

# **“Fortress Europe” or “Europe as Empire” – Conflicts between different EU long-term Strategies and its Effects on the Representation of Europe**

**Andreas Weiß**

## **RESÜMEE**

Der Artikel vergleicht zwei Repräsentationen der Europäischen Gemeinschaft, die “Festung Europa” und „Europa als Imperium“ miteinander und untersucht sie als Fremdzuschreibungen hin auf ihre Kompatibilität mit der gemeinsamen europäischen Außenpolitik in den 1990er Jahren. Im Mittelpunkt stehen dabei die Euromediterrane Partnerschaft und die EU-Erweiterung 2004. Er geht davon aus, dass diese Fremdzuschreibungen auch deshalb solche Popularität erlangten, da sie zwar zugespitzt die beiden extremen Pole europäischer Außenpolitik beschreiben, aber von „Innen“, aus der Perspektive Brüssels, nicht in Übereinstimmung mit den Eigenrepräsentationen der Gemeinschaft gebracht werden können und daher weniger Analysen europäischer Politik denn Kritik an Europa sind. Sie spiegeln so vielmehr die Dilemmata wider, vor denen die Politiker nach dem Fall des „Eisernen Vorhangs“ standen und auf die die EG aufgrund ihrer Eigenrepräsentationen und Sprachregelungen in nur eingeschränkter Weise reagieren konnte.

A widely used commonplace declares the European Union to be an entity *sui generis*. This is not only due to the very particular founding and developmental history of the EU, but also because to many its foreign policy seems erratic. This invited many to criticise this foreign policy and ascribed different representations to the EU, despite the EU’s efforts to develop its own representations of Europe. I use here the concept of representation<sup>1</sup> not only because the EU uses it to ‘represent’ itself while negotiating with

1 This article is a part of the research results of the project “Representations of Europe” which is part of the SFB 640. The SFB is founded on the concept of representation used by Roger Chartier, Paul Rabinow and Serge Moscovici. Representations of Europe in our case would be things such as freedom, democracy, and rule of law. Then images of the self and representations of the other will be compared. The representations of Europe then gain in the political arena the function of a collective or social representation, in a Durkheimian sense; see G. Delanty, *Inventing Europe: idea, identity, reality*, Basingstoke 1995, 4-5; W. S. F. Pickering (ed.), *Durkheim and Representations*, London/New York 2000.

non-EU actors, but also because these representations operate inwards while establishing regimes of what can be said publicly. The Union conceives itself as a space of democracy, freedom and human rights; therefore, it cannot use quasi dictatorial compulsion vis-à-vis its unruly member states – as the current debates regarding the international debt crisis demonstrate. Representations establish regimes of thinking and sayability. As for legal practitioners, the same principle applies to politicians: one could not step back from what was once written down, especially in institutionally highly sensitive, complicated organisms such as the EU. In this sense, paper is not only patient but also a memory focused on permanence. Hence the main focus is not on the actors as such (i.e. which group intermingles with which), but rather what they discuss. Why, how and for what reason do they talk about the EU? For example, in the enlargement debates employed here as examples, the two options enlargement/integration vs. non-enlargement needed to be explained. This is also done with the help of representations of Europe; actually one could go as far as to suggest that in the long run, representations of Europe were employed as a means to forestall the entry of Southern Mediterranean states into the Union.

To exemplify how the representations of Europe intermingle with joint actions in foreign policy, this article turns its attention to two major debates during the 1990s: the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and the 2004 enlargement – or Eastern enlargement, as it is called more often. Each was selected because it stands for two different ascriptions critics use to describe the common foreign policy of the Union: the concept of ‘Europe as Empire’ (the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership) and the ‘Fortress Europe’ (the 2004 enlargement). This means that the two different strategies were labelled in a negative way by their critics to delegitimize them in a way that racist ascriptions were allegedly used to denounce people of a different origin. These critics were mainly human rights groups as well as non-governmental organizations concerned with migration issues. Their issues connected them with different left wing groups in Europe. Both processes illustrate the different political means that were used to expand the influence of the EU. In the negotiations that accompanied them, the EU had to reflect about its role in the world, the representation of its policies and about its self-representations. They were interconnected with a range of global problems such as migration, the economic North-South divide, terrorism, trade relations and democratic deficits. But while these issues touched upon unequal common interests, the specific, more regional interests of the different member states played a more important role, such as Spain’s, Italy’s and France’s interests in the Mediterranean region and those of Germany and Austria in Eastern- and Central Europe. With regard to the Union as a whole, one might ask whether the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership could be classified as a first attempt to develop an imperial foreign policy.<sup>2</sup> Likewise, one may regard the Eastern enlargement as an attempt to revise the borders, as an initiative to close the walls of fortification, since this was the furthest expansion imaginable for conservative protagonists. Therefore the projects reflect the diverse local and

2 Cf. G. Vobruba, *Das politische Potential der Europäischen Nachbarschaftspolitik. Zur Überwindung des Widerspruchs zwischen Integration und Erweiterung der Europäischen Union*, in: *Leviathan* 38 (2010) 1, 45-63, esp. 48f.

regional interests of different member states. Furthermore, the Nineteen Nineties are a period during which the EU sought to define what Europe is and what represents it. For many of the actors it remained unclear for a long time which countries could enter the Union and which could not. Spain for its part pushed for the accession of Morocco and, in case this would not happen, for deeper cooperation between the Union and Morocco. Simultaneously the Spanish interests had to be consistent with the traditional Mediterranean policy of the Community. The Eastern Enlargement, however, was regarded as a way to turn the Union into a global player by creating the biggest single market in the world and thus a new economic superpower. Both projects were not mutually exclusive and even complemented each other, yet financial questions and the unclear foreign policy approach of the Union rendered both projects antagonistic. Precisely this inherent antagonism makes it so worthwhile to examine these processes for the representations of Europe. This is because the European Commission – as the ‘Guardian of the Treaties’ – could use a stalemate to call for more competences, especially because it possessed the formal right to propose new accession candidates.<sup>3</sup> Especially during the Eastern Enlargement the EU, and the Commission in particular, claimed to be speaking on behalf of Europe as a whole. It became increasingly difficult for non-European states to play off one member state against another and make them exponents for another Europe, as had been attempted by Donald Rumsfeld in 2003.

