

# The European Union as a Community for Peace

## – Peace Research in Europe and in Japan

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*"Peace is not an absence of war, it is a virtue, a state  
of mind, a disposition for benevolence, confidence, justice."  
Baruch Spinoza (1632 – 1677)*

When I accepted your invitation to this symposium we did not know that the European Union would be awarded the **2012 Nobel Peace Prize**. The award is a great honour, of which citizens of Europe can be very proud. Coming when it does, I think Nobel award can be seen as both a **recognition** and an **admonition** for Europe.

The prize is **recognition** of how what is now the European Union has overcome centuries of war and conflict, in which millions of lives were lost, culminating in the ruins and devastation of World War II. The courage, vision and determination of statesmen in postwar Europe has been rightly recognized. These founding fathers who dared to rethink centuries old concepts of sovereignty and nationhood, and to imagine a Europe based on shared sovereignty, shared resources, and strong economic and political freedom, opened the way to a union of democratic states in Europe where the prospect of armed conflict has become unthinkable.

But I think we must also see the prize as a diplomatic **admonition**, coming as it does at a time when the sovereign debt and financial crisis in Europe has raised questions as to the effectiveness of the Union and even of the strength of the commitment of today's European leaders to the original vision of Europe. Short term crisis management has to be combined with a joint effort to build a new architecture for the Euro-zone and

a more integrated Europe. Despite significant progress achieved in the last two years more needs to be done. The journey to an "ever closer union" laid out in the Treaty of Rome has not yet reached its final destination. For us, the Nobel Peace Prize should be a reminder that peace, stability and prosperity cannot be taken for granted, and that courage, vision, determination and imagination are as much required of today's leaders as of the post-war generation of European leaders.

In this sense the **Nobel Peace Prize Award** serves as an inspiration for all Europeans to re-invigorate the European project. Outside Europe, it may illustrate how regional integration with strong supranational institutions, based on the rule of law, can bring about peace, stability and prosperity.

However, the EU itself cannot of course not claim the sole credit for peace in Europe. If I may use an environmental metaphor, the eco-system which has allowed peace to take root and flourish in Europe, is a complex one. NATO and the US have played a significant role. The Council of Europe, an international organization founded in 1949 promotes cooperation between European states on the rule of law, human rights, legal standards and cultural cooperation. We should also not forget the OSCE ( Organisation for Security and Co-operation ) and its predecessor, the CSCE ( Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe ) which became an important instrument for disarmament and confidence building, but also human rights issues and democratic reform. Even now, long after the Cold War has ended, the OSCE remains remarkably effective in election monitoring and in ceasefire supervision of the so-called frozen conflicts left over after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The synergies between these organizations and the EU institutions with their mechanisms for common rule setting, mediation and arbitration, peaceful cooperation during the last six decades have allowed Europeans today the kind of quality of life undreamed of even two generations ago. It has also given our institutions a resilience to shocks which might previously have had the potential to cause conflict. Just think about potentially disruptive events in the recent past like German unification and the integration of the newly liberated countries of Central and East Europe after the historic events of 1989.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The EU has been remarkable as a **transformational force**. Successive enlargements which increased the number of member states from 6 to the present 27 – 28 from next year – have not only built the world's largest economy and integrated market comprising 500 million people, but also transformed a devastated and subsequently divided continent (during the Cold War) into a family of democracies. We tend to forget that immediately after the Second World War only a minority of European states were democracies. It is doubtful that the transition from dictatorships to democratic market economies would have happened so smoothly – or at all – in countries such as Spain and Portugal in the 1970s and, after the Iron Curtain came down, in central and eastern Europe in the 1990s without the perspective of membership of the European Union. The same holds true for the western Balkans after the violent break up of former Yugoslavia. Croatia will become the second country of this region after Slovenia to become a member of the European Union next year. For others, the prospect of membership is more distant. But their European destination, which has come to be equated with membership of the European Union, is clear.

Let me come back to the **year 1989**. It is commonly asserted that this year with its peaceful revolutions in Central Europe liberating the region from communist dictatorships and of course the eventual collapse of the Soviet Union itself epitomizes the end of the postwar period in Europe.

