

EUROPEAN UNION AND THE WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION: POLICY, THREAT, RESPONSE

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Abstract. The aim of this article is to explore the European Union's (EU) attitude toward the weapons of mass destruction (WMD) – shape of non-proliferation policy, perception of the WMD threat and the EU's responses to it – through the Social Constructivism paradigm of International Relations. In providing the explanation author uses the notions of identity, historical experiences, institutional evolution, and lessons learned, as well as comparative method and content analysis. This paper argues that the EU's position toward the WMD (policy, threat, responses) is mainly the result of the EU's evolution and lessons learned in the field of foreign, security and defence policy after the Cold War, as well as its search for the global power identity role which has separate and different security interest from those of the USA and with its own vision of global order based on rules. Historical experiences of the World War II regarding the balance of power in Europe, lessons learned from the use of force without United Nations (UN) mandate in tackling the crisis after the Cold War and conditionality policy mainly used in the process of enlargement, as well as the search for distinct EU identity and associated world order and institutional development are all embedded in the EU non-proliferation policy, perception of the WMD threat and the responses to it. These policy, threat perception and response are also largely defined in terms of functionalism, multilateralism, comprehensiveness and strategic autonomy.

Keywords: *Non-proliferation; EU; WMD; social constructivism; multilateralism.*

European Union in the Social Constructivism Paradigm

After the Cold War Social Constructivism as the theory of International Relations gained particular importance since it offered new approach to the studies of international relations and understanding of the new world order that

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was just emerging. Better relations and even improved cooperation of the two superpowers, bilaterally and in the UN and other international institutions, highlighted the narrative previously reserved only for the West. In the centre of this narrative, which became globally applied after the Cold War, were the words such as “international community” and “international society”. The belief in the predominant power of the actor and not the structure gained new importance, since the “anarchy is what states make of it.”¹ Actor could influence the shape of the world by promoting its beliefs, values and interests through the process of interaction with other actors and creation of common institutions, shared knowledge and even culture.

In the Social Constructivism paradigm actors’ understanding of the world as it is and should be depends on its identity, beliefs, values, attitudes, knowledge and intentions and directs it toward the creation of a certain international state of affairs or world order. Construction of this certain international state of affairs or order is the actor’s interest conducted in order to fulfil its identity and material needs.² When these needs are satisfied in the current international environment actor tends to preserve it and maintain *status quo*. But, if actor feels it cannot fulfil its identity and material needs in current state of affairs it becomes revisionist and tries to change it.³

Regarding identity, Wendt, for example, classifies it in four different types. Personal or corporate identity refers to the kind of actor – state or non-state actor, inter-governmental organization or non-governmental organization etc. Type identity puts actors into a certain category depending on some features that actor possess like democracy, autocracy, capitalism, communism etc. Third type is the role identity which exists in relation to others and expresses what kind of role and action actor has in a broader structure. Finally, collective identity is based on the unification of self with the other or group, thus making common identity or *we* identity.⁴ Having in mind this classification I maintain that the EU perceive itself as a *sui generis* international organization of democratic capitalistic states – “community of states based on the common values”⁵ – with community and inter-governmental elements, and which tends to be strategic actor with distinct and autonomous foreign, security and defence policy in relation to the other actors such as USA or Russia and with overlapping collective identity mostly with the third democratic states (which are its allies) and within North-Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).⁶

¹ Alexander Wendt, “Anarchy is what States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics”, *International Organization*, Vol. 46, No. 2, Spring, 1992, pp. 391-425.

² Went is using Alexander Rosenberg’s distinction between identity and material needs. See: Aleksandar Vent, *Društvena teorija međunarodne politike*, Fakultet političkih nauka i Eigoja štampa, Beograd, 2014, p. 115.

³ *Ibidem*, p. 93.

⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 195-199.

⁵ “Consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union”, *Official Journal of the European Union*, C 326/28, EN, Brussels, 26.10.2012, Article 2.

⁶ For more on the EU’s identity and security needs and the conception of world order see: Марина Т. Костић, „Концепције светског поретка у политикама безбедности Сједињених Америчких Држава, Руске Федерације и Европске уније на почетку XXX века”, докторска дисертација, Универзитет у Београду, Факултет политичких наука, 2019, pp. 285-308.

Kissinger, for example, see EU's identity both as abandonment of the Westphalian system of sovereignty and as return to Westphalia, but not in the form of a single state actor, but as "regional and not mono-national power and as new unit in new global version of Westphalian system."⁷ It is thus a "hybrid", Kissinger claims, – entity between state and confederation which acts through the meeting of ministers and common bureaucracy with "cosmopolitan identity."⁸ This "cosmopolitan identity", together with the corporate identity which is based on institutions and rules, leads the EU to prefer and promote the so called rule-based international order and support multilateralism and international organizations, as well as good governed liberal-democratic states and cooperative security on the global scale. The EU and especially its supranational institution European Commission (EC), is sometimes accused of overwhelming normativity, which, as argument goes, neglects and oversees the individual interests of its member states. In recent years, these accusations provoked some kind of rebellion inside the EU, with new emphasises on the role of nation state, sovereignty and conservatism and emerging of new, so called, populist movement and political parties in Germany, Italy or France, but also among the new Eastern-European member states like Hungary or Poland where the, so called, populist government were formed.⁹ A lot of campaigning for "Brexit" was also based on the "rebellion" against the Brussels bureaucracy.¹⁰ Still, for any good analysis of the EU policy it is important to have in mind that the EU is not acting only through the meeting of heads of states or "ministers and common bureaucracy" with "cosmopolitan identity", as Kissinger claims, but also through the representative institutions such as the European Parliament (EP). This institution, through its budgetary and oversight mandate, as well as public debates and resolutions, and especially in relation to controversial issues like nuclear energy or nuclear weapons, have a significant influence on formulation of EU policies, including foreign, security and defence policy.

Following its identity as normative power that emphasises institutions and seeks the rule-based international order, EU has developed mechanisms to spread this kind of European order or European thinking on world order outside the EU. Through the several decades of implementation of conditionality policy, especially in the field of enlargement policy, EU has developed more rigorous instruments and implementation and verification mechanisms. Conditionality is sometimes in the form of "conditionality clauses" (human right clause or non-proliferation clause) which are the part of the mixed agreements that EU concludes with the third parties. In order to make them more effective the EU has developed several instruments which can be classified as preventive (and positive, "carrots")

⁷ Henri Kisindžer, *Svetski poredak*, CID Podgorica, 2015, p. 80.

⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 81.

⁹ See for example Tim Gosling, "Europe's Populist Governments Have a Problem: Their Capitals", *Foreign Policy*, 4 November 2019, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/11/04/europes-populist-governments-have-a-problem-their-capital-cities-czech-republic-hungary-poland-slovakia/>.

¹⁰ Timothy B. Lee, "Brexit: the 7 most important arguments for Britain to leave the EU", *Vox*, Updated Jun 25, 2016, <https://www.vox.com/2016/6/22/11992106/brexit-arguments>.

and coercive (or negative, “sticks”) instruments. Main “carrots” are usually large amounts of funds (donations, aid) and “stick” is usually in the form of restrictive measures, which, according to the EU strategic documents, can lead to the use of force only under the UN mandate.

Since it comprises 27 states and has significant number of citizens and share in global trade, the EU perceives itself as a global player which has the potential and willingness to participate in global affairs (shaping the rules, solving international crisis including military use etc.). The development of a common foreign, security and defence policy can be seen as an attempt of the EU to “affirm its identity, initially as an international actor, and later on as a global security actor.”¹¹ I would say that the EU believes that only by becoming a global actor it can preserve its security and integrity. “To build a secure Europe in a better world, we must do more to shape events”, states the conclusion of the Report on the implementation of the European Security Strategy (ESS) in 2008.¹² In shaping this role identity the greatest influence has the relationship with the USA which is ambivalent. On the one side, the EU has been supporting US perception of threats and, at first, in the 1990s also the US led responses. But, since 2003 and US counter-proliferation invasion on Iraq, which was taken without consensus with the allies, the EU has been developing separate and more independent view of security threats and responses to it. This can be seen in the EU’s strategic documents like the ESS and the Strategy for fight against WMD in 2003, as well as Report on the implementation of the ESS and New Lines for action by the European Union in combating the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems (New lines of action) in 2008 and later in A Global Strategy for the European Union’s Foreign And Security Policy (EU Global strategy) in 2016 and its review document in 2019. “It is the evolution of the identity of the EU and the interaction between the two partially overlapping security communities (EU and NATO, comment by the author), and therefore with the US, that helps in explaining variations in the preferences and interests of the EU, as well as in its security culture”, writes Monteleone.¹³

All these previously mentioned documents put “effective multilateralism” at the front of the fight against WMD and the UN in the centre of global rule-based international order. That does not mean that the EU is not conducting its own initiatives outside the UN, but on the contrary. It promotes and undertakes active multilateralism or diplomacy, which is seen as the EU’s role in “creating multilateralism” guided by the principled pragmatism or “variable geometry multilateralism”, which includes partnership with states and non-state actors

¹¹ Carla Monteleone, “Beyond material factors? Identity, culture and the foreign and security policy of the EU”, in: Lorenzo Cladi, Andrea Locatelli (eds), *International Relations Theory and European Security: We Thought We Knew*, Routledge, Abingdon, 2016, p. 84. (pp. 83-99)

¹² “Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy - Providing Security in a Changing World -”, Brussels”, 11 December 2008, https://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/reports/104630.pdf, p. 12.

¹³ Carla Monteleone, “Beyond material factors? Identity, culture and the foreign and security policy of the EU”, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

depending on the specific topic.¹⁴ The EU has also developed and increasing the use of the so called autonomous restrictive measures regimes (sanctions). In the fragile world, as the EU sees contemporary state of international affairs, soft power is not enough but should be combined with the preventive means and measures, as well as defence capabilities.¹⁵ I believe that this all should lead to the development of the EU's strategic culture which care about its own interest on its own way, based on its own capabilities. Thinking and acting in this way will, for sure, have more and more influence on the collective transatlantic identity and security.

In the next section of the paper I will examine how this EU identity is manifested in the EU relationship toward the WMD through the analysis of a creation of the EU non-proliferation policy, framing of the WMD threat and responses to it. It mainly uses the methods of content analysis of the EU official documents in the foreign, security and defence policy after the 2003, and the comparative method primarily in relation to the USA policy, strategic documents and activities.

Shaping the EU non-proliferation policy

The very beginnings of the EU non-proliferation policy can be found in the growing fear of the winners of the Second World War of the possible weaponization of civil nuclear energy programmes of defeated states in Europe. It “was first seen as an ‘internal matter’ for Europe, where the risk of Germany developing a nuclear weapons programme was seen as an actual risk to be avoided at all costs.”¹⁶ The fear of weaponization is also at the heart of the EU's concern over the Iranian civilian nuclear programme, contemporary one of the most pressing challenges for the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). This fear of proliferation theoretically stems from two beliefs. Firstly, that weapon proliferation contributes to the greater instability i.e. that non-proliferation brings more certainty and security and that institutions can constrain state's behaviour and contribute to the more peaceful environment and development. In one of the Council's Decisions, for example, it is stated the EU sees the non-proliferation and disarmament efforts as contributors to the international confidence, stability and peace.¹⁷ Secondly, even if the proliferation occurs it must not end up in the hands of communist or autocratic regimes/tyrannies/dictatorships which are by definition irresponsible

¹⁴ “The European Union's Global Strategy: Three years on, moving forward”, EEAS, https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/eu_global_strategy_2019.pdf, p. 16, 20.

¹⁵ “Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe, A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy”, EEAS, June 2016, https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/eugs_review_web_0.pdf, Point 4, pp. 44-46.

¹⁶ “Evolving EU Arms Control Policy”, EU NPDC E-Learning Course, <https://nonproliferation-elearning.eu/learningunits/eu-disarmament-and-non-proliferation/>

¹⁷ “Council Common Position 2003/805/CFSP of 17 November 2003 on the universalisation and reinforcement of multilateral agreements in the field of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and means of delivery”, <https://www.nonproliferation.eu/hcoc/wp-hcoc/uploads/EU-Council-Common-Position-2003.pdf>, p. 1.

toward the international peace and stability and its own people. Besides disturbance of the regional balance of power, this can be viewed as one of the explanation of the EU's different approach toward the Indian and North Korean or possible Iranian nuclear weapon programme.

