



NAVIGATOR

D8.1 THE END OF MULTILATERALISM AS WE KNOW IT? ASSESSING CURRENT TRENDS IN INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

FEBRUARY 2025

Malte Brosig (WITS)
John Karlsrud (NUPI)
Cristiana Maglia (NUPI)
Yf Reykers (UM)



This project receives funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under the Call HORIZON-CL2-2021-DEMOCRACY-01 – Grant agreement n°101061621



This project receives funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under the Call HORIZON-CL2-2021-DEMOCRACY-01 – Grant agreement n°101061621

Project acronym:	NAVIGATOR
Project full title:	The EU Navigating Multilateral Cooperation
Grant agreement no.:	101094394
Type of action:	Research and innovation
Project start date:	01.03.2023
Project duration:	48 months
Call topic:	HORIZON-CL2-2022-DEMOCRACY-01-09
Project website:	http://eunav.eu/
Document:	D8.1 Working paper on institutional landscape of global security governance
Deliverable number:	D8.1
Deliverable title:	The end of multilateralism as we know it? assessing current trends in the international security
Due date of deliverable:	28 February 2025
Actual submission date:	26 February 2025
Editors:	John Karlsrud, Malte Brosig, Cristiana Maglia, Yf Reykers
Authors:	John Karlsrud, Malte Brosig, Cristiana Maglia, Yf Reykers
Reviewers:	Ole Jacob Sending
Participating beneficiaries:	Whole NAVIGATOR Consortium
Work Package no.:	8
Work Package title:	Management
Work Package leader:	John Karlsrud
Work Package participants:	All partners
Estimated person-months for deliverable:	0.5
Dissemination level:	PU - Public
Nature:	Report
Version:	1
Draft/Final:	Final
No of pages (including cover):	27
Keywords:	EU, global governance, global security, international cooperation, regional organizations



Introduction

The rules-based international order is under pressure (Lake, Martin Risse 2021, Börzel and Zürn 2021). The liberal order paradigm built around a 'one-world' concept in which global and regional governance institutions underpinned by universal values create and promote an ever-thicker system of norms, whereas integrating states into international institutions is weakening. This poses particular challenges for the EU and its member states who are amongst the strongest proponents of the liberal order vision. While in the past the dominance of the liberal paradigm, understood as regulation through international norms, served the EU well, the crisis of the liberal order questions the assumed natural symbiosis between the EU and global governance institutions. The resurging of geopolitics in the European agenda leads to a shrinking policy space and rising costs for maintaining EU-favourable multilateralism (Sending et al. 2024).

The EU is forced by circumstances to adopt a geopolitical power position (EU Commission 2024). The switch from a normative power Europe to a geopolitical order might be most visible in the field of security. Great power rivalry and geopolitical tensions have risen visibly, in the EU's neighbourhood but also across the Atlantic. The Trump administration clearly expects European countries not only to increase defence spending considerably but also to decrease if not decouple European security from US support. Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine has further limited institutionalized cooperation. Engagement between Russia and Western states has ceased in many venues such as the Council of Europe, Arctic Council and the NATO-Russia Council. In the OSCE Russia plays a disruptive role but maintaining its membership. Cooperation in the UN Security Council is severely constrained with veto use and non-consensus decision-making on the rise. With a second Trump administration, an isolationist approach to international cooperation and organizations such as the UN and NATO further strains multilateralism. The US prioritizes unilateral actions over collaborative efforts at least under President Trump, directly affecting the international order. In his first weeks in office, he has ordered a review of all multilateral organizations in which the US is a member with the aim to reconsider US engagement or opt out completely (Patrick 2025). This radical approach to multilateralism might well mark a sharp turning point of the US-led liberal order.

In fact, there is currently no security architecture in place which is pan-European. Military coups in the Sahel and beyond not only threaten to paralyse African regional organizations but have also led to a drawdown of UN peacekeeping missions, surge in mercenary activities like the Russian Africa Corps (formerly known as the Wagner Group) and suspension of bilateral cooperation involving France, Germany and other EU members. Protracted conflicts in the Middle East and in particular the war between Israel and Hamas and Hezbollah widen the rift between the political West and Global South. The fall of Assad sets Syria on a new course but with an unclear destination. None of the mentioned conflicts can realistically be expected to be solved in the near future but are likely to simmer on shaping the EU's foreign and security policy for a considerable time. The US push for a swift end to the conflict in Ukraine, for Europe to provide the lion's share of resources to support the country, and its de facto pullback from NATO also provides strong impetus for stronger EU cooperation on matters of defence and security.

In academia and policy circles alike debates on regional integration, sovereignty-transfer, and institutionalization, dominating the post-Cold War era have shifted to discussions on increasing informalization of governance structures, their de-institutionalisation and frequent use of ad hoc arrangements leading to a fragmentation and "a la carte" multilateralism (Brosig and Karlsrud, 2024, Patrick 2015, Reykers et al. 2023, Vabulas and Snidal 2013). In fact, if a critical number of powers routinely brackets or steps away from established rules and procedures, it unavoidably undermines and weakens the order itself. This presents a real dilemma for the EU:



On the one hand, it benefits from the reduced transaction costs, predictability, and order international institutions were created to foster. On the other hand, in times of clashing interests, increasing polarization, institutional stalemate and rising transaction costs in key international institutions, it can be rational to reassess commitment to them (Brosig and Karlsrud, 2024).

The weakening of the liberal, rules-based international order presents a momentous challenge for the EU, which has traditionally supported it. The strong anti-globalist orientation of the second Trump administration severely undermines existing multilateral institutions. At the same time, Russia's invasion of Ukraine continues to be the most direct attack on a European security order. Additionally, the rise of emerging powers, particularly China, has altered global power dynamics, necessitating institutional adaptability. As geopolitical tensions rise, the EU's role as a normative power is shifting towards a more geopolitical stance. This shift, marked by a decrease in multilateral cooperation and the rise of selective multilateralism, poses dilemmas for the EU. It must navigate between increasing the effectiveness of existing institutions, nurturing its legitimacy through more inclusiveness practices, and protecting its geopolitical interests. These goals are intersected by an increasingly fragmented and complex international environment. In this environment, security governance is shifting away from traditional multilateral structures towards more flexible arrangements. This paper explores current trends in security governance covering developments at global and regional level. In particular, the focus is placed on the UN Security Council and UN peacekeeping, the African Peace and the Security Architecture (APSA), NATO and the OSCE. The paper shows that multilateralism is strongly evolving beyond formal organizations. More state-controlled, informal formats, such as ad hoc coalitions (AHCs), offer lower transaction costs and greater operational flexibility. The EU plays a crucial role in setting up and supporting AHCs. This is evident in the use of the European Peace Facility (EPF), which has supported counterterrorism AHCs in Africa and plays a central role in Ukraine's defense against Russia. As the number of actors and conflict response mechanisms increases, better synergy between formal intergovernmental organizations (FIGOs) and AHCs is needed. In this respect the UN is considering a modular approach to security interventions, allowing it to integrate external capabilities based on mission needs. AHCs embody a security paradigm, emphasizing flexibility, technical efficiency, and operational openness. Yet, their informality raises concerns about governance stability. Unlike FIGOs, AHCs lack institutionalized oversight, long-term commitment, and normative coherence. This creates risks, as security cooperation could become contingent on shifting political interests rather than sustained strategic objectives. While AHCs can complement existing institutions by filling operational gaps, excessively relying on them undermines long-term multilateral stability. Thus, the EU should ensure AHCs do not compete with but rather enhance established security structures. They should function as preparatory or bridging mechanisms, gain political endorsement from regional and global organizations, and be used alongside other instruments to achieve common security goals. In a complex environment institutional compartmentalization needs to be strategically designed to minimize negative side-effects and garner its full potential.



Methodology

In this paper, we explore and analyse the changing environment of multilateral security cooperation, identifying common trend lines and suggesting policy directions for the EU to navigate the complexities of crisis-ridden multilateralism. We concentrate on three macro themes. These are the issues of geopolitical rivalry, declining institutional effectiveness and crisis of legitimacy. These themes are qualitatively framing the empirical analysis. At times of multilateralism in crisis, the NAVIGATOR project conceptualizes *search costs* as critical component helping the EU navigate the more complex and challenging landscape of international governance institutions (Seabrooke and Sending, 2023, Sending et al., 2024). Search costs are expected to be linked to different degrees of formality, accessibility and normativity. The three key variables in the NAVIGATOR toolkit score formality in a range that goes from formal to informal, accessibility from open to closed, and normativity from technical to normative, that result and reflect different governance arrangements.

