

# **Internal EU coordination for the G7, G8 and G20**

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## **Abstract**

This study examines if, how and why the EU coordinates for the G7, G8 and G20 (Gx). It focuses on internal EU coordination in Brussels involving all EU member states as opposed to ‘external’ coordination among European Gx participants in the margins of Gx meetings. This dissertation conceptualises coordination as a process and develops an elaborate definition of coordination. Subsequently, a coordination scale is constructed to distinguish between three coordination processes: information sharing, consultation and group decision-making. This scale is used to map out internal EU coordination processes for each Gx forum. In this way, this study provides a comprehensive overview of the (informal) procedures, the actors and committees involved and the evolution over time, from 2008 to 2012.

It appears that internal EU coordination not only differs across the three Gx forums, but also within a single forum such as the G20. In order to understand these patterns of coordination, six potential causal factors are assessed: existing policies, interests, competences, relevance, EU influence and Gx organization. These variables are applied to eight cases, covering most of the Gx agenda. Empirically, this study relies on 88 expert interviews, official documentation and an online survey completed by 160 government officials in the EU member states and institutions. The thesis concludes with a careful attempt to construct causal paths that lead to certain levels of internal EU coordination for the Gx.

This dissertation illustrates, among other things, that Gx-related factors significantly influence the level of internal coordination for the G7, G8 and G20. However, coordination seems to be less affected by the informal character of the Gx than it is generally assumed. Furthermore, it is argued that the role of the non-Gx EU member states cannot be ignored if one seeks to understand the level of internal EU coordination for the Gx. Finally, it appears that the European Commission is more concerned about its own performance and that of the Union in the Gx, rather than about involving the non-Gx EU member states in the Gx process.

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## Abbreviations

BCBS	Basel Committee for Banking Supervision
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China & South-Africa
CCS	Carbon capture and storage
COREPER	Permanent Representatives Committee
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DWG	Development Working Group
ECOFIN	Economic and Financial Affairs Council
ECOSOC	Economic and Social Council
EFC	Economic and Financial Committee
EPSCO	Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council
EU23	non-G8 EU member states
EU4	G8 EU member states
EUi	European institutions
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FSB	Financial Stability Board
FSF	Financial Stability Forum
G20	Group of Twenty
G7	Group of Seven
G8	Group of Eight
HRC	Human Rights Council
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IO	International Organisation
IPEEC	International Partnership for Energy Efficiency Cooperation
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
SCIMF	Sub-Committee on IMF-related affairs
TEU	Treaty on the European Union
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
TOR	Terms of reference
UN	United Nations
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
WHO	World Health Organisation

# Chapter 1

## **Introduction**

This study is about internal EU coordination for the G7, G8 and G20 (Gx). Internal EU coordination refers to coordination in Brussels involving all EU member states as opposed to ‘external’ coordination among European Gx participants in the margins of Gx meetings. This dissertation examines if, how and why the EU coordinates for the G7, G8 and G20. It conceptualises different coordination processes and maps out these processes for each Gx forum. In this way, this study provides a comprehensive overview of the (informal) procedures, the actors and committees involved and the evolution over time, from 2008 to 2012. It appears that internal EU coordination not only differs across the three Gx forums, but also within a single forum such as the G20. In order to understand these patterns of coordination, six causal factors are explored in eight cases based on expert interviews, official documentation and an online survey. The explanatory value of each variable is assessed in an embedded comparative case study design which subsequently leads to a tentative explanatory framework for EU coordination in the G7, G8 and G20.

This chapter introduces the two research questions: to what extent does the EU coordinate internally for the G7, G8 and G20 and what explains the differences in coordination for these forums. Subsequently, I explain the pragmatist research approach that guides this research and discuss the methodology and case selection. Finally, the contribution of this study is discussed. Chapter two provides an overview of the evolution and organisation of the G7, G8 and G20 and it reconstructs how and to what extent the EU and its member states became involved in each of the three forums. The third chapter develops a definition of coordination and constructs a coordination scale. Additionally, it suggests six hypotheses to explain EU coordination for the G7, G8 and G20. Methods and data collection are discussed in chapter four, while chapter five and six present the empirical material for our two research questions. The final chapter works towards a tentative explanatory framework and draws some general conclusions.

## **1.1. Problem definition and research questions**

In the G7, G8 and G20, four large EU member states – France, Germany, the UK and Italy, hereafter ‘EU4’ – are directly represented<sup>1</sup> as opposed to the 23 non-Gx EU member states (EU23)<sup>2</sup>. The EU has been fully participating in the G8 for more than three decades and has been an official member of the G20 since its inception in 1999. Given the EU’s long-time participation in these Gx forums, one could expect that the EU23 are in some way or another involved in the EU’s preparation for Gx meetings. After all, EU representatives in the Gx are supposed to represent all EU member states.

However, this assumption has not yet been systematically examined, apart from a paper by Nasra et al. (2009). The limited scholarly attention to the involvement of the EU23 in the Gx process is remarkable. On the one hand, the G7, G8 and G20 have the potential to exert great influence in international affairs. They are able to set the international agenda, create policy networks and prod other institutions. Besides the actual impact of members’ decisions, the political direction set by the Gx often trickles down to the agenda of other regional and international organisations (IOs) (Hodges, 1999: 69-73). Accordingly, ample attention has been paid to the G7, G8 and G20 and their respective role in global governance, yet the role of the EU – let alone the indirect involvement of the EU23 – in the Gx remains largely underexposed (Putnam & Bayne, 1987; Baker, 2006; Kirton, Daniels, & Freytag, 2001; Hajnal, 2007; Kirton, 2013). On the other hand, an increasing number of studies deals with the relationship between the EU and IOs (Jørgensen, 2009; Blavoukos & Bourantonis, 2011; Jørgensen & Laatikainen,

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<sup>1</sup> Spain is also a ‘permanent guest’ of the G20,

<sup>2</sup> Croatia became a member of the EU in July 2013, making it EU24. However, since this study focuses on the period 2008-2012, the term EU23 will be used.

2013), though, despite a few exceptions, the Gx has not received much consideration (Nasra et al., 2009; Huigens & Niemann 2009; Niemann & Huigens, 2011, Larionova, 2012).

Moreover, a closer look at the Gx context suggests that the involvement of the EU23 is not as self-evident as it might seem. For example, the G7, G8 and G20 are informal, club-like forums of nation states that lack the basic features of an IO such as a foundational treaty or formalized rules for membership. As the Gx outcomes lack any legal status, it is unclear to what extent the EU23 are actually bound by the EU's commitments in the Gx and thus to what extent EU23 involvement is required. In addition, the EU4, who participate in national capacity in the Gx, may obstruct attempts to involve the EU23 in order to protect their privileged membership of the Gx. The presence of the EU4 beside to representatives of the EU may also undermine the role of the EU in the Gx. The EU representatives have to walk a thin line as they may not upset the EU4 while also representing the EU23. Hence, involving the EU23 countries might not only be unnecessary but also undesirable or inappropriate.

In this thesis, the problematique of EU23 involvement is approached by looking at internal EU coordination for the G7, G8 and G20. Internal EU coordination refers to coordination that involves all EU member states and takes place before or after Gx meetings. Narrowing the focus from involvement to internal coordination keeps the subject researchable, while still paying attention to the possible involvement of EU23 countries in the EU's preparation for Gx meetings. The focus on internal EU coordination excludes coordination 'on the spot' among the EU4 and EU representatives in the margins of Gx meetings. It also excludes internal decision-making within the European Commission to establish an EU position for the Gx. Hence, the first main research question in this study is to what extent does the EU coordinate internally for the G7, G8 and G20.

### ***Research Question 1***

To what extent does the EU coordinate internally for the G7, G8 and G20?

An elaborate definition of coordination and a coordination scale is developed in chapter three. At this stage, it is important to highlight that this study considers coordination not as an outcome, i.e. the degree to which coordination is achieved, but as a process of achieving this end-result. In this view, our first research question investigates if and how the EU coordinates for Gx meetings, analyses the procedures used and examines the actors involved. Chapter five presents the findings on the level of coordination for the entire Gx system including the summit, preparatory sherpa meetings as well as nearly all policy areas of the Gx agenda. In this analysis, special attention will be paid to the role of the EU23 and EU4 as well as the European institutions such as the European Commission, the permanent and rotating Council president and the European Parliament. The study covers five years, from 2008 to 2012. Going back to 2008 enables the inclusion of the establishment of the G20 at the level of heads of state and government while minimizing the impact of personnel turnover on our research activities.