Once these beliefs were accepted and consolidated at the EU level and among the EU states, which meant the acceptance of the existing European order and *status quo* regarding nuclear weapons, EU could develop its role identity as global non-proliferator and external dimension of the CFSP/CSDP regarding non-proliferation. By pursuing non-proliferation policy outside the EU, it is also preserving its identity, stability and integrity, since it could be achieved only in the world that itself adopts and implements the non-proliferation principle. It is why I argue that the non-proliferation is the essential part of the very existence of the peace and security in Europe and of existence of the EU as a whole in a current form. Fear of the terrorism after the 11 September 2001 only added to the fear of proliferation and broaden the field by stressing the importance of including the non-state actors into the non-proliferation policy. The fact that the EU's main ally was the victim of the terrorist attack and had already been conducting the coercive counter-proliferation operation, led the EU to promptly develop stronger non-proliferation policy and adopt not only ESS, but also the Strategy for fight against proliferation of WMD (EU WMD Strategy) in 2003.

Today, the EU non-proliferation policy has been shaped mainly by one internal and two external factors. The internal one is the division of the EU member states regarding the nuclear energy and nuclear weapons issues and established balance of power in this regard. After referendum on "Brexit" in 2016, France remained the only EU nuclear weapons state (NWS) that is at the same time the permanent member of the UN Security Council. There are, also, four countries, founders of the EU, that host the US nuclear weapons (Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Belgium), several non-nuclear weapon states (NNWS), which are militarily neutral countries that strongly support nuclear disarmament (like Malta, Cyprus, Austria or Ireland) and, since the enlargement in the 2000s NNWS that strongly support the presence of nuclear arms in Europe i.e. are against the prohibition of nuclear weapons (like Poland). As the only nuclear weapon state, France is pushing for promotion of strategic autonomy culture at the EU level which is, in French view, impossible without nuclear deterrent.¹⁸ Although France became member of the NPT in 1992 it still remains outside the strategic arms control arrangements, as well as UK and China, but promotes universalisation of existing multilateral non-proliferation treaties and disarmament. Four EU states that host US nuclear weapons in the EU are faced with growing public protest against stationing of these weapons on their soil and may consider further reduction of the number of warheads.¹⁹ However, it has its function and

¹⁸ See for example Michel Rose, "Amid arms race, Macron offers Europe French nuclear wargames insight", Reuters, 7 February 2020, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-france-defence-macron-idUSKBN201190>

¹⁹ See for example Oliver Meier, "News Analysis: An End to U.S. Tactical Nuclear Weapons in Europe?", Arms Control Today, <https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2006-07/news-analysis-end-us-tactical-nuclear-weapons-europe>

success in preserving the existing balance of power among the EU member states and prevention of possible proliferation of nuclear weapons inside the EU.²⁰ Also, some in NNWS, like in Poland or the Baltic states, think that only by preserving US nuclear weapons in Europe or creating European nuclear weapons, in the case US is not willing to provide security guarantees any more, the substantial guarantee and deterrence can be made against possible Russian aggression.²¹ Finally, there are those EU militarily neutral states that are strong supporters of the nuclear disarmament like Ireland, Malta and Austria which recently ratified the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). In the era of the demise and crisis of several US-Russia arms control treaties after 2002 this division will only get deeper leaving more consequences for the European stability, but making EU non-proliferation policy even more important. Also, thirteen out of twenty seven EU member states have nuclear reactors and produce nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, which has raised important issues on nuclear waste and possibilities of nuclear accidents like that one in Fukushima in 2011.

The external factors that shaped the EU non-proliferation policy were (1) relation to the USA and its politics of counter-proliferation as response to proliferation crisis especially in the EU's neighbourhood (Libya or the Middle East) and (2) relation toward Russia, especially after the wars in Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014. The terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 put the EU in a position to support the USA self-defence by using force against Afghanistan. But the attack on Iraq in 2003 due to the alleged development and possession of the WMD created the wide division among the EU member states, primarily because of the negative lessons learned from the previous case of military intervention without UN mandate, such as the NATO use of force against FR Yugoslavia in 1999. That led to the adoption of the ESS, WMD strategy and the EU counter-terrorism strategy. Also, I maintain that Russian military activities in Georgia in 2008 and Ukraine in 2014 had significant impact on the EU non-proliferation policy by strengthening the lines of division among the old and new EU NNWS, since the new NNWS see nuclear weapons as possible balancer or deterrence against the possible further Russian military actions or the limited use of nuclear weapons in the region. But, stationing of the US or NATO nuclear weapons and infrastructure east of the once called West Germany would not only disrupt the whole post-Cold war peace architecture, but also more than 60 years long nuclear balance inside the EU. Ukrainian crisis in 2014 also provoked the discussion and regret for the Ukrainian consent in 1990s to remove nuclear weapons it inherited from the Soviet Union to Russia.²² Crimean crisis showed

²⁰ On the role of US nuclear sharing for the preservation of balance and non-proliferation in Europe see William Alberque, "The NPT and the Origins of NATO's Nuclear Sharing Arrangements. Proliferation Papers", No. 57, Institut français des relations internationales, https://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/alberque_npt_origins_nato_nuclear_2017.pdf 2017, especially p. 21.

²¹ See for example Katarzyna Kubiak, "Playing Warsaw against Berlin on nuclear weapons, European Leadership Network, 1 June 2020, <https://www.europeanleadershipnetwork.org/commentary/playing-warsaw-against-berlin-on-nuclear-weapons/>; Barbara Wesel, "Poland wants nuclear weapons for Europe", *Deutsche Welle*, 7 February 2017, <https://www.dw.com/en/poland-wants-nuclear-weapons-for-europe/a-37449773>

²² See for example Anthony Zurcher, "Ukraine's nuclear regret?", *BBC*, 20 March 2014, <https://www.bbc.com/news/blogs-echochambers-26676051>.

that the nuclear guaranties from the US and other NWS were not enough for Ukraine to preserve its territorial integrity, which send ill signal to other states that might feel endangered and thus seek the creation of nuclear weapons. Also, debating the follow on treaty after the New START expires after five years extension agreed in 2021 US emphasises, among other things, the limitation on Russian tactical nuclear weapons, while Russia calls for the removal of US tactical nuclear weapons in that case.