Empirically, the paper focuses on a selection of pivotal international institutions of direct relevance to the EU's foreign and security policy, which are the UN Security Council, UN peace operations, the OSCE, NATO and the AU. Each is discussing the current state of multilateralism and ends with a short categorization of the governance metrics mentioned above. One of the main findings of this paper is that the crisis of multilateralism fosters the surge of ad hoc coalitions (AHCs) emerging outside the framework of established organizations. AHCs are temporary arrangements, which can be categorized as less formal, consisting of flexible membership and tend to be technical solution oriented. The paper proceeds by offering a short introduction to the three guiding themes before exploring the case studies. It concludes with an overall assessment of the state of multilateralism in the security sphere and offers advice on how to navigate this challenging landscape.

Three guiding themes

The crisis of multilateralism is multifaceted. While it manifests itself differently in different institutions, three overarching themes can be identified (Figure 1). The first and most pressuring one is increasing great power rivalry causing a push for Europe to reposition itself in the face of shifting geopolitics. At the centre of this crisis is an open clash of diverging interests which liberal institutionalism finds challenging to moderate. Processes of de-globalization, re-nationalizing and the growing influence of populist governments are fuelling a tendency to recalibrate multilateralism at the inter-state rather than the inter-governmental level. For the EU, this poses a significant challenge. Despite decades of European integration, it is still missing classical state power credentials, especially in the security domain. However, the consequences of great power rivalry and especially Russia's invasion of Ukraine in combination with a nationalistic US foreign policy which sees international collective collaboration more as a burden than an asset necessitates a geopolitical EU, which is able to defend its interests robustly.

Elements of a stronger geopolitical role can be seen in the new creation of a Defence Commissioner, the creation of a €500bn heavy European Defence Fund (EDF) and generally increasing defence spending across its members (FT 2024a). The European Peace Facility (EPF) is an essential tool for supporting Ukraine militarily as well as



funding military ad hoc coalitions in Africa. It remains to be seen, if the EU is able to generate the necessary unity and political will to strategically use this newly accumulated geopolitical instruments.

Second, international institutions have been not only challenged by obvious great power rivalry but also by the dwindling belief in the effectiveness of their instruments. For example, the current draw-down of UN peacekeeping missions does mostly not result from missions achieving their goals but also from their lack of success in establishing lasting peace (Brosig and Sempijja 2018). This also affects the EU's own approach to peace missions. Just offering niche support within the context of larger UN mission is no longer viable (Brosig 2014). The same is true for AU-led peace operations in Africa. African countries increasingly by-pass the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) which was chiefly supported by the EU and use ad hoc coalitions.

New, more effective, internationally legitimate, but at the same time, geopolitically relevant instruments need to be developed. Likewise, the OSCE needs to demonstrate that it can actively contribute to the dissipation of political tensions not-only in relations to EU-Russia relations but also to the re-appearing internal instability of countries in the EU's eastern neighbourhood. Anti-internationalism is not only a question of external great power rivalry but increasingly mainstreamed into centre left and right positions undermining the trust in the ability to act effectively.

Third, the issue of legitimacy. The call for more “inclusive multilateralism” as formulated by the BRICS group, is a critique of western domination in global affairs (BRICS Johannesburg II Declaration 2023). The missing reform of key global governance institutions has triggered a form of counter-institutionalization, for example in the form of the BRICS+, which are extending their membership (Patrick 2024). The group is cultivating an inter-state vision of cooperation which differs from liberal multilateralism promoting universal values, norms and building governance through regulation. However, more representation and power transfer to non-western countries, de facto means less “EU-favourable” influence.

The legitimacy question also has an internal Western and EU dimension. Anti-globalization governments in the US and European countries threaten to undermine liberal multilateralism from within. Furthermore, because of diverging foreign policy preferences within the EU, the adoption of strong common positions is constrained. There is no monolithic strategic vision among EU members on current security challenges.



Figure 1: The Triangle of Challenges



For the EU the challenge is that there is no perfect or easy to reach equilibrium between geopolitics, effectiveness, and legitimacy which are inter-dependent themes. Geopolitical changes have been pushing the EU to become a more engaged actor in security issues, yet this comes with a trade-off between legitimacy and effectiveness. As a formally established organization with regulatory and enforcement powers over its members, the EU scores high on input legitimacy, with decisions that are grounded in democratic processes and accountability. However, this strength can come at the cost of slower decision-making processes, as the need for alignment among members can delay urgent action. This affects EU's output legitimacy, how the public perceives its ability to deliver effectively.

The EU taking a more active role in security might sharpen its profile but risks undermining the legitimacy of global/regional governance institutions if the EU ignores the need for more inclusiveness and honest /consistent endorsement of liberal values. A more geopolitical EU is also perceived as a threat by nationalist movements in Europe who propagate a revival of inter-state cooperation at the expense of the EU. Likewise attempts to increase effectiveness without accommodation great power interests or by only promoting narrow EU interests is not likely to increase overall effectiveness of partner institutions. An increase in legitimacy, for example a substantial reform of the UN Security Council rather reduces the influence of EU countries undermining its geopolitical ambitions. But a geopolitically less influential EU might profit little from increased organizational effectiveness and uncontested legitimacy. Instead it may seek flexible opt outs, for example in the setting up and support of ad hoc coalitions which can undermine the functionality of established security institutions. The challenge for the EU is to develop an issue-specific catalogue which allows it to seek flexible and balancing prioritization between the elements of geopolitics, effectiveness and legitimacy, while minimizing harmful contraindications.



Current Trends in Global Security

This section presents the empirical contribution of this paper considering a selection of key international organizations in direct engagement with the EU and that are directly relevant to its foreign and security policy. The following sub-sections offer a short analysis of the current state of multilateralism starting at the global level with the UN, its Security Council and peacekeeping operations.

The UN Security Council

During the last decade, geopolitical tension between the leading world powers has once again been on the rise. Relations between China and the US have worsened considerably (Goldstein 2020), as have relations between Russia, the US and most European countries. Following Russia's invasion on Ukraine in 2022 increased polarization further with the Council not being able to adopt a meaningful position on the war. Relations with China remain more nuanced, although China is increasingly being portrayed as a threat to the liberal international order. Some US and EU voices are still advocating the economic and technological opportunities attached to collaborating with Chinese actors. For this reason, the EU classifies China as partner, competitor and systemic rival (Politi 2023). Mostly great power rivalry today takes place in a much more complex environment than in previous decades shaped by uni- or bipolarity.

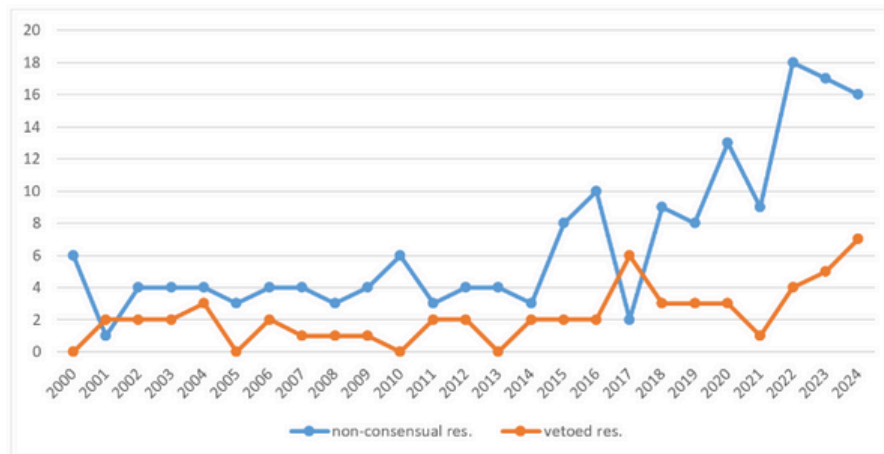
Both Russia and China are calling for a revision of the unipolar order, characterised by Anglo-American dominance of international institutions but at the same time resist Security Council reform, which would undermine their privileged role as permanent and veto holding powers. However, Russia and China are pursuing distinctly different strategies. While Russia has been on a confrontational path, China is seeking to match its increasing power with more responsibility in and influence on the multilateral system. It has now the largest delegation of diplomats of all states in Geneva, the largest number of interns and junior professional officers on secondment in the UN system (Baumann et al. 2022), and is seeking to take on new leadership positions, since taking on the position as under-secretary-general and head of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) in 2007. China is also increasing its economic contribution – China will move from providing an effective rate of 18,7% in 2024 to 23,8% of UN assessed contributions for peacekeeping operations from 2025 to 2027 (UN 2024c), a massive rise. In comparison, the US was supposed to provide 26% in 2024 and is allocated 26% in 2025-2027 (UN 2024c), but due to US Congress limitations, its contributions are capped at 25% (Congressional Research Service 2024). If the Trump administration realizes its threats of cuts to the UN, China may rapidly surpass the US as the main financial contributor, and it will likely want to increase the speed by which its values are being adopted in the UN system, resulting in a continued weakening of the liberal orientation of the system. The EU should thus stand ready to increase its combined financial contribution to the UN to balance Chinese influence if the US implements cuts.