While this is of course true, it has also been said that the significance of these events go beyond the break-up of the Soviet empire, marking the end of a system of balance-of-power in Europe which originated with the Treaty of Westphalia and of which the Cold War was but its latest and perhaps most dangerous manifestation.

What were and are the **implications for peace research** of these developments:

**Peace research in Europe**, was driven initially by the Super Power confrontation during the Cold War, on the assumption that Europe would again be the major theatre of operations in a confrontation between the Soviet Union and its satellites and the US and its allies. While Europe steadily recovered and rebuilt from the ruins of the World War, this was nonetheless a time of deep unease in Europe, as the generation of Western political leaders which came of age at that time were only too aware of the fragility of the peace their countries enjoyed. The likelihood that nuclear weapons would be used – not unrealistic given their presence in a number of European countries on either side of the Iron Curtain – was of course ever present in the minds of the general public, particularly during times of escalated tension. The impetus for peace research was therefore strongly moral, and it gave conscientious pacifism a scientific underpinning.

It was back in Oslo in 1959 that peace research in Europe was founded as an interdisciplinary area of research in the social sciences by Johan Galtung. His institute still works on the understanding of the origins, the conduct, the prevention and the peaceful resolution of armed conflicts., as well as – more fundamentally – on the societal and structural origins of peace and violence.

I will not go into a detailed discussion on the state of peace research in Europe as it would go beyond the scope of these remarks. Thinking about peace and conflict has become broader in scope after the end of the cold war. Hopes that the end of East – West confrontation would lead to a peaceful period of the

world's history have not been fulfilled. Nonetheless, it is fair to say that what we understand by "peace" today is very different from the definition of peace in 1950 or in 1980. Peace is no longer simply the absence of conflict, or the "armed peace" of the post-war decades, but has become a more dynamic concept, whereby there is an expectation that the potential causes of conflict will be identified and addressed.

This led to a number of attempts to better identify the factors that lie at the roots of violent conflict; and various attempts to develop "conflict indicators" that would give us early warning. There is a great literature on this now, and indicators offered range from development outcomes, to corruption and concepts harder to quantify such as the rule of law and respect for human rights. We can debate the merits of one or other of these approaches, but this work has certainly proved helpful in improving the sophistication of our analysis. It does not, however, change the reality that early warning is only helpful if it can lead to early, and well-designed intervention. That means having both the political decision-making processes in place, and the means to respond.

In Europe this analytical work has led to a number of significant changes in our approach:

- it has led to a reassessment of where the threats now lie;
- it has strengthened the case for a stronger European common and security policy – with conflict prevention and peace-building at the heart of it;
- with the growing challenge from asymmetric threats, it has blurred the traditional distinctions between domestic policy and foreign policy; and between development policy and security policy.

### **The new threat assessment:**

With the end of the cold war and of East-West confrontation we have seen the threat of large-scale state-to-state conflict recede. However, the violent break-up of former Yugoslavia, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan,

more recently the internal tensions in North Africa and Syria have shown that war is not a thing of the past, but the sources of instability may be different. There has been a growing understanding that the sources of conflict are very often within states themselves, not between states. And that in addressing them we need to look beyond traditional state actors – both as sources of conflict and as players in the resolution of conflict.

As we have tried to come to terms with this more complex world, attention has increasingly turned to understand how our own policies can contribute to stability, or undermine it. Poorly designed development assistance can be a source of conflict, as Mary Andersen's pointed out in her influential book "Do no harm". Failure to address weaknesses in the rule of law in our political relationships with third countries can store up problems for the future.

The emergence of asymmetric threats from terrorism or cyberspace; and the environmental pressures that the world is now facing and the search for energy security have challenged our traditional models of international problem-solving. But we have also seen the emergence of regional and sub-regional groups (the African Union, Arab League) as new sources of political legitimacy to address these issues. The Security Council remains the central pillar of the global peace and security architecture, but it is no longer the sole crucible for debate and action on these issues.

