

# EU AS A GLOBAL ACTOR IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD

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## Abstract:

*The European Union is a global actor, but confronted with internal crises and some are seeing it as a union trying to survive. There are some who believe that its strategy to spread the values that stand on its foundation in the entire world is not going to function. Since 1957 when 6 countries (Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxemburg and Netherland) founded European Coal and Steel Community, the European Union has experienced a huge process of enlargement uniting now 28 states. At the beginning it was about putting together the resources for common good purpose, is it still the same, or is it about gaining/ maintaining the power of a few state? The Union's objectives are to offer its citizens freedom, security and justice, a balanced economic growth for a social progress, and for this the EU promoted social, economic and territorial cohesion, and solidarity within the member states. But if we consider the exit of Britain and the fact that Turkey is still a candidate state when it applied to join in 1987 and in 1997 it was declared eligible to join European Union, EU as success project still remains uncertain. So, issues as: EU position in a more and more globalized world and the level of economic, social cohesion among its member states remains topical. The paper aims to present a framework of EU foreign policy and its interregional relations in order to understand the EU roll as a global actor, using quantitative data from EUROSTAT on trade in good by main world traders, share of national exports in world exports; extra-EU28 trade by main partners, total products, share of exports by partner and extra-EU28 trade by member state, total products, share of exports. It will conclude that while the Union in an important international actor, a model of regional integration, a model of multi-level governance, if it's a successful model, if it is going to survive as a union as large as it is at the moment or as a smaller one remains questionable.*

**Key words:** globalization, European Union, economic, social and territorial cohesion, foreign policy, trade

**JEL classification:** F02, F13, F42, F53

## 1. Introduction

Since 1957 when 6 countries (Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxemburg and Netherland) founded European Coal and Steel Community, the European Union has experienced a huge process of enlargement uniting now 28 states. It is also true that since then, till the present, the entire world had changed. If we could talk about a bipolar world up till the Cold War, when United States of America and the Soviet Union were the two main global actors, we are now facing a globalized world, with interdependences and many challenges. There are several global organizations, on different area of interests that prove it: WTO (World Trade Organization), ILO (International Labour Organization), FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization), IMF (International Monetary Fund), ITC (International Telecommunication Union), OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development), UN (United Nations), UNCTAD (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development), WB (World Bank), WCO (World Customs Organization), WHO (World Health Organization), ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement), ACP (African, Caribbean and Pacific states), NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization). Where does the EU stand in this complex world? It clearly has an economic powerful position, but is it enough or not?

G8 is to be mentioned in the context, as it is an annual meeting of the 7 most advanced economies and EU's representative, to discuss world's economic and financial problems and policies. Initially G7, Canada, Japan, U.S.A., Germany, France, Italy and United Kingdom started their ad hoc meetings in 1975. In 1977 Roy Jenkins, the President of The European Commission at the time, joined the third summit of G7, and since 1981 EU was always represented at the group's summit.

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The G20 is also to be mentioned here. At the beginning it was a forum for few finance ministers and central bank governors to improve the international finance system. Since the financial crises of 2008, the meetings were lifted up to a higher level and since then 20 heads of states and government leaders are meeting regular to discuss about international economic cooperation. But who are the 20 members of the group: 19 countries and the European Union. The countries are Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, the United Kingdom and the United States of America. So, The EU is present in the group but there are also a few member states represented themselves.

The EU is a unique union of states, as it has to create a vision both at the European and national level. If we consider its main principles, at a European level, the sovereignty of its member states is recognize, but put aside for world peace, economic convergence, and better global governance. At a national level, the politicians are still fighting with the instinct to averse the sharing sovereignty. But if we consider the exit of Britain and the fact that Turkey is still a candidate state when it applied to join in 1987 and in 1997 it was declared eligible to join European Union, EU as success project still remains uncertain. So, issues as: EU position in a more and more globalized world and the level of economic, social cohesion among its member states remains topical.

The next section of the paper aims to present a framework of EU foreign policy in order to understand the EU roll as a global actor; how the other actors report to its roll and it is recognize as an important player or not.

## **2. EU foreign policy and its interregional relations**

The European Union foreign policy and its interregional relations are very important factors regarding the Union image as a global actor.