However this article does not seek out the finality of European foreign policy. It is merely interested in these two particular projects and the representations of Europe articulated in both of them by European politicians as well as the two aforementioned catchwords. The presumption is that for politicians and bureaucrats at the level of the Commission and in other institutions of the EU, the self-image of being an Empire seemed rather absurd. This has both historical and cultural reasons. At the same time there was an undercurrent in its policies that could be perceived as being imperialistic. Conversely, one may pose the question as to the continuities regarding the imperial self-portrayal in the different member states. But the ambivalence can be explained by the circumstance that for the EU as a whole and especially in the European Parliament (EP), the concept of Empire carried extremely negative connotations. Nonetheless some politicians demanded – and still call for – a more active foreign policy of the Union combined with a stance of global dominance.<sup>4</sup> These ambivalences are also part of this investigation. The differences, but also the commonalities, between both projects will help to clarify the development of the representations of Europe vis-à-vis the European borders and the non-European states during the Nineteen Nineties. It is important to ascertain that these antitheses describe different courses of action both for the Community as a whole and of use for the interests of the different member states. As will be illustrated, the foreign policy of the Union du-

3 See Bretherton, Charlotte/Vogler, John, *The European Union as a global actor*. London 1999, 11.

4 Here one has to differentiate between two different orientations of foreign policy involvement: one is intervention on behalf of human rights, itself supported by some critics from the left; the other the classical ‘machievellian’ foreign policy. For the position of the Commission see Commission of the European Communities, KOM (2002) 247 endgültig: Mitteilung der Kommission: Ein Projekt für die Europäische Union, Brussels 2002, 12-17.

ring the examined period was shaped by many ambivalent factors. For instance, up until 1990 it was made very clear to Morocco that it could never become part of the EU. Then again, Spanish politicians were not the only ones who came to stress the similarities in the Mediterranean and the common ‘civilising’ values of a Europe that is precisely more than a mere geographical definition.<sup>5</sup>

This much can be said in advance: There was at least one major change in the representations during the period under consideration. Whereas different actors of the European Community made clear statements for a more active and dominant foreign policy in 1995, at the end of the decade statements pertaining to delimitation, inner reforms and consolidation of the EU came to the foreground. But this is not congruent with what critics understand under the term ‘Fortress Europe’. Due to its self-representations the EU cannot deviate from the image of being an attractive centre of the world. This brings us to the question of the way in which representations could be employed as a resource for political action and legitimization. Representations of Europe in this particular context will be understood in this sense – as political resources – as they shaped the mode of understanding of the European elite.<sup>6</sup>

Both catchwords gained publicity because they denote two different trends in European politics. For one, it can be said that since its beginnings, the history of the European Union is – in one way or another – linked to the concept of *Imperium*.<sup>7</sup> Established as an alternative to founding an empire after the destructive experiences of the first half of the twentieth century (especially the two world wars), in the Nineteen Nineties a number of academics, politicians and political activists came to classify the European Union itself as such. They understood empire loosely as an entity which strove to influence politics beyond its borders without the use of direct force, but instead a combination of economic measures, military threat and ideology. Especially the last point makes the EU so vulnerable, as one of its representations is that of being just a “civic-normative power”<sup>8</sup>, a self-portrayal that ironically was developed to counter any criticism of being an empire. So Empire became a highly ambivalent concept for the European Union. Just how problematic the concept of imperialism is when attributed to the EU is demonstrated by Jürgen

5 I. B. Neumann, European Identity, EU Expansion, and the Integration/Exclusion Nexus, in: L.-E. Cederman (ed.), *Constructing Europe’s Identity: The External Dimension*, London 2001, 141-164, here 144. For the actual interpretation personal talk, Spanish Foreign Ministry, March 2011.

6 It is not of primary interest here whether the EU is an elite project. For more on this question see M. Haller, *European integration as an elite process: the failure of a dream?* New York 2008; K. Poehls, *Europa backstage: Expertenwissen, Habitus und kulturelle Codes im Machtfeld der EU*, Bielefeld 2009. For the problems interests vs. Representations of Europe see the Working Paper J., *Grußendorf/A., Weiß, Europarepräsentationen – Spanien, Frankreich und Deutschland im Vergleich*, Berlin 2010.

7 The best known book to bring the EU and the concept of Empire together is the book by Jan Zielonka; J. Zielonka, *Europe as empire: the nature of the enlarged European Union*, Oxford 2006.

8 Cf. B. Hettne/F. Söderbaum, *Civilian Power or Soft Imperialism? The EU as a Global Actor and the Role of Interregionalism*, in: *European Foreign Affairs Review* 10 (2005), 535-552; S. Fröhlich, *Die Europäische Union als globaler Akteur: eine Einführung*, Wiesbaden 2008. Apparently the concept of the ‘civil-normative power’ is tied to older concepts of the civilising mission, see especially B. Barth/J. Osterhammel (eds), *Zivilisierungsmissionen: imperiale Weltverbesserung seit dem 18. Jahrhundert*, Konstanz 2005.

Osterhammel's definition in his article on models of Europe and imperial contexts: "An Empire is a spacious, hierarchically structured governing association (*Herrschaftsverband*) of polyethnic and multireligious character, whose coherence is ensured by threads of violence, administration, indigenous collaborators as well as a universalistic programme and the symbolism of an imperial elite (mostly with a monarchical centre), but not through social and political homogenization and the idea of a universal citizenship."<sup>9</sup> Likewise Herfried Münkler: "Empires and state systems differ [...] in that the first pacify the internal space and do not admit violent struggles of interests, neither over political legitimacy nor legislative issues."<sup>10</sup> However it is necessary to point out that members of the European Commission as well as other European politicians rarely combined the representation of Europe with the concept of Empire, in contrast to the beginning of the century, as is shown in Christian Methfessel's article. Besides the aforementioned employment of the term Empire in a critical sense, there was a second concept of Empire which seemed more appealing to the politicians as a positive example for the Union: the concept of the peaceful multiethnic empire. Two examples were mentioned: the Holy Roman Empire and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. They became models not only in the debate around *Mitteleuropa* but were also regarded as historic prototypes around which the European Union could be constructed and with which it could legitimize itself. Also, during the 1990s the EU tried to detach itself from any imperialistic policies akin to those of the USA.

Often one finds evidence for the belief that national affairs are shaped by notions of Europe. An idealistic reading tends to take Europe as a model example and a point of reference. However this article assumes that representations of Europe are more than merely a source for legitimization in the political arena. They establish regimes of what can be said (*Sagbarkeitsregime*). In the early Nineteen Nineties the then EC operated with representations of Europe it needed to revise up until the end of the century. These representations seduced it into seeing enlargement as a necessary historical process, because on the one hand the EU is attractive and on the other it would emerge stronger and better out of every enlargement round as well as every crisis. But this leads to a kind of *circulus vitiosus*: due to the enlargement the EU is criticised as an empire. The EU reacts by trying to amend its foreign policy. But this does not adequately describe the actual situation around 2000, because rather than changing the foundations of its foreign policy, the EU preserved many of its aspects. And this comes into conflict with the imperialistic traditions of some member states during the Nineteen Nineties. Both the EU and its member states develop their policies and self representations in interplay with each other. Actions of some member states which contradict the representation of

9 J. Osterhammel, Europamodelle und imperiale Kontexte, in: Journal of Modern European History 2 (2004) 2, 157-182, here 172 [own translation].

10 H. Münkler, Barbaren und Dämonen: Die Konstruktion des Fremden in Imperialen Ordnungen, in: J. Baberowski (ed.), Selbstbilder und Fremdbilder. Repräsentation sozialer Ordnungen im Wandel, Frankfurt a. M./New York 2008, 153-189, here 154, 166. This certainly applies in the EU's case where political struggle with peaceful means is at the heart of the Union.

the whole provoke criticism. Moreover, the Commission is compelled to react to the policies of member states running counter to the community's self image, particularly if it wants to assert its claim to leadership. With regard to the central concept of the title, it must be noted that while the term empire in one way or another (be it as delineation) accompanied the history of the EU since its beginnings and was sometimes given a positive connotation by some actors during its revival in the Nineteen Nineties 1990s, this was not the case with the concept of the 'Fortress Europe'.<sup>11</sup> One can differentiate between four different implications of the term. First, it has a high profile owing to the connotations evoked by the use of the term during the Second World War. Second, it alludes to an allegation made by the United States after the end of the Cold War, namely that the Union wanted to wall off its single market. Third, it is used in conjunction with the measures the European Union takes to stop South-North migration into the territory of the Union, something which keeps the topic in the media. And fourth, 'Fortress Europe' was employed as a counter-concept to the 'Europe in Diversity'<sup>12</sup>.