A first look at the EU's coordination efforts for the Gx reveals that the answer to the first research question is not straightforward. It appears that EU coordination varies across the three Gx forums and across different policy domains. For example, established internal coordination mechanisms with all EU member states are nearly non-existent for the G8. In contrast, coordination mechanisms for the G20 are relatively well developed especially for economic and financial affairs. All EU member states have plenty of opportunities to shape the EU's position in the G20 as far as economic and financial matters are concerned. However, for development-related G20 agenda items, internal EU coordination is limited to informative briefings by the European Commission. These patterns require further analysis and constitute our second

research question, namely what explains the differences in EU coordination for the G7, G8 and G20. The analytical framework to examine this research framework is developed in chapter three.

### ***Research Question 2***

What explains the differences in EU coordination for the G7, G8 and G20?

By focusing on how, when and why member states decide to coordinate, the dissertation tackles an under-explored aspect of the research on the EU in international contexts. Despite a growing body of literature on the Union's presence in international institutions (e.g. Jørgensen & Laatikainen, 2013) and the effectiveness of EU coordination (Smith, 2010; van Schaik, 2010), studies that explain why and when the EU coordinates are relatively rare. Most analyses on internal decision-making in the framework of the EU's external relations are situated in the traditional foreign policy sphere or in the area of trade policy (Delreux 2006: 244). Internal decision-making in the context of the EU's external economic relations remains however largely under-explored.

## **1.2. Research approach**

This study on EU coordination for the Gx forums is embedded in a pragmatist tradition. In the words of Kaag and Kreps (2012: 192), pragmatism is broadly interpreted as "what works". It tries to provide an answer to epistemological and methodological debates because it implies using the particular approach(es) that work(s) for the particular problem. A pragmatist abandons the search for epistemological purity and relies on those assumptions and methods that are useful to understand a complex phenomenon.

For many decades, social science has been dominated by the dividing debate between positivist and interpretivist approaches. Generally, positivists believe that a reality exists apart from our perception of it, just waiting to be discovered. That social world displays time- and context-free regularities that can be discovered by social scholars in the same way scientists discover regularities in nature. Thus only through observation, measurement and empirical facts, scientific knowledge can be acquired and general causes and universal laws can be discovered (Viotti & Kauppi, 1999: 16-17; Jørgensen, 2010: 263; Kurki & Wight, 2010: 22-23). Conversely, interpretivism rejects the belief that there is an objective reality that can be understood solely through scientific methods. Interpretivists believe that social reality is subjective and constructed by individuals. Truth and meaning is not discovered, but socially constructed. Consequently, there is no single truth since the meaning of a certain phenomenon may be constructed in different ways by different people. Interpretivists also typically use qualitative methods to understand the social world (Crotty, 1998: 9).

Pragmatism sets aside these unresolvable metatheoretical disputes and encourages engagement with the world of policy and practice. It offers a practical and outcome-oriented method of inquiry that is marked by action, dialogue and a spirit of fallibilism (Sil & Katzenstein, 2010: 411). Pragmatism has long been proposed as an alternative to the paralyzing epistemological debate of scientific inquiry. Often, social scientists have implicitly embraced pragmatism as common sense. However, only recently, pragmatism has been increasingly picked up by International Relations scholars as an explicit research approach (Davis, 2009; Cornut, 2009; Kerremans & Orbie, 2013; Delputte, 2013).

The main idea of pragmatism is that an idea or proposition is true only if it works satisfactorily. The meaning of an idea is to be found in its practical consequences, while impractical ideas are to be rejected (Hellmann, 2009: 641). So, if two different ontological positions do not make a difference in how we conduct our research, then the distinction is, for



practical purposes, not very meaningful (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004: 17). In order to know what works, researchers need to interact with the field they observe. Acquiring social knowledge occurs in actual empirical situations in which we act more or less by trial and error to solve a relevant problem (Reich, 2009: 62). Interaction with the field does however not happen uninformed. Pragmatists reject the split between theory and practice and consider “thinking and acting as two sides of the same coin” (Hellmann, 2009: 641). Hence, researchers engage with the empirical field on the basis of existing conceptual notions derived from scholarship. During the process, concepts may be adjusted, rejected or new concepts may be introduced or developed based on new empirical insights. As a consequence, pragmatism neither advocates inductive nor deductive research strategies.

While some scholars position pragmatism as a third way of social scientific inquiry next to positivism and interpretivism (e.g. Cochran, 2002), many others consider pragmatism heavily connected to interpretivism and constructivism (Reich, 2009: 57). Given that pragmatism believes that knowledge is socially constructed, it indeed shares the main tenet of interpretivism. Gould and Onuf (Ralston, 2011: 88) see a significant area of overlap between pragmatism and constructivism and argue that “some constructivists are beginning to realize they have been pragmatists all along”. Though, Weber (2013: 30) notes that constructivists tend to see knowledge as wholly constructed in a sense that human beings have total control over how they construct the world. However, the construction of ideas can also be limited by for example past experience. In a pragmatic tradition, knowledge is viewed as being socially constructed *as well as* based on the reality of the world we experience and live in (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004: 18).

For the purpose of this dissertation, pragmatism is perfectly suited. Pragmatists study practical problems rather than testing abstract theories (Cornut, 2009: 5). In the first place, this study aims to bring about deep and comprehensive understanding of EU coordination in the context of the Gx. A pragmatic stance allows me to approach this complex phenomenon with an open mind. As a pragmatist, I seek exposure to different arguments in theory as well as in practice, approach these arguments openly, compose own arguments creatively, and am constantly reminded of and challenged by the shortcomings of the arguments (Kornporbst, 2009). Hence, pragmatism is not an excuse for doing empirical research unencumbered by epistemological and methodological considerations. Instead, as Friedrichs and Kratochwil (2009: 707) argue, it is an instrument to conduct research with an appropriate degree of epistemological and methodological awareness. Like Fearon and Wendt (2002: 52), I consider different paradigms as complementary analytical tools for looking at social reality, rather than competing starting points for conducting social research. Based on the idea that “logic has priority to ontology” (Ralston, 2010: 92), concepts will be included in the analysis if they are useful to understand EU coordination. Committing to a certain paradigm *a priori* would yield benefits in terms of parsimony, but parsimony is not my first concern. This approach is particularly useful since EU coordination for the Gx and international organisations in general is still largely under-examined.

Just as no single epistemological and ontological stance is taken, this study does not apply a single coherent theoretical framework. Nevertheless, it is acknowledged that several grand and middle range theories could offer valuable perspectives on the process of internal EU coordination, even though it is unclear how these different theories would define internal EU coordination. For example, according to intergovernmentalism, the level of coordination could be the result of the power game between the EU4 and the EU23 in which the EU4, as Gx members and powerful EU member states, would largely determine the process and outcome. In this setting, the role of the European institutions would also be very limited. Neo-functionalists, in turn, would assume that European institutions would become agents of further integration and advocate for stronger coordination. It is however difficult to consider more intensive coordination as deeper integration since it does not involve a transfer of sovereignty to a central authority. Furthermore, the historical, rational choice and sociological variants of neo-

institutionalism would each emphasise different aspects of the process of and motivations behind coordination. For example, coordination might occur because it helps to maximize the member states' preferences or because policy-makers believe that coordination strengthens the influence of the EU in international settings. Finally, although principal-agent theory focuses on delegation and agency influence, this perspective could approach coordination as a mechanism for the principals to control the agents. However, it appears that coordination also serves other purposes that do not necessarily fit in a principal-agent framework.

As will be extensively illustrated, a thorough and comprehensive understanding of internal EU coordination for the Gx requires elements from all these different theoretical frameworks. Therefore, and given the unexplored state of the research area on internal EU coordination (see chapter three), it seems undesirable to commit to a certain theory in advance. Applying one or more specific theoretical lenses would definitely be useful to highlight the role of certain actors, processes or decisions, but it would still remain a limited perspective.

### **1.3. Methodology**

The research questions in this study have been examined through abductive reasoning. Abduction is one way of pursuing scientific research in a pragmatic tradition. According to Friedrichs and Kratochwil (2009: 714-715) a typical situation for abduction is when we become interested in a class of phenomena for which we lack applicable theories. If we simply trust that what we see is not random, we start collecting pertinent observations, while applying concepts from existing fields of knowledge. The choice of observations to be made and concepts to be applied will be driven by our research interests. Concepts may be refined or rejected if they do not help us reach our objectives. Otherwise the scope for observations may be adjusted by redefining the boundaries of the class of phenomena under study. Hence, abduction incorporates elements of both induction and deduction. It is a logical process to acquire scientific knowledge that involves both inference and insight (Kaag & Kreps, 2012: 194). For Friedrichs and Kratochwil (2009: 709), abduction is “reasoning at an intermediate level”.