Although strong position was set regarding the non-proliferation, there is large difference and disagreement over the issue of disarmament. The issue of disarmament is strongly connected to the non-proliferation policy since both are a part of the Non-Proliferation Treaty's (NPT) "grand bargain" between NWS and NNWS. But, since there was no consensus over the modalities of disarmament, it seems like it was side-lined from the EU policy on WMD. However, side-lining of the disarmament issue in the EU could seriously damage the credibility of the EU non-proliferation policy. It was something EU also recognised and in recent years has been putting more efforts to formulate coherent policy and identity of disarmament. The 2016 EU Global strategy put disarmament on the first place in stating that "The EU will strongly support the expanding membership, universalisation, full implementation and enforcement of multilateral disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control treaties and regimes."²³ Also, some of the EU official positions and organisations changed their name in order to add word "disarmament", such as Special Envoy for Non-proliferation which became the Special Envoy for Non-proliferation and Disarmament or the EU Consortium for non-proliferation which added the word disarmament in 2018, after the recommendation of the resolution of EP on nuclear security and non-proliferation.²⁴ I maintain that the link between the non-proliferation and disarmament lies in the facts that without non-proliferation disarmament is unacceptable and without going toward disarmament non-proliferation is not credible enough. Effective non-proliferation, I believe, is not possible without disarmament process and may provoke proliferation, since the non-proliferation efforts would be seen as means of preserving superiority and freedom of intervention in the internal affairs of states, which might provoke revisionism and make some states feel threatened. Because of the credibility of the policy and preservation of the NPT regime to which EU is committed non-proliferation and disarmament get along in the EU policy framing, at least at declaratory level.

The EU's framing of the WMD threat

Social Constructivism paradigm suggests that framing of the WMD threat by the EU is the result of the EU's identity needs, at the beginning primarily determined by collective identity needs but later more by its own role identity and search for

²³ "Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe, A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy", *op. cit.*, p. 41.

²⁴ "About us", EU Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Consortium, <https://www.nonproliferation.eu/about-us/>

its role as global autonomous power. The perception of the WMD threat in the EU went from prioritising proliferation of WMD by states as a threat in the 1990s, to the threat of WMD terrorism in 2000s and after 2014 again revived as prioritisation of the proliferation crisis attached to states. Possible lowering of the threshold for nuclear weapon use in regional conflicts, in context of the greatly deteriorated relations with Russia, the collapse of the arms control architecture in Europe, possible vertical proliferation of nuclear weapons of China and United Kingdom and challenges attached to modernization of nuclear arsenals by all NWSs, failure of the new US-North Korea talks on denuclearization during the Trump administration and the US withdrawal from Iran nuclear deal in 2018 only added to the renewed prioritization of proliferation threat stemming from state actors. However, this simplistic view of shifting perceptions of the WMD threat is complicated by the fact that there are still states sponsors of terrorism, which is the point where two types of WMD threat converge. Today, for example, Cuba, Iran, North Korea and Syria are included in the US State Department's list of state sponsors of terrorism.²⁵ The creation of Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in 2015 and the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters also posed a great threat to the European security. In recent years, the importance of the security of critical infrastructure was highlighted and the connection between non-proliferation and counterterrorism efforts strengthened. This connection was made in mitigation of the CBRN risks and of external and internal EU policies, bodies and measures. The new threat of WMD terrorism also impacts the definition of "weapons", since there is the threat of possible use of improvised explosive devices that can be made with various means, for example by combination of radioactive material and conventional explosives. That influences the regulation of the list of the weapons that should be controlled. Control of dual-use technologies and materials is thus of particular importance.

Since after the France entered the NPT in 1992 the non-proliferation principle was adopted by all EU member states and consensus was reached on this issue inside the EU, this organisation has been defining the WMD threat as external to the EU. The EU "member states and institutions are no longer concerned with nuclear weapons programmes within the EU, but have turned their attention to nuclear weapons proliferation abroad."²⁶ Although this might be true for state proliferation, it can be contested regarding the non-state actors' possible use of WMD. As Anthony and Grip observe, in the EU WMD Strategy the WMD threat was largely treated as coming from outside the EU but the actual source of violence can be increasingly rooted in the EU and its member states, especially more divided societies.²⁷ The threat of the so called foreign terrorist fighters

²⁵ "State Sponsors of Terrorism", Bureau of Counterterrorism, U.S. Department of State, <https://www.state.gov/state-sponsors-of-terrorism/#:~:text=Currently%20there%20are%20four%20countries,%2C%20Iran%2C%20and%20Syria.&text=For%20more%20details%20about%20State,in%20Country%20Reports%20on%20Terrorism>

²⁶ "Evolving EU Arms Control Policy", *op. cit.*

²⁷ Ian Anthony and Lina Grip, "Strengthening the European Union's future approach to WMD non-proliferation", SIPRI Policy Paper 37, June 2013, <https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/files/PP/SIPRI37.pdf>, p. 15.

after the creation of ISIS in 2013 was of paramount concern. Beside these immediate threats, the WMD threat encompasses all other issues related to the WMD acquirement (gaining knowledge, materials and technology, proliferation financing) and development of means of their delivery including new technologies such as drones.

The 2003 Council's Common Position on the universalisation and reinforcement of multilateral agreements in the field of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and means of delivery recognised the proliferation of WMD and means of delivery as a growing threat to international peace and security especially in the context of possible risk that terrorists will acquire chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear materials.²⁸ Also, the ESS in 2003 recognised the proliferation of WMD as potentially the greatest threat to the EU security.²⁹ But, the Report on the implementation of the ESS from 2008 put the proliferation of WMD by states at the first place among the five key global challenges and security threats, before the threat of terrorism and organised crime. It mentioned the cases of Libya, Iran and North Korea and a "likely revival of civil nuclear power in coming decades" as challenges to the non-proliferation system "if not accompanied by the right safeguards."³⁰ The development of an Iranian nuclear military capability "would be a threat to EU security that cannot be accepted" highlighted the Report.³¹ In relation to the ESS and WMD Strategy, in 2008, besides the Report on the implementation of the ESS, EU adopted the New Lines for action. It states that "the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems poses an even greater threat to the security of European citizens than at the time the WMD Strategy was adopted and that WMD "which may be in the hands of states of concern or terrorists/non state actors constitute one of the greatest security challenges which Europeans may ever face."³² In this document the acceleration of trade and globalization were recognized as main facilitators of proliferation of WMD which make certain states, private actors or illegal networks more prone to gain these kinds of weapons.³³ Van Ham considers that the main intention of the New Lines for action was "to raise awareness within EU member states of the growing WMD proliferation challenge, calling on governments and scientific and academic circles to be better informed on non-proliferation matters and the potential risks of their own activities."³⁴

²⁸ "Council Common Position 2003/805/CFSP of 17 November 2003 on the universalisation and reinforcement of multilateral agreements in the field of non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and means of delivery", *op. cit.*, p. 1.

