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The case of the TPNW”

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David Ragger BA

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Prof. Patrick Müller, M.A., Ph.D.



diplomatische
akademie **wien**
Vienna School of International Studies
École des Hautes Études Internationales de Vienne

Abstract

In this thesis, voting cohesion among EU members in the UN General Assembly from 2004 to 2020 is analysed using voting data from the 59th to the 74th Session of the UN General Assembly. A decline in EU cohesion on disarmament votes can be observed for the last 6 years. This decline is due to increased defections from the EU majority by member states which are not part of NATO, caused by a split among NATO and non-NATO EU members on the new issue of the TPNW banning nuclear weapons. In the same time period, cohesion remained stable for other matters, and even increased for votes on peace and security issues. The thesis draws on existing literature on EU voting cohesion, and on literature on the Europeanization of foreign policy. The process leading to the adoption of the TPNW, the positions of EU members towards it and its effects on EU cohesion are analysed as well.

In dieser Masterarbeit wird das Abstimmungsverhalten der EU-Mitgliedstaaten in der UN-Generalversammlung von 2004 bis 2020 analysiert. Dazu werden Daten zu den Abstimmungen von der 59. bis zur 74. Sitzungsperiode verwendet. In den letzten sechs Jahren ist die Geschlossenheit der EU bei Abstimmungen zu Abrüstung gesunken. EU-Mitgliedstaaten, die nicht Teil der NATO sind, weichen dabei öfter von der EU-Mehrheit ab, da diese und NATO-Mitgliedstaaten in ihren Positionen zum neuen Thema des Atomwaffenverbotsvertrags (TPNW) gespalten sind. Im selben Zeitraum blieb die Geschlossenheit der EU bei anderen Themen konstant, und stieg sogar bei Abstimmungen zu Frieden und Sicherheit. Die Arbeit stützt sich auf bestehende Literatur zum EU-Abstimmungsverhalten in der Generalversammlung, sowie auf Literatur zur Europäisierung von Außenpolitik. Die Entstehung des TPNW, die unterschiedlichen Positionen der EU-Mitgliedstaaten dazu, sowie deren Auswirkungen auf die Geschlossenheit der EU werden ebenfalls analysiert.

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List of Abbreviations

AI	Agreement Index
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
EC	European Communities
EEAS	European External Action Service
EU	European Union
GUAM	Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Moldova
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NPT	Non-Proliferation Treaty
SC	Security Council
TEU	Treaty on European Union
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
TPNW	Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons
UN	United Nations
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNODA	United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs

1. Introduction

Previous studies have generally found high cohesion among EU member states when analysing their voting behaviour in the General Assembly. In this thesis, I analyse voting cohesion among EU members in the General Assembly from 2004 to 2020, using voting data from the 59th to the 74th Session of the General Assembly. I find a decline in EU cohesion that can be observed for the last 6 years. This decline in voting cohesion is largely due to an increase in defection from the EU majority by non-NATO EU members on votes on disarmament. Beyond the issue of disarmament, EU cohesion remained stable and even increased for votes on peace and security matters in the same period. The changes in EU cohesion are analysed with the theory of Europeanization. In addition to the quantitative analysis of the voting data, two interviews with diplomats working at the UN in New York were conducted. Their names and workplace affiliations are not disclosed as confidentiality was agreed with both.

In the second chapter of the thesis, the relationship of the European Union to the United Nations is analysed, as well as its policy towards the United Nations as an organization, the policies it pursues within the UN, the status of the EU and its institutions at the UN General Assembly, as well as how the EU and its members states are trying to “speak with one voice”. This includes an overview of the existing literature on EU voting cohesion in the General Assembly.

The next section is about the theory of Europeanization of foreign policy. The general high level of voting cohesion in the General Assembly is seen as a sign of Europeanization, as has been done in other studies. Aspects of Europeanization theory that can be expected to be relevant for EU behaviour at the UN are highlighted. Given the observed decline in voting cohesion, attention is also given to limits of the Europeanization of foreign policy.

Chapter four describes the data collected for the master thesis. In chapter five, the quantitative methodology and the results of the empirical analysis are presented. First, the general observation of a decline in EU voting cohesion at the General Assembly is presented, with the conclusion that the decline is due to votes on disarmament. Then, defection of individual member states is analysed, and it is shown that the decline in voting cohesion on disarmament votes is driven by an increase in defection on disarmament votes by non-NATO EU members.

Chapter six looks at the relationship between the EU and NATO and its overlap in membership, as well as the role NATO and neutrality are given in the EU treaties. It also deals with the relevant context of the role of nuclear weapons within NATO and in Europe.

The next chapter seeks to explain the decline in voting cohesion regarding disarmament votes by looking at developments in nuclear policy that happened in the relevant time period and by looking at some specific votes in the General Assembly. In the time period where the decline in EU voting cohesion can be observed, the prohibition of nuclear weapons became an important and salient issue at the UN General Assembly, leading to the adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW). It is shown how the EU countries positioned themselves toward the TPNW, both before and after it was negotiated and adopted. The TPNW resulted in a cleavage between NATO and non-NATO EU members becoming apparent, which seems to be responsible for the decline in EU voting cohesion on disarmament votes. It is then analysed whether this cleavage also led to a decrease in EU cohesion on other matters.

2. The European Union and the United Nations

2.1. EU policy towards the UN

The UN plays an important role in the EU's foreign policy as the key institution of global multilateralism, which the EU has committed itself to promote. In the treaty provisions on the EU's external action, the UN is featured prominently. According to article 21 paragraph 1 of the Treaty on European Union (TEU), the EU "shall promote multilateral solutions to common problems, in particular in the framework of the United Nations." Article 34 TEU contains provisions on information sharing and collaboration between EU members that are members of the UN Security Council and those who are not. In the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) containing more detailed provisions on specific foreign policy domains, the UN is mentioned in the context of development cooperation (art. 208 par. 2 TFEU) and humanitarian aid (art. 214 par. 7 TFEU). Furthermore, it says that the EU shall "establish all appropriate forms of cooperation with the organs of the United Nations" (art. 220 par. 1 TFEU).

In its Global Strategy from 2016, a key foreign policy document of the EU, the UN is mentioned several times as well. The EU commits itself to "promote a rules-based global order with

multilateralism as its key principle and the United Nations at its core” (EU 2016, 15). It wants to strengthen the “UN as the bedrock of the multilateral rules-based order”, reform it and invest more financially (EU 2016, 39 f.). On a number of different issues, the EU commits itself to cooperating with the UN (and other multilateral organisations). Finally, the EU explicitly says that “[a]cross multilateral fora – and in particular the UN, the IFIs and the international justice organisations – the EU will strengthen its voice and acquire greater visibility and cohesion” (EU 2016, 40).

This commitment to the UN, already contained in the European Security Strategy of 2003, which preceded the current Global Strategy, was not inevitable. The European Security Strategy was published after the terrorist attacks of 9/11 in the United States, and their redefinition as a global actor, and in the aftermath of the invasion of Iraq, an act which side-lined the UN and divided the EU’s current and prospective members, some of which were part of the US-led so-called coalition of the willing (Kissack 2010, 1 f).

There are different explanations for this strong EU commitment to multilateralism and the UN. One of them has at its core that the EU is itself a multilateral organisation. EU member states are used to many of the aspects that come with being a member of a multilateral organisation like negotiations, compromise, and in the case of the EU even a partial transfer of sovereignty. This multilateralism that is part of the EU’s own political and legal system is projected on the international level, as states have done with aspects of their domestic political system in other cases. In addition, the EU’s values coincide with those of the UN, and in European discourse, multilateralism is usually framed as something positive (Jørgensen 2006).

Other perspectives interpret the EU’s commitment to multilateralism more as a rational decision. While Kagan (2004) also says that “[b]ecause of their own history, and because they now operate within an international organization, the European Union, that requires multilateral agreement on all matters, European’s respect for the legitimacy derived from multilateral negotiation and international legal institutions is often sincere”, he also believes that the Europeans use this commitment to legitimacy derived from the UN as a tool to limit the influence of the United States and gain influence of their own. Legitimacy is an area where they have a relative advantage over the United States (Kagan 2004, 72).

These two different approaches, one constructivist and one realist, as to why the EU is committed to multilateralism and the UN do not exclude each other and may both be part of the

explanation. The EU's commitment can be a consequence of its values and own political culture and at the same time make sense strategically as a way to increase the EU's influence at the international level.

2.2. EU policies at the UN

For the 74th session of the UN General Assembly (2019-2020) the priorities the EU had set for itself included UN reform and sustainable financing of the UN, conflict prevention and mediation, climate change, cooperation on migration, the promotion and protection of human rights and achieving gender equality. On disarmament, the EU committed itself to the non-proliferation and disarmament architecture and to counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Special focus is laid on the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and on chemical weapons (Council of the EU 2019, 10895/19).

2.3. The status of the EU at the UN

The Treaty of Lisbon was the last major amendment of the EU treaties. It was signed in 2007 and became effective in 2009. It contained many reforms relevant for EU foreign policy. Article 47 of the TEU gave the European Union legal personality, a status which it can be argued it already had enjoyed before, but now was made explicit in the Treaties, clearing out doubts about the issue. This clearly makes the EU a subject of international law, which comes with rights like concluding treaties or becoming a member of an international organisation (Blahušiak 2010). The Lisbon treaty also reformed the position of the High Representative, now titled "High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy". The High Representative became both a member and vice-president of the European Commission and the chair of the Foreign Affairs Council of the European Union. It also led to the creation of the European External Action Service (EEAS), a diplomatic service of the EU assisting the High Representative. Delegations of the EU now officially represent the EU as a whole, not just the European Commission (Paul 2008). The Lisbon treaty also created a permanent European Council president, whose tasks include the external representation of the EU at the level of heads of state and governments, while the High Representative does so on the ministerial level (Paul 2008, 14).

The treaty reforms of the EU's foreign policy structure also came with a change for the EU's representation at the UN. Before the Lisbon treaty, the member state holding the Council presidency was primarily responsible for representing the Union at the UN. Now, the Council presidency still plays an important role, but the "EU delegation is the primary actor representing the Union at UNGA" (Galariotis and Gianniou 2017, 62). Overall, the Lisbon treaty and the creation of the EEAS led to closer cooperation among EU members. The coordination became more routine, and over time, the trust towards the EU delegation increased (Interview, 3 June 2021). According to article 27 of the TEU, it is the High Representative (with the assistance of the EEAS) who shall "express the Union's position in international organisations". However, the European Union is not a member of the United Nations. Instead, all of its member states are in turn members of the UN. The EU itself as a regional organization has observer status in the UN General Assembly. Before 2011, the observer status of the EU was limited in scope and came with disadvantages for the representatives from the EU institutions. The EU delegation was allowed to speak at debates, but only after all of the UN member states had already made their statements. This changed with resolution 65/276, which was passed in May 2011 and granted the EU enhanced observer status (Blavoukos and Bourantonis 2017). Now, the EU is allowed to speak "among the major groups", before the individual UN member states. It can also present proposals or amendments, even though the EU itself cannot request a vote on these proposals or amendments, and the EU has the right to reply in the debate. However, the EU still cannot raise points of order or make procedural motions. Its representatives are seated with the other observers (Wouters, Odermatt and Ramopoulos 2014). Not all of the new rights granted to the EU are also used. While the right to speak before the individual UN members in the debate is amply used, and the President of the European Council has repeatedly delivered a statement in the general debate of the plenary (in line with him representing the EU at the level of heads of state and governments, who usually speak in the general debate), the EU has not made use of its right to present proposals and amendments or of its right to reply (Galariotis and Gianniou 2017, 75 f).