This applies to the groups of actors who brought this term into play in particular. On one side there were states of the opinion that their accession was either unduly delayed or withheld. On the other there were activists who criticised the migration policy of the community; especially in the Mediterranean, with the symbol of the border fence around Ceuta and Melilla. This results in unfamiliar constraints for the self representations of Europe. A region that projects an image of economic success and acts outwardly as an advocate for human rights and democracy can hardly behave towards the neighbour regions as a pure preventer with a new wall. How the EU reacted towards these challenges and if she adjusted her representations to a changed foreign policy is one of the central questions of this article.

11 As the prototypical critic on 'Fortress Europe' see Delanty, *Inventing Europe* (note 1), 149-155. Delanty uses the term in a diffuse sense, for him it means "the idea of Europe has become part of a new state-seeking nationalism that has crystallized in 'Fortress Europe' and far from being a successor to the nation-state, Europe, in fact, is a function of it." *Ibid.*, 14. Similarly M. Pelzer, *Festung Europa: Flüchtlingsschutz in Not*, in: *Blätter für deutsche und internationale Politik* 56 (2011) 10, 47-53.

12 P. Blokker, *Europe 'United in Diversity': From a Central European Identity to Post-Nationality?* In: *European Journal of Social Theory* 11 (2008), 257-274, here 262; also Delanty, *Inventing Europe* (note 1), S. VIII. Gerald Delanty speaks of the "chauvinism of the Fortress Europe project in Western Europe"; G. Delanty, *The Resonance of Mitteleuropa. A Habsburg Myth or Antipolitics?* In: *Theory, Culture & Society* 13 (1996), 93-108, here 104. For the definition of 'Fortress Europe': Often used by journalist for critical purposes, based on the allegation that the EU practice a policy of sealing-off vis-à-vis third states, especially in the asylum and migration policy or by the common agrarian policy; source: B. Zandonella, *Pocket Europa. EU-Begriffe und Länderdaten*, Bonn 2005, 2009 revised edition. ([http://www.bpb.de/popup/popup\\_lemmata.html?guid=1TDM61](http://www.bpb.de/popup/popup_lemmata.html?guid=1TDM61)). See also C. Phuong, *Enlarging 'Fortress Europe': EU accession, asylum, and immigration in candidate countries*. In: *International and Comparative Law Quarterly* 52 (2003) 3, 641-663, here 663, with regard to Eastern Europe: "that what we are currently witnessing resembles the resurgence of a new Curtain replacing the Iron Curtain, but further to the East. Europe's enlargement must not lead to the enlargement of 'Fortress Europe'. The Commission itself has warned that 'the future borders of the Union must not become a new dividing line'. In practice, whilst enlargement should be about inclusion, the hard border regime which is being imposed on candidate countries is about exclusion, 'about creating or recreating dividing lines in Europe.'"

## 1. The Nineteen Nineties: The stage for the EU as a global actor

After the fall of the 'Iron Curtain' the global general framework changed fundamentally for the EU. The Commission used this new situation to develop its own profile, steeped in by the understanding for a historical challenge. Because of the unclear global political situation after 1990 the EU stood for a multipolar world order with a focus on inter- and supranational institutions – a consequence of what was believed to be one's own success story.<sup>13</sup> Never before in history had the representation of Europe as a space of freedom and liberty seemed more fulfilled than in the beginning of the Nineteen Nineties. The EU improved, for example, its relations with the ASEAN states and provided institutional aid to model this and other organisations according to its own image.<sup>14</sup> After the end of the ideological bloc formation new markets could be developed in a totally different dimension.<sup>15</sup> At the same time the Yugoslav Wars (and Ruanda) demonstrated the EU's powerlessness in foreign affairs. Because military action was hardly conceivable for the Union – a consequence of the representations under discussion – new concepts of neighbourhood policy became the main focus beyond direct crises; new concepts without the ultimate aim of admission to the EU: strategies such as the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. What was new and exceptional about the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership was that it combined multi- and bipolar agreements at the same time; and the success of the project depended on this combination. This was so because security and economic interests corresponded with each other and were an important issue in the enlargement debates.<sup>16</sup> Both reflected problems were linked to the two central trajectories of the European Community: enlargement and consolidation. But it is also clear that some single actors (e.g. the French government) during this time had far reaching ambitions regarding the common foreign policy of the EU, as is demonstrated by the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) 1992. In 2001 this was followed by the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP, now the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)). Both approaches were designed to bestow more importance on the foreign policy of the

13 For the importance of visions of multipolar order in the Nineteen Nintees see e.g. Manuel Castells, who names the unification of Europe as the most important global model, M. Castells, *Das Informationszeitalter*, Band 3: *Jahrtausendwende*, Opladen 2003, 355-356; on the relationship between political changes, expansion and economy *ibid.*, 357, 360-361.

14 For the overall enthusiasm for a free trade community, but also generally for regional cooperation, cf. J. M. Zal-dom, *El Mediterráneo, gran oportunidad para los empresarios*, in: *Dirección y Progreso* 145 (1996), Enero-Febrero, 91-94, here 91ff. Further examples are the Uruguay Round, the AU (before 2002 OAU), the attempt of Lomé-II.

15 For the relationship between extension of commerce and "trade globalization" see N. Fligstein/A. Stone Sweet, *Constructing Politics and Markets: An Institutional Account of European Integration*, in: *American Journal of Sociology* 107 (2002) 5, 1206-1243, here 1237. Their institutional approach, it seems, is quite connectable with our concept of representations, cf. *ibid.* 1220-1221, 1224-1225, 1236, and 1239. The authors see the supranational policy of the Commission influenced by feedbacks, arising out of the interaction with lobbyists when these present their interests.

16 The author does not share the assessment common in the political sciences that security reasons stood at the foreground of the EMP; see A. Jünemann, *Repercussions of the Emerging European Security and Defence Policy on the Civil Character of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership*, in: A. Jünemann (ed.), *Euro-Mediterranean Relations after September 11. International, Regional and Domestic Dynamics*, London/Portland, OR 2003, 1-20.