²⁹ "A Secure Europe in a Better World - EU Security Strategy", <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-15895-2003-INIT/en/pdf>, p. 5.

³⁰ "Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy - Providing Security in a Changing World", *op. cit.*, p. 3.

³¹ *Ibidem*, p. 7.

³² "Council Conclusions and new lines for action by the European Union in combating the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems, Council of the European Union", Brussels, 17 December 2008, <https://www.nonproliferation.eu/hcoc/wp-hcoc/uploads/New-lines-for-action-2008.pdf>, p. 3.

³³ *Ibidem*.

³⁴ Peter van Ham, "The European Union's Strategy on Weapons of mass Destruction: From Ambition to Disappointment", Clingendael Institute, 2011, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/resrep05378.pdf?refreqid=excelsior%3A9dc7d328d548bc854e0bb1e492d37d21>, p. 9.

Both ballistic and cruise missiles were recognized as means of delivery, and they are also subject to non-proliferation norms and regulations. On 18 December 2008, the Council adopted Decision 2008/974/CFSP in support of the Hague Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation (HCoC) in the framework of the implementation of the EU WMD Strategy. Later it adopted several additional Council Decisions in support of this document. The continued proliferation of ballistic missiles capable of delivering WMD constitutes a cause of growing concern for the international community, in particular ongoing missiles programmes in the Middle East, North-East Asia and South Asia, including Iran and the North Korea.³⁵ In 2016, the EU Global Strategy recognised that “the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems remains a growing threat to Europe and the wider world.”³⁶ But, the 2019 Report on the Global Strategy does not mention specifically or use the word WMD threat, but states that “strategically, non-proliferation and arms control are at risk”³⁷, recognizing that the crisis of international regimes poses the new key threat in the era of renewed great power competition.

Of special importance for the EU in highlighting the WMD threat is the perception of the nature of the government of the state-proliferator and the fact that it usually emerges in the conflict areas, which raises the possibility of their use, sometimes very near the EU borders (in the case of Middle East).³⁸ The argument about the significance of the nature of the state-proliferator which then cause the difference in the response might be seen in the divergent EU attitude toward the possession of nuclear weapons in the case of India, which is regarded as democratic state with great economic value for the EU and with whom EU is cooperating even on the issues of nuclear energy, but which is not part of the NPT, and North Korea, which is perceived as the “dictatorship” and to which EU is implementing rigorous sanctions regime. This divergence in the attitude I believe may also stem from the perception of the threat of these countries that acquire or wish to acquire WMD and perceived adversaries to which their nuclear weapons might be built and targeted against. It is of course of particular importance for the US and the EU if they and their allies such as Japan or South Korea are perceived by these state-proliferators as adversaries.

Besides, Anthony and Grip states that the adoption of the WMD Strategy in 2003 was urged by the recognition that proliferation, in particular the acquisition of nuclear weapons, could be the cause of war³⁹, which is another framing of the WMD threat. But, I would suggest that it is rather an *attempt* to acquire nuclear

³⁵ “Council Decision 2012/423/CFSP of 23 July 2012 in support of ballistic missile non-proliferation in the framework of the implementation of the EU Strategy against Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction and of the Council Common Position 2003/805/CFSP”, <https://www.nonproliferation.eu/hcoc/wp-hcoc/uploads/HCoC-II-EU-Council-Decision-July-2012.pdf>.

³⁶ “Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe, A Global Strategy for the European Union’s Foreign and Security Policy”, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

³⁷ “The European Union’s Global Strategy: Three years on, moving forward”, EEAS, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

³⁸ Council Conclusions and new lines for action by the European Union in combating the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems, *op. cit.*, p.3.

³⁹ Ian Anthony and Lina Grip, “Strengthening the European Union’s future approach to WMD non-proliferation”, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

weapons that can more probably cause war than the “acquisition of nuclear weapons.” The US and EU member states’ military counter-proliferation was usually implemented to the non-democratic states (autocracies or tyrannies) which were allegedly trying to acquire WMD, such as Iraq and Libya, but not, at least not yet, to states that have already acquired nuclear weapons like North Korea. This difference might come from the fact that it is much harder to deal with the “rogue” country in possession of WMD, such as North Korea, and that it is worth implementing any measure necessary, including use of force, to prevent acquirement of the WMD by such countries. After all, the whole system of US national missile defence and NATO ballistic missile defence, was, at least declaratory, set up in Europe since 2002 as the security guarantee against the possible Iranian ballistic missile attack, despite causing the severe consequence for the Cold War arms control architecture in Europe and strategic stability with Russia.

However, while the US might be more prone to coercive solutions against countries that are not yet in the possession, but might acquire, WMD and, additionally, perceive the US and its allies as an enemies, the EU is more afraid of the consequences of another war in the Middle East and possible new migration crises and terrorist attacks which make it more prone to diplomatic solutions. Also, in some cases the interventionist policy of the US, especially regarding regime change, might act as the proliferation amplifier, which is also why I believe that the EU policy, which is turned to the elimination of root causes of proliferation, stresses the importance of the UN Security Council resolutions on the use of force or implementation of the Chapter VII of the UN Charter. This difference is manifested in the US withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) in 2018 and EU’s endeavour to preserve the treaty, which is glorified as the EU biggest non-proliferation success. The EU’s recent attempts to bring back the US into the JCPOA after the new US administration under the president Joseph Biden, who during the campaign announced the possibility of US return to these agreement under certain conditions, took the office in January 2021 only add to this point.⁴⁰ The EU is currently (May 2021) acting as the mediator between US and Iran, and the European External Action Service (EEAS) deputy secretary-general chairs the Joint Commission of the JCPOA where the restoration of the deal is being discussed.⁴¹