Although Friedrichs and Kratochwil suggest that abduction should in the first place be used to provide orientation in the field of study, abduction does not preclude causal theorizing (Friedrichs & Kratochwil, 2009: 716-719). In this dissertation, abduction serves both purposes. It helps us in understanding the complex phenomenon of EU coordination, while it may also elicit potential causal factors to explain EU coordination processes for the Gx. With regard to causality, I assume ‘multiple conjunctural causation’, which implies that different causal paths may lead to the same outcome (Rihoux & Ragin, 2009: 8). EU coordination can thus be explained by different configurations of causal factors. Those causal configurations depend on the context, time frame, as well as on the researcher and his or her interaction with the field.

Although abduction might suggest to some that research is conducted in an improvised, unstructured and arbitrary way, this study has followed a logical, but flexible plan entailing a couple of explicit steps or phases. Nevertheless, these individual steps are not clearly delineated in time since there was a constant interaction between different phases, between practice and theory and between the different substantive cases. Newly gained insights in one part of the study influenced research in other parts. The remainder of this section makes the research plan specific. It explains how the research questions have been addressed and clarifies the selection of cases. Chapter four tackles the specific methods that have been used to gain knowledge. These include expert interviews, an online survey and a literature study of primary and secondary sources. Chapter four also introduces a number of tools that have been applied to manage the complexity stemming from the considerable amount of observations.

### **1.3.1. Research Question 1**

Very early on in this research project, practitioners were interviewed in order to have a finger on the pulse. In this way, I was directly able to monitor new developments with regard to EU coordination for the Gx forums. Since this process was rapidly changing, a snapshot during a limited timeframe would not have been adequate to fully understand these coordination processes. Therefore, interviews have been conducted throughout the entire research project whereby the *level* of EU coordination was continually addressed. Parallel to this, literature on (EU) coordination (in IOs) was consulted in search of conceptual clues and applicable theories or frameworks. When the literature on coordination appeared to be limited in scope and only partially useful to study EU coordination for the Gx, I developed a suitable definition and conceptual framework of coordination and constructed a coordination scale by combining concepts from the literature and insights from the field (see chapter three). In an iterative process, all available elements have been used to adjust and fine-tune the coordination definition and scale as well as to construct a comprehensive picture of internal EU coordination for the G7, G8 and G20.

Research on the first research question is both exploratory and descriptive. It is exploratory in the sense that it literally explores the field of study. It endeavours to determine the boundaries of the phenomenon and tries to provide a better understanding of the situation. This is crucial since so far, the internal EU's preparation of Gx meetings has not been systematically studied. At the same time, chapter five, which presents the findings on the level of EU coordination for the Gx, is descriptive as it describes the sequence of events, maps processes and players and classifies observed coordination attempts according to the conceptual framework.

In mapping the level of EU coordination for the Gx, the aim is to be as comprehensive as possible. This should ensure that no important empirical data is overlooked. After all, if certain cases with extreme coordination 'values' were to be missed, this could seriously undermine any conclusions on causality. Therefore, I examined coordination processes for (nearly) all aspects of the Gx process. This includes not only coordination for seven different policy areas – finance, development, trade, agriculture, labour, climate and energy – , but also coordination for the Gx summits and sherpa meetings. While each aspect or every policy domain could be seen as a separate case, this part of the study is not conceived as a case study since the entire 'population' of EU coordination processes was examined. Consequently, there was no need to make a selection of cases. However, I say *nearly* all aspects because I did exclude one policy area, notably foreign affairs. This dissertation does not pay attention to so-called 'high politics' such as peace and security, geopolitical issues or non-proliferation. Although I acknowledge that foreign affairs issues represent a significant share of the G8 agenda, this choice has been made because of feasibility considerations. This study already covers multiple different policy areas for both research questions and to include foreign affairs would be at the expense of what is currently presented. Foreign affairs issues have distinct characteristics, involve other networks and tend to depend more on the news of the day. The expectation was that the learning costs and additional research efforts would not have been compensated by new and innovative insights. However, it definitely is a promising area for further research.

### **1.3.2. Research Question 2**

To analyse the differences in EU coordination across the Gx forums and across individual policy domains, the same abductive reasoning process has been applied. "In the very identification of potential causal factors", writes Jackson (2009: 658), "[pragmatists] are creatively arranging the ambiguous material of the world in dialogue with the scholarly traditions within which we locate ourselves". Accordingly, expert interviews revealed potential causal clues which have been put in relation to hypotheses found in the literature and vice versa. Certain findings

have been further explored via an online survey. Intuitively developed expectations also influenced the reasoning process. In a pragmatist tradition, concepts are incorporated in the analysis if they are useful for understanding the problem. Subsequently, out of this process, six potential causal factors or variables have been distilled: existing policies, interests, competences, Gx relevance, EU influence and the organisation of the Gx system. These variables are elaborated in chapter three.

Although pragmatists usually refrain from using language that is typically associated with positivism such as ‘variables’, ‘hypotheses’ or ‘causality’, I have opted to call causal factors variables and to formulate hypotheses. Alternative terms are drivers, forces or determinants, and I could use expectations instead of hypotheses, but in essence, all these terms have a similar meaning and imply causation (Davis, 2009: 3). However, rather than looking for *the* explanation of EU coordination, the aim is to understand which aspects matter (most) for determining the level of EU coordination for the Gx forums in a particular timeframe. Moreover, hypotheses are not conceived here as expectations to be tested against an objective external reality, nor can this research be considered as a purely hypothesis-formulating study, because in the process of developing hypotheses, insights were directly put in touch (‘tested’) with practitioners and other data sources.

Findings on the second research question are presented in chapter six and structured as a comparative embedded case study. From the perspective of pragmatism, case studies provide valuable practical details and experience which illuminate the value of the hypotheses (Mills, Durepos, & Wiebe, 2010: 724). In the view of Friedrichs and Kratochwil (2009: 719) “abduction is a comparative case study method”. A comparative case study enables us to contrast and relate findings in multiple cases and may reveal possible patterns of similarity and difference (George & Bennett, 2004). In this dissertation, a case represents a policy domain in a particular Gx forum. The boundaries between the different policy domains are however not strict as for example, development involves trade and agricultural issues. In total, eight cases have been selected (see Table 1). According to the idea that “a pragmatic researcher will typically select either the most important or the most typical cases in each domain” (Friedrichs & Kratochwil, 2009: 718), case sampling has followed a ‘most important’ case selection strategy.

With regard to the G20 agenda, five cases have been included: finance, development, labour & employment, food & agriculture and trade. In this study, finance and development represent the two key G20 cases while the other three policy domains are relatively less elaborate. In the empirical chapter six, findings on the G20 cases labour & employment, food & agriculture and trade are therefore grouped under the heading ‘other G20 cases’. This is due to two reasons. First, finance and development appeared to be ‘extreme cases’ with extreme values of EU coordination. In order to detect potential causal factors, both cases have been studied first and rely on the largest number of interviews. As soon as more specific hypotheses came to light, preliminary findings were applied to the other G20 cases. Consequently, these cases are included in the study as they offer valuable information and provide useful insights for the hypotheses under consideration. More importantly, conclusions based on extreme cases can only be representative for the population, i.e. the Gx process, if they are compared with a larger sample of cases (Seawright & Gerring, 2008: 297). Second, research on the ‘other G20 cases’ is less extensive because G20 activities in these areas are less prominent and rather limited and modest. For example, food and agriculture only appeared on the agenda in 2011 and 2012, with only two high-level meetings. It is also illustrative that trade issues are not prepared in a dedicated trade working group, but form one of the many agenda items at meetings of the G20 sherpas, the leader’s personal representatives.

As far as the G8 is concerned, an analysis of the agenda between 2008 and 2012 resulted in the selection of two cases: development and energy/climate. The second case treats both energy and climate issues together since the G8 has been framing energy and climate security as

interconnected challenges since 2002 (Van de Graaf, 2013: 135). For reasons mentioned earlier, foreign affairs issues have been excluded from the study. Finally, from 2008 and 2012 the G7 has only been dealing with financial, economic and monetary issues.