Front-stage collaboration on security issues at the UN has become increasingly difficult. Whereas two European veto powers, the UK and France, have not cast a veto since 1989; China, Russia, and the US have increasingly used theirs. Since 2011, Russia has vetoed 33 resolutions, China 14, and the US 9. Most vetoes concerned Syria and the



Middle East. Interestingly, China never used its veto independently but votes with Russia when using the veto. The UN has become a site for posturing differences and disagreements. Russia's attack on Ukraine, and the West's condemnation, made collaboration next to impossible. Meanwhile, the US has effectively hindered resolutions on Israel/Palestine issues, including on Israel's ongoing war against Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Figure 2: UNSC voting 2000-2024



Source: Own compilation

Figure 2 summarizes current trends. Not only has the number of vetoes reached a new post-Cold War peak with seven casted in 2024 but the number of non-consensual resolutions increased markedly over the last 10 years. At the same time, the overall number of adopted resolutions is decreasing to just 46 in 2024, the lowest number in 30 years. Most resolutions adopted without consensus are not driven by mass abstention from elective members (E10) but from the P5. Behind this trend is primarily Russia abstaining in all 17 resolutions adopted without consensus in 2023. In this context, Russia and China often vote together.

Furthermore, there is a growing number of major armed conflicts which the Council is not substantially involved. This covers conflicts in Ethiopia, Israel/Palestine, Myanmar, Ukraine, Syria, Sudan and Yemen. The absence of meaningful action in such a wide range of cases affects the UN output legitimacy and poses the risk of gradually normalizing violations against international law (Landgren 2024). The inability of the Council to act has fostered the use of alternative formats. In the case of Ukraine, the Israeli/Palestine conflict, and Myanmar, the UN General Assembly adopted resolutions. In the case of Gaza, South Africa litigates against Israel through the International Court of Justice. President Putin and former president of Sudan Al-Bashir are wanted by the International Criminal Court (ICC). For more than a decade, the Council has not mandated a new peacekeeping mission, despite the increase in armed conflict. For 2023, the Uppsala Conflict Data Program counts 59 state-based armed conflicts, another post-Cold War record (UCDP 2024). As older missions are closing and the Council is barred from action in numerous conflicts, its reliance as the central place for managing the world's security issues is in decline. Likewise, the Council has practically



stopped setting up new sanction regimes and thus giving away an important enforcement instrument (Landgren 2024).

Despite this, the Council is not completely defunct or paralysed. Veto use remains mostly confined to particular issues such as the Middle East and Ukraine. At the same time P5 members vote alongside each other for the majority of resolutions, which are less politicised (and normative) and are often technical roll-over resolutions. The UN remains the focal formal organization dealing with security. The relative paralysis of the Security Council has also led to innovation with regards to the role of the General Assembly (GA). In 2022, the US and its allies rallied states to adopt resolutions on Ukraine, and since late 2023 the GA has passed a series of resolutions calling for an end to fighting in Gaza and for Palestine to become a member of the UN.

While the current power competition is not leading to a complete stand still, the EU's position is no easy one. The EU does not have a seat at the Council and the only permanent EU member is France, which suffers from a remarkable loss of influence in the Sahel leading to the closing down of a UN peacekeeping and EU training missions in Mali as well as withdrawal of French troops from the region. European members as such (permanent and elected ones) tend to vote alongside each other. Of all voting groups European countries display the greatest internal coherency. Between 2000-2021 they voted together in 92% of cases in which a resolution was adopted without consensus (Brosig and Lecki 2022: 261). The European block is one of the strongest in the Council. With increasing great power divisions, European unity becomes more important geopolitically but cannot unlock great power rivalry on its own.

Increasing the Council's legitimacy is mainly linked to the issue of Council reform. Europe's historic overrepresentation, the informal agreement in which the penholding system privileges the P3, and the practice of ringfencing senior UN positions for the UK and France makes it rather unlikely that the self-declared geopolitical Commission will succeed in making major inroads in pushing through its geopolitical interests without resistance from the global South (Carver 2023). More likely than not France will come under pressure for holding a lead of the UN Department of Peace Operations since 1997, with China as the most likely contender. With the UK having left the EU, the Union lost the one European country holding the most ring-fenced senior positions in the UN. With the election of a more EU-friendly government under Prime Minister Starmer and the return of an anti-globalist Trump administration, the EU and UK should prioritize a stronger alignment.

The EU is confronted with a real dilemma. Because increasing the output legitimacy of the Security Council guarantees no increased effectiveness (or input legitimacy) of it from the European perspective and contravenes a more geopolitical EU, a purely interest-driven approach is difficult to realize. However, not supporting structural reform makes the EU vulnerable of accusations of applying double standards by only verbally endorsing liberal values but ignoring them when in conflict with geopolitical goals (Eisentraut 2024).

What are the EU's best options in such a context? As substantial Council reform is still at a distance, the interim period offers a number of options in which EU countries can maintain their position but endorse piecemeal changes working in their favour.

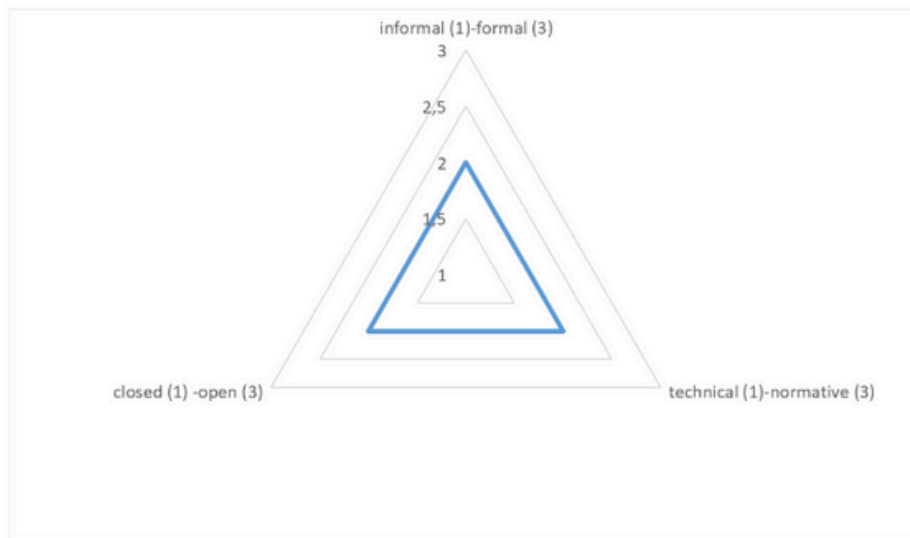
One such option is enhancing the role of the E10 which in the case of the Gaza war managed to draft a resolution. More systematic co-penholdership between E10 members and P3 is to the advantage of European members but also of interest for disadvantaged groups such as the African 3 (A3). The application of un-used articles of



the UN Charter, for example, restricting veto use, as in article 27(3) excludes voting rights for parties of a conflict, can potentially reduce veto use (see Action 41 in Summit of the Future 2024). Articles 34 and 35 of the Charter technically allow the Council to discuss a wide range of issues and disputes and can work against the artificial narrowing of the Council agenda. Voting on procedural matters cannot be vetoed by permanent members. Breaking up common informal practices is possible without substantial reform but also risks P5 push-back.