EU response to the WMD threat

As well as other threats, EU is perceiving the WMD threat in the security-development nexus and tend to address the root causes of it. Thus, the EU put more emphasis on prevention and long term but, in its view, more effective solutions to the problem. In its identity framework, working on development,

⁴⁰ “Iran”, Arms Control Association, <https://www.armscontrol.org/taxonomy/term/10/Iran-Nuclear-Brief/issuebriefs/subject-resources/conventional-arms-control-trade>.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*.

good governance and respect for human rights can bring sustainable peace and remove incentives for the states to develop weapons of mass destruction. On the other side, highlighting the possibility of the use of force only under the mandate of the UN, the EU is trying to eliminate the possible external incentives for these states to develop WMD. This is where its approach diverge from the US's. Defining the "fragile states" as the main source of concern, instead of what the US labels "rogue nations", shows this difference as well.⁴² This "diagnosis" of the sources of threat and perceived effects it has to the EU security lead to the difference in choosing the "cure". "Fragile states" are to be object of the EU's long term strategies in order to rectify their shortcomings, but the "rogue states" are to be objects of the US's military counter-proliferation efforts with immediate results. I argue that the EU's choice of this approach is the result of lessons learned and evolution in thinking about the consequences of the military interventions conducted without UN mandate and the so called Arab Spring, culminating in large migration crisis and the terrorist attacks in Europe. These events have led to the more thoroughly connected EU non-proliferation and counter-terrorism strategies and instruments, state and non-state actors and external and internal security policies and activities in fight against the WMD threat. As Lundin writes: "Using nuclear security as one of many possible examples there is a clear link to counterterrorism, but also more generally to the rule of law, effective multilateralism, energy policy, research and development (R&D), and regional and global cooperation, among other things. Like terrorism, it is not just a matter of external policy but also of internal."⁴³ Also, New Lines for action highlighted that "while non-proliferation activities form an essential part of the Common Foreign and Security Policy, certain types of measures may be implemented within the framework of other EU policies and instruments which may contribute towards the same objective (including Community policies and specific instruments such as the Instrument for Stability)."⁴⁴

One of the expressions of searching for long term path toward the solution of WMD threat is the EU conditionality policy. Originally developed under the context of the first EU enlargement, over time, the EU sophisticated methods and instruments used in this kind of policy. It developed a lot of "carrots" i.e. funds (aid, donations) or trade preferences and "sticks", usually in the form of restrictive measures (sanctions), which now tend to be "smart", and their applications. More profound provisions of conditionality developed over time and nowadays they are contained in the formal instruments (treaties) that EU concludes with third countries in the form of conditionality clauses called WMD or non-proliferation clause that was adopted by the Council in 2003, and strong implementation and

⁴² Robert Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order*, Alfred A. Knopf New York, 2003, p. 30.

⁴³ Lars-Erik Lundin, "The European Union and Weapons of Mass Destruction: A Follow-On On The Global Strategy?", Non-Proliferation Papers, EU Non-Proliferation Consortium, No. 58 May 2017, <https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/European-Union-weapons-mass-destruction.pdf>, p. 6.

⁴⁴ "Council Conclusions and new lines for action by the European Union in combating the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems", *op. cit.*, p. 3.

verification mechanisms. For the effectiveness of the EU conditionality policy it is important for the EU to be a desirable actor, “trusted, reliable and cooperative power: an indispensable partner in the world”, as it is written in the 2019 Review of Global Strategy.⁴⁵ This shows that the EU knows that its strategy can work only if not associated with the prompt and reckless use of force and economic and political weakness.

Generally, the EU fight against WMD threat can be perceived through measures concerned with prevention and those dealing with coercion or enforcement at all aspects of WMD threat previously mentioned. Regarding prevention, it can be of internal and external character. Internally, the EU has developed a set of regulations dealing with the WMD threat, such as stronger export control, and institutional structure in order to more effectively engage with the issues of non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament. Externally, the main pillars of the EU preventive action against the WMD proliferation are effective multilateralism, regional security, cooperation with key partners and conditionality (non-proliferation clauses on WMD and small arms and light weapons (SALW)). On the other side, the coercive response to the WMD threat is based on sanctions, stronger border controls and other controls and interceptions related to possible proliferation financing and trade, and when necessary, use of force under the UN SC mandate and in accordance with the UN Charter.

Since 2003 Council meeting in Thessaloniki and adoption of the WMD Strategy EU is committed to development of the necessary structures within the Union for dealing with the issues of non-proliferation and fight against WMD threats. As Anthony and Grip state “the adoption of the WMD Strategy in December 2003 marked the institutionalization of non-proliferation in the EU’s Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP).”⁴⁶ This institutionalization has been, however, challenged by the horizontal nature of the non-proliferation issue as well as the competence problem among the EU and its member states. Besides, there is also lack of coherence among member states, which is the result of the “simple fact” that the “EU comprises nuclear weapon states and non-nuclear weapon states, members of the... (NATO) and non-NATO states, and supporters and opponents of nuclear energy.”⁴⁷

Practically, all EU institutions are, through its mandate and everyday work, dealing with the non-proliferation issues. The European Council, European Parliament, Council of Ministers, European Commission, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HR) which is also Vice President of the European Commission and Chair of the Foreign Affairs Council supported in his/her work by the EEAS, all have their roles in formulating, proposing, decision-making and implementing the strategies, decisions and activities regarding the non-proliferation. The EU Agencies which the High Representative is authorized

⁴⁵ “The European Union’s Global Strategy: Three years on, moving forward”, EEAS, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

⁴⁶ Ian Anthony and Lina Grip, “Strengthening the European Union’s future approach to WMD non-proliferation”, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

⁴⁷ Peter van Ham, The European Union’s Strategy on Weapons of mass Destruction: From Ambition to Disappointment, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

to manage also deal with the non-proliferation issues, especially through analysis, research, education and recommendations on CFSP, as well as information gathering. These are EU Satellite Centre, the EU Institute for Security Studies, the European Defence Agency, the European Security and Defence College, Joint Situation Centre. The EUROATOM is also playing its role in providing effective regional nuclear safeguards system operating an inspection regime for the civilian fuel cycles of its members in order to prevent the diversion of fissile materials and contains an advanced export controls system.⁴⁸ Lisbon Treaty, also, established the permanent position of the President of the European Council who is assisted by the cabinet of thirty members one of which is dealing with the CSDP, including the non-proliferation issues. The HR and the President of the European Council share the role of representing the EU's external non-proliferation policies in international organizations and conferences.⁴⁹