Case	Dossier
G20 – Finance	Global economy
	Financial regulation
	Tax evasion
	IMF reform
G20 – Development	The Multi-Year Action Plan
G20 – Labour & Employment	Quality employment
	Youth employment
G20 – Food & Agriculture	AMIS
	Agricultural production
	Biofuel policies
G20 – Trade	Protectionism
	Doha Development Agenda
G8 – Development	Health-MDGs
	Food security
G8 – Energy/climate	Climate targets
	IPEEC
	Carbon capture and storage
G7 – Finance	Global economy
	Monetary affairs

**Table 1. Selection of cases and dossiers.**

A final point is that this study is a comparative *embedded* case study. Embedded case studies involve more than one unit of analysis (Scholz & Tietje, 2002: 9-10). The choice for an embedded case study was motivated by the realization that the variables play at different levels of analysis. For example, competences, relevance and the organisation of the Gx are related to the policy domain, while the latter two also vary depending on the Gx forum. In addition, existing policies and interests are rather focused on individual dossiers. Therefore, cases have been further specified into dossiers, following a similar “most important” sampling strategy. The selected dossiers are listed in Table 1 and substantively introduced in chapter six. An embedded case study allows us to systematically analyse data within, between and across the cases (Baxter & Jack, 2008: 550).

#### **1.4. Contribution of the study**

This study on internal EU coordination for the G7, G8 and G20 adds value to the academic literature in at least six ways. First, the recent appearance of the G20 at the centre of global governance has renewed interest from policy-makers and academics in the role of the EU in the Gx system. Nevertheless in general, the role of the EU in the G7, G8 and G20 remains largely underexposed. The literature particularly ignores the involvement of the EU23, who are after all indirectly represented in the Gx through their EU membership. This thesis obviously addresses that gap.

Second, this study also represents an often neglected case in the study of the EU in multilateral institutions. The case of the EU in the Gx however is a peculiar one, given the informal character of the Gx and the specific membership arrangements of the EU in the Gx forums. In addition, studies that explain why and when the EU coordinates in IOs are remarkably rare despite an increasing number of studies on EU in IOs and extensive research on coordination in other disciplines such as computer science or organisational studies. So far, EU

coordination has been primarily approached as an independent variable, for example to explain the EU's influence in international settings (Smith, 2010). Coordination as a dependent variable remains however largely under-explored, particularly in areas outside the traditional foreign policy sphere (except for trade).

Third, this study develops a more sophisticated conceptualisation of coordination than what already exists by approaching coordination as a process rather than the degree to which EU member states can agree on a common EU position. Based on this definition of coordination, a scale is constructed which typifies four levels of coordination. The definition aims to grasp the many different forms of EU coordination in the full spectrum of international institutions. This facilitates future comparative research on EU coordination for multiple international organisations and benefits the theorizing of EU coordination.

Fourth, EU- and IO-specific factors are combined to explain EU coordination. Despite the growing recognition among scholars that the external context affects the EU's behaviour, there has been little systematic attention paid to the question of how the character of the multilateral system influences, constrains or enables the EU to act (Kissack, 2010: 5). Nevertheless, since the study of EU coordination in IOs is located at the intersection of the international and the EU level, the internal focus is of limited value and IO-specific features need to be taken into account (Jørgensen & Laatikainen, 2013: 4). Thus, relying on either EU-specific or IO-specific factors cannot provide a full account of EU coordination. Hence, this research proposal adds a second 'explanatory layer' consisting of IO-specific variables on top of EU-specific variables and thereby contributes to our understanding of the influence of the external context on the EU's behaviour.

Fifth, the research leaves room for intra-organisational diversity. An IO is not a static setting in which the EU operates. Not only may EU coordination vary within a single IO, the characteristics of that IO such as its relevance, may also differ across different policy areas. In other words, one IO can also represent several distinct contexts.

Sixth, this study provides a substantial empirical contribution by relying on 88 expert interviews, various official, often confidential documents and an online survey that has been completed by 160 government officials in the EU member states and institutions. Data collection by means of an online survey is highly original in this field and provides very valuable first-hand information. By measuring the perception of the relevance of the Gx, the survey offers new and useful insights on how EU member states perceive the Gx. While the attitude of most G8 and G20 countries vis-à-vis the G7, G8 and G20 has already been covered in the literature (Lesage, 2010; Bradford, 2011), the perception of the G7, G8 and G20's relevance by the EU, including the non-Gx EU member states has not yet been systematically addressed.

Chapter 2  
**Literature review**

In order to fully understand EU coordination for the G7, G8 and G20, it is imperative to first gain insight in the origins, organisation and functioning of these three forums as well as to situate the EU's role in the Gx. This chapter first provides an overview of the evolution and agendas of the G7, G8 and G20. Next, it discusses their organisation, functioning and relevance. Subsequently, by reviewing the literature on the EU in the G7, G8 and G20, it reconstructs how and to what extent the EU and its member states became involved in each of the three forums. In addition, the literature also offers a couple of insights on EU coordination for the G8 and G20, which are presented at the end of this chapter.

## **2.1. Origins and evolution<sup>3</sup>**

The roots of the Gx system can be traced back to the first informal gathering of the finance ministers of France, West Germany, the UK and the US in the White House Library in March 1973 to discuss the world's monetary system. The meeting of the so-called Library Group must be seen against the wider economic background of the early 1970s. The world economic system was under severe stress due to a number of events: the collapse of the Bretton Woods monetary system; the oil crisis of 1973-74; the ensuing economic recession in the OECD countries and the first enlargement of the European Community to include Britain, Denmark and Ireland which had not reinforced the Atlantic partnership but instead increased frustration and misunderstanding (Putnam & Bayne, 1987: 25-27; Hajnal, 2007: 11-12). The four finance ministers experienced a heightened vulnerability to economic shocks and sought a way to find coordinated solutions, especially since the traditional international organisations seemed unable to cope with these developments.

While the first Library Group meeting did not lead to substantive results, the informal, frank and candid exchange of information and opinion was highly valued by its participants. Consequently, the Library Group met periodically for a number of years and was soon joined by the Japanese Finance Minister, forming the Group of Five finance ministers (G5) (Baker, 2006: 24).

When the finance ministers of France, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, and Germany, Helmut Schmidt, became the leaders of their countries in 1975, they were keen to continue the informal talks at the level of heads of state and government (Garavoglia, 1984: 5). Hence, Giscard took the initiative for a 'Western Economic Summit' in Rambouillet on 15-17 November 1975, based on the Library Group format, i.e. a minimum of protocol and a maximum of discretion. The Rambouillet meeting brought together the leaders of Germany, France, Italy, Japan, the UK and the US as well as their finance and foreign affairs ministers to "discuss economic issues of mutual interest, including the promotion of recovery in the world economy, trade and monetary policy, developments in energy and other raw material markets, and relations with other developed and developing nations" (Hajnal, 2007: 21). The forum was extended to include Canada in 1976, becoming the G7.

However, even before the leaders met in Rambouillet, tensions arose over the summit process (Merlini, 1984: 193-195). On the one hand, Giscard and Schmidt pushed the idea of a multilateral summit meeting to consider economic issues in a personal and exclusive setting. Together with the colleagues from Italy and the UK, they envisaged an informal meeting which would primarily foster personal relationships between the leaders of the most powerful industrial democracies, while not designed to take decisions and without any bureaucratic involvement. The Americans, on the other hand, rather thought of the meetings as a decision-making institution to identify unresolved policy problems and seek solutions. Supported by its own preparatory and follow-up

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<sup>3</sup> For a comprehensive and detailed account of the evolution of the G7 and G8, see for example Putnam and Bayne (1987) or Bayne (2005).



apparatus, this forum would allow for effective international policy coordination (Putnam & Bayne, 1987: 35). This way, the summits, as a system of collective management would compensate for the declining economic power of the US (Bailin, 2005: 46). The divergence of views on the summit process has persisted over time and the Gx has assumed both a role as platform for dialogue as well as a decision-making institution.