Union, to consolidate the international appearance that did not rest on arguments of an economic nature alone. It is worth noting in our context that organisations such as Frontex are not directly associated with these organisations. As a result the appearance of the EU vis-à-vis its neighbours remained polyphonic. The burden of the operation is shouldered by particular member states. In our case a relevant example would be Operation Hera, where Spain and Italy provide the ships but the costs are divided up among all the member states of the Union.<sup>17</sup> These operations are among those which contribute to the image of the ‘Fortress Europe’ given that it is primarily a defensive foreign policy. This could be used as an argument against ‘Europe as Empire’ because the old member states disagreed over the matter of a long term effective rapid reaction force, and for the new member states of East and East Central Europe the entry into the NATO had priority. Because the relationship between NATO and EU remains unclear to this day the latter cannot simply employ the military power of the former and many EU member states eschew the financial burdens of the installation of a military parallel structure.<sup>18</sup> This does not mean that the EC lacked a foreign policy before 1990, yet it consisted mainly of association agreements and development policies. This is of particular relevance because in the Nineteen Nineties the EU barely broadened its foreign policy tools. They remained the same instruments: association and multilateral agreements in combination with bilateralism.<sup>19</sup> Admittedly, the Commission reacted to the changed circumstances in 1993 at the Copenhagen Summit, where rules were defined for future member states, which also came to affect the representations of the Union. These so called “Copenhagen criteria” could be separated into three categories. First, an accession candidate has to fulfil the political criteria of “stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities”. Second, the EU emphasized the economic criteria of „the existence of a functioning market economy as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union”. And third, the *Acquis communautaire*, the “the ability to take on and implement effectively the obligations of membership, including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union”.<sup>20</sup> So an affinity for formalized relations is characteristic of the EU’s foreign policy – and this precisely what separates it from every concept of Empire.<sup>21</sup>

17 Cf. [http://www.frontex.europa.eu/newsroom/news\\_releases/art13.html](http://www.frontex.europa.eu/newsroom/news_releases/art13.html).

18 Castells, *Das Informationszeitalter* (note 13), 363. For the hope of synergy see government declaration of the German chancellor during the NATO summit with following debate in the 202. Session, 13.01.1994, printed in *Das Parlament*, Nr. 3, 21. Januar 1994, 3.

19 The only instrument not used in this ‘classic’ foreign policy of the EU were the so-called European Agreements, because they were considered to be direct precondition for concrete accession. For the problem foreign policy/enlargement see Fröhlich, *Die EU als globaler Akteur* (note 8); C. C. Pentland, *Westphalian Europa and the EU’s Last Enlargement*, in: *European Integration* 22 (2000), 271-298.

20 Cf. the glossary of the European Union: [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/policy/conditions-membership/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/policy/conditions-membership/index_en.htm)

21 Cf. M. Smith, *The European Union and International Order: European and Global Dimensions*, in: *European Foreign Affairs Review* 12 (2007), 437-456, here 441.



One could allege that over a long period the EU took the enlargement trajectory if the admittance of these states seemed unproblematic. In light of the changing circumstances in the Nineteen Nineties the EU had to cope with totally new, different and diverse pleas for admission than had seemed plausible at the time of the Treaty of Rome or the Southern enlargement. The altered conceptual structure and the sheer number of member states that complicated the coordination process demanded reforms in the consolidation process. Two foreign affairs projects (dominant foreign actions and civilising mission) were developed in parallel during the enlargement but also mutually depended on each other. If the EU understood the changed global circumstances as an opportunity to expand ideologically and politically, it also conceived of the political situation as unsecure, even as threatening as is underlined by the strong emphasis placed on security issues and counter-terrorism in the Declaration of Barcelona.<sup>22</sup> Thus globalisation during this period was not only an opportunity but also a potential menace. Against this threat the regions felt compelled to "defend their traditions and their identities".<sup>23</sup>

## 2. The EU and the Non-EU – The EU as actor

Against this background it becomes comprehensible that during the Nineteen Nineties the EU had a number of options regarding its foreign policy that partially overlapped with the interests of different member states but also with the self interests of the EU as an institution. Thus 'Fortress Europe' and 'Europe as Empire' are nothing less than two different paths of development for the EU as an institution that are not congruent with the enlargement debates used here as examples. Both could be related to older traditions that were dominant in the foreign policy of European states around 1900. Every now and then it seems that these imperialistic traditions of some member states effectively continued without interruptions. This is not only true for abstract large structures like the Commonwealth of Nations in the case of the United Kingdom and the *francophonie* for France. Also the prompt recourse to Special Forces and the tendency for small-scale

22 And this all before 2001! Focal point of the terroristic menace here was also an Islamist one, but in this case the focus was groups like the Algerian GIA and the Muslim brothers. Also the problem of illegal migration plays a role here. For an attempt to define the perspectives of the actors see E. Rhein, The European Union on its Way to Becoming a World Power, in: European Foreign Affairs Review 3 (1998), 325-340. Rhein makes particular mention of two criteria, namely Eastern Enlargement and the shared currency. On the issue of the EU's "Global Mediterranean Policy" cf. F. Pierros/J. Meunier/S. Abrams, The Global Mediterranean Policy, 1972–1989, in: Eidem, Bridges and Barriers: the European Union's Mediterranean policy, 1961 – 1998. Aldershot 1999, 82-125; for the problem of a diffuse concept, *ibid.*, 85-86. If at least this claim is kept, 85-86. For the pretence of international politics in the "Agenda 2000" see Bretherton/Vogler, The European Union as Global Actor (note 3), 15. The document itself was revised several times, the starting point was COM(97) 2000 final and emerged clearly from the Eastern enlargement.

23 See Romano Prodi at the 32. Plenary session of the Committee of the Regions on 16 and 17 February 2000; <http://europa.eu/archives/bulletin/de/200001/p110031.htm#anch0553>.

military interventions overstressing one's own abilities could be seen as being part of this tradition.<sup>24</sup>

A frequent point of criticism the EU and its institutions have to grapple with is the allegation that its policies are corrupted by interests on every level – region, member state, EU. It appeared as though the foreign policy of the Union followed the national interests of single member states. In this reading the Eastern enlargements would come to benefit the North, e.g. Germany, while the Mediterranean partnership would be of use to the South, e.g. Spain. But on the level of the Union, the Commission was strengthened as the centre of the enlargement processes and the Union as a whole because it could expand its regional predominance and zones of influence. At the same time the institutions of the Union are also strengthened. But in the context of the Union national interests always have to be disguised with representations of Europe. No actor can formulate openly and officially on the level of the Union that a project serves its own interests alone, as this would lead to massive opposition and harsh reactions by the other partners. Besides the principle of compensation, which is at the roots of the peace-building founding ideals, this is based on the often articulated principle of (subsidiary) solidarity within the EU. Or to put it another way: Even if someone operating within the frame of global foreign policy in the 1990s had the idea of an 'Empire Europe' it could not be sold in the style of American foreign policy, as this would be incompatible with the self-representations of Europe – at least Europe had to appear as a model for the world. This tension is transferable onto the dichotomy under consideration here, namely between enlargement and integration, between 'Europe as Empire' and 'Fortress Europe'. The origin of both terms does not lie in the self-descriptions of the EU but are primarily ascriptions. Admittedly, it applies to some statements of EU actors.<sup>25</sup> It is interesting that while the EU justifies its power-political outreach with a better multipolar world order and the support of the United Nations, the neighbourhood policy could quite understandably be read as imperialistic:

*Stabilising the continent and boosting Europe's voice in the world. The aim is to pursue the enlargement strategy, which offers a unique opportunity to expand the area of freedom, stability, prosperity and peace. [...] It must also work to secure greater coherence in the management of the world economy, a gradual integration of the developing countries and the definition of new 'ground rules', essential if the fruits of globalisation are to be divided fairly and benefit the largest number of people possible. Finally, given the weakness of the international system, the objective must be to make Europe a global actor, with a political weight commensurate with its economic strength.*<sup>26</sup>

24 Overstretching implies that up until today the Union lacks the necessary resources for long-term military combat operations of its own with designated EU combat troops.