Regarding the choice of the measures – preventive or coercive – Council of Ministers have the main role in deciding the allocation of funds or imposition of sanctions and it defines the negotiation mandates for political dialogue with third countries. The European Commission is responsible for the implementation of the adopted measures. The horizontal nature of non-proliferation issues and its framing in security-development nexus can be seen through the organisation of the European Commission where several directorate generals (DGs) dealing with development, trade, civil protection and humanitarian aid, enlargement and partnership relationship (contractual relationships with the third countries), as well as home affairs, health, industry, internal market, energy touch the issues of non-proliferation and manage financial instruments dedicated to this issue. For example, DG for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO) leads the EU Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence (CoE) Initiative, which funding is implemented through the Instrument Contributing to Stability and Peace (ICSP), the EU's main international cooperation instrument supporting security initiatives and peace-building activities in Partner Countries.⁵⁰ The EU has eight regional CoEs at the moment, each facilitated by a Regional Secretariat, covering 62 Partner Countries through eight regional centres for African Atlantic Façade, North Africa and Sahel, Eastern and Central Africa, South East and Eastern Europe, Middle East, Gulf Cooperation Council Countries, Central Asia and South East Asia.⁵¹ The European Parliament oversees the implementation of the CFSP/CSDP

⁴⁸ For more details on specific internal organization of these institutions regarding the non-proliferation see: Lina Grip, "Mapping the European Union's institutional actors related to WMD non-proliferation", Non-Proliferation Papers, No. 1, May 2011, EU Non-Proliferation Consortium, https://www.sipri.org/sites/default/files/EUNPC_no-1.pdf and Lina Grip, "EU institutions", EU non-proliferation Consortium E-learning, Learning Unit 14, https://nonproliferation-elearning.eu/learningunits/eu-disarmament-and-non-proliferation/pages/P24/resource/lu14_v12.pdf.

⁴⁹ Lina Grip, "Mapping the European Union's institutional actors related to WMD non-proliferation", *op. cit.*, p. 3.

⁵⁰ "EU Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence (CoE)", https://europa.eu/cbrn-risk-mitigation/index_en.

⁵¹ *Ibidem*.

policy and instruments, and has budgetary authority and legislative capacities related to aspects of non-proliferation. It does not have, however, the role in the decision making in the area of CFSP/CSDP (and non-proliferation policy which is the part of CFSP/CSDP) as in the case of Community policies, but have a strong consultative role and gives recommendations through resolutions regarding non-proliferation and disarmament that can sometimes bring changes in the EU policies or the work of member states. As can be seen through its resolutions the EP is usually more prone to the issues of disarmament than the EC and reflects the growing attitude of the public opinion toward disarmament.

External preventive measures are concerned with effective multilateralism, regional cooperative order and cooperation with key partners.⁵² Effective multilateralism means supporting the work of international organisations such as UN and its related organisations in the field of non-proliferation and disarmament, as well as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO); tightening export controls and; pushing for universalisation of multilateral treaty regimes, their strengthening, especially in terms of verification provisions. In the 2003-2019 time frame EU dedicated 122.1 millions of euros, through 42 Council Decisions, to the functioning of international organisations in the field of non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament (IAEI, CTBTO, OPCW, HCoC, UNSCR 1540, Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) and World Health Organization (WHO) laboratory for biosafety and biosecurity).⁵³

The WMD Strategy states that “the EU is committed to the multilateral treaty system, which provides the legal and normative basis for all non-proliferation efforts.”⁵⁴ The EU policy is to pursue the implementation and universalization of the existing disarmament and non-proliferation norms and to work towards the universalization of the bans on biological and chemical weapons, as well as to pursue an international agreement on the prohibition of the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices.⁵⁵ Also, the 2016 EU Global Strategy stated that “the EU will strongly support the expanding membership, universalisation, full implementation and enforcement of multilateral disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control treaties and regimes.”⁵⁶ However, the EU is due to its internal divisions especially regarding the Treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons and membership of key countries in NATO, not mentioning the ban on nuclear weapons nor any possibility of multilateralization of strategic nuclear arms control. Instead, European states with the strategic nuclear weapons, at that moment both France and the UK, prefer unilateral measures instead of inclusion into the treaties and further reduction of their arsenals under the formal arrangements with verification provisions.

⁵² “EU strategy against proliferation of weapons of mass destruction”, Council of the European Union, Brussels, 10 December 2003, https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/st_15708_2003_init_en.pdf.

⁵³ According to: “The WMD Clause and Financial Contributions”, <https://nonproliferation-elearning.eu/learningunits/eu-disarmament-and-non-proliferation/>.

⁵⁴ “EU strategy against proliferation of weapons of mass destruction”, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

⁵⁵ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 42.

Besides international organisations and support to multilateral treaty regimes, the EU is a key donor to the third countries and regional organisations such as African Union in order to enhance their capabilities to prevent proliferation, especially export control authorities. The EU approach is that for the effective fight against the WMD proliferation the root causes should be addressed. EU sees them in the environment of regional instability, insecurity and conflict for which the political solution has to be found in order for these states not to seek WMD and to avoid possible arms race. “The best solution to the problem of proliferation of WMD is that countries should no longer feel they need them”, states the EU WMD Strategy.⁵⁷ The best instruments that the EU foresees in achieving this goal are regional security arrangements and regional arms control and disarmament processes. The EU also seeks to cooperate with partner states with special emphasises of the cooperation with the USA, Russia, Japan and Canada.⁵⁸ The EU participated in various programmes directed toward nuclear threat reduction by helping former Soviet republics, for example, to improve their nuclear safety, destroy WMD and associated infrastructure and establish verifiable safeguards against the possible illegal trafficking. It also actively participated in activities related to limitation and elimination of North Korean nuclear weapon programme and engaged in negotiations with Iran which resulted in the JCPOA in 2015, which it continued to actively support even after the US withdrawal in 2018.