The EU had initially proposed a resolution that would have granted it further reaching participation rights, but this first proposal was met with considerable resistance, as other countries saw the intergovernmental nature of the UN put in question by the proposal and did not want the distinction of sovereign states and regional organisations to be blurred. The second, ultimately successful attempt for enhanced observer status for the EU took the positions and

misgivings of other UN members into account and required extensive diplomatic effort by both the EEAS and the EU member states. References to the Treaty of Lisbon and the high level of integration in the EU were dropped from the resolution that granted the EU observer status to leave open the possibility of granting similar rights to regional organisations which do not share the EU's level of integration, and to dismiss concerns about blurring the line between sovereign states and regional organisations (Blavoukos and Bourantonis 2017).

2.4. EU cohesion at the UN General Assembly

The Global Strategy explicitly states that enhanced cohesion at the UN is one of the goals of European foreign policy (EU 2016, 40). In Brussels, there are several working parties, preparatory parties for the Council of the EU, which are involved in developing the EU's policies at the UN. There is one specific United Nations Working Party (CONUN), but also several others that deal with issues relevant to the work at the UN, for example on Human Rights (COHOM), Public International Law (COJUR) or Global Disarmament and Arms Control (CODUN). For each session of the UN, the Council of the EU then develops a policy paper "EU priorities for the UNGA" (see 2.2) containing common positions and priorities for the EU at UNGA. These are the issues to which the EU members are expected to hold common positions at the UN (Galariotis and Gianniou 2017, 63 f).

Delegates from the EU member states in New York frequently hold meetings with each other to coordinate and try to find a common position, usually before each UNGA committee meeting. Before the Lisbon treaty, these meetings were chaired by the EU member state holding the Council presidency, now they are chaired by the EU delegation in New York. If the EU member states manage to find a common position on an issue, they do so in detail on all provisions contained in a draft resolution. If they cannot agree in detail, they try to find a common general position or a common explanation of their votes. The chance of success in finding a common position is largely influenced by the level of detail national delegations receive from their capitals and the degree of flexibility they are given. The more politically sensitive an issue is, the more detailed instructions will usually be, making an agreement on common EU positions more difficult, even if in some cases, dynamics of EU negotiations can be a reason for capitals to revise their instructions for their delegations (Panke 2017). When the EU manages to find a common position among its members, the EU delegation and the permanent missions of EU member states also work together on achieving what they agreed on,

negotiating with other countries or groups of countries and developing alliances. To that end, there is even a division of labour occurring between EU member states' diplomats, "with the goal to respond in an effective way to the large number of topics discussed every year at UNGA" (Galariotis and Gianniou 2017, 64). "Work division is organized by according to issue specialization, time availability and traditional alliances between states" (Galariotis and Gianniou 2017, 65).

Studies looking at EU voting behaviour have found that until the 1980s, voting cohesion among EU members had been low and declining, but has been increasing since then (Hosli et al. 2010). This general trend of increasing cohesion was neither slowed down by the accession of new member states nor accelerated following the adoption of the Treaty of Lisbon (Jin and Hosli 2013). Comparing EU voting cohesion with cohesion among other regional organizations, like the Arab league, ASEAN or the African Union, shows that across all votes in the General Assembly, the EU does not show higher, but instead even lower cohesion than other organizations. However, taking into account the general level of disagreement among all members in the General Assembly, the EU is the only regional organization that can maintain its high cohesion in contested votes (Burmester and Jankowski 2014).

Looking at specific issues, voting cohesion among EU members is constantly highest for resolutions regarding the Middle East. Voting cohesion on human rights, international security and decolonization varies, but recently has not been far behind the levels of voting cohesion on the Middle East either (Jin and Hosli 2013). Cohesion on economic matters and development also has been found to be very high. On disarmament, studies have found frequent defection of France and the UK (Galariotis and Gianniou 2017, 67 ff).

Despite the generally high levels of cohesion, defections by individual EU members from the EU mainstream do occur and have been studied by Burmester and Jankowski (2018). They identified membership in the UN Security Council as one strong predictor of defection. Both the United Kingdom and France show relatively high levels of defection, especially on decolonization and arms. Other factors affecting the probability of defection identified by Burmester and Jankowski (2018) are the years a country already is a member of the EU (the longer it is a member, the less likely it defects) and the government position towards EU integration (the more positive a government's view is towards EU integration, the less likely it defects). Finally, the position of the US government also plays a strong role in defection of

individual EU members. If the EU and US position align, defection becomes less likely. If the US position differs from the EU majority position, defection by individual EU members becomes more likely, especially when the vote is important to the US.

3. Europeanization

The cooperation and voting cohesion which EU member states exhibit at the UN can be analysed as a result of an increasing Europeanization of foreign policy. Europeanization can mean the creation of new EU institutions with increased competences (polity), but also the impact the EU has both on European and national foreign processes (politics) and on foreign policy preferences (policy). Applied to foreign policy, the concept of Europeanization is about the relationship between a common European foreign policy and national foreign policies. That means a focus on politics and policy, even though formal institutions play a role in shaping both (Alecú de Flers and Müller 2012, Tonra 2015).

Europeanization is a concept that has also been used widely in other policy areas to study how EU member states adapt to their membership in the EU and the governance structures and rules that come with it. As the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) is characterised by intergovernmental decision-making, and the EU institutions, unlike in many internal areas, do not have the competence to decide on rules by majority which are binding also for member states which do not approve of them, it was initially questioned whether Europeanization would also occur in the realm of foreign policy (Tonra 2015, Gross 2009). However, it is now widely accepted that despite the differences to internal policy areas, the concept of Europeanization can also be meaningfully applied to the study of foreign policy.

Europeanization is not seen as a one-way process in either direction between the EU and its member states. Rather, there are different dimensions of Europeanization. The dimension of uploading looks at how member states influence EU foreign policy. Member states bring their views and preferences to the European level and try to shape common EU positions and policy outcomes. The EU and other EU member states are used as support for a country's foreign policy. The dimension of downloading refers to how the national foreign policies and foreign policy institutions of EU member states are influenced by the common European foreign policy and by other member states (Wong 2007, Alecú de Flers and Müller 2012, Tonra 2015). A third

dimension, crossloading, referring to a reconstruction of identities and the emergence of common norms, can be seen both as the result of and contributing to the other two (Wong 2007).

On the dimension of downloading, or adaptation, outcomes that can occur as a result of Europeanization are “bureaucratic reorganization, constitutional change, elite socialization and shifts in public opinion [...], a more general change in policies, preferences and institutions, increased salience of the European agenda, and adherence to common policy objectives, policies agreed to for the sake of EU unity (high price of defection) and the relaxation of traditional policy positions” (Gross 2009, 17). When it comes to the behaviour at the UN (see chapter 2), bureaucratic reorganization and elite socialization play a role as EU diplomats frequently hold coordination meetings with each other and there is even a division of labour among EU member state missions to the UN to some extent. As it is an explicit goal of EU foreign policy is to speak with one voice at international organizations, agreeing to policies for the sake of EU unity and the relaxation of traditional policy positions can also be expected, just as the adherence to common policy objectives. On the other hand, shifts in public opinion and constitutional change are less likely to play a role for EU behaviour at the UN.

When it comes to uploading, or projection of national preferences to the European level, possible policy outcomes are “states taking advantage of the EU to promote specific national interests, states attempting to increase national influence in the world by participating in or initiating EU policies, and states using the EU as cover to influence foreign policies of other member states” (Gross 2009, 18). Results of Crossloading include the “emergence or existence of norms among policy-making elites, shared definitions of European and national interests, [...] shared or overlapping definitions of the state’s and Europe’s role in the world, and of Europe’s security parameters” (Gross 2009, 19). All of these outcomes could play a role for EU member states’ behaviour at the United Nations.

Overall, Europeanization comes with a “substantive engagement of engagement of national foreign policy identities within the construction of the collective European policy” (Thomas and Tonra 2012, 24). It becomes a priority of national foreign policy actors that there is a common effective and credible EU policy, and national foreign policy actors may even “begin to present a coherent and effective policy as being a national foreign policy objective in its own right” (Thomas and Tonra 2012, 24). Cohesion as a foreign policy objective in its own right is especially relevant when it comes to voting at a public international forum like the UN, as it

requires EU member states to take a clear stance and the degree of EU cohesion is directly visible for other international actors. One interview partner called it “embarrassing” when the EU does not manage to agree on a common position and said that in principle, all EU members support the goal of finding a common position (Interview, 28 May 2021).

Different mechanisms underlying this Europeanization have been identified. First, socialization refers to the process by which actors over time adopt common rules and norms as a result of belonging to a group, in this case EU institutions. This can happen strategically, meaning that member states take into account the European context when pursuing their own policies. However, it can also happen by an actual and genuine change in one’s own beliefs and preferences. National actors internalize community norms and practices. This socialization is more likely to occur when interactions on the EU level are frequent and intensive, when the issues are not politicised and when member states’ representatives are allowed discretion by their capitals (Alecú de Flers and Müller 2012). In line with this view of socialization, national diplomats working in CFSP and CSDP Council committees adopt supranational role conceptions in addition to their national roles, viewing it as their goal to strengthen the EU’s foreign policy in addition to that of their own government’s foreign policy. The supranational aspect of their role is stronger the longer they have been working in Brussels, and weaker if they come from a country with more negative public opinion towards European integration (Chelotti 2015). Another mechanism of Europeanization is learning, which happens on several levels. On an organizational level, it results in the adaptation of both European and national processes and institutions. Policy learning refers to the dissemination of information and building collective knowledge leading to convergence, which, like socialization, is more effective in less politicised area. Policy transfer is about member states learning from each other (Alecú de Flers and Müller 2012).

Socialization has been identified as a phenomenon contributing to voting cohesion in the UN General Assembly. As socialization is a process that does not happen instantly, this leads to voting cohesion increasing over time (Hosli et al. 2010). This could also be the reason why countries who have been a member of the EU for a longer period of time are more likely to vote with the other EU members and less likely to defect (Burmester and Jankowski 2018).

The environment which enables Europeanization and its different mechanisms is characterized by regular communication and consultation, confidentiality and a culture of consensus. Regular

communication and consultation was a norm from the onset of foreign policy cooperation in the EU/EC, as it became expected of member states to at least consult with their partners before adopting final positions so the others were not caught by surprise. Confidentiality of the discussions helps build trust among officials and can avoid politicization of issues or stances in the public, though it also runs contrary to other European norms like transparency and democratization. A culture of consensus is often associated with a policy of the least common denominator and blockades, but it can lead to states being more willing to engage in discussions on sensitive issues as they do not have to fear to be overruled, and lead to a culture of cooperation (Smith 2000, 615 f).