Applying the NAVIGATOR taxonomy to the UN Security Council, an important sub-organ of the UN, one is confronted with a mix of conditions (Figure 3). Formal and informal practices are both shaping the operation of the Council. While membership and voting procedures are highly formalized, the process of drafting resolutions (penholdership) is based on informal rules. Its membership is closed with regard to permanent and veto holding countries but is open and competitive for elected members. A fair share of adopted resolutions is technical in nature but thematic and normative issues are well-established agenda items.

Figure 3: The UN Security Council





UN Peace Operations

The UN is involved in global peace and security across the spectrum from prevention to peacekeeping and peacebuilding, but here we will focus on its peace operations, defined as peacekeeping operations and special political missions. The dynamics described in the previous section are affecting the mandating and deployment of these missions. Over the last decade, no new multidimensional UN peacekeeping operation has been deployed, and only a few small peacekeeping operations and special political missions have been fielded. In the same period, several large UN peace operations have been closed – in Cote d'Ivoire, Darfur, Haiti, Liberia, and Mali, and the remaining large operations in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and South Sudan have also been asked to develop transitions plans and downscale their presences. The number of UN special political missions has also come down over the last years, with less willingness to start new missions and missions being closed in Guinea-Bissau (2010-2020), Somalia (2013-2024) and Sudan (UNITAMS, 2020-2024) and soon in Somalia (UN 2025). The Economist has drawn the bleak conclusion that “the era of multilateral peacekeeping draws to an unhappy close” (The Economist 2025). In response to the dwindling support for large-scale missions and increasing competition from ad hoc coalitions, the UN has put forward a modular approach to peace operations, emphasizing the ability of the UN system to generate a variety of services and capabilities, depending on the conflict in question (Wane et al. 2024). With this approach, the UN is also highlighting how it can integrate its capabilities with subregional and regional operations, as well as AHCs.

Importantly the draw-down of UN peace operations is not simply a function of increasing great power rivalry. In many cases the mentioned missions have been deployed for decades but failed to create stability or lasting peace. Their effectiveness can be called into question. In some cases like Mali and Sudan, military coups occurred, causing a drastic change of geopolitical orientation. Mali rejected French military presence on its territory and penholder position. Likewise, the military leadership in Sudan declared the head of the UN Integrated Transition Assistance Mission in Sudan (UNITAMS) a persona non grata, effectively stopping the democratic transition process and kicking the UN out of the country. The switch to military governments which happened in and around Russia's invasion of Ukraine opened the doors for Europe's toughest geopolitical contender, in areas which France has traditionally considered its *pré carré*. Here is the EU is facing a double challenge, how to win back political sympathy of formerly close partners, while at the same time keeping Russia at bay. The need for re-thinking the tool of UN peacekeeping is obvious, had the deployed missions succeeded in stabilizing these countries, Russia would not be able to leverage its influence through supporting military governments and challenging European positions.

The African Union

The AU has over the last decades developed and deployed its capacities to prevent, mitigate and respond to conflicts on the African continent. Although it remains a closed regional organization, the AU maintains a strong partnership with the EU. The EU has provided significant direct support to the development of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). At bi-lateral level European countries such as France, Germany or Norway have been essential in supporting capacity building at AU and sub-regional level. However, within this formal organization, the African Standby Force (ASF) has not yet formally been put to action (Darkwa 2019), a feature that the ASF shares with other standby forces established by regional organizations such as the EU and NATO (Karlsrud and Reykers 2019). When crises arise, African countries have been hesitant to activate the instrument. Instead, they have in some instances



opted for missions mandated and led by the AU, such as the AU Support and Stabilization Mission in Somalia (AUSSOM, 2025-), and its predecessors the AU Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS, 2022-2024) and the AU Mission to Somalia (AMISOM, 2007-2022). In other instances, subregional organizations that are part of the recognized members of the ASF have deployed forces, such as the Southern African Development Community's operations in Mozambique (SAMIM, 2021-2024) and the DRC (SAMIDRC, 2023-). In yet other instances, ad hoc coalitions (AHCs) have been formed outside of the ASF altogether, such as the Multinational Joint Task Force fighting Boko Haram (MNJTF) in the Lake Chad region, or the Group of Five Sahel Joint Force fighting terrorism in Mali and its neighboring countries (2017-2023). AHCs have proved to be a significant addition but also challenge to the continued investment in the APSA.

The AU has long sought more predictable and sustainable financing for African peace and security efforts, and in December 2023, the UN Security Council adopted resolution 2719 on this matter (UNSC 2023). However, so far, the Council has not found agreement on the implementation of the resolution, although e.g. the follow-on mission to ATMIS in Somalia has been suggested as a possible candidate. The newly elected Trump administration is rather likely to further cut back its expenditure on international peacekeeping.

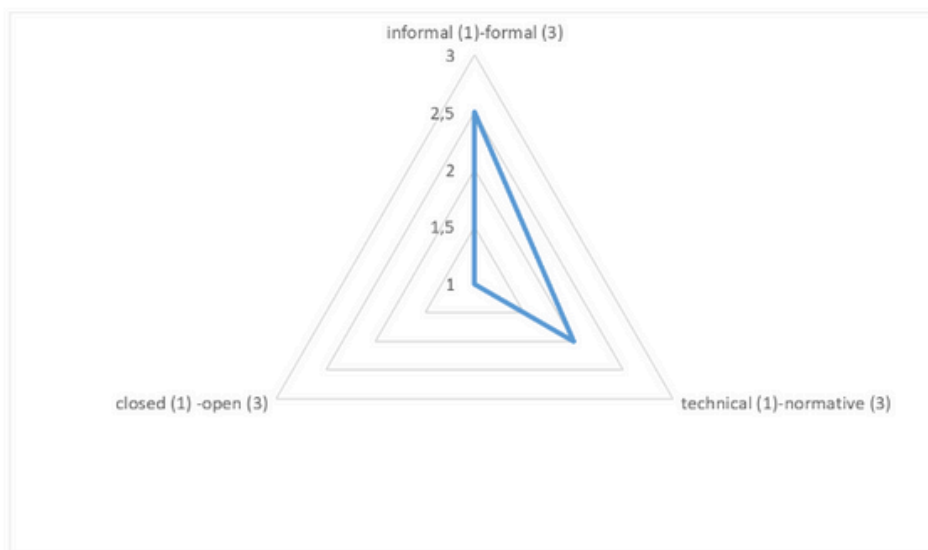
In Africa not only the use of more military AHCs connotes a shift away from inter-governmental multilateralism in the form of regional organizations, towards a preference for inter-state cooperation and more sporadic coordination. The resurgence of frequent military coups (16 since 2020) mostly in the Sahel and Francophone Africa set in motion a partial dismantling of institutionalized regional security cooperation. This is most visible in the case of ECOWAS, formerly considered the most advanced Regional Economic Community. France's near complete failure as a lead-security actor for EU initiatives is a historical burden and opportunity. The forced withdrawal of French forces from large parts of Francophone Africa leaves space for other actors including the EU. In this context, it is noteworthy, that EUCAP Sahel Mali, a civilian EU capacity building mission stayed in the country until January 2025 while all other multilateral missions have been expelled by the military government.

Despite concerning trends weakening institutionalized forms of multilateralism, the AU has been and remains the foremost venue to establish and carry forward an African voice on technical matters of peace and security and therewith remains a strategically important partner for the EU.

Considering the scale for measuring organizational structures of the NAVIGATOR project, the AU remains a formal organization with closed membership, guided by its normative framework but also being technically oriented (Figure 4). It is this particular character which contributes to the increasing popularity of ad hoc coalitions which constitute a much more flexible instrument than established institutions such as the APSA.



Figure 4: The African Union



The OSCE

The OSCE has played a central role in the maintenance of east-west relations in the northern hemisphere during the last half century. In the area of peace and security, its main contribution has been with tools at the softer end of the spectrum, with a particular emphasis on conflict prevention and resolution, deploying monitoring, mediation and election observation missions. Its Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM), launched in 2014, was its largest operation, and was ended with the Russian invasion in 2022. In the current environment, the OSCE is hamstrung by the tense relations between Russia and the West and its consensus-based formal decision-making model but retains its value as a potential platform for engagement and dialogue in the future.