If we consider the definition of foreign policy as a way of influencing the external environment and the comportment of the other actors in order to pursue your own interests, values and goals, than how the others actors sees you on the stage is an important issue.

Many studies were conducted on the subject of how the other actors report to EU's roll as a global actor and if it is recognize as an important player or not, and Simion Schunz in his paper *A Global Actor in Search of a Strategy*, offers a synthesis of the following conclusions: EU is a little known and little debated actor in countries like Australia, Brazil, Canada, Egypt, India, Japan and South Africa, the citizens do not seem to be informed about the Union, except Chinese citizens with a positive attitude toward EU; EU is often perceived as an economic and trade giant by the business elites and the press from Brazil, India, Mexico and South Africa; EU is regularly seen as a supporter of multilateralism, global governance and sustainability, more on African continent; EU is a model of regional integration, also a predominant perception on African continent; EU has a problem with lack of internal unity and a problematic Eurocentric attitude. (Simion Schunz, 2014)

Henrik Larsen, in his paper *The EU as a Normative Power and the Research on External Perceptions: The Missing Link* offers another synthesis of the EU's external perceptions through specific literature. He outlines the next main perceptions presented by Chaban et al. in the paper *Images of the EU beyond Its Borders: Issue-Specific and Regional Perceptions of European Union Power and Leadership, 2013* who talks about EU as an international actor on some issue, but not a great power in all fields. EU as an international economic power is a trade giant, huge market and a source of direct foreign investment, but in the south (Africa, India, China, Brazil, The Pacific) EU is perceived as an economic power negatively, in its relation with ACP the term of 'partnership' is seen as a false one, the 'neo-colonialism' term being considered more appropriate (Chaban et al., 2013). Chaban is also

reviling the perception of EU as a diplomatic power, with an important role in peaceful reconciliation or mediation and not such a power in the military field (Henrik Larsen 2014).

It is hard for European power to extend to fields like strategic military affairs regarding its history. And even if some have considered the possibility on creating a European military force, the process will take some time. NATO, on the other hand has some history on the field, and some serious contributions from member states of EU. It is a military force with significant experience and the input of a powerful global actor, USA. This alliance with the USA is important considering that Russia and Turkey are not member states of European Union.

Larsen takes in consideration the Elgström O. researches results: EU a great power on fields like commerce and environment, and also the 'false' partnership of EU with ACP. The EU's negative image on its relation with Africa, keeping Africa in a subordinate position was outlined also by researchers like Brantner (2010), Morini et al. (2010), Olivier and Fioramonti (2010), Fioramonti and Polletti (2010). Larsen points out that as a political global actor the south has a more positive image on Union versus U.S.A., but Morini et al. (2010) on the other hand presents an EU as a weak actor in the political field. (Henrik Larsen, 2014).

The EU foreign policy is a complex term as it involves multilevel and more then one system of governance. But it is also impossible to take it as a sum of the 28 member state's foreign policy or to reduce it on the policy conducted by EEAS (Simion Schunz, 2014).

Simon Duke in his book *Europe as a Stronger Global Actor: Challenges and Strategic Responses* (2016) consider that EU has to define more clearly its interest as a global player and "the vary act of defining the Union's interests demands some form of strategic dialog, both within the Union's institutions and with its members as well as significant third parties with whom there is much in common across the board (Australia, Canada, India, Japan, South Korea and the USA being obvious examples). Other actors, such as China and Russia, already have a keen sense of their interests. Even some of mid-size powers like Brazil, and South Africa (also strategic partners) and Turkey (a candidate for membership) appear to have a keener sense of their interests." (Duke, 2016, pp.60)

Gehring et al. concludes that the Union "constitutes a strong market power in its own right and a weak security power." They consider that the EU is "institutionally ill-equipped to purposefully mobilize its market power to pursue high-politics goals" (Gehring, Urbanski and Oberthür, 2017).

Along with its enlargement EU improved its legislations. The EU's based legislation, the treaties have been approved by the member states and sate out the Union's objectives, rules for its institutions. Along with the treaties are adopted regulations, directives and other acts that are then implemented by the member states.