Europeanization would expect the High Representative of the Union to play a large role in EU foreign policy. He or she would have the goal of defining, directing and executing the EU's foreign policy goals. The High Representative would also be engaged with national foreign policy actors on specific issues, but also be more generally active to ensure the EU is seen as "a credible and effective foreign policy actor" (Thomas and Tonra 2012, 24).

Many of the studies on Europeanization are single case studies or comparative studies, focussing on the effects of EU membership on the foreign policy of a particular member state or a certain defined group of member states (Tonra 2015, 188). Europeanization can be an independent and a dependent variable, sometimes both in the same study (Fenko and Lovéc 2015). Methodologically, it is seen as important to distinguish the two. If Europeanization is used as an independent variable, it is seen as "the explanation (the cause) for national foreign-policy change" (Tonra 2015, 188). When Europeanization is used as a dependent variable, studies seek to determine the causes for an "increasing coordination of national foreign policies, possibly leading to the creation of a truly common EU foreign and security policy" (Tonra 2015, 188). In this thesis, Europeanization will serve as a dependent variable, with EU voting cohesion at the General Assembly seen as an aspect of Europeanization. The thesis is about identifying areas and issues in which Europeanization does or does not occur and when the EU manages to find a common position at the UN. While studies on EU voting cohesion at the General Assembly rarely explicitly reference Europeanization theory, behaviour at the UN General Assembly has already been part of some studies on Europeanization or de-Europeanization (see chapter 3.1 below for the concept of De-Europeanization). Possible De-Europeanization was analysed at the UN in the cases of Italy, finding no signs of De-Europeanization of Italy at the UN General Assembly as a result of the economic crisis

(Monteleone 2015), and Slovenia, where its abstention in the UN General Assembly vote on Palestinian observer state status due to economic interests was interpreted as a sign of de-Europeanization (Fenko and Lovéc 2015). For Ireland and Austria, two neutral states, Alecu de Flers (2012) studied their voting behaviour in the General Assembly as one aspect of the Europeanization of their foreign policies. She found that when Ireland was a member of the EU and Austria was not yet, Ireland's voting behaviour in the General Assembly was more aligned with the EC/EU majority when it came to matters of international security and disarmament than Austria. This changed in the early 1990s, the years preceding Austria's accession to the EU in 1995. From then onwards, Austria's voting distance from the EC/EU majority decreased considerably, almost becoming smaller than Ireland's distance (Alecu de Flers 2012, 104 ff).

3.1. Limits of Europeanization

Several studies have identified obstacles and limits to Europeanization. In some countries, there is a general resistance to a more far-reaching Europeanization of foreign policies. The United Kingdom, which has now left the EU, was seen as an example. The name High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy was in part chosen over that of an EU foreign minister in response to British concerns about Europeanization going too far (Hill and Wong 2011, 225).

Another obstacle to Europeanization is membership in other international organizations, which could influence foreign policies of member states instead of the EU, even though Europeanization also plays a role in these other organizations when it comes to coordinating the behaviour of EU members within them. Relevant international organizations include "the UN system, NATO, *L'Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie*, the Commonwealth, and the Nordic Council" (Hill and Wong 2011, 226). Studying the responses of three EU countries (France, United Kingdom and Germany) to (military) crises, Gross (2009) found that Europeanization and NATO alliance politics both played a role in the response to the crises, but to a different extent depending on the country and the situation. For example, EU foreign policy was important in the Afghanistan conflict when it came to the political and economic situation in the country, but military considerations were dominated by the US and NATO. NATO and US interests were even of great importance in the response to the crisis in FYROM, even though generally Europeanization played a larger role there as all three countries studied accepted a big role for the EU and a takeover from NATO resulted in the first EU CSDP military operation.

Gross concludes that “[i]ntegration mechanisms in the sense that existing EU institutions exert influence on national foreign policy that results in policy adaptation were not observed when it came to the application of military instruments under ESDP”, meaning “that the utility of the Europeanization framework is limited on account of the influence of the transatlantic alliance in national foreign policy” (Gross 2009, 157).

All member states have what is called *domaines réservés*, areas in which they are not willing to accept a common EU policy to have an influence on their own positions (Hill and Wong 2011, 214). The range of *domaines réservés* in which it is seen as legitimate that states decide purely according to their own national interests without consideration of the EU level has decreased over time as collective decision-making became the generally accepted rule, rather than the exception (Smith 2004, 748). Foreign policy subjects traditionally considered as *domaines réservés* include “unilateral problems, whether domestic (such as separatism) or foreign (Greece’s attitude toward Turkey); bilateral problems between EU member states (such as Northern Ireland; and certain military crises affecting one or more partners (such as Africa)”, (Smith 2000, 616). However, some of these subjects are now also discussed on the European level.

Among all policy areas, foreign and defence policy as a whole has long been seen as a *domaine réservé*. Within the domain of foreign policy, national security and defence policy have been identified as those where Europeanization is most likely to be limited (Hill and Wong 2011, 226). This is one of the takeaways of the study by Gross (2009) on military crises already discussed above. Also, EU officials have more influence in civilian missions than in military operations. They can act rather independently from member states when working on civilian missions, whereas there is close cooperation with individual member states or NATO when it comes to military missions (Dijkstra 2012). For Ireland and Austria, two neutral countries, the field of “security and defence policy has turned out to be a very sensitive area”, where different rhetoric and willingness to adapt their neutrality policy to the European context are observed at the domestic and the European level (Alecú de Flers 2012, 125). Security policy is an area which is “close to home”, and the national interests and positions play a larger role compared to other areas, and there is no ongoing effort to unify member states’ position on security policy at the UN in New York (Interview, 3 June 2021). On nuclear disarmament, it is generally known that very different positions exist within the EU and therefore, unlike with other areas of foreign

policy, there is no expectation towards the EU by member states or third actors that there is a common position (Interview, 28 May 2021).

Whereas limits to Europeanization concern areas in which Europeanization is less likely to occur in the first place, the concept of De-Europeanization refers to areas or countries where there is a reversal of Europeanization that has already taken place, highlighting that Europeanization cannot be taken for granted and is not irreversible (Alecú de Flers and Müller 2012, 23 f). This could happen as the result of a crisis (see Stavridis, Tsardanidis and Christou 2015) or when there is a country “positively attempting to rid itself of any perceived restraints imposed by European foreign policy” (Hill and Wong 2011, 211), maybe after EU-sceptic domestic actors come to power (Alecú de Flers and Müller 2012, 23 f).

4. Data

The voting behaviour of EU member states in the General Assembly is analysed with a dataset containing all recorded votes in the plenary from the 59th session (2004-2005) up to the most recent completed 74th session (2019-2020). The starting point was chosen because of the Eastern enlargement of 2004. At the beginning of the 59th session in September 2004, the Eastern enlargement had already taken place. Since then, EU membership has been relatively stable, even though there have been some changes in EU membership: Romania, Bulgaria and Croatia became members in 2007 and 2013 respectively, and the United Kingdom left the European Union. For the purpose of this thesis, Romania and Bulgaria, who became EU members on January 1 2007, are counted as EU members from the 62th session, which started in September of 2007. Croatia became an EU member on July 1 2013, and is counted as an EU member from the 68th session, which started in September that year. Even though the UK left the EU during the 74th session, the last session included in the dataset, when Brexit took effect on January 31 2020, it is still counted as an EU member for this session. As the UK is a significant member when it comes to voting cohesion (see 2.4), excluding it from the EU countries could be expected to have a large impact on general measures voting cohesion. However, as there are only few votes in the dataset that occurred after the UK had officially left the EU, I chose to count the UK as an EU member for the 74th session as well, despite the fact that it ceased to be one during this session.

The voting data was retrieved from the meeting records of the General Assembly. These include not only the statements made by countries in the plenary meetings of the General Assembly, but also the recorded votes and their results. Not only the votes on final resolutions, but also votes on amendments of resolutions, specific paragraphs of resolutions and procedural issues like the inclusion of agenda items are included in the dataset. However, resolutions and decisions adopted by consensus (without a vote) are not included in the analysis. Sometimes, member states indicate after a vote has been held that their vote choice did not reflect their voting intentions. These subsequent disclosures are mentioned separately in the meeting records, but are not reflected in the dataset collected for the thesis.

The dataset contains 1789 recorded votes in total. There are around 100 votes per session (but close to 200 in the most recent two sessions).

Votes are then coded for broad issue categories by looking at the agenda items under which a vote has been held. These agenda items are grouped into different headings at the General Assembly. This can be drawn from a UNGA document on the allocation of agenda items of the respective General Assembly session. There are eight issue categories:

- UN & Organizational, administrative and other matters
- Economy & Development (including development in Africa, a separate heading)
- Peace & Security
- Disarmament
- Human Rights
- Humanitarian Assistance
- Justice & International Law
- Drug Control, Crime Prevention and Terrorism

As an example, a vote on a resolution entitled “Status of internally displaced persons and refugees from Abkhazia, Georgia, and the Tskhinvali region/South Ossetia, Georgia” was held in the 95th plenary meeting of the 72nd Session of the General Assembly (UNGA 2018, A/72/PV.95, 6 f). The vote was held under agenda item 35, “Protracted conflicts in the GUAM area and their implications for international peace, security and development”. Agenda item 35 falls under the heading “Maintenance of international peace and security” according to the

allocation of agenda items of the 72nd Session of the General Assembly (UNGA A/72/252, 2), and was therefore coded accordingly.

The distribution of all votes across sessions and agenda items can be seen in the table below. More than 80 percent of the recorded votes fall under the three categories “peace and security”, “disarmament”, and “human rights”. Due to the low number of votes in the categories “humanitarian assistance”, “justice and international law”, and “drug control, crime prevention and terrorism”, these votes are not separately analysed and are therefore put in the general category of UN, administrative and other matters, for the purpose of this thesis.

Table 1 - Votes and Categories

Session	59	60	61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70	71	72	73	74	total
UN	4	4	8	7	5	4	6	6	6	3	4	4	11	5	18	12	107
Development	4	14	3	9	2	6	4	3	5	3	9	3	7	18	20	29	139
Security	23	23	25	25	24	25	26	22	25	24	22	24	25	27	42	24	406
Disarmament	28	40	46	33	44	35	40	46	43	48	k	43	63	56	90	95	798
Human Rights	30	24	24	22	23	19	17	0	14	15	17	20	17	26	12	17	297
Humanitarian	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	6	4	15
Intl Law	2	1	1	1	2	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	2	2	2	1	18
Crime	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
total	92	106	108	97	100	90	94	77	94	93	100	95	127	135	191	183	1782 ¹

In addition to these categories obtained from the allocation of agenda items, an additional variable is created on whether a vote was about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, as this has been identified as an important category with high levels of cohesion in previous studies (see chapter 2.4) and it is not captured by the headings from the allocation of agenda items. This variable was ascribed to votes that were held under an agenda item whose name includes a reference to “Palestine” or “Middle East” in its name, excluding those on nuclear disarmament and a nuclear weapons free zone in the Middle East. Not all votes related to the conflict are captured by this categorization, as there are sometimes sub-items on the conflict under items not coded as “Middle East”, for example “Assistance to the Palestinian People”, under an item on humanitarian assistance in general, or resolutions on human rights of Palestinians discussed under a general human rights agenda item. The agenda items which are coded as being related to the Middle East mostly fall under the “Peace and Security” of the eight categories above,

¹ There are 7 votes for which coding for an agenda item / issue category is not possible.

except for the agenda item on the peace missions in the Middle East, which falls under the category “UN, organizational, administrative and other matters”. In total, there are 295 votes coded as being related to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The agenda items which fall under the Middle East category are no longer included in any of the others so there is no overlap between the categories.