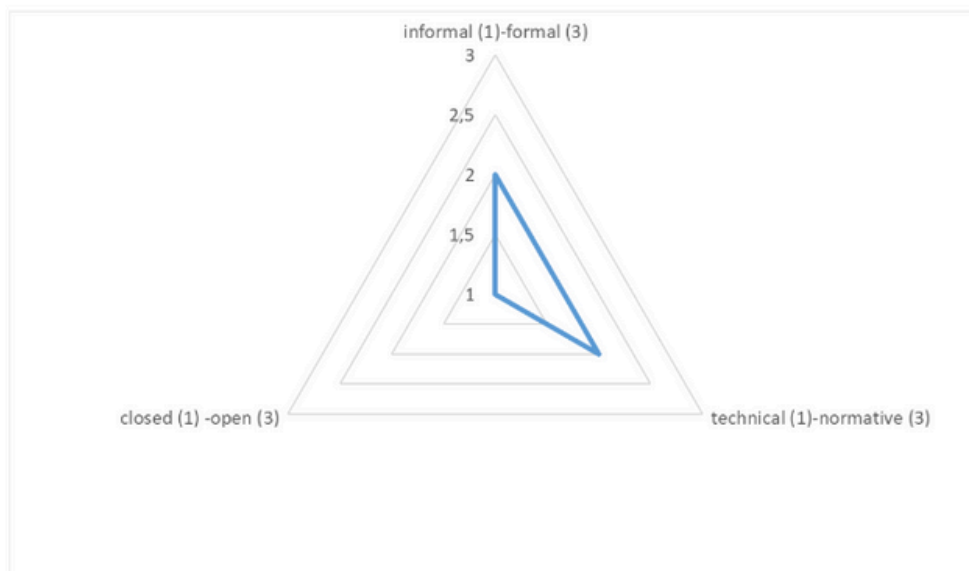
The OSCE can potentially be a viable technical and operational tool in a post-Ukraine war environment. In the past, Russia participated in OSCE missions in geopolitically contested areas, such as in Kosovo. Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine and EU sanctions on the country, foreign minister Lavrov visited two EU countries (Sweden and Malta) to attend OSCE summits. While this in itself might not mean much, the OSCE remains at least one of the few institutional formats in which EU and Russian diplomats are meeting on mostly European issues.

The potential attractiveness of the OSCE as a diplomatic format for Russia is likely to be dependent on the organization's future political orientation. Russia's choice not to leave – but causing an existential crisis – is likely to be motivated by preventing it from becoming a forum working against Russian geopolitical interests. It works as, for example, a preparation or waiting room for aspiring new EU member states from the Balkans or Caucasus which Russia considers as its legitimate zone of influence. For the EU, the question emerges if the OSCE can be a forum for building a post-war political order with Russia or as an alternative forum for solidifying liberal values in Europe beyond EU membership. It likely cannot be both.



Applying the NAVIGATOR taxonomy the OSCE can be characterized as a semi-formal and informal organization. Its character is one of technical and normative orientation with a pan-European closed membership (Figure 5).

Figure 5: The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe



NATO

With Donald Trump's return to the White House, NATO faces turbulent times, to say the least. NATO allies are set for another four years of naming and shaming by the US President. During his previous presidential term, Trump was exceptionally blunt already on the need for European allies to spend more on defence, hammering on the 2% spending target agreed during the 2014 Wales Summit. Ahead of his second term, he showed a commitment to further increase the spending target, even calling for an unrealistic 5% target (FT 2024b). Despite a real increase of 11% in defence spending in 2023, it is clear that European Allies and Canada will have to step up their spending levels – a target level of 3 to 3,5% of GDP is a realistic scenario. Yet, Trump also does not shy away from openly questioning the US' commitment to Article 5 of the NATO Treaty, the collective defence principle upon which the alliance is built, thereby undermining the alliance's credibility in a context of geopolitical turmoil.

In February, hardly four weeks into his new term, US President Trump and his administration left their European NATO allies in shock when presenting their 'peace plan' for Ukraine. In a series of conflicting statements, they ignored Ukraine's right of self-determination and suggested that Europe would not get a place at the peace negotiation table. The emergency meeting convened by French President Macron in Paris on 17 February – involving eight European heads of government, the presidents of the Council and the Commission and the NATO Secretary-General – is illustrative of the unilateral and informal governance trend that increasingly characterizes European security governance.

With Finland and Sweden having joined the alliance (4 April 2023 and 7 March 2024 respectively), the NATO Europe borders with Russia have increased considerably. As the consequences of a Russian victory or peace deal that weakens rather than strengthens Ukraine will be incalculable for Europe, it is essential for Europe an allies to maintain (and up) military support to Ukraine, if necessary without active



US support. Keeping the US committed should nonetheless remain a key priority or NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte, who might be the key bridging person between Europe and Washington. Meanwhile, as the question of Ukrainian membership in NATO has been wiped off the table by the Trump administration, the urgent and difficult question arises if and how European allies (and hence the EU) can offer Ukraine the necessary hard security guarantees without US support.

Whatever the outcome will be of Russia's war on Ukraine and Trump's peace plan, the Russian threat to Europe will remain. During his first major speech as incoming NATO Secretary-General on 12 December 2024, Mark Rutte did not hesitate to emphasize exactly that grim geopolitical reality. "We are not ready for what is coming our way in four to five years. Danger is moving towards us at full speed", he said. NATO allies are confronted with a string of hybrid attacks on public and commercial infrastructures. In 2024, NATO launched a new Maritime Centre for Security of Critical Undersea Infrastructure, signalling the increasing importance of this area of security (NATO 2024). Ever since, hardly a week has passed without yet another foreign attempt at sabotaging undersea cables in the Baltic Sea, leading NATO to launch a new maritime operation "Baltic Sentry" on 13 January 2025.

It is self-evident that in this geopolitical setting, the times of NATO's large-scale out-of-area operations are over. NATO started pulling back troops under President Obama already, and the retreat continued under Trump and Biden. Today, the alliance's focus is on guaranteeing a credible and deterrent presence at its flanks. NATO's Enhanced Forward Presence at the Eastern Flank, the Standing Naval Forces, and its Air Policing all serve that purpose. Granted, the organization still maintains a sizable presence in Kosovo, with the Kosovo Force currently counting more than 4,500 troops (NATO 2025a). NATO also maintains a non-combat advisory and capacity-building mission in Iraq, a maritime patrolling mission in the Mediterranean ocean and an air policing mission in the coalition states' airspace (NATO 2025b). But it is obvious that the core focus for the next decade will be on defending NATO territory and deterrence.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine in that sense accentuated and strengthened NATO's role as the pivotal defence organization in Europe, at least until February 2025. Deepening relations with the EU is nonetheless still high on the agenda. The fact that NATO Secretary-General Rutte, a former Prime Minister of the Netherlands, is familiar with the EU bubble will certainly help to strengthen mutual understanding between both organisations, who have 23 members in common. This is much-needed, as EU-NATO relations have all too often been characterized by tensions about potential duplication. The visit by the new European Commissioner for Defence and Space, Andrius Kubilius, to NATO Headquarters on 20 January 2025 can be read as a step forward in building a more productive partnership.