The early meetings unfolded with a relatively limited agenda and a restricted number of participants. The six topics of the Rambouillet meeting (world economy, trade, energy, East-West relations, relations with developing countries and monetary problems) remained on the agenda of the subsequent summits. But gradually, the summits expanded with an enlarged agenda and more ministerial meetings (Bayne 2005: 17-33). From the 1980s onwards, the leaders increasingly discussed political subjects including the Middle East, terrorism and missiles. Also finance ministers and foreign affairs ministers began to meet on their own, away from the summit (see *infra*). At the end of the Cold War, the G7 concentrated on integrating Central European countries and Russia into the international system and embarked upon a transformation of the international system itself. The G7 also began to focus on the implications of advancing globalisation by discussing social issues, trans-border crime and the problems of developing countries. The expansion of the agenda is also reflected by the proliferation of other ministerial meetings such as in the area of employment, terrorism and environment. By the mid-1990s, the summit agenda has become heavily overloaded leaving insufficient time for the leaders to discuss all issues in depth. Under the British G8 Presidency in 1998, the summit process and agenda was substantially revised. From then on, the heads of government attended the summits without supporting ministers and only with a very small delegation. The agenda for the leaders' summit was narrowed down to a couple of items, while the other topics were delegated to the sherpa network and ministerial meetings. In addition, also Russia was added as a full member to the club, turning the G7 into the G8<sup>4</sup> (Bayne, 2005: 37-38). Under the rejuvenated summit process, the G8 addressed, among other things, the challenges of terrorism, dealt with the development of Africa and tackled energy/climate issues (see Table 2 for a historical overview of the main achievements of the G7/G8).

Year	Location	Achievements
1975	Rambouillet	Monetary reform
1976	Puerto Rico	Nothing significant
1977	London	Trade, growth, nuclear power
1978	Bonn	Growth, energy, trade
1979	Tokyo	Energy
1980	Venice	Afghanistan, energy
1981	Ottawa	Trade ministers' quadrilateral
1982	Versailles	East-West trade, surveillance
1983	Williamsburg	Euromissiles
1984	London	Debt
1985	Bonn	Nothing significant
1986	Tokyo	Terrorism, surveillance, G7 finance ministers
1987	Venice	Nothing significant
1988	Toronto	Debt relief for poor countries
1989	Paris	Helping Central Europe, environment, debt
1990	Houston	Trade

<sup>4</sup> In this dissertation, G8 is used consequentially when referring to the 'political' G6/7/8 to avoid confusion with the G7 which only deals with financial and economic affairs.

1991	London	Helping USSR
1992	Munich	Nothing significant
1993	Tokyo	Trade
1994	Naples	Russia into political debate
1995	Halifax	Institutional review, IMF and UN reform
1996	Lyon	Debt, development
1997	Denver	Russian participation, Africa
1998	Birmingham	New format, crime
1999	Köln	Debt, Kosovo, finance
2000	Okinawa	Outreach, information technology
2001	Genoa	Infectious diseases, Africa
2002	Kananaskis	Africa, cleaning up WMD
2003	Evian	Outreach, reconciliation after Iraq
2004	Sea Island	Middle East
2005	Gleneagles	Climate change dialogue, Africa
2006	Sint-Petersburg	Energy security
2007	Heiligendamm	Outreach
2008	Hokkaido	Climate change, energy efficiency
2009	L'Aquila	Climate change, food security
2010	Muskoka	Health
2011	Deauville	Arab spring, accountability
2012	Camp David	Nothing significant
2013	Lough Erne	Taxation

**Table 2. Main achievements of the G7/G8. (year 1975-2005 adopted from Hajnal, 2005: 143; own compilation for 2006-2013).**

Since the 2000s, the G8 has increasingly reached out to African countries, emerging powers and other international institutions. In 2003, France invited an unprecedented number of guests to the summit in Evian. The G8 sought a special relationship with five emerging economies Brazil, India, China, South-Africa and Mexico, the so-called O5, in the realization that the G8 had to adapt to the evolving shifts in geopolitical and economic power (Kirton, 2008: 52). Instead of expanding the G8 membership, the O5 have been structurally involved in the workings of the G8 through the Heiligendamm Process since 2007 (Cooper & Antkiewicz, 2008). The Heiligendamm Process involves a topic-driven dialogue around four thematic pillars: innovation, freedom of investment, development and energy efficiency. The Heiligendamm Process was however kept outside the G8's central structures and the role of the O5 in setting the agenda remained very limited (Gnath, 2010: 3-4). The attitude of the O5 towards the Heiligendamm Process has hence been ambivalent. The O5 countries also struggled to reconcile their identity as members of the developing world with their involvement in this rich men's club (Alexandroff, 2008: 344). And since the OECD housed the secretariat for the Heiligendamm Process, the process has been approached with reserve and caution. Nevertheless, the Heiligendamm Process has been extended at the 2009 L'Aquila Summit transforming it into the Heiligendamm L'Aquila Process. However, due to the rapid rise of the G20, the Heiligendamm L'Aquila Process has been silently discontinued in 2010.

Parallel to the G7/G8 summit process, the G5 finance ministers and central bank governors continued to meet until the end of the 1980s (Hajnal, 2007: 12). The meetings were usually held in secret, with the exception of a public announcement at a meeting at the Plaza Hotel in Manhattan in 1985. The Plaza Accord, in which the five countries agreed to intervene in the exchange markets to depreciate the dollar, has triggered the demand of Italy and Canada to

extend the G5 forum and bring it into line with the G7 summits. Subsequently, the G7 leaders decided at the 1986 Tokyo Summit that their finance ministers and central bank governors would meet more frequently in the periods between the leaders' summits. However initially, the G5 continued to meet ahead of the G7 meetings, but by 1989 G7 meetings had almost entirely replaced G5 gatherings (Baker, 2006: 26, see also Figure 1). The G7 thus became a stand-alone forum focusing on financial and monetary issues. It primarily serves as a platform to increase understanding and economic policy coordination to stabilize the world economy. According to Baker, the G7 is “as much about catalysing developments elsewhere, and formulating and endorsing approaches and ideas, as it is about reaching decisions in its own right” (2006: 241). The G7 has initiated a wider machinery of global financial governance and most consensual norms, ideas and approaches in contemporary global financial governance are authored or approved by the G7.

In the wake of the East Asian financial crisis, the G7 countries recognized the need to regularize communications between the G7 and significant emerging economies. Canada and the US were the driving forces behind the idea of a broader group of countries in which ministers can talk candidly about important economic policy issues. Also Gordon Brown, then Britain's Chancellor of the Exchequer, was a strong proponent of giving the emerging nations a voice. The other European G7 countries, in particular France and Germany were not overly enthusiastic to establish a new, large grouping in which their position would be diluted. Instead, they preferred to exploit the momentum of the financial crisis to reform the existing international financial institutions. But as economic conditions deteriorated, European dissent eroded and on 25 September 1999 the G7 established the G20 as a channel for permanent dialogue between these two groups of countries. The G20 represented the institutionalisation of earlier ad hoc consultations with emerging markets in the format of the G22 and G33 in 1998 and 1999. The G20 gathered the finance ministers and central bank governors of Argentina, Australia, Brazil, China, India, Indonesia, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey and the European Union, together with the G7 and senior representatives from the IMF and the World Bank. (Hajnal, 2007: 151-153; Ibbitson & Perkins, 2010; Kirton, 2013: 62-66).

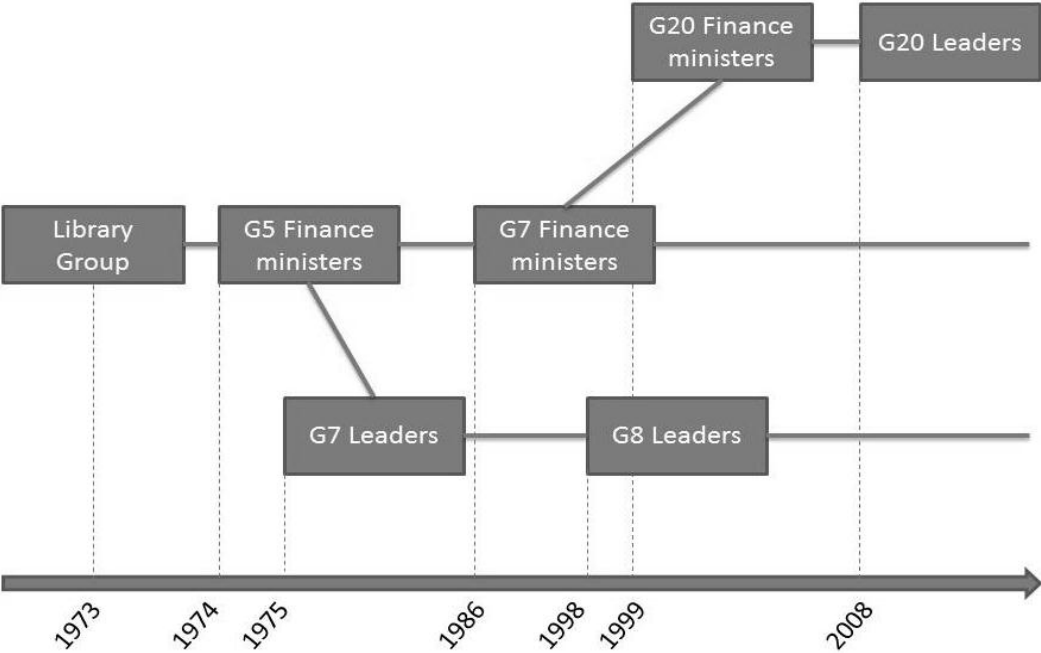


Figure 1. Evolution of the Gx system.

