The European Union in UN politics

Caroline Bouchard and Edith Drieskens

Introduction

Some years ago, Hoffmeister and Kuijper used the following colourful terms to describe the complexities of studying the EU at the UN: ‘Painting a picture on the status of the European Union at the United Nations may not result in a beautiful Rembrandt with a golden undertone of good old State sovereignty. Rather an artist would possibly have to recourse to some abstract modern techniques, where colours are constantly changing’ (Hoffmeister and Kuijper, 2006: 34). Carrying this argument further, this entry discusses how researchers have dealt with the EU’s distinct nature at the UN in New York and maps the recent literature on the EU at the UN, more particularly at General Assembly (UNGA) and UN Security Council (UNSC).

Both the UNGA and UNSC are principal organs of the UN, but they are as different as day and night as regards membership and procedure. This differentiated reality is reflected by the EU’s representation and functioning in these two organs. First, all EU member states have a seat at the UNGA but only France and the UK are represented on a permanent basis at the UNSC; others may obtain a two-year seat pending the approval of their respective regional groupings. Second, the EU member states coordinate within the UNGA, but not within the UNSC, even if their representation behaviour is subject to guidelines laid down in the Treaty on European Union (TEU). Also, within the UNSC, the role of the EU institutions is less developed. Such differences, and the distinctive nature of the EU more generally, remain both a significant conundrum and a stimulating challenge for scholars analysing the EU at the UN, also after Lisbon. The UNGA has often been seen as a fertile ground for EU foreign policy, notably in comparison to the UNSC. Yet, the implementation of the newest Treaty has reminded both scholars and policy-makers that not only the EU’s representation and functioning within the UNSC, but also within the UNGA is shaped by UN rules and realities.

This entry reviews the current state of the art and presents some new agendas for future exploration. The first part looks at how the Lisbon Treaty and its implementation in the intergovernmental context of the UN have given this field of research a new impulse. Putting the current research momentum into a broader perspective, the second part draws parallels with the increase in studies following the European Security Strategy’s (ESS) plea for effective multi-lateralism. The third part overviews the conclusions on the EU at the UNGA and evaluates the
use of voting cohesion as indicator for performance. The fourth part concentrates on the research about the EU at the UNSC and highlights the main findings and challenges. Looking to the future, the final part suggests some venues for future work along these lines.

A new research momentum

The number of papers presented or published in recent years suggests that the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty has given a new impulse to the study of the EU at the UN. Indeed, various scholars have begun to explore the implementation and potential impact of the new treaty provisions on the EU’s external representation. The Treaty aims at strengthening the coherence and visibility of the EU as an international actor and replaces the rotating presidency with a more permanent structure for issues covering the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). Focusing on the EU’s spokesperson, it gives a rather institutional answer to the challenges of EU foreign policy.

It is no real surprise that this answer has drawn quite some scholarly attention, notably from scholars with an interest in EU–UN relations. The increase of research on this topic often stems from changes to the rules governing the EU’s functioning at the UN – be it in the form of amendments to the treaties or policy documents. Scholars in this field have mostly explored the extent to which new ambitions are realised in practice. The Lisbon Treaty is no different, with scholars comparing the situation before and after implementation (Drieskens, 2008; Degrand-Guillaud, 2009a; Laatikainen and Degrand-Guillaud, 2010).

Pointing at both the more elaborated role of the rotating presidency and the EU’s search for enhanced observer rights, scholars have argued that the impact of the Lisbon Treaty is most significant for the UNGA, even if the wording of the Treaty suggests otherwise by introducing the new High Representative to the UNSC (Article 34 TEU). True, the presentation of some decisions at the UNSC may be delegated to the EU’s new representative. But the actual decision-making remains firmly in the hands of the EU member states. In fact, the Treaty leaves no doubt concerning the impact of the new provisions. Following Declaration 14 concerning the common foreign and security policy, it is clear that the provisions will not affect the existing legal basis, responsibilities and powers of the EU member states in relation to their participation in international organisations, including their membership of the UNSC. It should then be no surprise that the EU’s representation and functioning in the UNGA and UNSC remain fundamentally different also after Lisbon.