All treaties are important but a main one is Maastricht Treaty entered into force in November 1993, because it introduced in EU legislation the Maastricht criteria in order to prepare for EMU and elements from the area of internal affairs policy, citizenship and common foreign. On the internal affairs policy it's legislating new forms of cooperation between member states on justice and defense.

Another important Treaty is the Lisbon one, as it is titled the Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe. It was a necessity regarding EU-27. Its main changes were: legal status for EU; establishing the area on which EU has the entire power to decide and the area which are shared with the member states; permanent presidency for European Council, the position High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy being held by the same person who is also a Vice-President of European Commission and helped by a European External Action Service. With this "merging" position, in the wake of Lisbon, EU has become an international actor, with potential important power in a global grand bargain. (Jolyon Howorth 2010) But Herman van Rompuy who took the presidency for European Council and Catherine Ashton who took the position High Representative for Foreign Affairs

and Security Policy were two minor officials who were practically unknown in their own countries. (Jolyon Howorth 2010)

However Herman van Rompuy, the first on permanent presidency for European Council, was reelected for a second term from June 2012 till November 2014. Before being the President of European Council he expressed his opinion about Turkey joining EU. In 2004, he stated "An enlargement [of the EU] with Turkey is not in any way comparable with previous enlargement waves. Turkey is not Europe and will never be Europe." He continued "But it's a matter of fact that the universal values which are in force in Europe, and which are also the fundamental values of Christianity, will lose vigour with the entry of a large Islamic country such as Turkey." (<https://en.wikipedia.org>) It is also appreciated that thru his presidency he did not oppose to Turkish membership.

About Catherine Ashton the first High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy along with the position of Vice-President of European Commission, before she was a member of the Commission responsible with trade. She led negotiations on Free Agreement with Korea, contributed to the enforcement of European-ACP economic relationship and solved a number of high-profile trade disputes with major trade partners. (<https://eeas.europa.eu>) Regarding that EU is recognized as an economic power, most on the trade area, maybe it wasn't such a lack of wisdom in naming that the European Council made for above top-level positions, as Jolyon Howorth thought.

It is a fact that foreign affairs and security policy are more and more important on the EU agenda. There were lesson drawn from the mandate of the period 2009-2014, and a correlation with the internal movements was impetuous. For EU to be stronger it has to be one voice speaking, and for one voice speaking has to be one internal venture who establishing the voice to speak. A proof of it is the statements of Jean-Claude Juncker, on July 2014: "We need to be more effective in bringing together the tools of European's external action. Trade policy, development aids, our participation on international financial institutions and our neighbourhood policy must be combined and activated according to one and the same logic." It was the point when he was elected as President of European Commission, as a successor of Jose Manuel Barroso. The figures at the moment revealed an EU with: 1/4 world's GDP (to the 56,246 billion euro global GDP EU contributes with 24%, followed by USA with 22% and China with 13%, Brazil, India and Russia with 3%); world's largest trading block, world's largest source and destination of foreign investments; world's largest aids donor with 58.2 billion euro contribution.

The areas on which EU is leading its foreign policy are: common foreign and security policy; terrorism, drugs, energy diplomacy, environment and climate changes; human rights and democracy; migration and nuclear safety. European Union has certain norms regarding the issues, and it is trying to propagate them through negotiation. "Europe has considerable economic and commercial leverage. It is through this that Europe managed to convince Moscow to sign the Kyoto Protocol in exchange for Russia joining WTO. But Europe's power does not go further..." (Zaki Laïdi, 2010).

The European norms are reliable but they can be spread on fragmentary bases, in fields like environment, international justice and sustainable development, rather than security and diplomatic issues. But this is normal, as EU is about managing 28 states with its own strategy on security and diplomatic issues. And a very important issue is that Europe is an example of global governance, a global power that has signed around 40 documents and texts that are the foundation of global governance at world level, and 34 of those are treaties and texts signed by member states, compared with 11 for USA, 16 for China and 15 for India. (Zaki Laïdi, 2010)

Regarding the fact that EU is perceived as a global actor on economic and trade levels we analyzed some figures on the issues.