In its first decade, the G20 was foremost a consultative and consensus-building group. However it increasingly assumed a decision-making role just as the G7 and G8 did (Kirton, 2013: 71). Contrary to the commonplace idea that the G20 concentrated on technical issues in the strict financial-economic realm (Cooper & Thakur, 2013: 44), the G20 soon embarked upon a flexible and comprehensive agenda. The Canadian finance minister and first chair of the G20, Paul Martin, stated that “[t]here is virtually no major aspect of the global economy or international financial system that will be outside of the group’s purview” (Canada, 1999). Though, the European countries preferred the G20 to focus on issues where there was no consensus in the IMF. Early on, the G20 countries dealt with the challenges of globalisation addressing specific issues such as income distribution and social protection. After the terrorist attack on the US of 9/11 the G20 agenda shifted towards the fight against the financing of terrorism and targeted its root causes. The focus of the G20 on global poverty is an illustration of the latter (Cooper & Thakur, 2013: 44). In addition, the G20 tackled the reform of the IMF’s quota and governance and reached a compromise in the two consecutive reform rounds of 2006 and 2008 (see Table 3 for an overview of the main achievements of the G20).

When Paul Martin was elected as the Prime Minister of Canada in 2004, he started a campaign to make the G20 a leaders-level group known as the Leaders 20 (L20) (Hajnal, 2007: 164-166). While Martin did not manage to win the crucial support for his initiative, in particular the US remained uncertain, the idea was picked up by the academic community as an interesting thinking exercise (English, 2005; Lesage, 2007). It was only until the global financial crisis of 2008 that the US and the other G20 countries could step in a G20 at the level of heads of state and government.

At the outset of the global financial crisis, the then US President Bush acknowledged that the US alone would be unable to solve the financial chaos born in the US. Moreover, traditional bodies for international economic cooperation such as the IMF, the UN or the G7 and G8 were deemed inadequate to tackle the unprecedented economic and financial challenges (Kirton, 2013: 227). Consequently, President Bush convened the leaders of the G20 countries in Washington in November 2008 for the ‘Summit of Financial Markets and the World Economy’. The G20 successfully assumed the role of crisis committee. It managed to avoid widespread protectionism and contained the economic recession through impressive stimulus measures (Dadush & Suominen, 2011: 2). Hence, the G20’s core portfolio ranges from crisis resolution, including a \$1 trillion stimulus package in 2009, over crisis prevention by regulating financial markets to the reform of the international institutional architecture. The reform of the Financial Stability Board and the IMF are the most important illustrations of the latter. Soon, the G20’s agenda expanded to embrace other topics such as labour and employment, development, agriculture and energy. In 2013, the economic agenda has even been overshadowed by geopolitical discussions on the Syrian civil war and any potential international reaction to the chemical attacks.

By 2013, the G20 has met eight times at leaders level and is set to continue to meet annually. The G20 has however lost some of its glance and observers question the G20’s future beyond its role as crisis committee (Cooper, 2010). The euro crisis has diverted the G20’s focus from its long-term imperative of ensuring sustained global economic growth (Dadush & Suominen, 2011: 1). In 2013 at Saint Petersburg, the euro zone’s troubles did no longer dominate the summit’s agenda, but the G20 failed to produce any concrete deliverables. The communiqué was more a technocratic report card summarizing previous commitments rather than a visionary statement (Steger, 2013). Consequently, G20 (finance) officials have called to narrow down the G20’s agenda and focus on its core economic issues such as financial regulatory reform, tax issues, macroeconomic policies and global financing (Lange, 2013). In the margin of a G20 finance minister meeting in October 2013, the ECB Executive Board member Asmussen stated that G20 should cut out additional topics like food security or labour issues (Strupczewski, 2013).

Year	Location	Achievements
1999	Berlin	Creating the group
2000	Montreal	Managing globalization
2001	Ottawa	Terrorist finance
2002	New Delhi	Development
2003	Morelia	Poverty reduction
2004	Berlin	Financial stability
2005	Xianghe	IMF reform
2006	Melbourne	Energy/environment, IMF reform
2007	Kleinmond	Global economy, commodities
2008	Washington	Crisis management
2009	London	Stimulus measures, tax havens
2009	Pittsburgh	Global growth, employment, financial regulation
2010	Toronto	Eurozone crisis
2010	Seoul	Global imbalances, IMF reform, development
2011	Cannes	Eurozone crisis, food security
2012	Los Cabos	Eurozone crisis
2013	St. Petersburg	Taxation, Syria

Table 3. Main achievements of the G20. Own compilation based on Kirton, 2013.

## 2.2. Organisation and relevance

The most determining characteristic for the organisation of the Gx forums is informality. From the outset, the G8 has been established as an informal gathering of heads of state and government. To ensure personal interaction among summit participants and to grant the leaders a maximum of flexibility, it was a deliberate choice to keep the summit process as informal as possible. Hence, the G8 as well as the G7 and G20 have no legal basis, no rules for membership, no formal decision-making mechanism and no formal mandate. Although some Gx members prefer a greater degree of institutionalisation and for instance advocated unsuccessfully for the establishment of a permanent secretariat (Carin, 2011), the Gx process still remains highly informal.

The Gx forums are chaired by one of the members who also acts as host of the summit. The Gx presidency rotates annually according to a predefined order.<sup>5</sup> Given the informal and flexible nature of the Gx, the presidency can have a significant influence on the Gx process. Since the EU cannot hold the Gx presidency, it is deprived of these privileges. Firstly, it is the host leader's prerogative to set the thematic focus of the summit. Certain major issues remain on the agenda for several years, but the chairing country usually adds a couple of its own topics as well (Hajnal, 2007: 53). Also major unexpected events, such as natural disasters, international political crises or terrorist attacks, may hijack the agenda. Secondly, the Gx presidency also has the right to invite other non-Gx members. Usually a number of African countries attend (parts of) G8 meetings. Also in the G20, the decision who will be on the guest list is up to the presiding G20 country. In Seoul, the G20 agreed to limit the number of non-member invitations to five, of which at least two will be countries from Africa (G20, 2010b). Thirdly, the organisation of ministerial meetings and the creation of working groups, task forces or expert groups is at the discretion of the Gx chair. Depending on the agenda, the presidency may consider it necessary to gather ministers or experts in a certain field to provide input to the summit. Some ministerial meetings or working groups have a more or less permanent character, while others have only been organized once or twice.

<sup>5</sup> The G8 presidency's rotating order is France, the US, the UK, Russia, Germany, Japan, Italy and Canada. The G20 presidency rotates across five groups of countries.

Typically, a Gx work year starts off<sup>6</sup> with an announcement of the thematic focus of the summit. Subsequently, the personal representatives of the leaders – the sherpas – develop and flesh out the agenda and prepare for the forthcoming summit. They meet several times a year and their task is “to act and take decisions in the name of heads of government, and in their interests, in all matters relating to the organization and substantive preparation of these meetings. [...] It is diplomacy at the sharp end” (Fowler in Hajnal, 2007: 72). The sherpas oversee the Gx process, reach out to civil society and other stakeholders and collect input from the ministerial meetings and working groups. While the sherpas do not release public statements on their confidential meetings, ministers and working groups may publish a communiqué or report. The summit itself usually lasts for about two days and takes place in a very informal setting. The leaders take time to go for a walk together or watch a football game (Hajnal, 2007: 31, also at the 2010 G8 and G20 summits in Canada). In the margin of the summit, the heads of state and government also meet bilaterally. Finally, the summit ends with the endorsement by the leaders of the communiqué.