25 A fairly recent example is given in an interview with the President of the European Commission, Manuel Barroso, in 2007. He picks up on the terminology of Europe as Empire and stresses the differences to old, "military empires". See H. Mahony, Barroso says EU is an 'empire', in: euobserver.com, 11.07.2007 (<http://euobserver.com/9/24458>).

26 See work programme (Commission); Bulletin EU 1/2-2001; <http://europa.eu/archives/bulletin/en/200001/>

Accordingly, the idea of a strong Europe as the guarantor of a multipolar world order forms an important element in the representations of the European Union with regard to its foreign policy.<sup>27</sup>

Nonetheless specific positions of individual member states had to be taken into consideration. In the presidency's conclusions, the Seville European Council accepted the "traditional policy of military neutrality" of Ireland and promised "that this would continue to be the case after ratification of the Treaty of Nice".<sup>28</sup> Not only the consideration of political beliefs of single member states but also the lack of any common foreign policy as well as the multilateral orientation thwarted any dominant claim to power.<sup>29</sup> This view remained prevalent despite the challenges the enlargement placed on the efficiency of the Union. At the same time the reference to the continuing weakness of the European Union underpins the assumption that the European Union is not in the position to be an imperialistic power – even if this were its desire. The only 'imperialistic mission' that the Union could have besides the propagation of a (social) market economy and the establishment of regional organisations would be the promotion of human rights. Indeed, this is an argument often mentioned in programmatic foreign policy statements; however, this position is not accompanied by forceful efforts towards this end in day to day policy. A hint to the problematic reality of any imperialistic policy is given by the calls for a stronger commitment in the realm of foreign policy,<sup>30</sup> a fact underlined by the following remarks to the EMP.

p110012.htm. This point appears so or similar also in earlier work programmes and concepts. That the Union avoided in other co operations any imperialistic painting is demonstrated by the declaration of Rio de Janeiro in 1999. Point 3 of this declaration stresses the policy of non intervention; <http://europa.eu/archives/bulletin/de/9906/p000447.htm#anch0502>.

- 27 A paper by the Spinelli Group reads: „Die jüngsten Ereignisse zeigen, dass die Welt mit nur einer Hypermacht das gesamte globale System destabilisiert. Ein vereintes und starkes Europa ist notwendig, um die Arbeit der Vereinten Nationen möglich zu machen und um ihre Autorität wieder herzustellen. Europa hat die Pflicht, eine wichtige Rolle beim Fortschritt der internationalen Gemeinschaft hin zu demokratischen Verfahren, verbesserter Regulierung und zu einer Welt zu spielen, die kollektiv vom Recht und nicht von der reinen Macht regiert wird. Europa muss deshalb seinen Einfluß für eine angemessene Verteilung des Reichtums in der Welt, für faireren Handel, für internationale Zusammenarbeit, nachhaltige Entwicklung und Agrarpolitik, und für friedliche Konfliktlösung nutzen. Um ihre Verantwortung als ein ‚global player‘ zu erfüllen, braucht die EU den politischen Willen und die Instrumente, um eine wirkliche gemeinsame Außen- und Verteidigungspolitik entwickeln zu können.“ See Europa Dokumente Nr. 2317: Europäisches Konvent: Beitrag der Gruppe Spinelli zum neuen Föderalismus, Brussels 8. Mei [sic] 2003, 3.
- 28 Council of the European Union, Brussels, 24 October 2002 (29.10) (OR. fr) 13463/02: Seville European Council, 21 and 22 June 2002, Presidency Conclusions, 3; [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/press-data/en/ec/72638.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/press-data/en/ec/72638.pdf).
- 29 See, e.g., Europa Dokumente Nr. 2008: Politische Leitlinien und Gesetzesinitiativen für die Tätigkeit der Europäischen Kommission im nächsten Jahr, Brussels 25. Oktober 1996, 5, 6.
- 30 As an example from the end of the research period see Europa Dokumente Nr. 2334: Erweiterung, Stabilität und nachhaltiges Wachstum im Zentrum der Besorgnis der Kommission für das letzte Jahr ihres Mandats, Brussels 6. November 2003, 3: „Durch die Erweiterung wird das Auftreten der Union auf der internationalen Bühne verstärkt; dies bedeutet, dass die Union ihre Verantwortlichkeiten in ihrer Nachbarschaft überprüfen und bei der Entwicklung einer engen, unterstützenden Partnerschaft mit ihren nächsten Nachbarn im Osten sowie in der Mittelmeerregion die Führung übernehmen muss.“

### 3. The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership

Like the Eastern Enlargement, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership was the result of local/regional interests of different member states. One can argue that the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership was a result of Germany paying off Spain in 1994 in order to implement the Eastern Enlargement. The connection to the EU as a whole was that the Southern member states feared Eastern Enlargement would alter the symmetry of the Union in favour of its Northern member states. But the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership was more than merely an attempt to save the Moroccan agricultural market for Spain. It was the first international effort for highly formalized and institutionalized cooperation with – by any definition – non-European states, which reached far beyond any previous exchanges of treaties and cooperation proposals. The EU had a list of specific goals it strove to accomplish through the partnership and some member states had vital interests in the cooperation with these close neighbours. The stabilisation of the region, countering the terrorist threat emanating from Islamic groups and of the cessation of South-North migration by enhancing economic growth in the Arab states were among its main purposes.<sup>31</sup>

The foundation of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership rested on several pillars. Besides the abovementioned global changes, economic interests such as the revival of the Mediterranean Policy of the Community played a role.<sup>32</sup> But the main thrust of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership remained unclear. If one were to classify the (early failed) security cooperation as somewhere between ‘Fortress Europe’ and ‘Europe as Empire’ the European Parliament’s main focus was on “benevolent, civil-normative” Imperialism.<sup>33</sup> As in the Eastern Enlargement the issue of human rights was also used vis-à-vis the southern Mediterranean states as an instrument to intervene in their internal affairs. During the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership a number of Arab states deemed some of the reforms proposed by the Union to be unacceptable interferences in domestic affairs

31 How the different imaginations, especially of the Maghreb, shaped representations of Europe during this period is demonstrated by Johan Wagner’s article in this issue.

32 For the traditionalists in the EMP see Pierros/Meunier/Abrams, *Bridges and Barriers* (note 22); N. Fridhi/J. Quatremer (ed.), *The new Euro-Mediterranean Economic Area*. Study written by the Club de Bruxelles. For the conference organised on 28-29 February and 1st March 1996 by the Club de Bruxelles, with the support of the European Commission (DG IB, III, VII, XIII, XVII-Synergy Programme, XXIII), Brussels 1996, 3.