**Table 1: Trade in good by main world traders,  
share of national exports in world exports (%)**

| GEO/time           | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 |
|--------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| <b>EU-28</b>       | 18,9 | 18   | 17,1 | 17,3 | 16,6 | 17,1 | 16   | 15,9 | 15,5 | 16,3 | 15,9 |
| <b>Canada</b>      | 5,1  | 5    | 4,6  | 4,3  | 3,9  | 3,5  | 3,4  | 3,3  | 3,3  | 3,2  | 3,3  |
| <b>USA</b>         | 13,1 | 12,4 | 12,2 | 11,9 | 11,2 | 11,8 | 11,4 | 10,9 | 11,1 | 11,1 | 11,4 |
| <b>China*</b>      | 9,5  | 10,5 | 11,4 | 12,5 | 12,4 | 13,5 | 14   | 14   | 14,7 | 15,6 | 16,5 |
| <b>Japan</b>       | 9,1  | 8,2  | 7,6  | 7,3  | 6,8  | 6,5  | 6,9  | 6,1  | 5,7  | 5    | 4,9  |
| <b>South Korea</b> | 4,1  | 3,9  | 3,8  | 3,8  | 3,6  | 4,1  | 4,2  | 4,1  | 3,9  | 3,9  | 4    |
| <b>Russia</b>      | 2,9  | 3,3  | 3,6  | 3,6  | 4    | 3,4  | 3,5  | 3,8  | 3,8  | 3,7  | 3,5  |
| <b>Singapore</b>   | 3,2  | 3,2  | 3,2  | 3,1  | 2,9  | 3    | 3,1  | 3    | 2,9  | 2,9  | 2,9  |
| <b>Mexico</b>      | 3    | 2,9  | 3    | 2,8  | 2,5  | 2,6  | 2,7  | 2,6  | 2,7  | 2,7  | 2,8  |
| <b>India</b>       | 1,2  | 1,4  | 1,4  | 1,5  | 1,6  | 2    | 2    | 2,2  | 2,1  | 2,4  | 2,2  |
| <b>Brazil</b>      | 1,6  | 1,6  | 1,6  | 1,6  | 1,7  | 1,7  | 1,8  | 1,9  | 1,7  | 1,7  | 1,6  |

Source: EUROSTAT, <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm>, \*except Hong Kong

Looking at the trade in goods by main traders, as contribution to the world exports, it shows that EU-28 is declining, and China is the leader in 2014. EU-28 comes on the second place and it is followed by USA. If we consider ASEAN, in the table in only a part of it and it's already the leader. So, how can EU negotiate with China regarding human rights issues, and it is not the only example, as China is a power global actor on the same strategic field, trade. But here is important to mention that regarding EU's implication in WTO, European Commission, the EU's executive arm, is speaking for all European member states at almost all WTO meetings, even if the 28 member States of the EU are also WTO members in their own right.

The European Union is also negotiating a trade agreement with the four members of MERCOSUR –Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and Paraguay, actually the founders of MERCOSUR. Since 1999 the EU and MERCOSUR trade relations is governed by an inter-regional Framework Cooperation Agreement. The EU exports in the region increased up to 46 billion euro in 2015 and EU is the biggest foreign investor in the region. But here there is a serious threat regarding NAFTA.

The Transatlantic Trade and Investments Plan was a proposed trade agreement between EU and USA, with the aim to promote a multilateral economic growth. The negotiations should have been completed in 2014, but the plan ultimately failed.