Although all Gx forums share the same core characteristics, there are some minor differences between the G7, G8 and G20 with regard to organisation and functioning. The G8 is primarily focused towards a single event, the summit, especially since the era of multiple G8 ministerial meetings seems to be over. Whereas in 2009 ministerial meetings were still organized in the areas of energy, environment, employment, foreign affairs and justice and home affairs, the G8 has adopted a ‘back-to-basics’ approach from 2010 onwards (Lukov, 2010: 10; The White House, 2012). Notwithstanding some exceptions, now only the foreign affairs and finance ministers meet in support of the summit just as in the early years.

The G8 process is steered forward by the sherpas. The G8 sherpas are assisted by a finance and a foreign affairs sous-sherpa (see Figure 2). The finance sous-sherpa comes from the finance ministry. The foreign affairs sous-sherpa is an official from the foreign affairs ministry and is responsible for economic issues that are outside the portfolio of the finance sous-sherpas, such as trade and development (Hajnal, 2007: 71). In addition to the sherpa team, each G8 member also has a political director who reports to his or her minister of foreign affairs. The political directors prepare ‘classical’ foreign affairs matters on the agenda such as the Middle-East, non-proliferation and terrorism.

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<sup>6</sup> The G7/8 presidency starts on 1 January. The G20 presidency begins on 1 December.

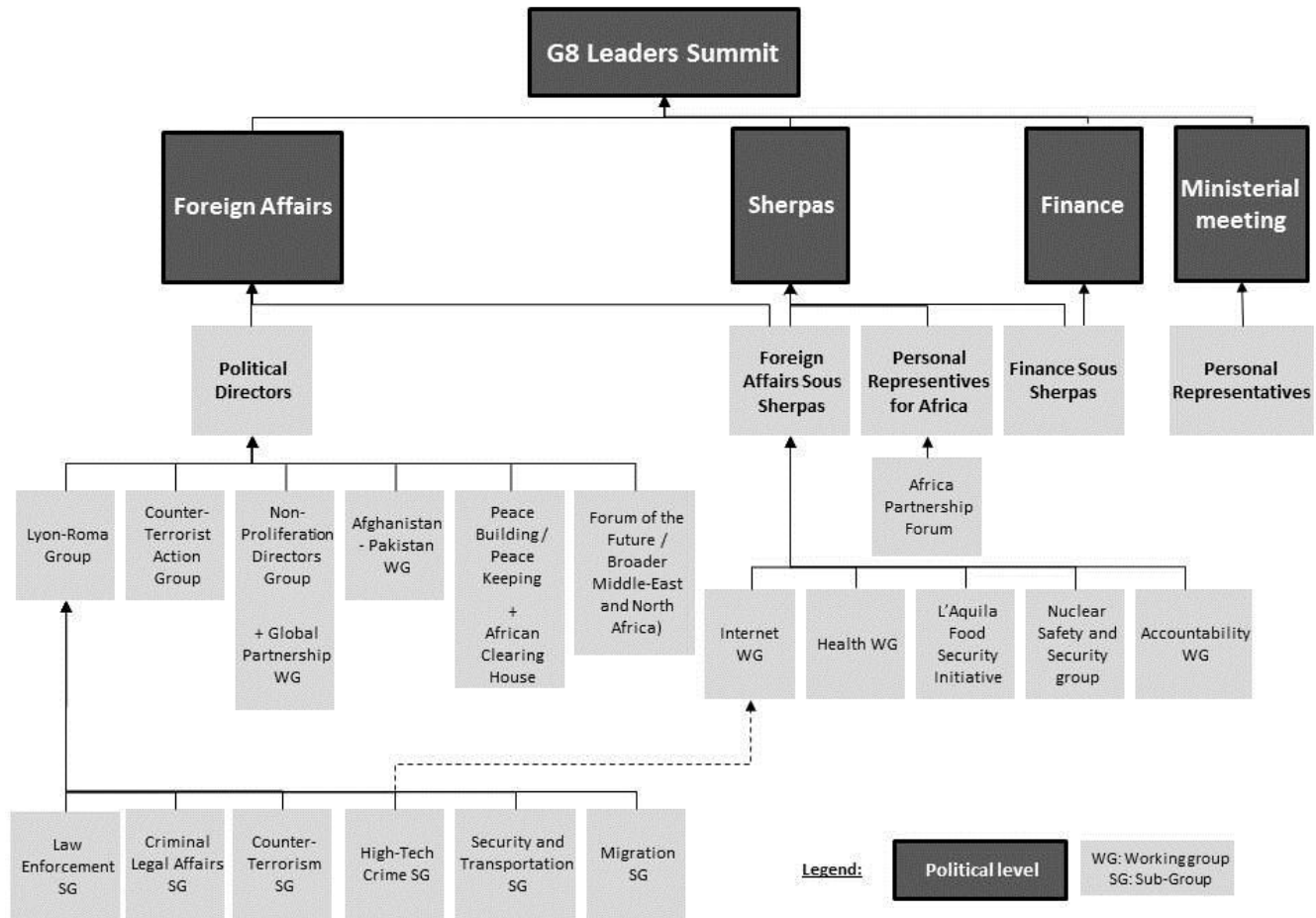


Figure 2. Organisational chart G8 as of January 2011 (Based on inside information from G8 network).

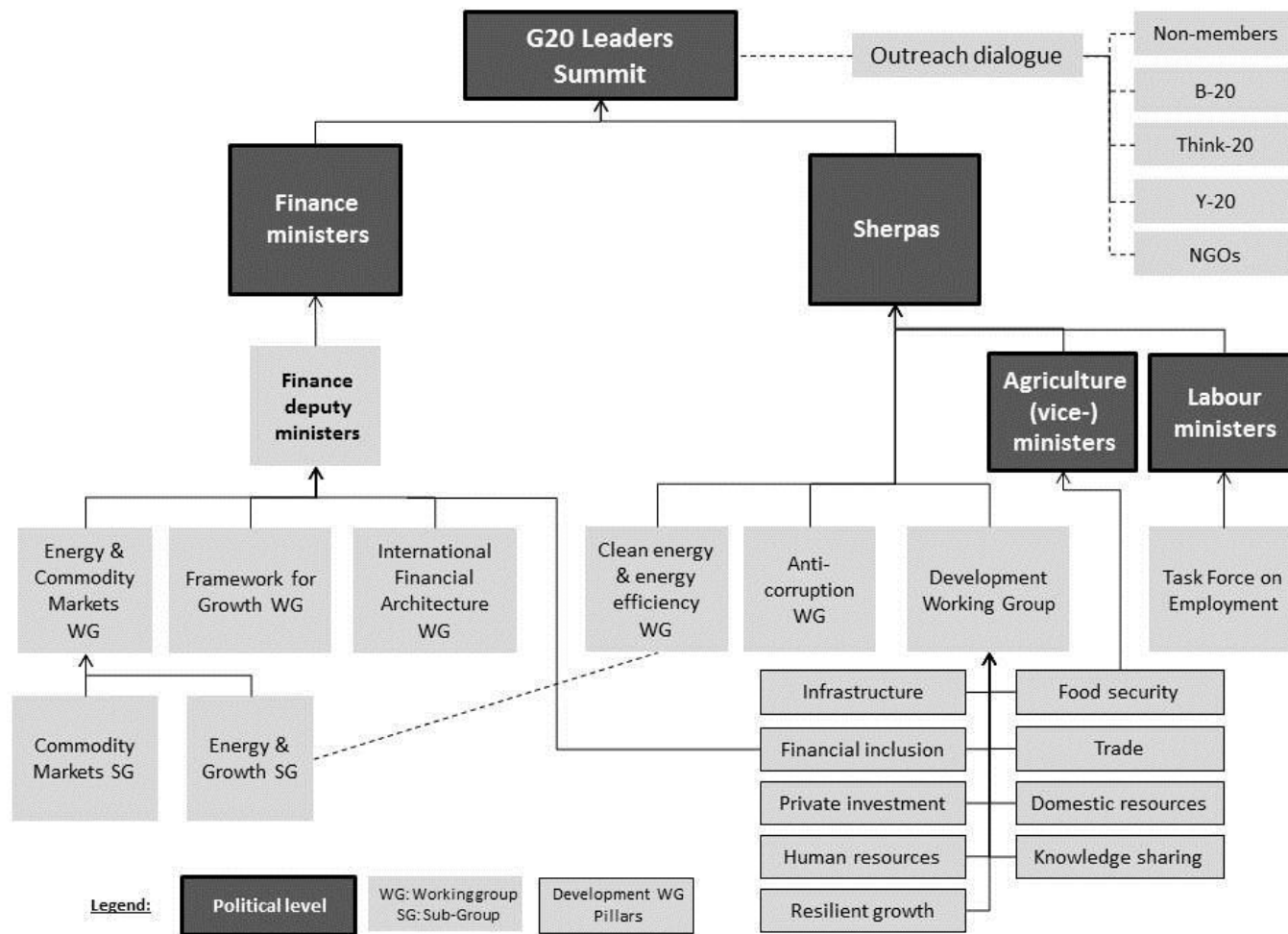


Figure 3. Organisational chart G20 (own compilation based on discussion paper by Mexican G20 Presidency, 2012a).