However, the violent break-up of former Yugoslavia, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, more recently the instability in North Africa and Syria has raised the question of when is it right to intervene in an internal conflict? The concept of "humanitarian intervention" and the "responsibility to protect" remain contested ones. There is no golden rule for this, and though there has been strong debate and indeed disagreement within the EU with each fresh challenge, it is possible to discern a number of basic parameters on which there is an emerging consensus: an intervention must be consistent with the UN Charter; it must meet a minimum standard of political legitimacy,

either through the UN or through the endorsement of a regional or sub-regional organization; it must be limited in scope, built around a clear concept of the endstate and supported by the necessary means to bring it about; it must reflect the legitimate aspirations of the people affected. Syria, with its fragmented opposition groups only now beginning to coalesce, is just the latest example of how tricky that last criteria is to determine. Mali, where the EU is likely very soon to mobilize a peace keeping operation, is another example: a conflict with a regional dimension playing out within a single state.

### Strengthened Common Foreign and Security Policy

The EU was, well before the Lisbon Treaty, a major foreign policy actor in its own right. It did not call what it was doing "foreign policy" and it did not have its own diplomatic service. But it was able to bring its influence to bear in the cause of peace.

The enlargement process is a good example of this: stabilizing our neighbourhood through political and economic engagement, and a standards-based approach to institutional, legal, economic and democratic reform.

The EU's central role as a provider of development aid and preferential trade to the ACP countries, underpinned by a far-reaching political framework (the Cotonou Agreement) has also meant that it has been an active player in the mediation and resolution of conflicts. We continue to fund the African Union peace keeping forces through our development monies.

But it became increasingly clear that in order to preserve the freedoms and prosperity that European integration was providing at home, the EU had to be able to represent itself more effectively abroad. Interestingly, much of the logic for the drive for an integrated foreign service that we now have came from our experience of EU Peace Keeping operations. Even more importantly, it came from the realization that the prevention of violent conflict, and effective post-

conflict stabilization required an integrated approach. The integration of our development, peace keeping and economic support under an overarching political approach is now perhaps the defining contribution that the EU is making in this field.

There is also one other distinctive factor of the European approach that I should touch upon. That is that while we will always want to work in a UN or regional framework, we are also ready to shoulder direct political responsibility for safeguarding a peace and reconciliation process. EU CSDP concepts allow us to take on executive functions – that is to say, under an appropriate mandate, the EU is ready to exercise specific powers that would normally be reserved to a sovereign state, where temporary international trusteeship of these powers is deemed essential to a stabilization process.

Peace research in Europe has hence had to move with the times to deal with conflict research and to offer its instruments of dialogue, mediation, settlement, reconciliation and finally trust and confidence building. This is also the case for the 5 peace centres which have been established in my native country, Austria. One of them, the peace centre at Schlaining – sometimes called the peace castle – recently also tried to make a contribution to reconciliation in Sri Lanka.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me go back to briefly focus on **what the EU is doing to promote peace in the world**. It is today a significant provider of security as the world's largest economy, trading power and aid donor. Increasingly the focus is on a **comprehensive approach** to conflict prevention, peace-building and crisis management, combining all the instruments at the Union's disposal – its diplomatic network, military and civilian capabilities, its external assistance instruments and capacity building.

Peace building and conflict prevention are also at the heart of the EU's diplomatic service, the EEAS, which was set up by the Treaty of Lisbon and became

operational two years ago. In fact, promoting peace, the EU's values and the well-being of its peoples are enshrined in the Treaty, as is the mandate "to preserve peace, prevent conflicts and strengthen international security". In this context the Union also promotes the systematic use of conflict analysis, notably with respect to fragile and conflict-prone countries.

An important part of the EU preventive diplomacy on the ground is **mediation**. It is a key tool in the area of conflict prevention and peace-building in conflict countries. The EU has developed its own mediation support capacity - the Concept on Strengthening EU Mediation and Dialogue Capacities adopted in November 2009.

Actors such as EU Special Representatives, EU Delegations and CSDP ( Common Security and Defense Policy ) missions are frequently engaged in mediation efforts, ranging from seniorpolitical level dialogue to political facilitation and confidence building. The EU is also active with dialogue processes with civil society organisations at grassroots levels.