**Table 2: Extra-EU28 Trade by main partners,  
total products, share of exports by partner (%)**

| Parteners/time     | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 |
|--------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| <b>USA</b>         | 24,9 | 23,9 | 23,2 | 21   | 18,9 | 18,6 | 17,9 | 17   | 17,4 | 16,7 | 18,3 |
| <b>China*</b>      | 5,1  | 4,9  | 5,5  | 5,8  | 6    | 7,5  | 8,4  | 8,8  | 8,6  | 8,5  | 9,7  |
| <b>Russia</b>      | 4,9  | 5,4  | 6,3  | 7,2  | 8    | 6    | 6,4  | 7    | 7,3  | 6,9  | 6,1  |
| <b>Switzerland</b> | 8    | 8,2  | 7,7  | 7,6  | 7,7  | 8,1  | 8,2  | 9,1  | 7,9  | 9,7  | 8,2  |
| <b>Norway</b>      | 3,3  | 3,2  | 3,3  | 3,5  | 3,3  | 3,4  | 3,1  | 3    | 3    | 2,9  | 2,9  |
| <b>Turkey</b>      | 4,3  | 4,3  | 4,3  | 4,3  | 4,2  | 4,1  | 4,6  | 4,7  | 4,5  | 4,5  | 4,4  |
| <b>Japan</b>       | 4,6  | 4,2  | 3,9  | 3,5  | 3,2  | 3,3  | 3,3  | 3,2  | 3,3  | 3,1  | 3,1  |
| <b>South Korea</b> | 1,9  | 1,9  | 2    | 2    | 1,9  | 2    | 2,1  | 2,1  | 2,2  | 2,3  | 2,5  |
| <b>Brazil</b>      | 1,5  | 1,5  | 1,5  | 1,7  | 2    | 2    | 2,3  | 2,3  | 2,4  | 2,3  | 2,2  |
| <b>India</b>       | 1,8  | 2    | 2,1  | 2,4  | 2,4  | 2,5  | 2,6  | 2,6  | 2,3  | 2,1  | 2,1  |

| Parteners/time      | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 |
|---------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| <b>Saudi Arabia</b> | 1,3  | 1,5  | 1,5  | 1,6  | 1,6  | 1,7  | 1,7  | 1,7  | 1,8  | 1,9  | 2,1  |
| <b>Canada</b>       | 2,3  | 2,2  | 2,3  | 2,1  | 1,9  | 2    | 2    | 1,9  | 1,9  | 1,8  | 1,9  |
| <b>Algeria</b>      | 1    | 1    | 0,9  | 0,9  | 1,2  | 1,4  | 1,2  | 1,1  | 1,3  | 1,3  | 1,4  |
| <b>U. A. E.</b>     | 2    | 2,5  | 2,2  | 2,2  | 2,5  | 2,3  | 2,1  | 2,1  | 2,2  | 2,6  | 2,5  |
| <b>Singapore</b>    | 1,7  | 1,6  | 1,7  | 1,7  | 1,7  | 1,9  | 1,8  | 1,8  | 1,8  | 1,7  | 1,7  |
| <b>Hong Kong</b>    | 2    | 1,9  | 1,9  | 1,7  | 1,7  | 1,8  | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2,1  | 2    |
| <b>Mexico</b>       | 1,6  | 1,6  | 1,7  | 1,7  | 1,7  | 1,5  | 1,6  | 1,5  | 1,7  | 1,6  | 1,7  |
| <b>Australia</b>    | 2,1  | 2    | 1,9  | 1,9  | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 2    | 1,8  | 1,7  |
| <b>Nigeria</b>      | 0,6  | 0,6  | 0,6  | 0,7  | 0,8  | 0,8  | 0,8  | 0,8  | 0,7  | 0,7  | 0,7  |
| <b>South Africa</b> | 1,7  | 1,7  | 1,7  | 1,7  | 1,6  | 1,4  | 1,6  | 1,7  | 1,5  | 1,4  | 1,4  |

Source: EUROSTAT, <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm>, \*except Hong Kong

Regarding the extra EU-28 trade by main partners, the trend is the same, USA is loosing ground to China, Russia is gaining ground and Switzerland and Turkey are maintaining it's position. In 2004 the main partners for extra EU-28 exports were: USA with 24,9%, fallowed by Switzerland with 8%, China 5,1 %, Russia 4,9% and Turkey with 4,3%. In 2014 USA is leading with only 18,3%, a 6,6% decline, fallowed by China with 9,7%, up by 4,6%, Switzerland with 8,2 %, Russia 6,1% and Turkey with 4,4%. Even if it looses ground The USA is the main partner so The Transatlantic Trade and Investments Plan should be resurrected, but with on Trump's presidency it's a challenging perspective. Switzerland is also an important trade partner for EU but even if it has an unusual position being surrounded by EU member states, Switzerland does not wants to join EU. In 1992 the Switzerland submitted an application to enter the EU, but a Swiss referendum held on 6 December of '92 rejected the join of EU with 50.3%, and in 2001 76.8% of Swiss voted against joining EU. The Swiss Confederation adopted some EU's law in order to participate on the EU's single market, but does not goes further than this.