Adhering to an institutional perspective, scholars have also discussed the new EU delegations that are responsible for the local coordination and representation tasks previously performed by the rotating presidency (Laatikainen, 2010; Chapter 2 of this volume; Drieskens, 2012a). Being one of the few to take a more analytical stance in that regard, Laatikainen writes that the new delegation (which integrates the former Commission delegation and the former New York Liaison Office of the Council Secretariat) and the EU member states are ‘locked into a partnership’ because the member states are no longer represented by a primus inter pares, but by a unit that is not a member of the UN and does not have voting rights (Laatikainen, 2010: 481–82). That said, according to Laatikainen, the role and size of the new delegation are factors that will influence the EU’s role at the UN, in particular whether its leadership can be classified as structural, entrepreneurial or intellectual (Laatikainen, 2010: 491).

The Treaty’s implementation status and the obstacles along the way may explain the rather descriptive and often hypothetical nature of most of the writings published so far. Indeed, in its first years of operation, the role of the new EU delegation to the UN in New York – in fact, the role of the EU delegations to the UN more generally because progress in New York was
seen as a catalyst for implementation in other UN contexts like Geneva and Vienna – was shaped by the more fundamental questions on status that were raised by the UN membership, in particular within the context of the UNGA.

In a nutshell, the EU wanted its post-Lisbon foreign policy architecture to be matched with an enhanced status within the UNGA, but only managed to secure its wish list of representative rights in May 2011 after intensive outreach and textual compensations. For obvious reasons, the EU’s failed attempt to secure those privileges in September 2010 attracted attention from both academic scholars and commentators affiliated with think-tanks. Some advised the EU ‘to do its diplomatic homework better’, stating that it is too costly for its reputation and credibility to be surprised when a proposal is blocked by countries that are the EU’s main aid beneficiaries (Emerson and Wouters, 2010). Others were rather surprised by the ‘unusual degree of alarm among commentators’ and warned against prioritising a formal question like the EU’s status over its lack of unity in dossiers like the Middle East one and ‘embarking on an inward-focused review’ (Gowan and Brantner, 2010).

Indeed, the episode once more illustrates the impact of the external context on the EU’s representation and functioning in international settings and the necessity of incorporating extra-EU variables into research. However, research on the EU at the UN, like research on the EU in the multilateral system more generally, has been driven internally, responding to changes from within the EU (Kissack, 2010: 15). Bias is the result, with most scholars reducing the outside world to ‘a stage upon which the EU acts’, as Kissack aptly summarised. Only more recently have researchers turned their attention to the impact of the external context on the EU and its representatives, including when studying the EU at the UN (Brantner and Gowan, 2009; Delreux et al., 2012). Several edited collections seek to generate broader conclusions in that regard, comparing practices among diverse contexts (Jørgensen, 2009; Blavoukos and Bourantonis, 2011; Costa and Jørgensen, 2011).

On a related note, Kissack’s own empirical investigation of the EU’s working practices in the multilateral system challenges the widely-held belief that the interests of the EU and the multilateral system run parallel (Kissack, 2010: 5). The EU in particular remains a strong believer in multilateralism and even defines its relations with the emerging powers in terms of partnerships to effective multilateralism (European Council, 2008). However, more recent research shows that those powers are not as like-minded as the EU wants them to be, especially when it comes to the role of the UN in international politics. They embrace different meanings of what multilateralism entails and how it should be operationalised, notably in the UN context (Bouchard and Peterson, 2010; Keukeleire and Bruyninckx, 2011). In consequence, also scholars exploring the EU through the lens of multilateralism seem to have broadened their perspective by incorporating the external context in their reflections on the subject. More generally, the EU’s support for (effective) multilateralism has been an important starting point for research on the EU at the UN in the past decade, even the main catalyst, as demonstrated in the following section.