5. Analysis

There are different ways in which voting cohesion in the General Assembly has been measured and calculated. This different approaches make direct comparisons between different studies on the issue difficult. In this thesis, I analyse both the overall voting cohesion of EU members as a group and the defection of individual member countries from the EU majority.

One issue concerns how to code the different options when voting. States can vote *yes*, *no* or *abstain* when voting in the General Assembly. They can also be *absent*. Abstaining votes and absences are treated differently in the literature (see Hosli et al 2010, 16). One approach is to treat abstentions like no votes, as the relevant legal requirement for a resolution to pass is the number of yes votes. Others treat abstentions, yes and no votes as three completely separate choices or assign a value between that of yes and no to abstentions. Absences are sometimes treated like abstentions, sometimes not taken into account for calculations. Both in studying EU cohesion and in studying defection, I will use approaches in which abstentions, yes and no votes are counted as three completely separate votes. Whenever a country is absent, it is not included in the analysis of the vote.

5.1. EU cohesion

To calculate the overall voting cohesion among EU members, I use the Agreement Index developed by Hix, Noury and Roland (2005) for cohesion in the European Parliament, but also used to analyse voting cohesion in the General Assembly (Ferdinand 2014). This Agreement Index can be calculated for each vote using the following formula:

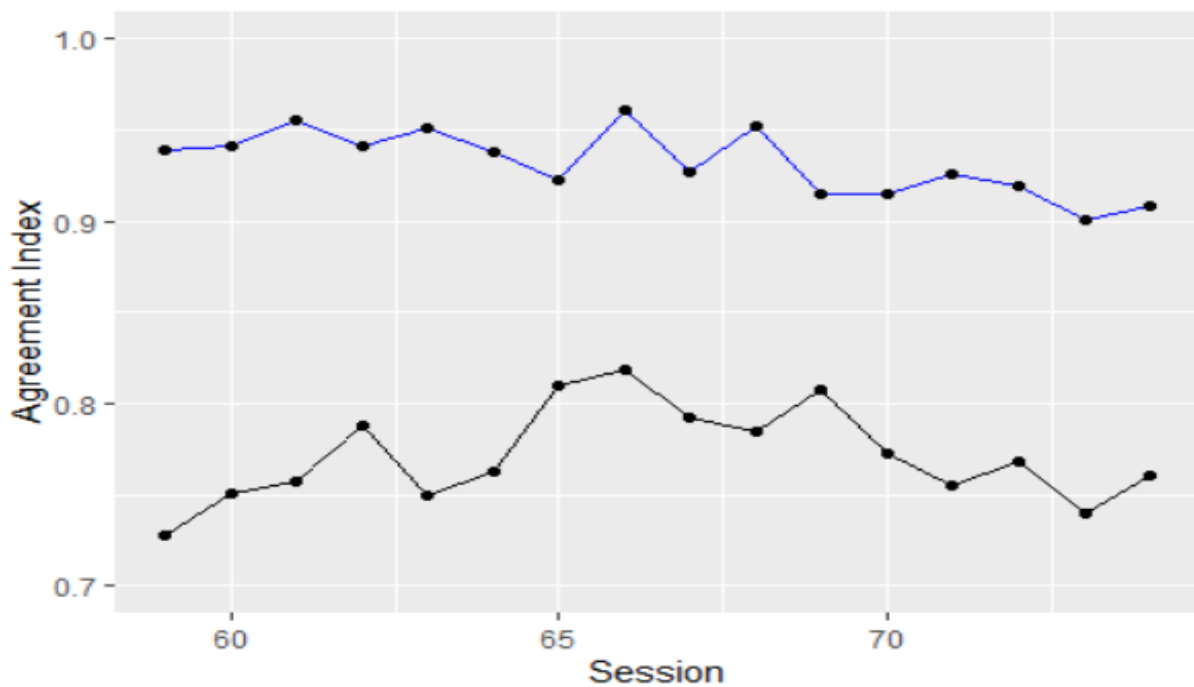
$$AI = [\max \{Y, N, A\} - 0.5 * (Y + N + A - \max \{Y, N, A\})] / (Y + N + A)$$

A, Y, and N are the number of abstentions, yes and no votes respectively, and $\max \{Y, N, A\}$ is the number of the voting option that was most often chosen by the members of the group in

that vote. The Agreement Index takes a value between 0 and 1, with one meaning that all members voted the same way and 0 meaning that the votes were equally divided between all three options. All votes divided between two of the options (for example 14 yes votes and 14 abstentions), would result in an Agreement Index of 0.25.

The agreement index is calculated to assess within EU agreement for each vote in the dataset and will be used as a dependent variable. With the same formula, an agreement index can also be calculated for the rest of the members of the General Assembly, which will be used as a control variable.

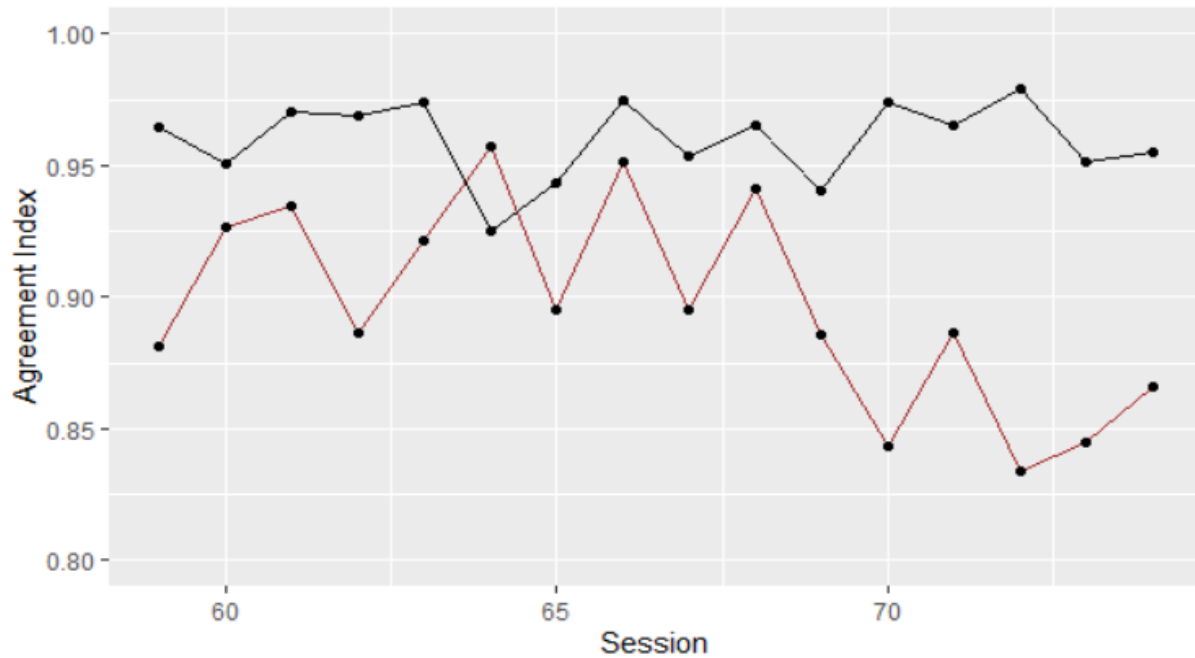
Figure 1 – Agreement index EU and rest of UNGA



The graph below shows the average Agreement Index among EU members (in blue) and among the rest of the General Assembly (in black) in each of the sessions in the observation period. EU cohesion is generally on a higher level, but a decline in EU voting cohesion can be observed from the 69th session, with the last two sessions being the ones with the lowest average Agreement Index. Among the rest of the General Assembly members, cohesion first increased and then decreased around the same time as EU cohesion did.

When looking at the categories in which the decline in EU cohesion occurs, it can be observed that the decline in voting cohesion is due to the votes in the disarmament category (in brown), with no significant decline in the other votes (in black).

Figure 2 - Agreement Index EU disarmament and other categories



To analyse this in more detail, a linear regression is run using R, with votes as observations and the agreement index of EU members as the dependent variable. To analyse the decline in voting cohesion among EU members, a dummy variable is created, taking the value 1 for sessions 69 to 74, where this decline can be observed, and the value 0 for the sessions before that. Based on the existing literature on EU voting cohesion (see chapter 2.4), control variables are added in the models. These are a variable indicating whether the US vote differed from the EU majority², the agreement index among the non-EU members of the General Assembly, and dummy variables on the issues of the vote. The categories disarmament, security, human rights and development are taken from the headings of agenda items. In addition, the variable on the Middle East coded as described above is included. Votes which fall under the Middle East category are excluded from the Peace and Security variable.

² It takes the value 1 if the US position differed from the EU majority position, and the value 0 if the US position aligned with that of the EU, or if the EU did not have an absolute majority position or the US was absent from the vote.

The table below shows the regression results with robust standard errors. As a reference for the interpretation of the size of the coefficients, a value of -0.054 would roughly mean one additional country defecting from the majority vote (with all 28 EU members voting).

Table 2 - Linear Regression results

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
(Intercept)	0.96 *** (0.01)	0.96 *** (0.02)	0.93 *** (0.02)	0.92 *** (0.02)	0.93 *** (0.02)	0.94 *** (0.01)
Session 69-74	-0.03 *** (0.01)	-0.03 *** (0.01)	-0.03 *** (0.01)	0.00 (0.01)	-0.02 (0.03)	-0.01 (0.01)
United States	-0.01 (0.01)		-0.05 *** (0.01)	-0.05 *** (0.01)	-0.05 *** (0.01)	-0.05 *** (0.01)
AI among rest of UNGA	-0.01 (0.01)		0.07 *** (0.02)	0.07 *** (0.02)	0.07 *** (0.02)	0.07 *** (0.02)
Disarmament		-0.06 *** (0.02)	-0.07 *** (0.02)	-0.03 (0.02)	-0.05 * (0.02)	-0.05 *** (0.01)
Security		-0.03 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.02 (0.02)	-0.06 * (0.02)	-0.06 *** (0.02)
Middle East		0.03 (0.02)	0.05 ** (0.02)	0.06 *** (0.02)	0.04 * (0.02)	0.04 *** (0.01)
Human Rights		0.01 (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)	
Development		0.01 (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.03)	
Disarmament x Session 69-74				-0.07 *** (0.01)	-0.04 (0.03)	-0.06 *** (0.02)
Security x Session 69-74					0.07 * (0.03)	0.05 ** (0.02)
Middle East x Session 69-74					0.02 (0.03)	
Human Rights x Session 69-74					0.01 (0.03)	
Development x Session 69-74					0.05 (0.04)	
N	1789	1782	1782	1782	1782	1782
R2	0.01	0.06	0.08	0.09	0.10	0.10

Standard errors are heteroskedasticity robust. *** p < 0.001; ** p < 0.01; * p < 0.05.