33 Cf. M. Köhler, *Die Mittelmeerpolitik im Anschluß an die Konferenz von Barcelona: „EMP unterscheidet sich von den anderen regionalen Kooperationspolitiken der EU. Sie ist nicht auf wirtschaftliche Integration ausgerichtet, wie etwa PHARE. Sie ist auch nicht vordringlich auf den Aufbau neuer ökonomischer Strukturen ausgerichtet, wie etwa TACIS. Andererseits ist die EMP sehr viel mehr als lediglich eine Politik der wirtschaftlichen Kooperation, wie sie die EU mit Mercosur oder ASEAN betreibt. EMP ist vielleicht am besten zu beschreiben als ein politisches Kooperationsmodell mit dem Ziel, Transitionsprozesse in Richtung einer Integration der Partnerstaaten zu beschleunigen. Dabei ist nicht unbedingt klar, ob politische oder wirtschaftliche Interessen für die EU vordringlich sind. [...] Für das Europäische Parlament ist die Förderung von Demokratie und Menschenrechten in den Partnerstaaten ein zentrales Kriterium für den Erfolg der EMP. Allen Akteuren gemeinsam erscheint die Tendenz einer funktionalen Reduktion auf Teilaspekte der EMP. Der normative Ausgangspunkt dieser Studie ist, daß die Probleme des Mittelmeerraumes sich nur in einem langfristigen Prozeß der politischen, kulturellen, sozialen und wirtschaftlichen Annäherung der Partner lösen lassen.“* In: Europäisches Parlament, Generaldirektion Wissenschaft: Arbeitsdokument, *Die Mittelmeerpolitik im Anschluß an die Konferenz von Barcelona*, Luxemburg 1998, 7.

as well as a neo-colonial act. Thereby these critics exposed a weak spot of the Union, since a number of political actors had called for a more imperialistic foreign policy of the Union in the past, which ran counter to the image the European Commission wanted to portray. These discussions of the 1990s are connected to the changes in the global situation after the fall of the 'Iron Curtain'. Already in early statements one can clearly trace an all-embracing approach as the Community felt responsible for the Mediterranean as a whole very early on in its history.<sup>34</sup> In 1985 the Commission countered concerns of the Southern member states regarding an accession of Spain and Portugal with financial guarantees. Here the geopolitical-regional strategic relevance is clearly visible.<sup>35</sup> The prospect of negotiations with the EU was appealing for the Southern Mediterranean neighbours because a membership potentially seemed possible as the boundaries of the EU were not defined. It always remains unclear along which lines the borders of Europe run. Indeed the Treaty of Rome stated that every European state could become a member of the Community, but to this day the Commission refuses to fix the geographical borders of the continent<sup>36</sup>. This is clearly illustrated in a report of the Commission from 1992: "In the Commission's view it would neither be possible nor expedient to fix the boundaries of the European Union now and for all times, as [the Union's] outlines require longer periods of time to evolve."<sup>37</sup> Here the Commission rejected a clear definition of the

- 34 E.g. Eberhard Rhein: „Es kann nicht genug betont werden, daß die neue EU-Mittelmeer-Politik in ihrem Ansatz nicht mehr auf die Finanzierung von Einzelvorhaben abzielt, sondern auf die dauerhafte Veränderung der wirtschaftlichen und politischen Rahmenbedingungen.“ E. Rhein, *Mit Geduld und Ausdauer zum Erfolg*, in: *Internationale Politik* 51 (1996), Nr. 2, 15-20, here 17. In contrast to this, Juan Manuel Fabra Valles, member of the EVP faction: "The recent conference of Barcelona defines the frame for a global pact with the whole Mediterranean area. Finally, one was anxious to apply this politic in such a way, that it encompasses all of the countries in the southern Mediterranean, not only those, with whom traditional association agreements existed." [Own translation, AW] In: *Europäisches Parlament, Fraktion der Europäischen Volkspartei (Christlich-demokratische Fraktion): Die europäische Wirtschafts- und Währungsunion. Die politische und strategische Lage im Mittelmeerraum. Die Umweltpolitik. Vouliagmeni, Studientage, 29 April – 3 Mai 1996, Luxemburg 1996*, 59.
- 35 "There is much at stake here, as whether or not the commitment is met will largely determine the future of the Mediterranean area, which – politically, strategically and economically – is of crucial importance for the Community." Quotation in: *Europa Dokumente N. 1348: The European Commission invites the Council to give Mediterranean countries concerned about community enlargement some guarantees, Brussels 20 March 1985*, 1.
- 36 Article 237 of the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community, 25.03.1957: „Jeder europäische Staat kann beantragen, Mitglied der Gemeinschaft zu werden. Er richtet seinen Antrag an den Rat; dieser beschließt einstimmig, nachdem er die Stellungnahme der Kommission eingeholt hat. Die Aufnahmebedingungen und die erforderlichlich werdenden Anpassungen dieses Vertrages werden durch ein Abkommen zwischen den Mitgliedsstaaten und dem antragstellenden Staat geregelt. Das Abkommen bedarf der Ratifizierung durch alle Vertragsstaaten gemäß ihren verfassungsrechtlichen Vorschriften.“ ([http://eur-lex.europa.eu/de/treaties/dat/11957E/tif/TRAITES\\_1957\\_CEE\\_1\\_XM\\_0310\\_x777x.pdf](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/de/treaties/dat/11957E/tif/TRAITES_1957_CEE_1_XM_0310_x777x.pdf)); see also G. Delanty, *The Frontier and Identities of Exclusion in European History*, in: *History of European Ideas* 22 (1996) 2, 93-103.
- 37 „Nach Auffassung der Kommission wäre es weder möglich noch zweckmäßig, jetzt ein für allemal die Grenzen der Europäischen Union festzulegen, deren Umrisse sich vielmehr über längere Zeiträume hinweg herausbilden müssen“ – *Europa Dokumente N. 1790: Bericht der EG-Kommission zu den Kriterien und Bedingungen für den Beitritt neuer Staaten zur Gemeinschaft, Brussels 3. Juli 1992, 1-2*. The position of the European Parliament was similar, see: *Europa Dokumente Nr. 1820/21: Entschliessung des Europäischen Parlaments zu institutionellen Problemen, zur institutionellen Rolle des Rates und zum Verfahren der Zusammenarbeit, Brussels 30. Januar. 1993, 2: "[I]n der Überzeugung, daß die Zugehörigkeit zu Europa weder geographisch noch historisch, weder ethnisch noch religiös, weder kulturell noch politisch eindeutig definierbar ist, aber in jedem Fall den politischen Willen voraussetzt, an einem gemeinsamen Schicksal teilzuhaben, [...]"*

borders. But, as previously indicated, this vagueness leads to political conflicts over objectives. Beyond its territory the EU erects different border regimes by inspecting the trans-border regions compatibility with Europe. Even though the relevant official formulations no longer differentiate between a ‘barbaric hinterland’ and ‘European’ regions (as around 1900) it nevertheless seems that there are concepts at play – from time to time different ones – which determine who may enter the Union and who may not. If one asks for the imperialistic path of the Union, it is necessary to record the commonalities and differences between both processes as the period of the decolonisation after 1945 must be regarded as a fundamental break.<sup>38</sup>