A sense of déjà vu

Scholars watching the EU at the UN for the past decade may well feel a sense of déjà vu with the current interest in the Lisbon Treaty. It is reminiscent of the early 2000s when the relationship between both organisations was explored via the European Security Strategy (European Council, 2003). Drafted in 2003, the document defined the UN and its Charter as the main framework for international relations and called for an international order based on ‘effective multilateralism’. The notion was not defined in operational terms, but became the guiding principle of most foreign policy documents that the EU issued thereafter.
Moreover, the EU’s ambition of effective multilateralism was mirrored by a growing academic interest in its conceptualisation and application, particularly, though not exclusively, in the UN context (Biscop, 2005; Biscop and Drieskens, 2006a, 2006b; Jørgensen, 2006a, 2006b; Biscop and Andersen, 2007; Gowan, 2007; Kissack, 2010; Koops, 2011). In fact, the number of publications expanded to such an extent that ‘EU and multilateralism’ was included as an entry in Smith’s list of popular areas in research on foreign policy decision-making (Smith, 2010: 338). Just a few years earlier, Smith (together with Laatikainen) had decided to edit a volume devoted to the EU at the UN in order to examine whether or not the EU member states were increasingly conducting their UN policy through the EU (Laatikainen and Smith, 2006a). Covering not only institutional and membership questions but also various policy areas, the volume was the first of its kind. Five years after publication, it remains the key reference work on the EU’s relationship with the UN, providing essential reading for scholars and practitioners alike.

Laatikainen and Smith brought scholars together to explore how the different approaches of the EU and the UN to multilateralism intersect, realising that ‘a systematic analysis of the EU’s approach to the central political bodies of the UN was lacking’ (Laatikainen and Smith, 2006b: 5). Likewise, as recently as 2004, the editors of the present volume pointed out that ‘the EU at the United Nations has been an under-researched topic for years’ (Jørgensen and Laatikainen, 2004: 20). With hindsight, what seems to have been lacking was not research as such, but rather the accumulation of knowledge, since many studies were variations on the same themes. True, the amount of literature on the EU at the UN could not be compared to the rather fertile scholarship on the relationship between the US and the UN (Foot et al., 2003; Luck, 1999). Yet the EU’s representation and functioning in New York has attracted scholarly attention since the early 1970s. Various scholars have confronted the challenge of studying an actor that is neither a state nor a typical intergovernmental organisation and reflected upon the EU’s cooperation and priorities at the UN. Yet most of them raise the question if new steps in integration prompt the EU member states to increasingly speak with a united voice, considering voting cohesion as the ultimate proof of EU foreign policy success, notably in the context of the UNGA.

Rasch explains this fascination by noting that the EU at the UN in New York provides a unique miniature reflection of the dynamics of EU foreign policy (Rasch, 2008: 13). If this view is taken, then the status quo of research should come as no surprise. Like research on EU foreign policy more generally, academic interest in studying the EU at the UN has been growing, but there is still a need for more substantial analysis. Few analysts have left the beaten path, both for the UNGA and UNSC. This is true from a methodological point of view, with most scholars relying on voting analysis, but also from a theoretical one. Indeed, reflecting the general uneasiness concerning theorising the EU’s foreign policy, only a minimal number of scholars has offered theoretical insights (Drieskens, 2008). In fact, for a long time, the same conclusion was valid for the study of the UN more generally (Barnett and Finnemore, 2007).

Kissack’s evaluation of another must-read on EU–UN relations, i.e. the collection edited by Wouters, Hoffmeister and Ruys, echoes that observation: missing is the ‘engagement with the wider academic literature’ (Kissack, 2010: 18). A major plus, however, is that the volume, which is rather encyclopedic in nature, includes numerous entries written by diplomats and policy officials who bring valuable insider information on the practice of EU coordination and representation to the outside. In fact, the dialogue between the academic and the policy worlds has been a constructive one. A growing group of scholars has completed extensive fieldwork as part of their research (Alcalde and Bouchard, 2008; Rasch, 2008; Drieskens, 2009; Laatikainen, 2010; Kissack, 2010). Some even added an explicit policy-relevant dimension to their work, reflecting, for instance, on the operationalisation of effective multilateralism or formulating
recommendations on improving the EU’s functioning at the UN more generally (Biscop, 2005; Laatikainen and Degrand-Guillaud, 2010).

Also, practitioners writing down their day-to-day experiences allowed researchers to glimpse behind the scenes, even if they often do so from a legal background (Winkelmann, 2000; Paasivirta and Rosas, 2002; Sucharipa, 2003; Chevallard, 2005; Verbeke, 2006; Lej, 2007; Degrand-Guillaud, 2009a and 2009b). Indeed, it is important to stress that even though a growing group of practitioners and students of international relations have reflected upon the EU at the UN, most writings take a predominantly legal perspective. Rather than looking into the various stages and levels of decision-making, they emphasise the legal provisions that guide the EU’s representation and shape the representation behaviour of the EU member states (Denza, 2004; Macleod et al., 1998; Wouters, 2001; Marchisio, 2002; Govaere et al., 2004, Hoffmeister, 2007; Gstöhl, 2008). In other words, although research exploring the EU at the UN in New York has steadily grown and has even experienced some growth spurts, scholars still tend to focus on the rules and outcome of decision-making rather than on the process. This is especially true for the UNGA, as illustrated in what follows.