Regarding coercive measures for the effectiveness of non-proliferation the New lies for action highlighted resolute action to resolve proliferation crisis and ensure implementation of the UNSC resolutions and resolute operational cooperation in combating proliferation, in order to obstruct sensitive transfers and counter illegal networks.⁵⁹ The EU advocates reinforcement of the compliance with the multilateral treaty regime through enhancement of detectability of “significant violations and strengthening enforcement of the prohibitions and norms established by the multilateral treaty regime, including by providing for criminalisation of violations committed under the jurisdiction or control of a State.”⁶⁰ It also wants to see UN SC more effective in the cases of non-compliance with the norms or treaties provisions. The 2003 EU WMD Strategy emphasised that the EU will use “all instruments and policies at its disposal” and work to prevent, deter, halt and, where possible, eliminate proliferation programmes.⁶¹ But, the UN SC should play a central role in this fight.⁶² The EU implements restrictive measures which “are not punitive”, but intends to “bring about a change in policy or activity by targeting non-EU countries, as well as entities and individuals, responsible for the malign behaviour at stake.”⁶³ Also, the EU adopts its own

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 7.

⁵⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 8.

⁵⁹ “Council Conclusions and new lines for action by the European Union in combating the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems”, *op. cit.*, p. 4.

⁶⁰ “EU strategy against proliferation of weapons of mass destruction”, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

⁶¹ *Ibidem*, p. 2.

⁶² *Ibidem*, p. 5.

⁶³ “Restrictive measures (sanctions)”, https://ec.europa.eu/info/business-economy-euro/banking-and-finance/international-relations/restrictive-measures-sanctions_en.

autonomous restrictive measures regime, besides the one established by the UN and currently, it has over forty different sanctions regimes in place, and has autonomously adopted restrictive measures concerning nineteen countries or their citizens and four thematic fields (human rights, chemical weapons, cyber-attacks and terrorism).⁶⁴

Conclusion

The research conducted in this paper assessed the relationship of the EU toward the weapons of mass destruction. It explored the shape of the EU non-proliferation policy, perception of the WMD threat and the EU's responses to it by implementing the Social Constructivism paradigm of International Relations. I argued in this article that the EU's relationship toward the WMD (policy, threat, responses) is mainly the result of the EU's beliefs, evolution and lessons learned in the field of foreign and security policy after the Cold War, as well as the search for its identity role as a global power with separate and different security interest in relation to the USA and vision of global order based on rules. Historical experiences of the Second World War regarding the balance of power in Europe, lessons learned from the use of force without UN mandate in tackling the crisis after the Cold War and conditionality policy mainly used in the process of enlargement, the search for distinct EU role identity and associated institutional development are all embedded in the EU non-proliferation policy, perception of the WMD threat and the EU's responses to it.

The EU identity as a *sui generis* international organization of democratic capitalistic states with supranational and inter-governmental levels of decision-making, and which tends to be strategic actor with distinct and autonomous foreign, security and defence policy in relation to the other actors such as USA or Russia led to the creation of specific EU non-proliferation policy. As part of the overall EU global strategy or vision of world order that should be based on rules, EU is promoting effective multilateralism and strengthening universalisation of existing international regimes in the field of non-proliferation, but also actively participate in shaping new rules and international agreements, such as with Iran.

The evolving EU foreign, security and defence policy emerged from the EU's mission to establish itself as global power, which is indispensable partner for the third countries and international and regional organisations. It should provide EU with enough attractiveness and strength to be desirable partner who can conduct its conditionality policy, which one part is contained in the mixed agreements with the third countries in the form of WMD non-proliferation clause. In shaping this role identity the greatest influence has the ambivalent relationship with the USA.

The EU non-proliferation policy was mainly shaped by the division of member states inside the EU toward the nuclear energy and nuclear weapons, the relation to the USA counter-proliferation policies and activities as well toward

⁶⁴ "EU Sanctions Map", <https://www.sanctionsmap.eu/#/main>.

Russia, especially after 2008 and wars in Georgia and Ukraine. Framing the WMD threat by the EU is comprising both state and non-state actors, and both issues related to acquirement (trade and transfer of WMD materials, goods, technologies, knowledge) and possible use of WMD, including means of delivery. Fear of possible acquirement of the WMD by other states that might perceive the EU as adversary and WMD use by terrorists is coupled with the fear of renewed arms race after the crumbling of USA-Russia arms control talks and treaty architecture that preserved strategic stability and stability in Europe for several decades. There is also raising concern over the strengthening of strategic capabilities of China in opaque manner, but also the consequences of the increase of British nuclear stockpile ceiling to no more than 260 warheads, instead of previously announced 180 by mid-2020s, and with reduced transparency over it.⁶⁵ This will have large effect on the French nuclear policy and overall balance of power in Europe, making it hard for the EU to maintain credibility of its non-proliferation policy. The possibility of lowering the threshold for nuclear weapon use in the regional context poses another significant concern. Turmoil in the Middle East and Arab peninsula poses special concern regarding the possible use of chemical weapons and the COVID 19 crisis has raised the issue of possible biological threats and will certainly lead to more efforts turned to bio-security and bio-safety. The EU as want-to-be global actor will seek to do more in the field of non-proliferation, primarily through its diplomatic role and persuasion of great powers to reach some kind of an agreement on nuclear and other WMD related issues between themselves, but also to pursue USA to restore compliance with specific arrangements such as JCPOA. In parallel with this process, the EU will continue strengthening its defence (industry, infrastructure and forces) in the case diplomatic efforts toward third countries that try to gain WMD weapons fail.

Still, the EU will continue to be mainly non-proliferation actor concerned with prevention which direct its efforts towards dealing with root causes of instability through attempts to resolve ongoing conflicts, investment in development, and promotion of respect for human rights and good governance in the fragile states, universalisation and effective implementation of existing multilateral agreements and establishment of zone free of nuclear weapons and all other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East. The EU will also tend to be prepared for the support of military solution although only, as declared, in the case of UN approval, but regarding the sanctions it has been already adopting its own autonomous, more restrictive measures concerning for example North Korea or China. On the other side, the EU non-proliferation policy will continue to be limited by the horizontal nature of the issue, struggle over the competences between the EU supranational and inter-governmental institutions and policies and separate national interests of its member states.

⁶⁵ “Global Britain in a competitive age: The Integrated Review of Security, Defence, Development and Foreign Policy”, March 2021, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/969402/The_Integrated_Review_of_Security__Defence__Development_and_Foreign_Policy.pdf, p. 76, 15.

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