of well governed countries to the East of the European Union and on the borders of the Mediterranean with whom we can enjoy close and cooperative relations [...]. It is not in our interest that enlargement should create new dividing lines in Europe.<sup>38</sup>

Slightly further away from the EU, there are numerous neighboring countries that do not have the status of candidate or potential candidate for EU membership. They have been brought together under the umbrella of the European Neighborhood

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<sup>36</sup> For instance, the German Chancellor Angela Merkel or the former French President Nicolas Sarkozy.

<sup>37</sup> Z. Önis, "An awkward partnership: Turkey's relations with the European Union in comparative historical perspective", *Journal of European Integration History*, vol. 7, no. 1, 2001, p. 105.

<sup>38</sup> European Council, *European Security Strategy*, *op.cit.*, p. 8.

Policy.<sup>39</sup> I divide the analysis of the ENP peace-prone mechanism into two distinct areas, considering successively its eastern and southern parts.

The Eastern Partnership dilemma – pre-accession or buffer zone?

The Eastern Partnership – within the ENP – gathers Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and the Ukraine. According to the ESS Implementation Report, its “goal is to strengthen the prosperity and stability of these countries, and thus the security of the EU”.<sup>40</sup> Interestingly, several tools developed in this framework deal with the mobility of people, that is, with strengthening their interactions. Moldova and Ukraine could be seen as a ‘natural’ zone of expansion for the EU security community. However, no official explicit perspective of EU membership has been granted to them. Their strategic importance for European security is, however, acknowledged by this Report, insofar as these two countries need to peacefully resolve the Transnistrian conflict.<sup>41</sup> In this respect, the EU supports the OSCE’s ‘5+2’ talks and promotes confidence-building measures. Overall, this region seems rather stable, especially compared to the South Caucasus. On that point, “new concerns have arisen over the so-called ‘frozen conflicts’” in the South Caucasus.<sup>42</sup> The conflicts in question regard Georgia (Abkhazia and South Ossetia) as well as Armenia and Azerbaijan (Nagorno-Karabakh). German and Moustakis rightly observe that

[t]he unresolved dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan [...] is one of the most worrying unresolved conflicts in the Caucasus region [...]. Furthermore, in a similar fashion to the on-going separatist disputes in Georgia, the protracted conflict undermines [...] the development of a wider security community.<sup>43</sup>

Consequently, the EU decided to engage in this region in order to encourage the development of peaceful interactions among these three countries. This is particularly obvious in their inclusion in the ENP and in the appointment of an EU

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<sup>39</sup> Article 8(1) TEU stipulates that: “The Union shall develop a special relationship with neighboring countries, aiming to establish an area of prosperity and good neighborliness, founded on the values of the Union and characterized by close and peaceful relations based on co-operation”.

<sup>40</sup> Council of the European Union, *op.cit.*, p. 10.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> T. German & F. Moustakis, *Securing Europe: Western Interventions Towards a New Security Community*, London, Tauris Academic Studies, 2009, p. 129.



Special Representative for the region in 2003.<sup>44</sup> The Georgian-Russian armed conflict during the summer of 2008 excludes even more clearly Russia from my definition of the EU security community. In the framework of the Eastern Partnership, the problematic relationship between Armenia and Azerbaijan is the most serious challenge to be dealt with.

However, the EU remains rather silent and distant with regards to the potential conflicts in this region, and I consider that this is the best illustration of the way in which the remoteness of the perspective of EU membership hinders the strengthening of the EU security community. Stuck between the potential prospect of EU accession in a distant future and the mere position of a buffer zone between the EU and Russia, the countries of the Eastern Partnership are less integrated into the EU security community than the Western Balkans and Turkey.

The ambiguity of peace promotion in the Mediterranean – a security/democracy bargain?

Compared to the eastern part of the European continent, the situation is even less clear in the EU's southern neighborhood. It is widely recognized that this region is not meant to become part – even in a remote future – of the EU.<sup>45</sup> The 'carrot' of membership is not available there when spreading the EU security community. However, as pointed out by Furness, "the EU has tried to encourage southern neighbors to engage in 'comprehensive' regional security cooperation based on a model reliant on multilateralism, rules and 'shared values'".<sup>46</sup> Through the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) and then the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM), the EU has been trying to foster dialog and cooperation among its southern neighbors.<sup>47</sup>

Since its launch in 1995, the EMP's primary objective has been the development of a "political and security partnership to create an area of peace and stability".<sup>48</sup> Additionally, as expressed in the ESS Implementation Report, the UfM – launched in

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<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.