**Status quo of research**

**The General Assembly**

Ever since the United Nations Working Group on Coordination (better known by its acronym CONUN) was established in the early 1970s, scholars have studied the EU’s performance at the UNGA by measuring voting cohesion. Most often, they asked if new steps in the European integration process, both in terms of widening and deepening, resulted in increased cohesion between the EU member states. Scholars repeatedly mention the dazzling amount of coordination meetings – more than a thousand – organised each year, as well as the roles of the rotating presidency, the Commission and the Council Secretariat. Concentrating on the outcome in New York, they tend to overlook the process of decision-making and its Brussels dimension. More detailed accounts like the ones on the adoption in December 2007 of a resolution calling for a moratorium on the death penalty are thus the exception, not the rule (Laatikainen and Degrand-Guillaud, 2010; Kissack, 2010).

The main conclusion is one of increasing unity (Farrell, 2006a, 2006b). The level of cohesion between the EU member states increased from 74 per cent in the second half of the 1980s to 95 per cent in the second half of the 1990s (Wouters, 2001: 402), and is higher than the level of cohesion measured for the entire UN membership (Hosli et al., 2010). Keeping in mind the number of split votes in the UNGA’s Political and Security Committee and the Special Political and Decolonization Committee, however, these records also reveal that it remains difficult to align the EU member states on security-related issues, especially France and the UK.

Luif demonstrates in this regard that a core group of countries (including Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Italy, Germany, Portugal, Spain, Greece and Denmark) often constituted the EU majority voting behaviour during the 1990s for international security and disarmament issues; France and the UK have been most distant from this majority on security and disarmament since the mid-1990s (Luif, 2003). Young and Rees reach a similar conclusion (Young and Rees, 2005). Continuing on the same line, Johansson-Nogués shows that, while the voting records of the new EU member states on issues such as human rights issues fit well to the EU majority, this is less so for international security questions (Johansson-Nogués, 2004, 2006). Exploring the impact of the 2004 enlargement and the war on terror in more detail, Jakobsson found that France and the UK maintained the highest degree of transatlantic
solidarity among the EU member states, but also that these events effected the EU’s cohesion in a negative way and decreased voting cohesion (Jakobsson, 2009).

In any case, looking from a New York perspective, the level of cohesion between the EU member states remains remarkable. After all, one should not forget that the EU member states are dispersed across three electoral groupings – the fifteen old member states belong to the Western Europe and Others Group (WEOG), the new member states to the Eastern Europe Group (EEG), except for Cyprus which belongs to the Asian Group. However, as Kirn explains, since the groups rarely discuss matters of substance, this dispersion does not preclude EU dynamics from developing (Kirn, 2006). Because of these dynamics, Smith defines the EU member states as a ‘common interest regional group’ (Smith, 2005: 71). Morphet adds that the EU ‘eclipsed’ the WEOG as a political grouping (Morphet, 2000: 245); Laatikainen notes that the EU tends to dominate the proceedings within the EEG since the 2004 enlargement (Laatikainen, 2006).

Importantly, EU dynamics may be prominent in New York, but are not omnipresent. Looking at the UNSC for instance, the reality is that EU member states are (s)elected by their respective regional groupings. Whereas O’Brien sees a ‘CFSP logic’ in the sense of an informal promotion of EU agreed candidates (O’Brien, 1999: 32), Brussels-driven election dynamics are absent, both for presenting and electing candidates. In fact, their EU membership does not impede the EU member states from running against each other. The dispersion over various groups, but also diverging views on UNSC reform may explain so. Unsurprisingly, the EU member states are not demanding the reconfiguration of groupings, as they have different pools to fish in.

Some looked into the statements made by the presidency on behalf of the EU (Adriaenssen, 2008; Hosli et al., 2010) when studying the EU at the UNGA. Again, the conclusion is one of success: the number of countries supporting the EU’s interventions has gradually increased, encompassing not only EU member states, but also candidate and other countries. Nevertheless, most scholars have relied on voting analysis. Granted, there are advantages to this method: not only are the voting records electronically available; they are also consistent over time and thus adequate for statistical analysis (Kissack, 2007). However, there are also significant shortcomings, because this method abstracts the process of decision-making and ignores the fact that for issue areas where the level of consensus between the UN members is high so is the likelihood of agreement between the EU member states (Jørgensen, 2004; Smith, 2005).