It can be seen that EU cohesion is significantly lower from session 69 onwards than before that (models 1 to 3). However, interacting this time variable with the different issue categories (models 4-6) shows that this decline in EU cohesion is uniquely due to votes on disarmament, the only interaction term with a negative coefficient. The overall effect disappears, while the

decline is relatively strong in votes on disarmament. For votes on peace and security, the EU even became more unified, while there is no significant change in the effect of other categories. In disarmament votes, the EU was already less cohesive than in other categories before the 69th session, but this effect roughly doubled after that. For security votes, cohesion was lower than average, similar to disarmament, before the 69th session, but the EU then experienced a significant increase in cohesion afterwards. EU cohesion was higher for votes on the Middle East, consistent with observations from the literature (see chapter 2.4), while there was no significant effect for the remaining categories development and human rights. Interestingly, the control variables of the US alignment with the EU position and the agreement index among the rest of the General Assembly members are only significant when the issue categories are also included (model 1 versus model 3-6). They consistently show that EU is less cohesive when the US vote differs from that of the EU majority. The agreement index among the rest of the General Assembly members is significant as well, but the size of the effect has to be interpreted cautiously. The EU agreement index is on average higher by 0.07 points when the agreement index among the rest of the General Assembly members is higher by one point, which is the entire range of the Agreement Index, which can only have values between 0 and 1.

When the regression is run with only the votes on final resolutions (around 1000 votes), omitting procedural votes and votes on specific preambular or operative paragraphs, the main picture of a decline in voting cohesion in sessions 69 to 74, due to votes on disarmament remains the same. The estimates of the effects of the US and Agreement Index of non-EU UNGA members are smaller and less significant. For model 6, the effect of the disarmament variable in sessions 69 to 74 is higher (- 0.09) and is still highly significant, the one for security votes in sessions 69 to 74 becomes insignificant. R² is a bit higher with 0.13.

5.2. Defection

Like with voting cohesion, there are different approaches to analyse the vote choices of individual group members in the context of voting cohesion.

In the approach used by Luif (2003), a value of disagreement is assigned for each vote between a pair of two countries. This value is 1 if they are in full disagreement (one votes yes, the other no), 0 if they vote the same way, and 0.5 if they are in partial disagreement (one votes yes or

no, the other abstains. Absences are treated like abstentions. The values are then added and divided by the number of votes.

To calculate the distance from the EU majority, Luif (2003) follows the same approach discussed above but calculates the agreement between the country and the EU majority position. Only votes where there is an absolute majority among EU member states are included.

Another approach (following Burmester and Jankowski 2018) is to look at the likelihood of defection from the EU majority. Defection is defined as a vote which does not follow the EU majority³, with abstain, yes and no treated as three completely different options. Here, there is no partial disagreement. For example, if the majority vote is yes, an abstention and a no vote equally count as a defection. Absences are excluded from the analysis. The table below shows the rates of defection of all EU members across all votes in which it took part as an EU member⁴.

Table 3 - Rates of Defection

Country	Total Votes	Defections	Rate of defection	Country	Total Votes	Defections	Rate of defection
Austria	1763	133	7.5 %	Italy	1752	48	2.7 %
Belgium	1755	39	2.2 %	Latvia	1750	40	2.3 %
Bulgaria	1439	28	1.9 %	Lithuania	1764	33	1.9 %
Croatia	907	11	1.2 %	Luxembourg	1757	24	1.4 %
Cyprus	1760	178	10.1 %	Malta	1754	158	9.0 %
Czech.Republic	1759	40	2.3 %	Netherlands	1758	45	2.6 %
Denmark	1761	16	0.9 %	Poland	1758	42	2.4 %
Estonia	1760	32	1.8 %	Portugal	1753	47	2.7 %
Finland	1764	85	4.8 %	Romania	1458	48	3.3 %
France	1758	247	14.1 %	Slovakia	1757	17	1.0 %
Germany	1758	40	2.3 %	Slovenia	1760	26	1.5 %
Greece	1760	57	3.2 %	Spain	1759	45	2.6 %
Hungary	1757	54	3.1 %	Sweden	1763	118	6.7 %
Ireland	1747	142	8.1 %	UK	1758	258	14.7 %
total	47749	2051	4.3 %				

³ When the term defection is used in this thesis, it is not taken into account whether the vote choice is actually the defection from a previously agreed EU position, or whether it is just a vote choice different from that of the majority of EU members. It can be expected that the latter is more often the case.

⁴ Only votes where there was an absolute EU majority are taken into account.

In total, there were 2051 cases of defection among 47749 votes, which means a rate of defection of 4.3 percent. The rate of defection was lowest for Denmark, which defected from the EU majority in less than one percent of its votes, and highest for France and the UK, with a rate of defection of close to 15 percent defection each. Other countries with higher than average rates of defection are Austria, Cyprus, Malta, Finland, Ireland and Sweden.

The advantage of looking at cases of defection instead of aggregated values of agreement between countries or a bloc of countries is that the effect of other variables on the likelihood of defection can be analysed using logistic regression (see Burmester and Jankowski 2018), which is why this approach is used in this thesis.

The dependent variable in the regression is a dummy variable, taking the value 1 if a country defected from the EU majority. Votes where there was no absolute majority among the EU members are therefore excluded from this analysis. One observation is now not a vote in the General Assembly, but rather a vote choice made by one country. The independent variables used in the linear regression above are used here as well, with one additional variable indicating whether a country is a permanent member of the Security Council, whether it is not a member of NATO,⁵ or whether it is neither of the two. As can be seen in the table above, these three groups of countries are each distinct in their voting behaviour, with the permanent members of the Security Council having the largest rates of defection with over three times the average, the non-NATO states also having higher than average rates of defection, and the others all having lower than average rates of defection.

A mixed-effects logistic regression is run, with the 28 countries as random variables. The model used is a generalized linear mixed-effects model, using the lme4 package in R (Bates et al 2020). The results are presented in the table below.

⁵ These are the United Kingdom and France, and Austria, Ireland, Malta, Cyprus, Finland and Sweden respectively.

Table 4 - Logistic Regression Results

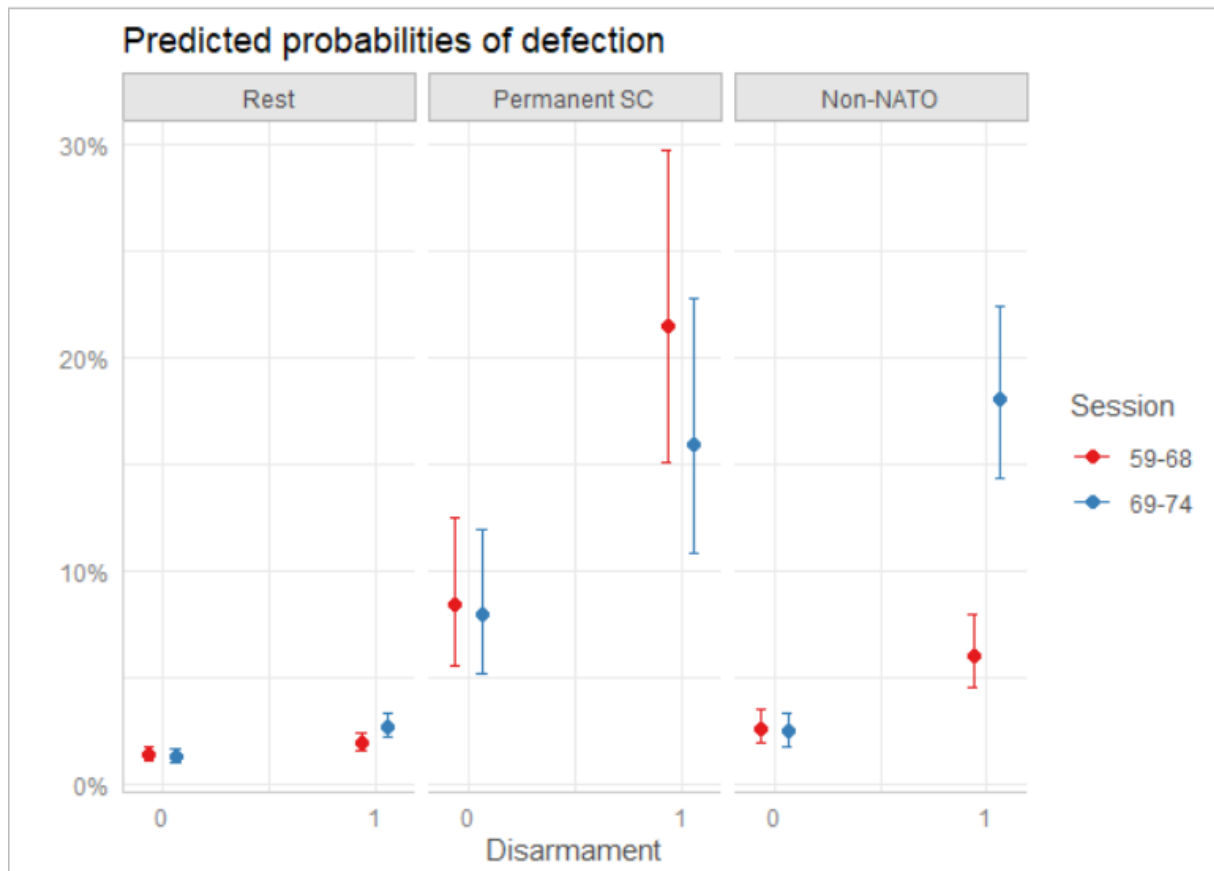
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
(Intercept)	-4.34 *** (0.12)	-4.03 *** (0.16)	-3.77 *** (0.17)	-3.92 *** (0.16)	-3.46 *** (0.17)
Session 69-74	0.41 *** (0.05)	0.34 *** (0.05)	0.02 (0.10)	0.14 (0.08)	0.02 (0.13)
United States	0.53 *** (0.05)	1.02 *** (0.05)	1.04 *** (0.05)	1.03 *** (0.05)	1.05 *** (0.05)
AI among rest of UNGA	-0.07 (0.12)	-1.46 *** (0.14)	-1.55 *** (0.14)	-1.47 *** (0.14)	-1.56 *** (0.14)
Permanent SC member	2.08 *** (0.21)	2.15 *** (0.21)	2.15 *** (0.21)	2.33 *** (0.22)	1.90 *** (0.24)
Non-NATO	1.36 *** (0.14)	1.39 *** (0.14)	1.39 *** (0.14)	0.96 *** (0.14)	0.66 *** (0.18)
Disarmament		1.08 *** (0.12)	0.72 *** (0.14)	1.08 *** (0.12)	0.34 * (0.16)
Security		0.60 *** (0.14)	0.87 *** (0.16)	0.60 *** (0.14)	0.86 *** (0.16)
Middle East		-1.27 *** (0.16)	-1.35 *** (0.16)	-1.28 *** (0.16)	-1.35 *** (0.16)
Human Rights		-0.21 (0.14)	-0.31 * (0.14)	-0.21 (0.14)	-0.31 * (0.14)
Development		-0.12 (0.15)	-0.12 (0.15)	-0.12 (0.15)	-0.12 (0.15)
Disarmament x Session 69-74			0.60 *** (0.11)		0.39 * (0.16)
Security x Session 69-74			-0.76 *** (0.18)		-0.75 *** (0.18)
Perm. SC x Session 69-74				- 0.40 ** (0.13)	-0.02 (0.20)
Non-NATO x Session 69-74				0.73 *** (0.11)	-0.02 (0.19)
Disarmament x Perm. SC					0.75 *** (0.17)
Disarmament x Non-NATO					0.54 ** (0.17)
Disarmament x Perm. SC x Session 69-74					-0.70 ** (0.26)
Disarmament x Non- NATO x Session 69-74					0.90 *** (0.24)
N	47749	47749	47749	47749	47749
N (member)	28	28	28	28	28
AIC	15456.80	14602.31	14522.08	14514.96	14330.76
BIC	15518.22	14707.60	14644.91	14637.80	14506.23
R2 (fixed)	0.16	0.27	0.27	0.26	0.24
R2 (total)	0.17	0.28	0.29	0.28	0.26