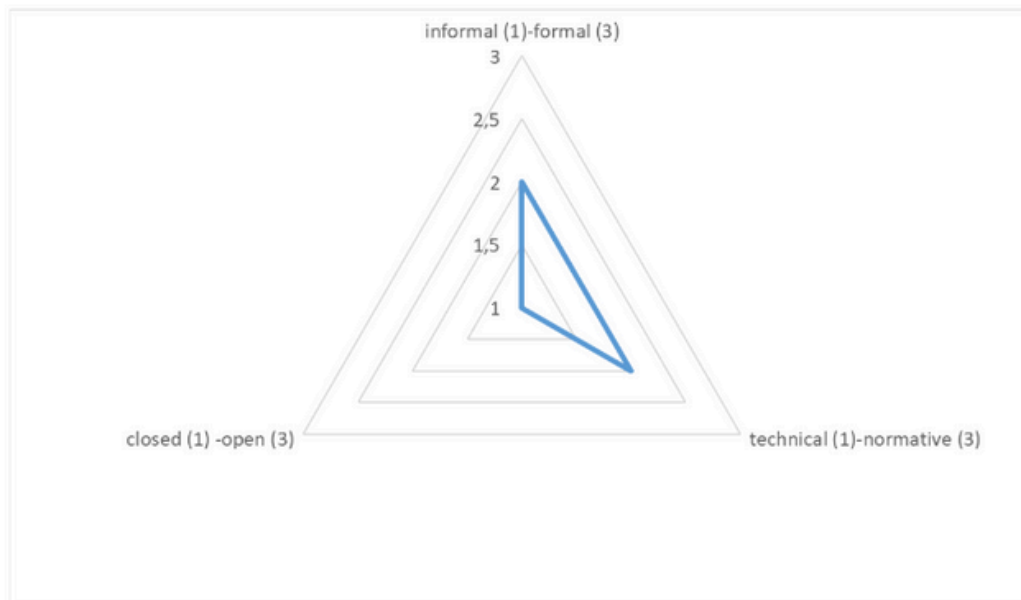
In the end, it is the EU that has a pivotal role to play in keeping the US committed to NATO, by means of showing that it is serious about removing some of the US' defence burden in Europe (and Ukraine) and that it can contribute to building a credible European "pillar" in NATO. For doing so, member states will have to be pushed to increase their defence budgets above and beyond their current ambition levels, but efforts should also go beyond that. Convincing collaborative EU projects are needed to acquire capabilities for which Europe now relies too much on the US, such as air defence, space and cyber capacity, as well as strategic enablers, including air-to-air refuelling and intelligence, command and control, and strategic reconnaissance. Most crucially, enhancing European defense industrial cooperation and innovation is finally becoming an EU priority. Essential will be to get to an agreement on the involvement of non-EU allies' defence industries in these EU defence industry initiatives, in particular essential non-EU NATO allies such as the UK and Norway.



Finally, concerns of duplication between NATO and the EU are still looming at the horizon. Just as NATO has been concerned about potentially duplicating efforts by the EU in the area of defence, also the EU looks with suspicion at NATO's increased emphasis on resilience and hybrid threats. Likewise, discussion about divisions of responsibilities are recommendable, at least if NATO survives the storm of the second Trump administration.

Applying the NAVIGATOR scale of organizational structures to NATO, it is clearly a closed organisation, as illustrated by the not so self-evident accession of Sweden and Finland or Ukraine's broken membership aspirations. In essence a formal organization guided by the NATO Treaty and formal procedures, NATO's strategic decision-making still has lots of informality, taking place in concentric circles with the US at its core. NATO also combines a normative agenda with technical cooperation and standard-setting in terms of capability targets.

Figure 6: The North Atlantic Treaty Organization



Ad hoc coalitions (AHCs)

As discussed, formal organizations, particularly the UN, have struggled to respond effectively to multiple crises, due to slow decision-making processes and internal deadlock (Guterres 2023). As a result, states (and non-state actors, such as IOs) have been searching for alternative and more informal arrangements for collective action. Ad hoc coalitions (AHCs) have become increasingly prominent and visible, particularly in peace and security. They align with the move towards more transactional international relations, where states set up short-term AHCs to solve particular issues in a quick, time-limited and effective manner (Reykers et al. 2023).

What sets AHCs apart from other arrangements in global governance is not so much their organizational features (such as the aforementioned levels of formality, accessibility and normativity), which exhibit significant variation. Rather, they are autonomous initiatives with the organizational flexibility to address complex and varied challenges, focusing on fast and temporary responses. Examples range from technical operations such as Operation Barkhane in Mali and Sahel region and Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan to more institutionalized cases such as the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) and the Global Coalition Against Daesh. Over time, the number of active coalitions has fluctuated, rather than steadily



increasing. Eventually, they disband, which confirms the conceptual assumption that AHCs usually dissolve when their task-specific objective has been achieved (Maglia, Karlsrud and Reykers 2025).

Accumulative is the number of states and other actors grouped together in an increasingly complex crisis response network. Over the past decades, more states have been actively involved in AHCs, with more connections formed among them through co-membership. While some coalitions are more open than others in terms of openness to external actors, the most active states in multiple unique coalitions are predominantly from the Global North (Maglia 2025), including the United States, France, United Kingdom, Italy, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Norway, Denmark, and Poland (Maglia, Karlsrud and Reykers 2025).

AHCs are often acting outside the framework of and in parallel with formal international organizations. Whereas their usefulness has been recognized by inter alia the European Commission in its Strategic Compass (2022), the relationship between AHCs and international and regional organizations is ambivalent. On the one hand, AHCs are gaining recognition as a viable, speedy, and flexible tool for multilateral action in peace and security. IOs and their internal agencies have already been cooperating through mandating, authorizing, endorsing, financing, and supporting coalitions. With proper coordination, functional differentiation, and a clear division of labor, they potentially complement formal organizations.

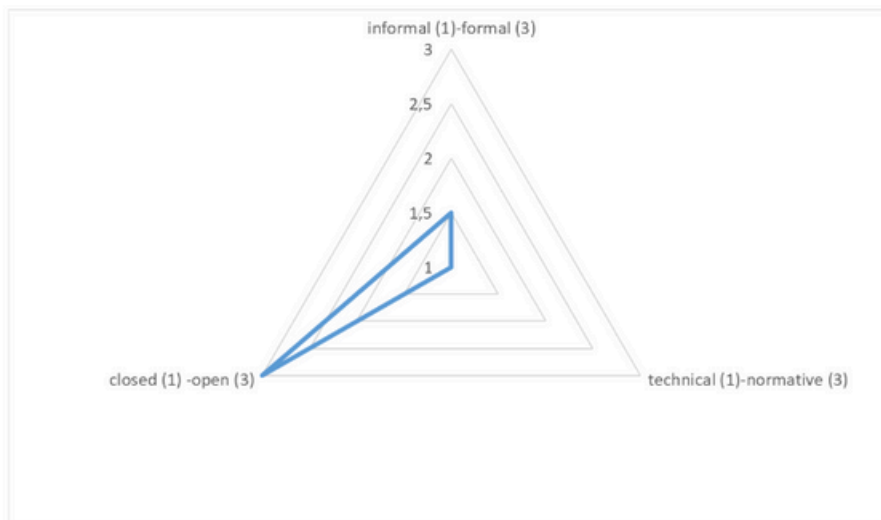
On the other hand, it could be argued that, on the long term, they may instead compete with these IOs. No doubt, the increased visibility of AHCs is part of a wider trend towards task-oriented mini-lateralism and informality in global governance. This results in actors using AHCs to bypass IOs decision-making procedures, making it faster to cooperate among themselves in a coalition to solve a particular problem for a determined time-period. The combined effect of these trends amounts to, for instance, the deinstitutionalization of the AU (Brosig and Karlsrud 2024). The EU followed and created the trend of more frequent use of AHC with a reform of its funding structure through the setting up of the EPF. While the new funding instruments shifts funding away from regional organizations such as the AU and others, it enabled direct support for example for the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) fighting Boko Haram.

Strictly speaking AHCs are not formal international organizations (FIGOs). Figure 7 aptly summarizes their main characteristics. They are not only temporary cooperative arrangements but also tend to be lighter in their formal set up, are strongly technical in focus given their problem-solving orientation, and their membership is not pre-determined. At times of multilateralism under strain, this makes them appear attractive as alternative institutional instruments.



This project receives funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under the Call HORIZON-CL2-2021-DEMOCRACY-01 – Grant agreement n°101061621

Figure 7: Ad Hoc Coalitions





Conclusion

Security in an era of geopolitical competition and institutional complexity

With geopolitics taking primacy and the relative shift in global power towards China and emerging powers, the EU needs to navigate an increasingly complex institutional landscape. Multilateralism is partly moving away from formal international organizations to alternative formats which are less institutionalized but more flexible with greater direct state control. Symptomatic of this shift in state preferences is the proliferation of ad hoc coalitions. AHCs have “lower creation, operation and exit costs” than traditional conflict management tools (Reykers et al. 2023: 727). Likewise, the establishment of the EPF reflects the move towards more transactional international relations and geopolitics for very specific goals. In the case of the AU it is moving resources from APSA to directly support e.g. counter terrorism operations such as the MNJTF fighting Boko Haram. In the case of Ukraine, the EPF turned out to be one of the most important and reliable extra budgetary European support instruments countering Russia's invasion.