Furthermore, voting analysis is not appropriate for measuring the EU’s performance in all UN bodies, most notably in the UNSC (Drieskens, 2012b). Three reasons explain so: first, given the UNSC’s restricted membership, it only allows measuring the degree to which a variable group of EU member states vote in a similar way at a certain point in time; second, as the UNSC largely operates by consensus and divisive issues are rarely pushed to a vote, one can only measure the degree to which a number of EU member states vote similarly on draft resolutions that are formally introduced; and third, unlike at the UNGA, the EU member states serving at the UNSC are not involved in EU coordination. At most, they are involved in EU representation, with their representation behaviour being subject to EU rules. Put differently, the UNSC provides scholars with a different kind of Mini-Europe than the UNGA.

### The Security Council

The challenges discussed in the previous part may also explain why research on the EU at the UNSC remains somewhat thin, particularly in comparison to the UNGA. Scholarly interest into the EU’s foreign policy at the UNSC has been growing, but often results in a historical reconstruction of the relevant legal provisions or factual description of the membership,
concentrating on France and the UK as permanent members (Tsakaloyannis and Bourantonis, 1997; Bourantonis, 2005; Hill, 2006; Drieskens, 2009). Most authors pay limited attention to the non-permanent members, unless their respective countries managed to secure a seat. The same goes for the member states and institutions without a seat. Moreover, the UNGA has often been used as a point of reference as a result of which most conclusions are of a rather general nature, stressing what the EU at the UNSC is not.

For its part, the EU is keen on stressing that it is not a regional organisation in the sense of Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, which frames the cooperation between the UNSC and regional ‘arrangements’ and ‘agencies’ (Tavares, 2009; Drieskens, 2010). The EU has been a loyal participant in the meetings organised under this umbrella. However, it does not want to attend as a regional arrangement or agency, only as one of the ‘other international organisations’. Considering this scepticism, it is quite surprising that Chapter VIII has been one of the main reference frameworks for scholars studying the EU at the UNSC. Whether implicit or explicit, also the more recent regionalisation literature envisions a UNSC with regional seats, including one for the EU, as an end goal of the process of regionalisation (Van Langenhove and Costea, 2005; Graham and Felício, 2006). Likewise, an EU seat at the UNSC has been seen a logical outcome of the EU’s CFSP, not only by EU member states like Italy who realise that a permanent seat of their own is not an option, but also as by EU scholars (Fulci, 2001; Blavoukos and Bourantonis, 2002; Fassbender, 2004; Missiroli, 2005; Chevallard, 2005; Marchesi, 2010). However, the reality is that support for such seats is limited, both in New York and Brussels (Drieskens et al., 2007).

That said, the reform of the UNSC has been a popular research topic, with scholars reflecting upon the EU’s future representation and its lack of a common position (Roos et al., 2008; Brantner and Gowan, 2009; Blavoukos and Bourantonis, 2011). As for the latter, Blavoukos and Bourantonis write that the EU’s adherence to multilateralism is instrumental, because there is a significant gap between the EU’s rhetoric and the actual positions of the EU member states. These countries may have been the driving force for certain questions of UN reform in recent years, yet not for the UNSC. However, they, and states more generally, will remain the main actors at the UNSC in the years to come, underlining the necessity of systematic research on their representation behaviour. Such research would allow for nuancing the glass half-full/empty views that are common in writings on the EU at the UNSC (Kissack, 2010: 109).

Extensive fieldwork combining expert interviews and archival research already made it possible to set the record straight as regards the origins and language of the reference to the UNSC in the former Article 19 TEU (Drieskens, 2010). This disclaimer in this provision echoes the language of the UN Charter and is often read as France and the UK safeguarding their veto rights (Fink-Hooijer, 1994; Lenaerts and de Smijter, 1998; Stahn, 2003; Lenaerts and van Nuffel, 2005; Azoulai, 2005; Hill, 2005, 2006; Koutrakos, 2006; Verbeke, 2006; Wessel, 2007; Rasch, 2008). However, it was not France or the UK who tabled the disclaimer on day one of the negotiations leading to the Maastricht Treaty; the Dutch Presidency did so in the very final weeks. And whereas the first drafts explicitly mentioned France and the UK, the final text did not, which can be explained under the context of German unification. On a final note, now that the Lisbon Treaty has entered into force, the disclaimer applies to all EU member states serving at the UNSC, thus also to the EU member states with a two-year seat.