**Table 2: Extra-EU28 Trade by member state, total products, share of exports (%)**

| GEO/time              | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 |
|-----------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| <b>EU-28</b>          | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  | 100  |
| <b>Belgium</b>        | 6    | 5,9  | 6    | 6,1  | 5,6  | 5,9  | 6,1  | 6,2  | 6,2  | 6,1  | 6,1  |
| <b>Bulgaria</b>       | 0,3  | 0,3  | 0,4  | 0,4  | 0,5  | 0,4  | 0,4  | 0,5  | 0,5  | 0,5  | 0,5  |
| <b>Czech Republic</b> | 0,7  | 0,8  | 0,9  | 1    | 1,1  | 1,1  | 1,2  | 1,3  | 1,4  | 1,3  | 1,4  |
| <b>Denmark</b>        | 1,9  | 1,9  | 1,8  | 1,8  | 1,8  | 2    | 1,8  | 1,8  | 1,8  | 1,7  | 1,8  |
| <b>Germany</b>        | 27,1 | 26,3 | 27,6 | 27,3 | 27,3 | 27,4 | 27,8 | 27,6 | 28   | 27   | 28   |
| <b>Estonia</b>        | 0,1  | 0,1  | 0,2  | 0,2  | 0,2  | 0,2  | 0,2  | 0,3  | 0,3  | 0,2  | 0,2  |
| <b>Ireland</b>        | 3,3  | 3    | 2,8  | 2,6  | 2,4  | 2,9  | 2,7  | 2,5  | 2,2  | 2,2  | 2,4  |
| <b>Greece</b>         | 0,4  | 0,5  | 0,5  | 0,6  | 0,6  | 0,7  | 0,7  | 0,8  | 0,9  | 0,8  | 0,8  |
| <b>Spain</b>          | 4    | 4,1  | 4,2  | 4,4  | 4,4  | 4,5  | 4,4  | 4,7  | 5    | 5,1  | 5,2  |
| <b>France</b>         | 13   | 12,9 | 11,8 | 11,4 | 11,5 | 11,9 | 11,4 | 10,8 | 10,8 | 10,2 | 10,2 |
| <b>Croatia</b>        | 0,2  | 0,2  | 0,3  | 0,3  | 0,3  | 0,3  | 0,3  | 0,2  | 0,2  | 0,2  | 0,2  |
| <b>Italy</b>          | 11,1 | 10,8 | 11   | 11,3 | 11,4 | 11,1 | 10,5 | 10,5 | 10,6 | 10,4 | 10,6 |
| <b>Cyprus</b>         | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    |
| <b>Latvia</b>         | 0,1  | 0,1  | 0,1  | 0,1  | 0,2  | 0,2  | 0,2  | 0,2  | 0,2  | 0,2  | 0,2  |
| <b>Lithuania</b>      | 0,3  | 0,3  | 0,4  | 0,4  | 0,5  | 0,4  | 0,5  | 0,5  | 0,5  | 0,6  | 0,6  |
| <b>Luxembourg</b>     | 0,1  | 0,2  | 0,2  | 0,2  | 0,2  | 0,2  | 0,2  | 0,2  | 0,2  | 0,2  | 0,1  |
| <b>Hungary</b>        | 0,7  | 0,8  | 1    | 1,1  | 1,1  | 1,1  | 1,1  | 1,2  | 1,1  | 1    | 1    |