With increasing complexity in terms of actors and conflict responses, there is a pressing need “to invest more in studying how to create synergies between ad hoc, UN-led and regional organization-led initiatives” (Karlsrud and Reykers, forthcoming: p. 2). Fittingly, the UN is contemplating a more modular approach where it can plug in capabilities according to the needs of the host country and the particular configuration of international actors in the theatre of operations.

Multilateralism, and what shape it takes, is impacted by weighing between legitimacy and effectiveness in the context of geopolitical competition. Institutions that were set up to lower transaction costs, such as the UN, now instead increase the transactional burdens on states, pushing cooperation towards informality. In this context, coalitions and other more informal cooperation formats becomes more useful, although they increase the transactional burden on individual states and might lack broad-based multilateral legitimacy. Undergirding these shifts there is more emphasis on effectiveness and less emphasis on the legitimacy and normative orientation that global and regional institutions provide to security operations.

Whereas the first four examples are, by definition, formal organizations, ad hoc coalitions are autonomous arrangements that reflect a high score of informality, openness and technical functionality (Figure 7). With this flexible approach and increasing importance, they have become an essential component in the broader mapping of the multilateral security landscape. We can observe a shift in focality away from FIGO's to more flexible and open formats. If this is a desirable trend which should be further developed given the current crisis of multilateralism or is aggravating the dismantling of existing security organizations remains to be seen. It is not clear if the effectiveness gap left by existing organizations can be filled by AHCs. Their institutional lightness and emphasis on technical short-term cooperation bears risks too. AHCs without common vision, stable membership, normative orientation and formalized cooperation risks degrading security governance to the whims of short-term and variable political interests.

In the best case, AHCs are complementing existing organizational frameworks and take action in areas in which FIGOs are not the first or best choice. In the worst case the excessive use of AHCs drains essential resources from existing organizations and



aggravates the crisis of multilateralism. In the end, short-term gains in effectiveness and flexibility cannot offset the costs of substantially weakening long-term formalized and normatively guided cooperation. Operating in a complex institutional environment including traditional elements of formal organizations and AHCs requires thoughtful decision-making. Likely no single type of institution is in itself sufficient to address an issue satisfactorily. The art of managing regional and global governance institutions rests on the ability to structure governance tasks smartly in a way and manner that pragmatically enhances reaching common goals. Thus, we propose the concept of **strategic institutional compartmentalization**. This can be achieved through considering the following recommendations:

- The EU should not design AHCs trying to out compete established security organizations. Competition is best avoided if AHCs perform **functionally different tasks** from what established organizations traditionally offer.
- AHCs can best 'dynamize' gridlock in established organizations when they operate as a preparation **or bridging instrument**, leaving space for later FIGOs involvement.
- AHCs reduce the chance of harmful competition if they actively seek political **endorsement** from relevant regional and global organizations.
- In a complex institutional and security environment priority should be given to reaching common goals through **using various instruments in parallel** allowing for a moderate degree of redundancies because the effectiveness of a single instrument is not guaranteed in complex environments.



References

- Baumann, Max-Otto, Sebastian Haug and Silke Weinlich (2022) China's Expanding Engagement with the Peace and Development Pillar. Bonn: Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.
- Börzel Tanja, Zürn Michael (2021). "Contestations of the Liberal International Order: From Liberal Multilateralism to Postnational Liberalism" *International Organization* 75(2), 282-305.
- BRICS: Johannesburg II Declaration, 23 August 2023: "BRICS and Africa: Partnership for Mutually Accelerated Growth, Sustainable Development and Inclusive Multilateralism" <http://www.brics.utoronto.ca/docs/230823-declaration.html>
- Brosig, Malte & Karlsrud, John (2024). "How ad hoc coalitions deinstitutionalize international institutions," *International Affairs*, 100 (2), 771–789.
- Brosig, Malte & Lecki, Markus (2022). "The African Three (A3) at the UN Security Council: Translating Agency into Influence?," *Politikon*, 49(3), 254-273.
- Brosig, Malte and Sempijja, Norman (2018). "Does Peacekeeping Reduce Violence? Assessing Comprehensive Security of Contemporary Peace Operations in Africa". *Stability: International Journal of Security & Development* 7(1): 4, 1–23.
- Brosig, Malte (2014). EU Peacekeeping in Africa: From Niche Selection to Interlocking Security Governance" *International Peacekeeping* 21(1), 74-90.
- Carver, Fred (2023). Ringfencing and the General Assembly A briefing by Blue Smoke exploring General Assembly action on the issue of monopolies on top UN roles. https://una.org.uk/sites/default/files/2023-05/ringfencing_and_the_general_assembly_-_final.pdf
- Congressional Research Service (2024). United Nations Issues: U.S. Funding to the U.N. System. Washington D.C.: Congressional Research Service. Available at: <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF10354>. Accessed 17 Jan 2024.
- Darkwa, Linda A. O. (2019) "Tools in a toolbox: The African Union's repertoire of mechanisms for addressing peace and security on the continent", in Karlsrud, John and Yf Reykers (eds.) *Multinational Rapid Response Mechanisms: From Institutional Proliferation to Institutional Exploitation*. Abingdon: Routledge: pp. 18-40.
- Duursma, A., Bara, C., Wilén, N., Hellmüller, S., Karlsrud, J., Oksamytna, K., ... & Wenger, A. (2023). UN Peacekeeping at 75: Achievements, Challenges, and Prospects. *International Peacekeeping*, 30 (4), 415-476. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13533312.2023.2263178>.
- The Economist (2025) "The era of multilateral peacekeeping draws to an unhappy close", *The Economist*, 2 Jan 2025. Available at: <https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2025/01/02/the-era-of-multilateral-peacekeeping-draws-to-an-unhappy-close>. Accessed 15 Jan 2025.



European Union (2025a). “European Peace Facility (EPF)”. Available at: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/european-peace-facility-epf_en. Accessed 17 Jan 2025.

European Union (2025b). “Missions and Operations”. Available at: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/missions-and-operations_en#11929. Accessed 17 Jan 2025.

Eisentraut, Sophie (2024). “Standard Deviation: Views on Western Double Standards and the Value of International Rules” Munich Security Brief, 1/2024. <https://securityconference.org/publikationen/munich-security-brief/standard-deviation/main/>

EU Commission (2024). Stronger Europe in the World, Factsheet, 11 Oct. 2024. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/fs_24_1394

EU, A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence, Brussels March 2022. https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/strategic_compass_en3_web.pdf

Financial Times (2024a). “Trump wants 5% Nato defence spending target, Europe told”, Financial Times, 20 December 2024. Available at: <https://www.ft.com/content/35f490c5-3abb-4ac9-8fa3-65e804dd158f>. Accessed 17 Jan 2025.

Financial Times (2024b). “Europe races to set up €500bn defence fund”, Financial Times, 5 December 2024. Available at: <https://www.ft.com/content/169816b5-39e9-4f05-ae84-43ef8e277c76>. Accessed 17 Jan 2025.

Goldstein, Avery (2020). “US–China Rivalry in the twenty-first century: Déjà vu and Cold War II,” China International Strategy Review, 2, 48–62.

Hoeffler, C., Hofmann, S. C., & Mérand, F. (2024). The polycrisis and EU security and defence competences. Journal of European Public Policy, 31(10), 3224–3248.

Karlsrud, John (2019) ‘From Liberal Peacebuilding to Stabilization and Counterterrorism’, International Peacekeeping, 26(1), pp. 1-21.

Karlsrud, John (2023). UN Peacekeeping Operations in a Multipolar Era. Global Governance: A Review of Multilateralism and International Organizations, 29(2), 219-229. <https://doi.org/10.1163/19426720-02902001>

Karlsrud, John and Malte Brosig (2024). “The Multilateral System: Between Reform and Deinstitutionalization”, IPI Global Observatory, 6 September 2024. Available at: <https://theglobalobservatory.org/2024/09/the-multilateral-system-between-reform-and-deinstitutionalization/>. Accessed 17 January 2024.

Karlsrud, John and Yf Reykers (eds.) (2019). Multinational Rapid Response Mechanisms: From Institutional Proliferation to Institutional Exploitation. Abingdon: Routledge.