There were numerous different representations of Europe towards the “South”. On the one side the European Community styled itself as an economically successful region. More important – and with stronger imperialistic tendencies – was the pretence of representing a policy of democracy, human rights and peace-building.<sup>39</sup> Although the Union emphasised the civilizational divide between ‘Europe’ and the ‘South’, this divide could be overcome by the ‘benevolent’ leadership of the Union. In this reading the “imperial border” is not the “zone that separates radically different strangers from each other” because the declaration of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership focuses on the common ground.<sup>40</sup> How interwoven this was with the problem of migration and the avoidance of a policy that could lead to a ‘Fortress Europe’ is exemplified by the same document:

*A considerable proportion of the European Community’s immigrants is from the Mediterranean region. [...] If planned cooperation with the countries in question fails to produce a methodical way of tackling migratory pressure, friction could easily result, hurting not just international relations but also the groups of immigrants themselves.<sup>41</sup>*

Under the impression of the discussion around ‘Fortress Europe’ the EU reacted with new strategies of its neighbourhood policies which had to take the changing circumstances and different representations into account.<sup>42</sup> But through cooperation the Com-

38 Bretherton; Vogel, *The European Union as a Global Actor* (note 3), 34-36.

39 E.G. Commission of the European Communities, COM(95)72 final: Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament: Strengthening the Mediterranean Policy of European Union: Proposals for Implementing a Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, Brussels 08.03.1995, 2: “The Mediterranean is strategically important to the European Union. One of Europe’s priorities is to consolidate peace and stability in the region. This challenging task would involve: – supporting political reform and defending human rights and freedom of expression as a means of containing extremism; – promoting economic and social reform in such a way as to produce sustained growth (to create jobs) and an increase in standards of living, with the aim of stemming violence and easing migratory pressure. The Community and its partners in the Mediterranean are interdependent in many respects. Europe’s interests in the region are many and varied, including as they do the environment, energy supplies, migration, trade and investment.”

40 Münkler, *Barbaren und Dämonen* (note 10), 156. Cf. Europa Dokument N. 1930/1931: Bericht des Rates über die Beziehungen zwischen der Europäischen Union und den Mittelmeerländern zur Vorbereitung der Konferenz, die am 27.28. November in Barcelona stattfinden wird, Brussels 27. April 1995, 1-2.

41 COM (95)72 (note 39), 2.

42 See Commission of the European Communities, COM (2003) 104 final: Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament: Wider Europe – Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours, Brussels, 11.03.2003, 5: “In some cases the issue of prospective membership has already been resolved. Accession has been ruled out, for example, for the non-European Mediterranean

mission tried to avoid the impression of the EU as a fortress. This means that the EU did not wanted to bulkhead herself off but attempted to influence the environment in the South in a way that would minimize the migratory and security pressure and this region would become a smaller Europe, a small counterpart. Associated with this is a representation of Europe that is only hinted at in the statements of the EU but clearly visible in the Spanish documents. Here the EU is unquestionably the teacher that brings modernity to the South. One could criticise as imperialistic that the EU does not take different concepts and mentalities into account but that it tries to influence the processes according to its own liking. Indeed, by means of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, the EU sought to influence the conditions in the South in such a way that the migration stream would subside, yet this failed due to the actual implementation. The Southern Mediterranean neighbours gained more preferential quotas than other states but nonetheless they articulated a feeling that the Union wanted to seal off the Common Market, especially in textiles and agricultural products. So the perception of the EU as a fortress grew stronger during the EMP and intervention into the home domestic affairs of single states was regarded as imperialistic. Because the Commission as well as the Union did not understand the complaints and did nothing to resolve the tensions, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership failed in the medium term.

#### 4. The Eastern Enlargement of the European Community

How problematic debates around enlargement could become is demonstrated by the different terms used for the different accession rounds of the EC, especially when the official terms are far from consistent in and of themselves. They are problematic insofar as they are associated with historical thought structures. This especially applies to the fifth enlargement round of the EU.<sup>43</sup> Whereas 2004 Enlargement or Eastern Enlargement suggests neutrality, the German term *Osterweiterung* has more historical connotations. Especially some Polish saw the activism of some German groups as a renewal of the German Poland policy before 1945. For this reason the official accession documents

partners. But other cases remain open, such as those European countries who have clearly expressed their wish to join the EU. [...] In reality, however, any decision to further EU expansion awaits a debate on the ultimate geographic limits of the Union. This is a debate in which the current candidates must be in a position to play a full role. [...] The aim of the new Neighbourhood Policy is therefore to provide a framework for the development of a new relationship which would not, in the medium-term, include a perspective of membership or a role in the Union's institutions. A response to the practical issues posed by proximity and neighbourhood should be seen as separate from the question of EU accession."

43 For an overview see F. Schimmelfennig, Die Osterweiterung der Europäischen Union: Politiken, Prozesse, Ergebnisse, in: Zeitschrift für Staats- und Europawissenschaften. 2 (2004) 3, 465–491; E. Bos/J. Dieringer (eds), Die Genese einer Union der 27. Die Europäische Union nach der Osterweiterung, Wiesbaden 2008. On the connexion between migration, EU-accession and 'Fortress Europe' in this context (in which the term is used rather less frequently) see R. Krämer, Zwischen Kooperation und Abgrenzung – Die Ostgrenzen der Europäischen Union, in: WeltTrends (1999) 22, 9–26; Phuong, Enlarging 'Fortress Europe' (note 12).

stressed the aim of overcoming the European partition.<sup>44</sup> Many politicians understood the Eastern Enlargement as an event that corrected the historical ‘error’ of the ‘Iron Curtain’ and brought parts of Europe back into the boat of the European community. In the accession process the Central- and Eastern European candidates adopted the definition of a European identity as purported by the old member states – the ‘West’.<sup>45</sup> The Eastern enlargement therefore was stylised as a duty of historical dimensions, without any hints to an imperialistic or defensive foreign policy.<sup>46</sup> In this they continued older debates on the backwardness of Eastern Europe and the character of Europe as a model for reform there, as is demonstrated by Benjamin Beuerle for Russia after 1900 with regard to this issue. The dominant representation in view of the global position was the emphasis of the fact that with the accession of the Eastern European states the Union would be the biggest market of the world.<sup>47</sup> It is only possible to call the behaviour towards the accession candidates imperialistic insofar as they have to fulfil the conditions of the EU completely. Imperialistic indeed are the imaginations of global power and values developed after the enlargement as well as – and this is the commonality between the Eastern Enlargement and the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership – the civilising mission.

The enlargement supersedes the previous ‘walls’ of Europe, but towards the end of the millennium the EU begins to barricade itself off because the Community seems to be technically overburdened by the enlargement. Thus the EU does not become a fortress towards the migration streams but towards other states. Naturally it was clear for the Union that other states could interpret this big accession round as one last final acquisition project. The foremost goal was to create the biggest single market in the world and thereby strengthen the global importance of the Union. But because the Union draws an important part of its regional attractiveness from the potential entry into the Union and its global attractiveness from possible future alliances, any impression in the direction of a definitive closing had to be avoided. The “Joint Declaration: One Europe” of the “Final Act to the Treaty of Accession to the European Union 2003” therefore proclaimed that it is

*[O]ur common wish [...] to make Europe a continent of democracy, freedom, peace and progress. The Union will remain determined to avoid new dividing lines in Europe and to promote stability and prosperity within and beyond the new borders of the Union. We are looking forward to working together in our joint endeavour to accomplish these goals. Our aim is One Europe.*<sup>48</sup>

44 For example G. Verheugen, The Enlargement of the European Union, in: European Foreign Affairs Review 5 (2000) 439–444, here 439.