<sup>45</sup> Morocco submitted an application to join the then-European Communities in 1987. It was rejected on the grounds that Morocco was not a 'European state'.

<sup>46</sup> M. Furness, "Exporting the security community? The EU and regional security cooperation in the Mediterranean", *Studia Diplomatica*, vol. 61, no. 4, 2008, pp. 5-6.

<sup>47</sup> The EMP and the UfM do not have the same membership but will nevertheless be treated together, since their overall security-related objectives are the same.

<sup>48</sup> Balfour, *op.cit.*, p. 124.

July 2008 – provides a “renewed political moment to pursue this with our southern partners, through a wide-ranging agenda, including on [...] migration. Addressing security threats [...] will be an important part”.<sup>49</sup> Yet, as Balfour argues, “[r]egional security and cooperation have been held hostage by the long-standing conflicts over Palestine-Israel and the Western Sahara”.<sup>50</sup> These two conflicts are a central challenge to the expansion of the EU security community beyond the European continent. In both cases, the statehood of one of the parties is controversial and the use of large-scale violence is still a concrete prospect.

Moreover, the expansion of the EU security community in this region is hindered by a dilemma that the EU, as a norm exporter, is unable to solve. I argue that – in this region especially – promoting peace and stability on the one hand and democracy and the rule of law on the other, might prove to be difficult to reconcile.<sup>51</sup> As pointed out by Balfour, “it has been argued that security and stability are the central priorities of the EU member states in the region: political change towards democratization was perceived as potentially destabilizing and would thus be subordinated to the maintenance of regional stability”.<sup>52</sup>

The ENP is meant to secure the EU’s neighborhood without necessitating further institutional enlargement, through the promotion of “shared values [...] in the hope of promoting stability”.<sup>53</sup> However, in the case of the Mediterranean, such logic seems somewhat difficult to implement. Furness stresses in this regard that recent “European efforts to pursue hard security cooperation with Mediterranean partner governments have foundered on a lack of south Mediterranean commitment to the EMP’s ‘shared values’”.<sup>54</sup> Hence, as suggested by Bremberg, the expansion of the EU security community in this region has to first find solutions for how to interact “in terms of developing shared norms of consultation and reciprocity together with the spread of common security practices”.<sup>55</sup> To conclude,

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<sup>49</sup> Council of the European Union, *op.cit.*, p. 10.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> This dilemma is of particular relevance in times of popular uprising throughout the ‘Arab world’.

<sup>52</sup> Balfour, *op.cit.*, p. 126.

<sup>53</sup> German & Moustakis, *op.cit.*, p. 25.

<sup>54</sup> Furness, *op.cit.*, p. 13.

<sup>55</sup> N. Bremberg, “Widened security, expanding community? On the development of EU civil protection as an emerging community of practice”, Paper presented at the ECPR/SGIR 7<sup>th</sup> Pan-European International Relations Conference, Stockholm, 9-11 September 2010, pp. 25-26.

[a] Euro-Mediterranean security community is a worthwhile long-term goal for European policymakers, not because it is necessarily achievable within a discrete timeframe, but because the process of working towards it promises much in terms of political stability and economic prosperity in the Mediterranean basin. [...] Europeans managed this in Eastern Europe, with immensurable benefits for the security of EU member states. For Europeans, the security community remains a commodity well worth exporting.<sup>56</sup>

### *Findings of the case studies*

According to a 2006 *Special Eurobarometer*, “[s]ome 70% of the EU population believes EU assistance to neighboring countries will reduce the risk of war and conflicts in Europe”.<sup>57</sup> From an EU-centered perspective, much work remains to be done in order to further integrate the neighbors within the overall EU security community. A first step could involve increasing interactions with these countries and their populations, based on the assumption that this would favor the development of peaceful relations. This element ought to be stressed given the outcome of the same public survey, according to which only “[a] slight majority of the EU population (51%) is interested in what is happening in neighboring countries of the EU; a significant minority (48%), however, has little or no interest”.<sup>58</sup>

The accession perspective is the most efficient mechanism through which countries become integrated into the wider EU security community. On the other hand, without providing such a perspective, the ENP also proves to be useful in integrating the EU’s neighbors. The respect of certain norms, the development of good neighborly relations and regional cooperation are the main tools through which both the enlargement and the neighborhood policy mechanisms aim at promoting stronger interactions and dependable expectations of peaceful change throughout the EU’s peripheries. I consider that this pattern is well captured by the concept of “cooperative security”, defined by Adler as

a model of interstate relations in which disputes are expected to occur, but they are expected to do so within the limits of agreed upon norms and established procedures. It is, thus, the ‘natural’ security practice of security communities. More specifically, cooperative security is a collection of security practices, adopted mainly by multilateral institutions of security communities, on the

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<sup>56</sup> Furness, *op.cit.*, p. 26.