| GEO/time    | 2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011 | 2012 | 2013 | 2014 |
|-------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Malta       | 0,1  | 0,1  | 0,1  | 0,1  | 0,1  | 0,1  | 0,1  | 0,1  | 0,1  | 0,1  | 0,1  |
| Netherlands | 6,1  | 6,2  | 6,6  | 7,1  | 6,9  | 7,3  | 7,3  | 7,1  | 7,3  | 7,1  | 7,2  |
| Austria     | 2,5  | 2,6  | 2,5  | 2,5  | 2,5  | 2,4  | 2,4  | 2,3  | 2,3  | 2,3  | 2,4  |
| Poland      | 1,2  | 1,4  | 1,6  | 1,7  | 1,9  | 1,8  | 1,8  | 1,9  | 2    | 2,2  | 2,2  |
| Portugal    | 0,6  | 0,6  | 0,7  | 0,7  | 0,8  | 0,7  | 0,7  | 0,7  | 0,8  | 0,8  | 0,8  |
| Romania     | 0,5  | 0,6  | 0,7  | 0,7  | 0,8  | 0,7  | 0,8  | 0,8  | 0,8  | 0,9  | 0,9  |
| Slovenia    | 0,3  | 0,3  | 0,4  | 0,4  | 0,4  | 0,4  | 0,4  | 0,4  | 0,4  | 0,4  | 0,4  |
| Slovakia    | 0,3  | 0,3  | 0,4  | 0,4  | 0,5  | 0,5  | 0,6  | 0,5  | 0,6  | 0,6  | 0,6  |
| Finland     | 2,2  | 2,2  | 2,3  | 2,3  | 2,2  | 1,8  | 1,8  | 1,6  | 1,6  | 1,4  | 1,4  |
| Sweden      | 4,3  | 4,1  | 4,1  | 3,9  | 3,8  | 3,6  | 3,8  | 3,8  | 3,4  | 3,1  | 3    |
| U. K.       | 12,2 | 13   | 11,6 | 11   | 10,9 | 10,5 | 10,9 | 11,7 | 10,9 | 13,2 | 11,6 |

Source: EUROSTAT, <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm>

Looking in the structure of EU-28 membership, when it comes to the extra EU-28 trade by member state, there are only few that counts: Germany with almost 1/3, meaning 28%, followed by United Kingdom 11,6%, Italy with 10,6%, France 10,2%, Netherlands with 7,2 % and Belgium 6,1 %. Back, in 2004, France was on the second place, after Germany, but over the years it louses ground in favour of Britain and Italy. There is one disparity that continues to exist for almost 60 years. And it is not the only one. Many disparities exist between the member states of EU and this contribute to the internal tensions. The leaders of the most developed countries of EU are now debating on the differentiated cooperation. Considering the importance given by the EU to the regional development policy with the scope of reducing disparities between its regions, a deeper analyze should be done. In an interview of Jose Manuel Barroso, winter 2013, concluded "We should seriously ask ourselves if we did the best investments in the past to increase the competitiveness of our economies. I believe that some funds were not used to its full potential. (...) Every euro spent should have maximum impact in terms of growth and competitiveness."

### 3. Conclusions

There is no doubt that EU is a global actor, a powerful one in some fields, a shy one in others. It is also true that the world is in a continuous changing process, facing tumultuous challenges. The 21<sup>st</sup>-century world is a multi-polar one, where the new raising powers have sensitive needs.

After facing two major conflicts in a generation lifetime the main actors of Europe founded a Union searching to raise its power in order to be able to defend itself in case of a conflict, but more of it to be able to prevent a war through its power to negotiate. Considering this EU is a model of regional integration. And, also, through its foreign and security policy European Union seeks to preserve peace, strengthen international security, promote international cooperation and developed democracy, the rule of law, the respect for human rights. EU foreign and security policy strengthen by Lisbon Treaty, with the post of High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

European Union is also a model of global governance. Over the years, as it enlarged, manage to create an important legal framework, an institutional framework, facing multi-level governance, where member states, EU institutions, which are decisions makers, interact, being in fact about sharing sovereignty. Not to forget, that in many cases, at a national level, the politicians are fighting with the instinct to averse the sharing sovereignty. And if we consider the exit of Britain and the fact that Turkey is still a candidate state when it applied to join in 1987 and in 1997 it was declared eligible to join European Union, the future of EU remains uncertain. The present debate on the European Union split in two by the different

stages of developments of its member states is proving this uncertainty. It may conduct to other exits from the Union, if it is going to survive as a union as large as it is at the moment or as a smaller one remains questionable, and this has an influence on its perception as a powerful actor on the global stage. And it should not be an uncertain future, after the efforts being done along its existence. In the light of the above, what Jean Monnet wrote on his *Memoir*, in 1975: “Sovereign nations of the past are no longer the proper frame for the present problems that need to be solved. And the Community itself is only a step towards the organized world of tomorrow”, are still within the present.

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