Karlsrud, John, Malte Brosig and Cristiana Maglia (2024). Ad hoc coalitions in international security: The role of the G20. Brasília: T20. Available at: https://t20brasil.org/media/documentos/arquivos/TF06_ST_01_Ad_Hoc_Coalitions66fa0d64828b.pdf. Accessed 17 Jan 2025.



Karlsrud, John and Yf Reykers (2025). Integrating Ad Hoc Coalitions in International Conflict Management. International Studies Association Annual Conference, Chicago, 4 March 2025.

Keohane, Robert (1990). "Multilateralism: An Agenda for Research" International Journal, 45(4), 731-764.

Lake David, Martin Lisa, Risse Thomas (2021). „Challenges to the Liberal Order: Reflections on International Organization", International Organization 75(2), 225-257.

Landgreen, Karin (2024). "The United Nations in Hindsight: Does the Security Council Matter?" Security Council Report, 30 September 2024.

<https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2024-10/in-hindsight-does-the-security-council-matter.php>

Maglia, Cristiana, Karlsrud, John, Reykers, Yf (forthcoming) "Military ad hoc coalitions and their role in international conflict management: insights from the ADHOCISM dataset", International Peacekeeping.

Maglia, C, Sending, OJ, Bøås, M, de Coning, C, Eriksen, SS, Karlsrud, J, and Øverland, I (2024). Emerging powers, the G20, and reform of multilateral institutions. Oslo: Norwegian Institute of International Affairs.

Martin, Lisa (1992). "Interests, Power, and Multilateralism," International Organization, 46(4), 765–792.

NATO (2024). "NATO officially launches new Maritime Centre for Security of Critical Undersea Infrastructure", NATO, 28 May 2024. Available at: <https://mc.nato.int/media-centre/news/2024/nato-officially-launches-new-nmcscui>. Accessed 14 Jan 2025.

NATO (2025a). "NATO's role in Kosovo". Available at: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_48818.htm. Accessed 17 Jan 2025.

NATO (2025b). "Operations and missions: past and present". Available at: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_52060.htm. Accessed 17 Jan 2025.

Patrick, Stewart (2015). "Multilateralism à la Carte: The New World of Global Governance" Valdai Paper #22, https://valdaiclub.com/a/valdai-papers/valdai_paper_22_multilateralism_la_carte_the_new_world_of_global_governance/

Patrick, Stewart (2024). "BRICS Expansion, the G20, and the Future of World Order", Carnegie Endowment, 9 October 2024. <https://carnegieendowment.org/research/2024/10/brics-summit-emerging-middle-powers-g7-g20?lang=en>.

Patrick, Stewart (2025). "The Death of the World America Made" 19 February 2025. <https://carnegieendowment.org/emissary/2025/02/trump-executive-order-treaties-organizations?lang=en>

Politi, Alice (2023). "The Paradigm-Shift in EU-China Relations and the Limits of the EU's Current Strategy towards China: A Relational Perspective", Asian Affairs, 54(4), 670-693.



Reyker, Yf, Karlsrud, John, Brosig, Malte, Hofmann, Stephanie, Maglia, Cristiana, Rieker, Pernille (2023). "Ad hoc coalitions in global governance: a conceptual framework" *International Affairs* 99(2), 727-745.

Seabrooke, Leonard, and Sending, Ole Jacob. (2023). "The Navigator toolkit – working paper on the Navigator methodology." NAVIGATOR project. <https://eunav.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/D2.1-Working-paper-on-the-NAVIGATOR-methodology.pdf>.

Security Council Report (2018). *The Penholder System*, New York: SCR Report No. 3, 21 December 2018. <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/Penholders.pdf>

Sending, Ole Jacob, Seabrooke, Leonard and Karlsrud, John (2024). "Search Cost in Global Governance" working paper, navigator project, <https://eunav.eu/resource/working-paper-search-costs-in-global-governance/>

Sundar, Anand (2024). "Transatlantic drift: UK-EU defence cooperation in the second Trump era", *European Council on Foreign Relations*, 4 December 2024. Available at: <https://ecfr.eu/article/transatlantic-drift-uk-eu-defence-cooperation-in-the-second-trump-era/>. Accessed 17 Jan 2025.

UCDP (2024). "UCDP: record number of armed conflicts in the world", UCDP, 3 Jun 2024. Available at: <https://www.uu.se/en/press/press-releases/2024/2024-06-03-ucdp-record-number-of-armed-conflicts-in-the-world>.

UN, S/RES/2719, 21 December 2023. New York: United Nations.

UN (2024a). "Summit of the Futures Outcome Documents", New York, September 2024. <https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/sotf-the-pact-for-the-future.pdf>

UN (2024b) "Security Council Data - Vetoes Since 1946", United Nations. Available at: <https://psdata.un.org/dataset/DPPA-SCVETOES>.

UN (2024c) A/79/318/Add. 1. Implementation of General Assembly resolutions 55/235 and 55/236. New York: United Nations.

UN (2024d) *Scale of Assessments 1946-2024*. New York: United Nations.

UN (2025) "Past Missions". Available at: <https://dppa.un.org/en/past-missions>. Accessed 15 Jan 2025.

Vabulas, Felicity and Snidal Duncan (2013). "Organization without delegation: Informal intergovernmental organizations (IIGOs) and the spectrum of intergovernmental arrangements" *Review of International Organizations* 8, 193-220.

Wane, El-Ghassim, Paul D. Williams and Ai Kihara-Hunt, "The Future of Peacekeeping, New Models, and Related Capabilities", *Independent Study* commissioned by the United Nations Department of Peace Operations, October 2024.



Authors

Malte Brosig is Professor in International Relations at the Department of International Relations at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg. He joined the Department in 2009 after he received his PhD from the University of Portsmouth. His main research interests focus on issues of international organizations and security in Africa and Europe.
malte.brosig@wits.ac.za

John Karlsrud is Research Professor at the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs. He is co-Principal Investigator (PI) of ADHOCISM, a 1,2 EUR million Research Council of Norway project examining the role of ad hoc coalitions in global governance, and PI of NAVIGATOR, a 3 EUR million Horizon Europe project exploring changes in global cooperation across a range of issues.
jka@nupi.org

Cristiana Maglia is Senior Research Fellow at the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs. She is currently the post-doctoral researcher of the project Ad hoc crisis response and international organizations (ADHOCISM), funded by the Research Council of Norway. At NUPI, she also worked in the LORAX and Market for Anarchy projects.
cristiana.maglia@nupi.no

Yf Reykers is Assistant Professor in International Relations (tenured) at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at Maastricht University. Previously, he was a postdoctoral researcher at the Leuven International and European Studies Institute at KU Leuven, where he also obtained his PhD. He was a visiting scholar at New York University and at Aarhus University. He is currently also Associate Editor of the journal Contemporary Security Policy and co-Principal Investigator of the project “Ad hoc crisis response and international organisations (ADHOCISM)”, which is funded by a grant (2021-2025) from the Research Council of Norway.
y.reykers@maastrichtuniversity.nl



NAVIGATOR

NAVIGATOR is a 4-year research project set to examine how the EU shall navigate the increasingly complex – and conflict-laden – institutional spaces of global governance to advance a rules-based international order. What factors should be emphasized when considering which institutions to strengthen, which to reform, and which to by-pass when revitalising multilateralism? NAVIGATOR's main objective is to answer these questions and deliver a ready-to-use "search mechanism" and associated pathways of action that the EU and its member states can use as it seeks to strengthen a rules-based international order.

To achieve this, NAVIGATOR comprises a strong, global and inter-disciplinary team of researchers that explores institutional variation on six policy issues – climate change, digitalisation, finance/tax, health, migration and security – to identify what institutional mixes that enables the EU to have optimal impact in a given policy issue.

This project receives funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under the Call HORIZON-CL2-2021-DEMOCRACY-01 – Grant agreement n°101061621

All rights, amongst which the copyright, on the materials described in this document rest with the original authors of the text, except where referenced. Without prior permission in writing from the authors and the Norwegian Institute for International Affairs (NUPI), this document may not be used, in whole or in part, for the lodging of claims, for conducting proceedings, for publicity and/or for the benefit or acquisition in a more general sense.

The European Commission's support does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which only reflect the views of the author(s). The Commission is not responsible for any use of the information contained therein.



This project receives funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation programme under the Call HORIZON-CL2-2021-DEMOCRACY-01 – Grant agreement n°101061621