Models 1 to 2 show the same picture on a country level that could be drawn from the linear models on cohesion among the EU members: From the 69th session of the General Assembly onwards, member states were more likely to defect from the EU majority (models 1 and 2). This overall effect largely disappears once it is interacted with the issue variables (model 3): Defection becomes more likely from the 69th session onwards for votes on disarmament, while it gets less likely for votes on peace and security and stays constant for the rest. A US position different from that of the EU majority position increases the likelihood of defection, while higher cohesion among the other UN members decreased the likelihood of defection from the EU majority. Non-NATO members, and even more so the permanent Security Council members, were significantly more likely to defect than the rest.

Looking at the country level, it can be identified which were the countries that became more likely to defect over time. Model 4 shows the permanent Security Council members became less likely to defect in sessions 69 to 74, while the opposite is true for non-NATO members. In model 5, the time variable, the Security Council and non-NATO variables and the disarmament variable are interacted with each other. This shows that it is largely the EU countries which are not a member of NATO which became significantly more likely to defect in disarmament votes, while the two UN Security Council members even became less likely to defect from the 69th session onwards. The remaining members also became a bit more likely to defect on disarmament votes, but to a lesser extent than the non-NATO members.

The combined effects are also presented in the graph below. It shows the predicted probability of defection for countries, based on the logistic model 5 of the table above and with 95 % confidence intervals. Predicted probabilities are calculated using the `ggeffects` package in R (Lüdtke 2021). The middle column shows the probabilities for Security Council members and nuclear states France and United Kingdom, the right column the probabilities for non-NATO EU members, and the left column probabilities for the rest of the EU members. Probabilities are given respectively for non-disarmament votes on the left and for disarmament votes on the right in each column, and for the sessions 59 to 68 in red and the sessions 69 to 74 in blue.

Figure 3 - Predicted Probabilities of Defection



Overall, the predicted probability of defection is quite low, consistent with the high voting cohesion among the EU members. For NATO members with the exception of UK and France, the predicted probability of defection is well below 5 percent, as has been shown in Table 3. On votes which are not on disarmament, the probability of defection is a little higher but still below five percent for non-NATO members and highest for the UN Security Council members. For all groups of countries, there is no significant change over time for the totality of votes not related to disarmament.

On disarmament votes, the probability of defection is quite high for UN Security Council members but decreases for sessions 69 to 74. Non-NATO EU members were more likely to defect on disarmament votes than on other votes before session 69, but their probability of defection on disarmament votes roughly tripled in the sessions after that.

It can therefore be concluded that the decline in EU voting cohesion observed in sessions 69 to 74 is due to an increase in defections from the EU majority by non-NATO EU members on votes concerning disarmament, while the Security Council members became somewhat less

likely to defect on disarmament votes and defection became less likely for security votes overall. The following sections are about possible reasons for this development.

6. EU, NATO and nuclear weapons

Given the finding that the drop in EU cohesion is driven by non-NATO members being more likely to defect from the EU majority on disarmament matters, this chapter will give context on the relationship and the overlap in membership between the EU and NATO and the role of nuclear weapons in Europe and for NATO.

6.1. The EU and NATO

Among the 28 states that are or were part of the EU, 22 are also members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. NATO was created in the beginning cold war in 1949 and thus predates the EU and its predecessors. All of the signatories of the Treaty of Rome establishing the European Economic Community of 1957 were members of NATO at the time (France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Italy were founding members of NATO and West Germany had acceded in 1955). In 1973, Ireland became the first member of the EC which today still is not a member of NATO. The others are Austria, Sweden, Finland, Cyprus and Malta. For many Central and Eastern European states after the end of the cold war, accession to NATO preceded their membership to the European Union. The Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland became NATO members in 1999, and the Baltic states, Slovakia and Slovenia joined NATO in March 2004, shortly before their accession to the EU in May and along with Bulgaria and Romania, who joined the EU later in 2007. Croatia also joined NATO in 2009 a few years before it became an EU member in 2013. Today, EU members jointly make up more than two thirds of NATO's 30 members.

NATO is a military alliance. The key provision of its treaty is article 5, in which its parties agree that “an armed attack against one or more of them in Europe or North America shall be considered an attack against them all” (North Atlantic Treaty 1949) and agree that they will mutually assist each other as deemed necessary. A similar defence clause is also contained in the Treaty of the European Union, which is framed in even stronger terms: “If a Member State is the victim of armed aggression on its territory, the other Member States shall have towards it an obligation of aid and assistance by all the means in their power, in accordance with Article

51 of the United Nations Charter” (Art 42 par 7 TEU). The provision contains two further sentences, aimed at neutral EU member states and those part of NATO respectively. First, it is stated that the obligation of aid and assistance by all means “shall not prejudice the specific character of the security and defence policy of certain Member States.” This so-called *Irish clause* was included as a concession to the neutral EU member states after they had unsuccessfully tried to change the wording of art 42 par 7 to make military assistance non-binding. However, the legal effect of the Irish clause remains unclear, with neutral states claiming that it protects their neutrality and legal scholars arguing that it does not limit the clear obligation of “assistance by all means”, which is incompatible with at least some aspects of neutrality (Devine 2011, 352 ff).

The second sub-paragraph of article 42 paragraph 7 further contains an explicit reference to NATO: “Commitments and cooperation in this area shall be consistent with commitments under the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation, which, for those States which are members of it, remains the foundation of their collective defence and the forum for its implementation.” As can be seen from these provisions, both neutrality of certain member states as well as the role of NATO are acknowledged in primary law of the European Union.

6.2. Nuclear weapons in Europe

The United Kingdom and France are the only nuclear weapons states in Europe. They are, along with the other permanent members of the Security Council, among the five recognised nuclear-weapons-states according to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons of 1968 (NPT). The NPT differentiates between non-nuclear weapon states and nuclear weapon states. The former commit themselves not to acquire nuclear weapons (art. II), while the latter commit themselves not to transfer their weapons to non-nuclear weapon states (art. I). The treaty also contains the (not very specific) commitment to “pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control” (art. VI).

France conducted its first nuclear weapons tests in the 1960s. Nuclear weapons have since played an important role in France’s security policy, being seen as a way to contribute to France’s security through deterrence and to ensure France’s independence in its international

relations and security policy as it would not fully depend on nuclear security guarantees from the United States. There has not been an antinuclear movement or considerable political domestic opposition in France (Tertrais 2007). The United Kingdom started its nuclear weapons program in 1940 in the context of the Second World war and conducted its first tests in the 1952, a decade before France did so. As with France, security through deterrence was the main argument for UK's nuclear programme, but the UK also cooperated closely with the US and independence from the US was less of an issue than it was for France (Simpson 2004). Between the two European nuclear powers, UK and France, cooperation on nuclear related matters has not gone beyond declarations and cooperation taking place within NATO (Von Hlatky and Fortmann 2011, 90). France and the UK possess between 200 and 300 nuclear warheads each, which is only a fraction of the arsenal of the United States and Russia (around 6000 each) (SIPRI 2020, 326).

Even though the United Kingdom and France are the only states in Europe which possess nuclear weapons of their own, other EU member states cooperate with the United States on nuclear security through NATO, including the stationing of US nuclear weapons on their territory. This cooperation developed within NATO in the context of the Cold War (Frühling and O'Neil 2017). NATO describes itself as a nuclear alliance and sees nuclear weapons (especially those of the United States) as an important element of its deterrence and defence capabilities and as a security guarantee of the alliance (Andreasen, Williams and Rose 2018). There is a Nuclear Planning Group (NPG) and a High Level Group (HLG) in which the US consults with its allies on nuclear policy. France is the only NATO member which does not participate in these two groups, but nuclear policy is also discussed in the North Atlantic Council, the principal decision-making organ of NATO (Lunn 2018a, 41).

There are US nuclear weapons stored at an air base in Italy (also at an air base in Turkey) to be used by their own aircraft (Kristensen 2015), as well as 10-20 US nuclear weapons each at air bases in Belgium, Germany, Italy and the Netherlands for use of those countries' aircraft (Kristensen 2015, Kristensen 2018). It is the US president who has the power to authorize the use of US nuclear weapons, including those shared with a NATO ally. However, if an aircraft of another NATO member is to be used, the consent of this country would also be necessary, and it could be expected that all NATO members would be consulted in the decision-making process (Lunn 2018a, 41).

The future of the nuclear weapon sharing agreements between the US and NATO allies is unclear, as modernization in the US nuclear weapons arsenal also requires costly modification in the air forces of the host countries. It is not determined who will pay for these costs and the nuclear sharing arrangements are not popular among the general public in the host countries, which is why governments try to avoid public debate around it (Kristensen 2018, 35). The number of US nuclear weapons deployed in Europe decreased significantly after the end of the cold war. Even though deterrence of Russia still is an explicit goal of NATO nuclear strategy, the stationing of US nuclear weapons in Europe is now largely due to political and not operational factors, with nuclear sharing arrangements serving as a “visible symbol of the U.S. commitment to NATO” (Lunn 2018b). The arrangements are also a way to increase alliance cohesion and participation in nuclear sharing arrangements can be seen by host countries as a way to increase their bargaining power and influence on US nuclear policy (Frühling and O’Neil 2017).

7. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

Even though the European Union tries to be a significant actor in disarmament matters, this is made difficult especially in nuclear disarmament by the fact that EU members have very different positions and interests, from the nuclear weapon states France and (formerly) UK to some states very actively advocating for nuclear disarmament like Ireland and Austria. As a result of these different interests, common language that EU members can agree on often remains ambiguous on sensitive issues. On nuclear disarmament, the EU emphasises the importance and centrality of the NPT (Dee 2017). Examples of nuclear security issues where the EU can find a common position are non-proliferation or the JCPOA with Iran (Interview, 3 June 2021).

As will be shown in this chapter, an additional legal instrument was recently added to the international disarmament structure with the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons 2017 (TPNW). This presents a new salient issue on which the EU’s internal divisions on nuclear disarmament, primarily between NATO and non-NATO EU members, clearly manifest themselves, and a common position seems highly unlikely. This cleavage between NATO and non-NATO EU members is not new, but was exposed by the issue of the TPNW (Interview, 3 June 2021). The issue of the TPNW is given as the explanation for the decline in voting cohesion on disarmament matters. The process leading up to it and the positions of the EU

members are laid out in this chapter. The fact that many resolutions in the General Assembly are passed and voted on a yearly basis is used to study how the issue of the TPNW could disrupt EU cohesion not only on the TPNW itself, but also on related resolutions linked to it in which a higher level of agreement among EU members had previously existed.

7.1. The Humanitarian Initiative

From March 2013 to December 2014, coinciding with the beginning of the 69th session, where the decline in EU voting cohesion on disarmament matters can be observed, a series of three international conferences took place in Norway, Mexico and Austria. They were on the topic of the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons and included states, researchers, civil society organisation, UN agencies, and victims of nuclear weapons tests or use.

Norway, host of the first conference and a NATO state, was keen on keeping the event a fact-based exchange without direct binding political outcomes, but in the second and third conference in Mexico and Austria, political momentum grew towards creating a new legal instrument banning nuclear weapons. This development was supported by the hosts of the conferences, the governments of Mexico and Austria, and the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN), a global coalition of civil society organisations which had advocated for a nuclear ban since 2013 (Gibbons 2018). The conference in Vienna resulted in the “Austrian-sponsored Humanitarian Pledge, in which 127 states pledged to seek a clear and explicit legal prohibition of nuclear weapons.” (Hanson 2018, 476). The Austrian government had previously tried to include the nuclear weapon states in the process by assuring them that such a specific political outcome would not be the aim of the process. The third and last conference was the only in which two of the official (NPT) nuclear weapon states, the US and the UK, participated (Potter 2017). The United States delivered a statement at the conference explaining their opposition to a new legal instrument banning nuclear weapons. By mistake, this statement was delivered immediately after US and UK nuclear weapons testing program victims had recounted their experience, instead of during the general debate. “The unfortunately timed delivery of the prepared US statement, along with the Austrian government’s pledge to fill the ‘legal gap’ on nuclear weapons at the end of the conference, reinforced the view of those in the US government who felt the United States should not have participated” (Gibbons 2018, 23). Within the EU, France was the country most opposed to the conferences, and did not take

part. As a result, EU Council language on the matter only noted that the conference in Austria had taken place, and that not all EU members had participated (Dell 2017, 176 f).

The three conferences were meetings that arose from the Humanitarian Initiative, a large group of states focussing on the humanitarian impact which evolved in the context of the NPT framework. This group and the conferences are credited for fundamentally changing the discourse on nuclear weapons. Where before the focus was on inter-State security, for example on the theory of nuclear deterrence lowering the likelihood for armed conflict, now the unacceptable humanitarian impact of the use and development of nuclear weapons was made the centre of debate (Minor 2015).

After further negotiations on the issue did not succeed in the NPT framework, the Humanitarian Initiative took its efforts to the General Assembly. Unlike in the NPT framework, this opened the possibility for a forum in which consensus was not necessary (Potter 2017, 87 f). In December 2015 (70th Session), the General Assembly passed resolution “Taking Forward Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament Negotiations” (UNGA 2015, A/RES/70/33) by which it established an “open-ended working group to substantively address concrete effective legal measures, legal provisions and norms that will need to be concluded to attain and maintain a world without nuclear weapons” (par 2). EU member states were fairly divided on the issue. A majority of 16 abstained, four neutral states voted in favour and eight voted against the resolution, all of them NATO members, including France and the UK.

The UK and France did not participate in the meetings of this working group. The countries under the US nuclear umbrella which did participate in the meeting tried to steer the outcome away from an outright ban of nuclear weapons towards a “step-by-step” approach to disarmament. They did so without success. Instead, the final report of the working group “noted that a majority of participants sought to begin negotiations on a treaty prohibiting nuclear weapons in 2017” (Gibbons 2018, 26).

In December 2016, a year after the vote on resolution 70/33 another resolution titled “Taking Forward Multilateral Nuclear Disarmament Negotiations” (UNGA 2016, A/RES/71/258) was passed in the General Assembly. In this resolution, the report of the working group was welcomed (par 2), and it was decided that a UN conference should be taking place from 27 to 31 March and from 15 June to 7 July 2017 to “negotiate a legally binding instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading towards their total elimination” (par 8 and 10). Before the vote, the

US and France had lobbied against it, and the United States sent a non-paper to NATO members in which it expressed its view that a nuclear weapon ban treaty would be inconsistent with NATO obligations (Gibbons 2018, 26). In the paper, the US also listed negative security consequences of a potential ban of nuclear weapons. NATO members were therefore explicitly asked to vote against the resolution instead of merely abstaining, and they were also called on not to participate in the negotiations that would result from the resolution (Potters 2017, 94). The effort could not prevent the resolution from being passed, but most EU NATO members did vote against it. Compared with the previous resolution 70/33 (when most EU members had abstained), the EU was still divided in its voting behaviour. This time, however, a majority of 19 voted against the resolution, two abstained (Finland and the Netherlands), and seven voted in favour, including the remaining non-NATO states and Italy and Estonia. However, Italy and Estonia later informed the Secretariat that they had intended to vote against the resolution as well, meaning that by that point, a majority composed of the NATO states (except for the Netherlands) had formed within the EU which rejected further efforts towards a nuclear ban. In turn, the non-NATO states (except for Finland) supported the negotiations.

7.2. The adoption of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons

This division between NATO and non-NATO EU member states that had formed in the previous meetings continued throughout the actual negotiations on the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), which took place in 2017 in accordance with resolution 71/258. All NATO members except for the Netherlands chose not to even attend the negotiations. The government of the Netherlands only participated in the negotiations because it had been ordered to do so by its parliament. Of the non-NATO EU members, only Finland did not take part in the negotiations.

The negotiations were concluded successfully and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons was adopted on July 7 2017, with the Netherlands being the only country that had participated in the negotiations but then voted against the treaty (Gibbons 2018, 27). The treaty not only prohibits the (threatened) use of nuclear weapons, but also their development, testing, production, stockpiling, transfer or stationing on the territory of the States Parties, as well as assisting, encouraging or inducing other states in any of the prohibited activities (TPNW, art 1). This means that the ban would not only affect the nuclear states themselves, but also their allies. As described in chapter 6.2, many EU members are part of NATO, a self-described

nuclear alliance. For all of them, the nuclear weapons possessed by the US can be seen part of their security strategy, and some even have nuclear weapons stationed on their territory that would be used by their own aircraft. All NATO members, even those that are not nuclear states, therefore engage in activities that would probably be prohibited under the TPNW, either because they are nuclear weapon states or have nuclear weapons stationed on their territory or because they collaborate with their NATO allies on nuclear security, thereby assisting, encouraging or inducing activities prohibited under the TPNW. The clear opposition of the NATO states towards the TPNW therefore does not come as a surprise and is probably unlikely to change considerably.

7.3. After the adoption of the Nuclear Ban

After its adoption, the treaty was opened for signature and ratification by the states. So far (June 2021), 86 states signed the treaty, and 54 states have already become States Parties to it. The treaty entered into force on 22 January 2021, 90 days after the 50th ratification (Honduras on the 24 October 2020). Of the EU members, only Austria, Ireland and Malta have ratified the TPNW so far (UNODA n. d.)

The First Committee of the General Assembly is where disarmament and security matters are discussed and draft resolutions are voted on before coming to the plenary. After the adoption of the TPNW, many of the EU member states (like other states) commented on the TPNW and their own position towards it in the general debate in the First Committee in the 72nd Session of the General Assembly.

Austria voiced its unequivocal support for it, describing the treaty as a “way out of this [nuclear weapons] security dilemma” (UNGA 2017, A/C.1/72/PV.3, 17). Sweden and Ireland also expressed their positive view of the TPNW, but Sweden lamented the “unproductive deadlock on the prohibition Treaty” and expressed its wish to “focus on what unites us” (UNGA 2017, A/C.1/72/PV.3, 9). Ireland struck a similar tone, first lauding the treaty as “ground-breaking” but then going on to say that it did not “wish to perpetuate disagreements regarding the best path towards achieving our common goal of multilateral nuclear disarmament” but instead wished “to concentrate on our many shared goals” (UNGA 2017, A/C.1/72/PV.7, 19).

Of the EU states opposed to the TPNW, France and UK were most direct in their criticism, with France saying that the “Treaty is not just an ineffective measure on the path to nuclear

disarmament, it is also full of risk” and that its adoption was “largely to a lack of understanding of the strategic environment” (A/C.1/72/PV.4, 6). Other EU states opposing the treaty were more conciliatory and said they supported the Treaty’s goal of a world free of nuclear weapons, but believed the treaty was not “a realistic way to achieve our common goal” (Portugal, A/C.1/72/PV.7, 6). They favoured a progressive disarmament approach in the nuclear weapons states should be involved. Belgium also said it did not support the TPNW, but, like Sweden and Ireland, expressed concern of what the division on the TPNW would mean for other discussions related to nuclear disarmament: “Polarization will not bring us any closer to that objective [of a world without nuclear weapons]. Diverging views on one issue should not block us from making progress on others. Nor should this issue contaminate debates on unrelated affairs” (UNGA 2017, A/C.1/72/PV.5, 8).

Unsurprisingly given the disagreement of EU members on the issue, the statement delivered by the EU in its capacity of an observer, did not mention the TPNW (UNGA 2017, A/C.1/72/PV.2, 20 ff).

The negative views of many of the EU members of the TPNW did not change the fact that the TPNW had the support of a broad majority of UN members. In the years following its adoption, resolutions were passed by the General Assembly welcoming the adoption of the treaty and calling on all states to ratify it. In the votes on these resolutions, titled “Taking forward multilateral nuclear disarmament negotiations” in 2017 (UNGA, A/RES/72/31) and “Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons” in 2018 (UNGA, A/RES/73/48) and 2019 (UNGA, A/RES/74/41), EU members’ votes were divided along NATO membership lines. All NATO members voted against the resolutions, whereas the non-NATO EU members all defected from the EU majority, either voting in favour of the resolutions or abstaining (Finland, and Sweden in 2018 and 2019).

In the entire time period analysed in the thesis, there is a total of 28 votes where all and only the non-NATO EU members defected from an EU majority composed of the NATO members.