45 See Delanty, The Resonance of Mitteleuropa (note 12), 102.

46 Europa Dokumente Nr. 1766, Brussels 19. März 1992, 4.

47 Verheugen, Enlargement (note 45), 443.

48 Official Journal of the European Union, 23.09.2003: Final Act to the Treaty of Accession to the European Union 2003, 957–988, here 971. Available via <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2003:236:0957:0988:EN:PDF>.



But the accession complicated the foreign policy issue, as is demonstrated by the debates surrounding the Second Gulf War in 2003. The future member states of East Central Europe sided with the USA while old member states like France and Germany opposed military intervention. Even if the Union would have had a common position against American desires for military intervention, the problems of a common foreign policy would have become apparent by then. In this sense any common imperialistic foreign policy would have been impossible to implement. But also the 'Fortress' encountered its limits because Poland became a fervent advocate of future accession possibilities for other Eastern European states. This demonstrates that any foreign policy programme that may have existed would have reached its limits by now.

## 5. Conclusion

It is important to point out how often the EU emphasises that clear visions for a foreign policy are still missing.<sup>49</sup> Both ascriptions – 'Europe as Fortress' and 'Europe as Empire' fail both in reality as in the representations of Europe. Even if different groups of actors of the community came to use one of these ascriptions for their own goals, no group could enforce its own instrumentalisation of these representations. This is due to the character of the representations of Europe. Their foundations were laid in the Nineteen Fifties under circumstances that did not set boundaries for utopias because the reality was so unambiguous. This way a representation of an open, always receptive Europe without direct power-political interests outside of its common market could be articulated undisputed. It was not until 1990 that reality came to challenge these self-conceptions. However by 1995 it was too late to reformulate these representations given that two major enlargement rounds had taken place since 1980. Especially the so-called Northern enlargement, which strengthened that block of the Community which was most interested in the Eastern enlargement, applied criteria the Community could not step back from. These 'Copenhagen Criteria' had already been formulated in a similar version before 1990. To change the general requirements at this point in time would be a too obvious manipulation of the game. Both ascriptions thus only reflect the concentrated representation of the EU-inherent processes: the 'fortress' stands prototypically for the consolidation and the 'Empire' for the enlargement. But therefore Empire is a badly chosen term. When Herfried Münkler stresses that one of the defining features Empire is the presence of soft borders, then this does not apply to the EU as it is enclosed by sovereign states. The only form that could be considered imperialistic is the civilising mission. While the foreign policy is a prerogative of the member states the EU could concentrate on internal projects. It is important to mention that to follow any imperial idea the centre must know what it wants and how to achieve it; only then something

49 See e.g. Commission of the European Communities, COM (2003) 104 final: Wider Europe – Neighbourhood, Brussels 2003, 9.

like an expansive foreign policy comparable to that of an Empire becomes conceivable. But these clear visions are absent in the polyphonic EU. It may seem paradox in light of what has previously been mentioned, however the Union is too centralised and bureaucratically organised and manoeuvres within a world of established international law for “men on the spot” to be able to change a great deal. One problem is often forgotten when the foreign policy of the Community is flagged as imperialistic: the return of the nation state. The primary frame of reference for the EU – whether considered as a supra-, inter- or transnational institution – is the modern, Western nation state and not the Empire. The community had to cope with the resurgence of the nation state in Eastern Europe since the Nineteen Nineties and the permanent emphasis on this concept in the South. The time does not seem ripe for its efforts to build a multipolar world order with strong international institutions.

Fortress is a term coined to criticise the different efforts of the EU to cope with the growing pressure in migration. For the self-representation of the EU it was crucial to portray itself as an economical successful area. This was connected with the desire to be attractive. But when during the Nineteen Nineties this attractiveness led to rising numbers of immigrants the EU tried to stop this. Because the fortress-military-metaphor could not be combined with the self-representations, the community tried to establish ties to the periphery through contracts and agreements to influence their political and economical development. But one should not conflate this with a classical imperialistic foreign policy. Inside of the EU there was no consensus about what to do with the periphery. The conflicts and critical junctures of the enlargement debates of the Nineteen Nineties resulted in increasing self-preoccupation and reflection of the Union. But even then, there were no political and financial dispositions towards turning the EU into a fortress.

That this process is still underway and intermediary results will always be disputed by one or another is best proven by the conflicts around the two projects displacing the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and the Union for the Mediterranean. Nonetheless, the article asked for the articulated representations by European politicians involved in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and the Eastern Enlargement as well as secondary literature which either connect the Union to the concept of Empire or not. It is claimed as a result that for politicians and bureaucrats involved at the level of the Commission or other institutions of the European Union, the self representation of being an Empire seemed rather absurd. This had historical as well as institutional reasons, for example the representation of Europe as the space of freedom and democracy and the emphasis of a non-violent foreign policy of the Union as a whole. But there are sometimes politicians from single member states who on occasion propose openly or indirectly politics that could be interpreted as imperialistic. Here one can ask for continuities of imperial representations in different member states. The differences but also the similarities between both articles (Christian Methfessel’s one and this one) clarify the evolution of representations of Europe vis-à-vis European border regions and non-European states.

One could therefore conclude from the different programmes that after an idealistic beginning these programmes were overtaken by reality. Just as the Eastern European states did not instantly become European in economic and judicial terms, the neighbours in the South did not become democratic and secure overnight either. So, the Union as a whole complied to a *realpolitik* and for that reason alone turned into an opponent of the United States. After the end of the Cold War the USA tried to defend their position as the last remaining superpower while the EU propagated a new multipolar world order dominated by supranational institutions. Although this was in some way also an ideological policy, the EU disliked the aggressive tone and the militant actions by which the USA strove to spread capitalism and democracy. It was impossible to implement any imperial or fortification policy in all its abrasiveness because no adequate representation of Europe could be instrumentalised in any consensual way. The big foreign policy approach to being at least a regional hegemonic power and to frame and advocate the policies of the neighbouring states (Euro-Mediterranean Partnership) failed and the classical mechanisms of negotiation and institutional arrangements seemed to be overstrained by the enlargement. Thus after the completion of the accession of the new Eastern European member states the EU halted any plans for further enlargement. Metaphorically speaking, this policy was more of a "snail shell" than a "fortress". Among the reasons behind this development were an inconsistent foreign policy, the inability to convince the regimes in the Southern Mediterranean to adopt more far-reaching economic and political reforms, the obstructions the USA used to restrict EU foreign policy in the region as well as the resurgence of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. But institutional reforms around the treaty of Lisbon and the creation of the office of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy set the institutional foundations for a more active foreign policy in the future. How this foreign policy will appear with regard to the representations of Europe mentioned here remains to be seen, yet past examples strongly suggest that the Union will never resort to an active foreign policy such as the one of the USA. So to say, both concepts had no lasting effects on the representations of Europe, they – if they ever did – changed only momentarily the politics of the Union.