

## **Promoting and resisting the European Union's role in the internationalization of public policies**

Hosted by [AGORA](#) at CY Cergy Paris Université (France) on **7-8 April 2022**  
Organised by *Groupe de recherche sur l'Union européenne* ([GrUE](#))

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Where does one address a policy issue in a globalised world? From the perspective of governments, almost every policy issue has both an internal (i.e., local or national) and an external (i.e., regional or international) dimension in a globalised world. An obvious example is the fight against climate change. States act at the local and national level, while trying to coordinate at the European level, for those members of the EU (see the Commission's initiative for a European Green Deal), and at an international one (the Paris Agreement), to tackle "a problem of planetary dimension"<sup>1</sup>. If some issues are easily deemed global - because they involve several countries (e.g., migration, peacekeeping, etc.) or cross borders (e.g., pollution, energy supply, etc.) - other issues that are not necessarily considered a matter of global governance still have the potential for internationalization. For example, the rising numbers of students studying outside their home countries and the global competition have raised the question of the internationalization of higher education. At the European level, the Bologna Declaration addresses this new reality<sup>2</sup>. Those examples show that 'global issues' are not global by definition: "'global' is a putative rather than an objective condition, even though some problems in certain circumstances are more likely to become global than others"<sup>3</sup>. This workshop seeks to improve our understanding of the processes by which responses to public policy issues are stretched beyond and across national boundaries. By doing so, it examines more specifically how the internationalization of issues affects the European Union.

Indeed, in a globalised world, actors are increasingly interdependent and connected through various institutions. As a result, when some actors seek to internationalize an issue, they have many options to do so. They can either attempt to go at it alone; choose from a wide range of institutional venues that already exist and are available to them; implement bi- or multilateral agreements; or create ad-hoc arrangements.

In the specific case of European actors – that is, all governmental and non-governmental actors embedded within the EU and its member states –, they already have a highly institutionalized and integrated framework available. Common wisdom holds that those actors within the institutional context of the EU may be particularly inclined or encouraged to internationalize issues through EU institutions. Likewise, the EU itself, aiming at an ever-closer union, has an incentive to put (newly) internationalized issues on its agenda and acquire larger competences in those areas to gain weight on the world stage.

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<sup>1</sup> Aykut, S. (2020). "Global by Nature? Three Dynamics in the Making of 'Global Climate Change'", in E. Neveu & M. Surdez (eds.), *Globalizing Issues. How Claims, Frames, and Problems Cross Borders*. Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 277-99.

<sup>2</sup> Van Der Wende, M. (2001). "The International Dimension in National Higher Education Policies: What Has Changed in Europe in the Last Five Years". *European Journal of Education*, 36: 431-441.

<sup>3</sup> Neveu E., Surdez M. (eds.) (2020). *Globalizing Issues. How Claims, Frames, and Problems Cross Borders*, p. 4.

However, other dynamics hinder this promotion of the EU as a suitable forum to deal with internationalized issues. Instead of working through the EU, European actors may choose alternative international forums or handle issues unilaterally or nationally. First, as previously stated, besides the EU, there are many forums that exist, namely the different international organizations such as the UN, WHO, WTO, NATO, OECD, UNESCO etc. A State might belong to several of them, offering multiple options besides the EU to carry out an issue at the international level. Second, we also observe a “backlash against globalization”<sup>4</sup>. This “globalization-skepticism” has “resulted in more protectionist, isolationist, and nationalist policies, some of which fundamentally threaten pillars of the contemporary international order”<sup>5</sup>. Brexit is probably the most striking example of this backlash. Even without going all the way to exit the EU, one could easily imagine European actors choosing a national option over an EU solution.

The management of the Covid-19 pandemic is the most recent and a telling example of such dynamic processes engendering cooperation or competition as they reveal the tensions between both the internal and external dimensions of a public policy (the virus knows no borders but health policies remain national); and between the different existing forums to address the multiple aspects of the crisis (nationally, within the EU or through the WHO). Military operations are another example where such tensions regularly arise as European states have many options to intervene: either unilaterally, through the EU or NATO, or through ad-hoc coalitions. Discussions around the maritime initiative in the Strait of Hormuz illustrate such processes. Similar dynamics can be observed in other policy areas, as the recent unilateral and multilateral attempts to tax multinational companies engaged in the digital economy show.

These examples highlight the dynamics around the internationalization of public policy issues. Actors can promote or resist specific international forums or organisations. Albeit its centrality for European actors, the EU is far from being the only forum. Other international organisations exist and may be preferred over the EU. European actors, who remain embedded in national systems, may also try to retain or pull issues back in the national arena.

The purpose of this two-day workshop is to investigate the internationalization of public policy issues; which logics or factors guide the decisions of actors; which strategies they employ to achieve their objectives; how they construct an institutional forum as a suitable option to address public policy issues; and how they deal with the dilemmas arising from the availability of different venues to do so. More specifically, we seek to answer the following questions:

- How and why would European actors choose to internationalize a policy issue? On the contrary, why would they choose to de-internationalize (or re-nationalize) a policy issue?
- How and why would they choose the EU as the appropriate forum to address those internationalized issues and therefore implement the adequate response? On the contrary, why would they prefer other forums - either international or strictly national ones - to do so? What is the effect of such decisions on the EU?

To answer those questions, this workshop encourages proposals that explore and analyse the tensions and dilemmas surrounding those processes. It seeks to provide a stocktake of the different paths leading to the internationalization and/or de-internationalization of different public policies across time and space. Contributions shedding light on the multiple - economic, political, ideological or any other - factors explaining the dynamics and mechanisms behind the decisions to cooperate or not beyond the nation state are welcome. There are no theoretical or methodological restrictions in the study of those matters.

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<sup>4</sup> Walter, S. (2021). “The backlash against globalization”. *Annual Review of Political Science*, 24: 421-442.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 422.

*The goal of this workshop is to gather scholars at different stages of their careers (from PhD researchers to senior scholars) and from diverse disciplinary backgrounds in humanities and social sciences, interested in exploring the place and the role of the European Union and its actors in the internationalization of public policies.*

### **How to apply and important dates:**

- The deadline for submitting a detailed abstract (500 words) and full author(s) details is **24 October 2021** to the following email address: [grue2021.axe3@gmail.com](mailto:grue2021.axe3@gmail.com)
- The decisions of the organising committee will be notified in early **November 2021**.
- The full paper is due on **23 March 2021**.
- The workshop will take place at CY Cergy Paris Université and hosted by AGORA on **7-8 April 2022**.

*Travel expenses, accommodation, and meals for the duration of the workshop will be covered for successful applicants.*

*Each participant will present their paper and discuss a paper by another participant.*

*We hope to make this workshop the starting point for a special issue or an edited volume.*