Article 34 TEU (the successor of Article 19 TEU) may make the intersection of the EU and UNSC most visible on paper, given that it is the only provision in the European treaties that explicitly refers to the UNSC, but article 215 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (ex Articles 301 and 60 of the EC Treaty) does so in practice, as it shapes the implementation in the EU legal order of most of the sanctions imposed by the UNSC (Lenaerts
and de Smijter, 1998). In that regard, scholars conclude that Brussels is at the receiving end of what is decided upon in New York, reducing the Commission (Lukaschek, 2002: 344; Palchetti, 2002; Paasivirta and Rosas, 2002; Koutrakos, 2006) and the Council to implementing bodies. Nonetheless, (research on) the interaction between Brussels and New York was given a whole new dimension in the early 2000s, when targets of sanction measures turned to the European courts to challenge the decisions of the UNSC, questioning their regional implementation (Eeckhout, 2005; Lavranos, 2006, 2007; Vlcek, 2006, 2007; Harpaz, 2009; Drieskens, 2010).

**Conclusion**

Introducing his contribution to the edited volume of Laatikainen and Smith, Hill states the following: ‘If the United Nations is the universal form of multilateralism, the Security Council is its zenith. Within the Security Council resides the P5 (the permanent, veto-bearing members) while within the P5, Britain and France are themselves members of a formidable multilateral institution, the European Union. Our subject, then, presents us with a series of Chinese boxes, which need careful delineating and distinguishing’ (Hill, 2006: 49). Bringing together the literature on the EU at the UNGA and UNSC, this contribution demonstrates that research on the EU at the UN has flourished, notably in reaction to empirical developments within the EU, but also that there are important boxes waiting to be opened, even to be unwrapped, both for the UNGA and UNSC.

Significant scholarship on the EU’s participation in the UNGA and the UNSC has been produced in recent years, but there are still important gaps to fill. We have a good understanding of the EU’s foreign policy system in New York, including for the post-Lisbon era. We know the formal institutions and rules but need more in-depth empirical research on the informal practices and norms. Moreover, to date, we have little research on the decision-making dynamics in Brussels or on how the Brussels bodies influence events in New York. The same goes for the mechanisms used by the member states to upload their UN preferences to the EU level. Opening these boxes implies systematic fieldwork in both Brussels and the national capitals.

Scholars are encouraged to broaden their view of the EU at the UN to encompass these dimensions, but also to look beyond the almost sacred single voice and analyse, for instance, the EU’s capacity to shape the agendas and decisions at the UN. Also a better understanding of that intergovernmental context will increase our knowledge of the EU’s performance. Also, scholars should be aware of potential pitfalls stemming from the assumption that understanding the EU at the UN can be limited to studying the EU at UNGA or the UNSC. In fact, future research on the EU at the UN, while acknowledging the differences between the UNGA and UNSC, should explore how the EU’s participation in these organs is influenced by wider EU–UN dynamics. More complete conclusions on the EU at the UNGA and UNSC may result from examining how the EU acts in other UN or international bodies, but also from how other regional actors function within the UNGA and UNSC. Put differently, there is a clear need for more empirical studies with a comparative design, comparing decisions, actors and settings.

Finally, much more work is necessary to improve our theoretical understanding of the EU at the UN. One evident observation that can be drawn from the previous discussion is that the literature looking specifically EU at the UN has not yet offered strong theoretical explanations of the EU’s functioning and performance. Only some very initial work has been done. In consequence, moving forward requires both additional empirical research and theoretically sound argumentation. Scholars offering theoretical explanations of the EU as an actor at the UN, however, should avoid what has been a major criticism of the EU’s participation in the
UN: a lack of flexibility. Moving forward implies outside of the box thinking and the use of a theoretical approach that recognises not only the complexity of the EU as an international actor at the UN, with its various players and different levels of decision-making, but also the EU’s interactions with other international players and the pressures imposed by the international system.

References


caroline bouchard and edith drieskens