Table 5 - Defection of non-NATO members

Session	71	72	73	74	total
Defection of all and only non-NATO members	1	7	9	11	28

All of them took place after the 70th Session, and all of them were votes on nuclear disarmament. For Finland, the 28 cases in which it defected like all other non-NATO EU members and unlike

any NATO EU member account for almost a third of all its cases of defection contained in the dataset (see Table 3 - Rates of Defection in chapter 5.2). Many of these votes were either on resolutions directly related to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, or on provisions in other resolutions on nuclear disarmament referencing the TPNW. For example, there was a separate vote on the 6th preambular paragraph of a resolution on a Nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas (UNGA 2019, A/RES/74/48), which welcomed the adoption of the TPNW.

This resolution “Nuclear weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas” serves as an illustration on how the new issue of the TPNW had the potential to disrupt previously existing higher EU cohesion. The resolution was passed in almost all of the sessions since the 51st session. In the years before 2017, all EU members except France and the UK had repeatedly voted in favour of the resolution, resulting in relatively high cohesion. In the 72nd session, the resolution was passed for the first time since the adoption of the TPNW and included the positive reference to the TPNW in its 6th preambular paragraph (UNGA 2017, A/RES/72/45). Now, a majority of 17 EU members abstained, while only eight still voted in favour (the non-NATO states plus Belgium and the Netherlands), and three voted against (UK, France and Greece), making the EU a lot less cohesive than it was before on the issue.

In their statements in the discussion on this and other nuclear disarmament resolutions in the First Committee, the representatives of Belgium and the Netherlands, the two EU states which oppose the TPNW but voted in favour of resolution 72/45 despite the positive reference towards the TPNW contained in it, reflected on how the TPNW affected cooperation on other nuclear disarmament matters:

The Netherlands explained their negative stance towards the TPNW, saying that despite sharing the goal of the Treaty and their participation in the negotiations, they did not support the outcome and therefore voted against it. One of the main reasons given for this position is “the fact that [they] consider that the provisions of the TPNW are irreconcilable with [their] commitments as a NATO member”. Therefore, they could not “at this point support any language contained in First Committee draft resolutions that welcomes the TPNW” (A/C.1/72/PV.23).

Belgium also explained it did not support the TPNW, though without reference to its NATO membership, instead citing lacking support of the main stakeholders and the danger that it could

divert attention from pressing issues. In its statement, Belgium also expressed its fear “that the growing international division over nuclear disarmament has made our journey more complicated”, adding that “[t]he voting pattern today will undoubtedly illustrate how our common ground continues to erode” (A/C.1/72/PV.23, 14). Even though this was addressed towards all UNGA members, the division Belgium was talking about was clearly seen in the voting pattern of EU member states in particular.

Table 6 - Disruption of EU cohesion

Session	Nuclear weapon-free southern hemisphere				Towards a nuclear weapon-free world			
	In favour	Against	Abstain	Agreement Index	In favour	Against	Abstain	Agreement Index
74	9	2	17	0.41	5	22	1	0.68
73	-	-	-	-	5	22	1	0.68
72	8	3	17	0.41	5	21	2	0.61
71	26	2	0	0.89	5	17	6	0.41
70	26	2	0	0.89	5	2	21	0.65
69	25	2	0	0.89	25	2	0	0.89
68	-	-	-	-	26	2	0	0.89
67	25	2	0	0.89	24	2	0	0.88

A similar pattern can be seen with the resolutions titled “Towards a nuclear-weapon-free world: accelerating the implementation of nuclear disarmament commitments”. The resolutions, also passed yearly, mainly contain references to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear weapons and call on states to implement their commitments under this framework. In the sessions before the 70th session, all EU members with the exception of France and the UK voted in favour of it, resulting in high cohesion. In the resolution passed in the 70th session (UNGA 2015, A/RES/70/51), references to the Conferences on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons were included in several new preambular paragraphs and the evidence presented at the conferences was acknowledged in paragraph 3. In addition, new paragraphs were included that called for a diminished role of nuclear weapons in security doctrines, without a reference to the NPT and the commitments under its framework. States possessing nuclear weapons were urged to decrease the operational readiness of nuclear weapons (par. 6), and nuclear-weapon States were encouraged to “reduce the role of nuclear weapons in all military and security concepts” (par. 7). Furthermore, a provision directly fitting NATO members encouraged “all

States that are part of regional alliances that include nuclear-weapon States to further promote a diminishing role for nuclear weapons in their collective security doctrines” (par. 8). Only five EU members voted in favour of this resolution (the non-NATO members except Finland), the UK and France voted against, and the rest now abstained. In the following years, additional positive references to the negotiations on the TPNW, and after its adoption to the treaty itself, were included in the resolution. The majority of EU member states went from abstaining on the resolution to voting against it. The cohesion was lowest in the 71st session before the adoption of the TPNW and then increased when more states joined the majority voting against the resolution but cohesion remained consistently lower than it had been before the 70th session.

7.4. Impact on other issues

The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons resulted in the fact that EU members repeatedly cooperated and voted with two different groups on disarmament. NATO members did so with NATO, and the non-NATO members with the Humanitarian Initiative. In the First Committee, EU member states repeatedly expressed the fear concerning the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons that it would render cooperation on other matters of disarmament more difficult. In this chapter, I will analyse whether this fear was justified when it comes to cohesion among the EU member states. As was described in chapter 3, socialization of national representatives leads to Europeanization and increased cooperation on the EU level. Showing cohesion is also a goal of EU foreign policy of its own. Just as EU member state officials became used to cooperating with other EU member states, it is possible that the cooperation in other fora on the TPNW led to a decrease in cohesion of EU states in other related matters and lowered their inhibition to defect from EU majority positions on some issues. This is first analysed for votes on categories other than disarmament, and then on disarmament issues which are not directly related to the TPNW. Both interview partners agreed that when it comes to coordination among EU members, issues are compartmentalized. A lack of agreement in one area therefore does not affect cooperation in other areas. This is the case “even when it is the same people in the room” (Interview, 3 June 2021), although some took the matter of the TPNW more emotional than others (Interview, 28 May 2021).

7.4.1. Non-disarmament matters

For non-disarmament matters, the results of the analysis in chapter 5 already showed that for votes which were not related to disarmament, cohesion did not decline in the relevant time period. On the contrary, cohesion even increased for votes on security. The size of this effect is almost the same as it is for the decline in cohesion on disarmament votes. This is especially relevant as security is the category where an increased salience of the cleavage between NATO and non-NATO EU members could be expected to be most relevant among the other categories. Security is the category besides disarmament in which NATO membership is most likely to influence member countries' preferences. Furthermore, security matters are negotiated in the First Committee, just as disarmament, which means that there is probably also a procedural and personal overlap between the two areas.

7.4.2. Non-TPNW related nuclear disarmament votes

In a resolution on nuclear disarmament in which no references to the TPNW were added after its adoption, EU member states positions even converged over time, leading to an increase in cohesion. The resolution “Decreasing the operational readiness of nuclear weapons systems” was first passed in the 62th session and called for “practical steps to be taken to the decrease the operational readiness of nuclear weapons systems” (UNGA 2007, A/RES/62/36 par 1). EU member states' positions were divided, a slim majority of 15 states abstained, two voted against and ten in favour. Over time (the resolution was passed every two years), more and more EU states changed their vote from abstaining to voting in favour, leading to the EU majority position shifting and EU cohesion increasing.

Table 7 - Increase of EU cohesion

Session	Decreasing operational readiness			
	In favour	Against	Abstain	Agreement Index
73	25	2	1	0.84
71	25	2	1	0.84
69	21	2	4	0.67
67	17	2	8	0.44
65	17	2	8	0.44
63	11	2	14	0.28
62	10	2	15	0.33

This cohesion remained high after the adoption of the TPNW, to which no references were added in the resolution. This is only cursory evidence. States switching from abstentions to yes votes on this resolution is in line with the general trend in the General Assembly. However, the increase in cohesion in a resolution where the TPNW is not mentioned does support the claim that the TPNW is the cause for the observed decline in voting cohesion on disarmament votes.

8. Conclusion

From the 69th Session in 2014 onwards, there is a drop in EU voting cohesion for votes on disarmament. This can be explained by a relatively new topic on the agenda of the General Assembly, a complete ban on nuclear weapons. The focus on the humanitarian consequences of nuclear weapons, leading to a legal instrument prohibiting them, exposed a cleavage between NATO and non-NATO EU members on nuclear disarmament. Whereas before, EU members had often voted together with the exception of UK and France, the NATO members then joined the position of the UK and France, and it was the non-NATO states which defected considerably more often from the EU majority position. In the same time period, EU voting cohesion on other matters in the General Assembly remained high, and even increased for votes on peace and security issues.

As the issue of nuclear disarmament concerns national security and defence, the lack of a common EU position on the matter is consistent with the Europeanization literature, which suggests a convergence of foreign policy positions of EU members due to socialization and other mechanisms but expects the area of national security to be one where Europeanization remains limited.

In their statements in the First Committee, member states explained their positions towards the TPNW. Among the supporters of the TPNW, Austria and Ireland were the most vocal, whereas the UK and even more so France were clearest in their opposition. Other states opposed to the Treaty said they shared the goals behind it and but did not agree on the method. Among both the supporters and the opponents, states which were not on the extremes of the debate voiced concern about what divisions over the TPNW would mean for cooperation on other disarmament matters. As has been shown, adding references to the TPNW in other disarmament resolutions indeed has the potential to disrupt previously existing cohesion among EU

members. However, cohesion remained high where there were no references to the TPNW and was unaffected or even increased for votes on other issues, such as peace and security.

The different positions of EU members on the TPNW run deep. For NATO members, the TPNW is in direct conflict with their alliance membership and national security doctrines, while Austria and Ireland were two clear advocates of the treaty from the beginning. It is therefore highly unlikely that the different positions between non-NATO and NATO members on the issue can be reconciled, and there is little room for a change in positions. Sweden and especially Finland, which often are in the middle with abstaining votes, could change their voting behaviour in either direction, and NATO states which are more conciliatory towards the TPNW could become more tolerant in their voting behaviour of references to the TPNW in other resolutions.

A quantitative approach studying a large number of votes as it was taken in this thesis can point to developments in the voting behaviour as the one described here but could have difficulties to detect changes in EU cooperation which manifest themselves in fewer, albeit significant votes, or are not reflected by the voting behaviour at all. These developments can still be at least as relevant to study. For example, both interview partners referred to Hungary as a case of concern for EU cooperation at the UN, especially when it comes to the Middle East. While the data shows a tendency of increased defection of Hungary on Middle East votes in the past years, this difference is not statistically significant. Qualitative or mixed approaches could therefore be suitable to further study this issue. Furthermore, the quantitative methods employed in the thesis alone can only identify areas in which the EU does or does not have a common position and manages to speak with one voice, it does not capture whether a lack of cohesion in a particular area is perceived to be a problem or not. This aspect could be a matter of future research.

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On my honour as a student of the Diplomatische Akademie Wien, I submit this work in good faith and pledge that I have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance on it.



David Ragger