<sup>57</sup> European Commission, “Eurobarometer – The European Union and its neighbors”, *Special Eurobarometer*, no. 259, October 2006, p. 9.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p.4.

premise that threats to the community's security are best handled by confidence-building and dialogue, cooperative quality-of-life measures, and the promotion of regional identities, and, in particular, by the inclusion of neighboring states into the community as members or partners.<sup>59</sup>

The overall dual logic of my argumentation analyzing the mechanisms of the geographical expansion of the EU security community is finally summarized by a recent comment of British Foreign Secretary William Hague:

The EU's historic achievement has been to aid the establishment of stable, prosperous and well-governed states in Europe, using the transformative power of enlargement. That project is not complete: the nations of the Western Balkans and Turkey, as well as others to the east, have a European future. The challenge now for the EU is how we can replicate that achievement to the south, transforming countries whose future will not lie within the EU, but whose success is intimately tied to European security.<sup>60</sup>

"Since the end of the Cold War, the EU has increasingly but emphatically 'flexed its muscles' in Europe, assuming responsibility for an ever expanding geographical area – primarily through enlargement and the expansion of its 'security community'."<sup>61</sup> After analyzing both the reasons and the mechanisms underpinning the geographical expansion of the EU security community, it seems clear that it is necessary to differentiate among the EU's neighbors. Doing so requires going beyond the scope of the existing theoretical framework. Drawing on the concept of concentric circles, the next section allows a more advanced conceptualization of the progressive expansion of the EU security community.

### **The EU security community meets the concept of concentric circles**

The EU security community is expanding to the neighbors at different speeds and in different depths. I argue that it is possible to systematize this differentiated evolution within the security community through the concept of concentric circles.

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<sup>59</sup> E. Adler, "The spread of security communities: communities of practice, self-restraint, and NATO's post-Cold War transformation", *European Journal of International Relations*, vol. 14, no. 2, June 2008, pp. 206-207.

<sup>60</sup> Hague, *op. cit.*

<sup>61</sup> Smith, *op.cit.*, p. 288.

*The concept of the concentric circles and the EU security community*

From a historical point of view, it is interesting to note that the first broad discussion of a Europe of concentric circles developed in the 1990s as a result of the end of the Cold War and as a way to envisage relations with the Central and Eastern European Countries (CEECs).

In 1990 the Community compromised with the concentric circles approach [...]. An integrated European Union would be at the center (therefore the Maastricht Treaty was negotiated); in the closest ring to the EU would be the prosperous, small members of the European Free Trade Association linked to the EU via the European Economic Area [...]. The CEECs occupied the outer ring, [...] while the Soviet Union, off on the outer fringes of Europe, did not figure highly at all.<sup>62</sup>

This concept was systematized by then French Prime Minister Balladur<sup>63</sup> and has since existed in the mindset of EU policymakers. It is officially conceived at the level of the EU institutions as a

concept [that] involves a Europe made up of subsets of states which have achieved different levels of integration. It is not confined just to the integration structure of the European Union [...]. Some [...] talk of "the circle of shared law" (the Union's Member States), the "adjacent circle" (the countries outside the Union waiting to join it) and "more select circles" for the purpose of greater cooperation (the currency circle, the defense circle and so on).<sup>64</sup>

It is worth noting that this conceptual approach blurs the divide between the EU's internal and external policies, and it acts as a bridge between them. It is, however, also the source of some shortcomings, which I will now briefly outline.

A first limit of the concept of concentric circles is the fact that few scholars and policymakers consider it to be practical "because it does not fit into established categories".<sup>65</sup> The logic underpinning this concept has more often been used when considering other aspects of the EU integration process – mainly economic ones.<sup>66</sup> I argue, however, that the concept of concentric circles is particularly relevant for the

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<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 273.

<sup>63</sup> See E. Balladur, "Pour un nouveau Traité de l'Elysée", *Le Monde*, no. 15 503, 50<sup>th</sup> year, 30 November 1994.