A specifically dedicated "Conflict prevention, Peace building and Mediation Instruments Division" has been set up within the EEAS.

One of the areas where High Representative Ashton has been personally very involved in recent weeks was in mediation between Serbia and Kosovo, still one of the hurdles to overcome before full integration of the western Balkans into the European Union can happen.

With the launch of the **Instrument for Stability** (IfS) in 2007 as a follow up to the Rapid Reaction Mechanism, the EU has considerably intensified its work in the area of conflict prevention, crisis management and peace building.

Crisis response projects under the Instrument for Stability focus on a wide range of issues, such as support to mediation, confidence building, interim administrations, strengthening Rule of Law, transitional

Justice or the role of natural resources in conflict. Under the IfS, these activities can be supported in situations of crisis or emerging crisis, when timely financial help cannot be provided from other EU sources.

The IfS has been used to date to finance a large number of crisis response projects world wide. The largest share of funds was given to projects in Africa, Asia-Pacific, the Balkans, followed by the Middle East and Latin America and the Caribbean.

An innovative part of the IfS is the **Peace-building Partnership**. It is based on the recognition that civil society organisations – especially those with extensive field presence – constitute an invaluable source of expertise in this area.

The Peace-building Partnership envisages building the capacities of relevant organizations in pre-crisis situations, for instance to develop early-warning systems, to provide mediation and reconciliation services and to address inter-community tensions. It also addresses measures for improving post-conflict and post-disaster recovery.

The Instrument for Stability (IfS) also enables the EU to help build long-term international, regional and national capacity to address pervasive transregional and global threats.

Ladies and gentlemen, Let me summarize:

Since its foundation, the European Union is involved in all phases of the crisis cycle; from preventive strategies, to post-crisis rehabilitation and reconstruction. I have mentioned before that the EU is aiming at a coherent and comprehensive approach to crisis situations to assure that the instruments I have just referred to are complementary to the so-called ESDP actions.

ESDP missions have been carried out in FYROM (Former Republic of Macedonia), Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the occupied Palestinian Territories, Guinea-Bissau, Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan/

Darfur, Chad and the Central African Republic, Somalia, Afghanistan, Moldova and Ukraine, Iraq, Georgia and Aceh, which maybe constitutes the most successful example of the EU's involvement in conflict resolution in Asia.

These missions mainly support police, judiciary and customs reforms and capacity-building. They facilitate agreements ending hostilities and ensure compliance of these agreements. There are important efforts to assure the security of civilians, refugees, humanitarian workers and UN personnel. Furthermore, the ESDP missions can help in specific fields, like monitoring the borders where needed or even fighting against piracy.

But in closing I would also once again like to emphasize the **centrality of human rights** for the EU's policy actions. There cannot be peace without the protection of human rights – a concept which is shared by the Peace Museum at this University. The Union sees human rights as universal and indivisible. It actively promotes and defends them both within its borders and when engaging in relations with non-EU countries. All our partnership agreements with third countries contain a clause stipulating that human rights are an essential element in relations between the parties.

The EU's human rights policy is broad in scope – it encompasses civil, political, economic, social and cultural right. In many cases directly related to conflict situations it gives special emphasis to the rights of women, children, of persons belonging to minorities, and of displaced persons. With a budget of € 1.1 billion between 2007 and 2013, the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights supports non-government organisations. And on 1 September of this year the High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy, Baroness Cathy Ashton nominated a Special Representative for Human Rights to enhance the effectiveness and visibility of EU human rights policy.

I hope you will forgive me that I focused more on the centrality of peace, democracy and human rights

for the EU – both internally and in its foreign policy actions than on peace research as such. But we derive inspiration from your research and I do hope that the EU and Japan share the same values and a common outlook on many, if not most international issues will also contribute to more joint research and activities at the academic level.

Finally, a brief concluding thought. If there is one thing that the EU's experience over the past 60 years tells us, it is that it is that peace is not guaranteed by a test of strength between states. It is served by putting the rule of law at the centre of the relationship between states; by institutionalizing dialogue; and by a constant effort by political leaders to overcome the painful memories of past conflict. Preserving the precious peace that we now enjoy requires our constant vigilance.