<sup>64</sup> Europa Website, "Concentric Circles", *Summaries of EU Legislation – Glossary*. Interestingly, this definition strictly follows the one suggested by Balladur. See Balladur, *op.cit.*

<sup>65</sup> Waever, *op.cit.*, p. 100.

<sup>66</sup> See, for example, C. Tugendhat, "How to get Europe moving again", *International Affairs*, vol. 61, no. 3, pp. 421-429.

security aspects of the integration process. A parallel can be drawn with the perception of the EU as a peaceful hegemon developed earlier because, as Waever suggests,

the EU could be seen as yet another instance of the best-trying method of peace provision in history: that a region does not have a balance-of-power among competing powers, but a clear though far from all-dominant center whose power extends radically with fading force, as a number of quasi-independent political units operate around the center with increasing independence as the distance to the center increases.<sup>67</sup>

Another weakness concerning the way in which the concept of concentric circles has been presented in the literature is that it is constructed in mainly institutional rather than policy-oriented terms. I do not subscribe to this approach and I rather focus on a clearly delimited policy-area: the development of security through interactions.

#### *The expansion of the EU security community in concentric circles*

This sub-section takes into account the way in which the concept of concentric circles has been developed so far and – acknowledging my particular approach in this regard – applies it to the expansion of the EU security community.

#### The various concentric circles of the EU security community's expansion

This part of my analysis is “based on the assumption that as of the second half of the 1990s there is in Europe a stable ‘core of security’” and “this core of European security is surrounded by several peripheries”.<sup>68</sup> Given the present shape of the EU security community and the findings of my case studies, I argue that one can broadly identify two peripheries. This first consists of candidates and potential candidates to EU membership, while the second embraces the countries actively involved in the ENP. I refer to the core of the EU security community as ‘Circle 1’, to the candidates and potential candidates as ‘Circle 2’, and to the ENP countries as ‘Circle 3’.

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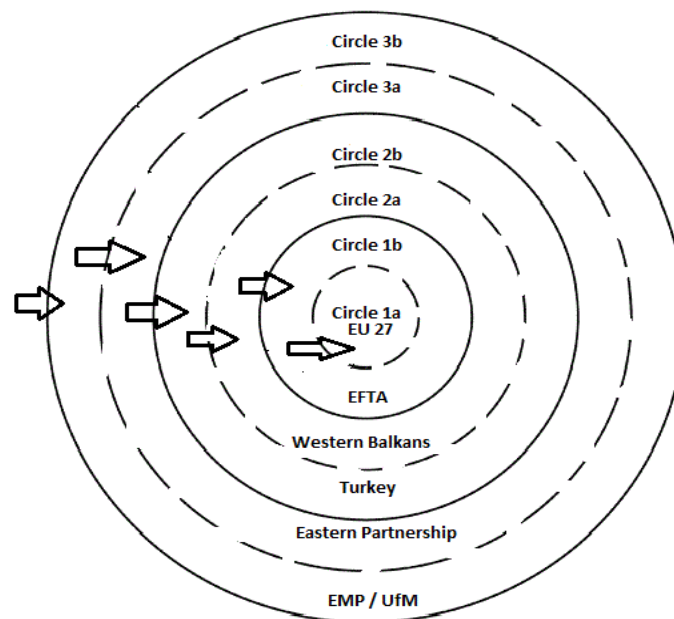
<sup>67</sup> Waever, *op.cit.*

<sup>68</sup> J. Hallenberg, “The extension of the European security community to the periphery: France in the Mediterranean and Finland and Sweden in the Baltic countries”, NATO Fellowship Final Report, Department of Strategic Studies, National Defense College, Stockholm, June 2000, pp. 1-2.

Moreover, a more thorough classification is possible when looking at the depth of integration within each circle. It is first relevant to emphasize the slight – mainly institutional – difference between the EU members and the EFTA countries –circles 1a and 1b respectively. For the second circle, I would argue that it makes more sense to distinguish between the Western Balkans (2a) and Turkey (2b) than between candidates and potential candidates. ‘Circle 3’ has been treated with a similar logic. This is why the eastern part of the ENP (3a) has been dealt with separately from the southern part (3b). The rationale behind this clear-cut split is the complete lack of an EU accession perspective for the latter, while the former group of countries finds itself in a more uncertain position in this respect.

Figure 1 classifies the various groups of countries depending on the depth of their integration with the European security community.

Figure 1: Expansion of the EU security community in concentric circles



Source: author's compilation.

This classification is only temporary: as suggested by the arrows, countries could slowly move towards the core of the EU security community. In addition, the list of countries to be integrated within this security community might evolve in the future, as suggested by the first arrow on the left. The solid lines do not represent hermetic or strong barriers to integration; they group together larger regions than the dashed lines. Finally, the number of concentric circles should not be seen as a fixed one.

## The concentric circles and the depth of the current EU security community

The last step is to bring together the various concentric circles identified and to match each of them with the relevant type of security community provided by Adler and Barnett.<sup>69</sup> Each concentric circle identified in this framework corresponds to a particular element of the theoretical typology. Before going into detail, let me recall that this perspective of a single but 'multi-speed' security community does not exist in the literature yet.

As already mentioned, the twenty-seven EU member states as well as the four EFTA members belong to the nucleus of the EU security community. These countries form the mature layer of the EU pluralistic security community. Upon further analysis, one might proceed with a further distinction. The expansion of the EU security community – a 'tightly-coupled mature pluralistic security community' – to the EFTA members creates an additional concentric circle, matching the criteria characterizing a rather 'loosely-coupled' mature pluralistic security community.

On a wider scale, candidate and potential candidate countries constitute the 'ascendant' layer of this pluralistic security community. Once again, the findings drawn from my case studies require a distinction between the Western Balkans and Turkey. However, the typology provided by Adler and Barnett is not precise enough to apply a more detailed vocabulary to this distinction. It suffices to say that the Western Balkan countries are slightly more integrated into the EU security community than Turkey.

Finally, I see the ENP countries as being the 'nascent' layer of this pluralistic security community. At this level, the case study led me to differentiate the Eastern Partnership from the EMP/UfM, with the eastern part of the ENP being more integrated into the EU security community than its southern part.

Table 1 sums up the successive elements of the argumentation provided throughout this section.

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<sup>69</sup> Adler & Barnett, *op.cit.*, pp. 50-56.



Table 1: Depth of the EU security community

Type of pluralistic security community		Circles		Group of countries
Mature	Tightly-coupled	1	1a	EU 27
	Loosely-coupled		1a + 1b	EU 27 + EFTA 4
Ascendant		1+2	1+ 2a	EU 27 + EFTA 4 + Western Balkans
			1+ 2a+ 2b	EU 27 + EFTA 4 + Western Balkans + Turkey
Nascent		1+	1+ 2+ 3a	EU 27 + EFTA 4 + Western Balkans + Turkey + Eastern Partnership
		2+ 3	1+ 2+ 3a+ 3b	EU 27 + EFTA 4 + Western Balkans + Turkey + Eastern Partnership + EMP/UfM

Source: author's compilation.

### Conclusion: the EU at the core of an expanding European zone of peace

This paper dealt with the question why and how the geographical scope of the EU security community is expanding. I argued that the security community is spreading out because the EU's own origins and self-perception are driven by the ambition to create lasting peace. The key mechanisms are the EU enlargement and neighborhood policies that are best combined with the concept of concentric circles: the regional EU-centered security community is a multi-speed security community, stronger at its core and weaker as it spreads towards its margins.

Progressively built upon the desire to put an end to the succession of wars on the continent, the EU is today the institutional embodiment of the creation of a common identity for European states and populations. Integrated more and more deeply since World War II, they do not use or threaten to use collective violence to resolve their disputes. Thanks to developing interactions, they know each other better, trust each other more, and therefore entertain dependable expectations of peaceful change. The conclusion I reach here is similar to Mayall's finding that the contemporary EU is "probably the most effective community security anywhere in the world".<sup>70</sup>

The EU is an expanding security community, in so far as it tends to encourage the development of peaceful interactions beyond its borders. It does so in order to

<sup>70</sup> J. Mayall, "The shadow of Empire: the EU and the former colonial world", in C. Hill & M. Smith (eds.), *International Relations and the European Union*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 312.

respond to both material (security-related) and ideational (peace-promotion-related) incentives. These incentives go beyond the terms of reference – altruistic versus self-interested – of the mainly conceptual debate about the nature concerning the EU's action in its neighborhood. In this regard, the EU acts as an *'aimant pacificateur'*, using the mechanisms of its enlargement and neighborhood policies. This process follows a pattern of concentric circles, where the EU is the core and its neighbors represent several external circles, depending on the depth of their integration within the overall EU security community. Overall, the EU is an expanding security community, one that is stronger at its core and weaker at its margins.

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