While the G8 is concentrated around one event, namely the summit, the G20 is rather a process that runs throughout the year. The G20 process entails two different tracks, the finance track and the sherpa track (see Figure 3). In the finance track, the G20 finance ministers and their deputies take care of the economic and financial items on the G20 agenda. The finance ministers tend to take significant decisions on their own before the summit has taken place, such as the decision to reform the IMF (Interview #61). In the second track, the sherpas, supported by their assistant-sherpas, are directly responsible for the preparation of the G20 leaders' summits. They do not only try to resolve the final economic and financial disputes, they also deal with new, mostly non-financial issues on the agenda such as development or global marine protection. Given the informal and flexible nature of the G20, the division of labour between both tracks is however not fixed. It may occur that a certain topic moves from the sherpa track to the finance track or vice versa which has for example happened with some energy issues.

The G20 sherpas coordinate the G20 activities regarding non-financial issues. However, no template exists for introducing and dealing with these topics. It depends on the G20 chair and the political will and capacity of the other G20 members whether a topic is dealt with by ministers or by a working group or task force. For example, the G20 labour and employment ministers have met annually since 2010. Also a Task Force on Employment (TFE) has been created to provide practical input to the ministerial discussion. However, the mandate of the TFE has to be explicitly renewed each year (G20, 2011b). Furthermore, in 2011 and 2012, a meeting of (vice-)ministers of agriculture has been organized to discuss food security and food price volatility. But these meetings have been discontinued under the Russian G20 Presidency of 2013 and the issue of commodity price volatility has been transferred to the Energy Sustainability Working Group under the sherpa track. In contrast to employment and agriculture, development issues have been delegated to the Development Working Group (DWG). One of the reasons is that not all G20 countries have a dedicated minister for development cooperation (Interview #37). The DWG seems to have acquired a more or less permanent place on the G20 sherpa track.

Compared to the G8, the G20 is less informal and personal. The actual G8 summit involves the heads of state and government who may only be accompanied by their sherpas (Hajnal, 2007: 71). In contrast, for each G20 country the head of state, the minister of finance and two additional senior officials such as the sherpa participate in the G20 summit. For example at the G20 Pittsburgh summit, there were 54 people in the meeting room, including those from international organisations. And more than in the G8, G20 summit participants tend to read standard speeches, rather than engaging in a free and fluent conversation (Kirton, 2013: 311). Hence, the informal and personal character of the G8, as well as its composition of like-minded states, is still largely valued by its participants.

As far as the G7 is concerned, I prefer to consider it as a stand-alone group, while some might see the G7 as a specific ministerial meeting in the G8 system. The G7 process is more compact, focused and has a slightly different way of working. Also the EU is not structurally involved in the G7 while it fully participates in the G8 and G20 (see *infra*).

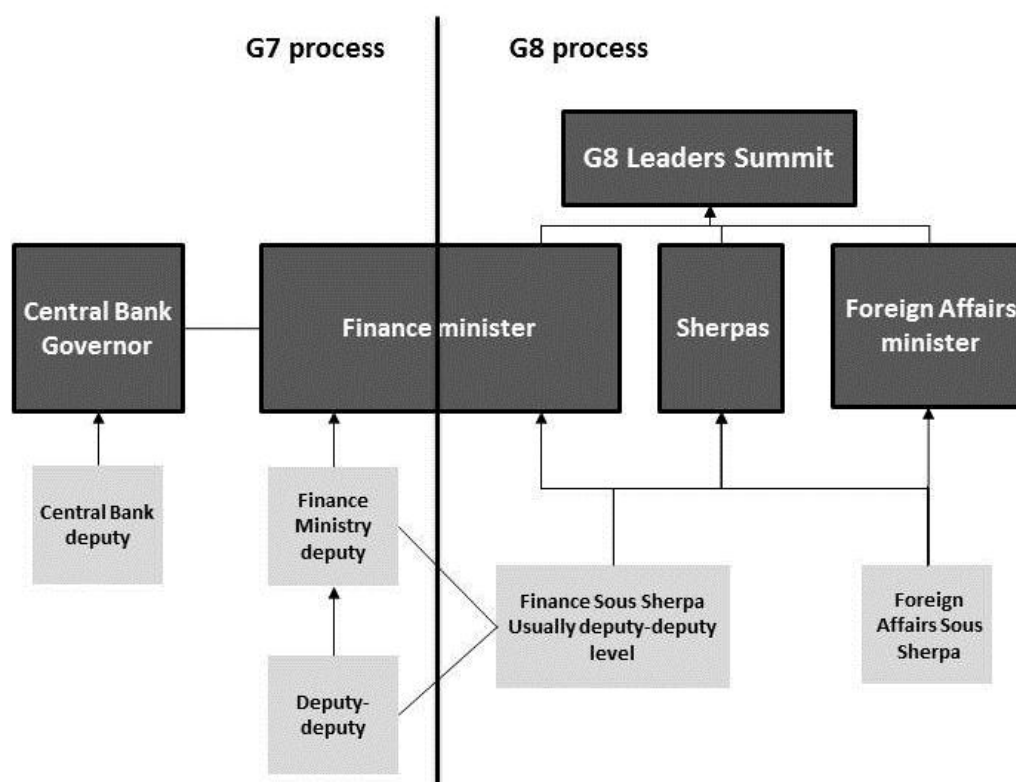


Figure 4. Organisational chart of the G7 and its relation with the G8. Adapted from Baker (2006: 112).

At the highest level, the G7 gathers the finance ministers and central bank governors. Usually, they meet in the margin of spring and annual IMF meetings and G20 meetings. In between, the G7 participants keep in touch primarily through telephone and video conference. Most of the work in the G7 process is carried out by the deputies, the most senior officials from the international divisions of finance ministries and the deputy governors of central banks (see Figure 4). The deputies are aided by the deputy-deputies who meet even more regularly and know each other from other settings such as the EU's Economic and Financial Committee. Even more than the G8 and the G20, the G7 is surrounded by secrecy and confidentiality. Often the closest colleagues of G7 officials only have a broad sense of what is discussed at the G7. At the end of a G7 meeting, a communiqué is not always released, but the G7 tend to issue statements on specific events and important economic developments. (Baker, 2006: 111-118)

The characteristics of the Gx, in particular its informal and exclusive nature, represent a trade-off between efficiency and legitimacy (Kadah, 2012; Cooper & Thakur, 2013: 122). On the one hand, the combination of informal and flexible procedures, the involvement of the highest political level and the most powerful states contributes to the Gx capacity to make quick and substantial decisions. As a result, the Gx is able to perform several functions such as crisis management, the provision of global public goods, surveillance of coherence in global governance and the steering of global governance (Lesage, 2007).

Indeed, by creating new international institutions, collecting and allocating money, setting the agenda and raising international consciousness, the Gx has proven its relevance in various policy areas. For example, the G7 has been fairly effective in managing the exchange rates of the US dollar, the yen and the euro (Fratzscher, 2008). In the area of development, the G8 in 2005 cancelled the debts of the poorest developing countries. In health, the G8 launched the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and raised substantial resources to improve maternal health. Moreover, Kirton (2010: 24) claims that in 1979 the G7 has invented global climate change governance by producing an ambitious emissions control regime.

In 2008 the debate on the relevance of the G7/8 was given a new dimension by the emergence of the G20 at leaders level, in itself a creation of the G7. Being more inclusive than

the G7/8, the G20 was assumed to overshadow or replace the G7 or G8 (The Economist, 2008). The early successes of the G20, including a \$1 trillion stimulus package in 2009, and the broadening of the agenda beyond purely economic issues initially only strengthened this view. In October 2009, the former IMF managing director Dominique Strauss-Kahn stated that “the G7 is not quite dead, but it’s losing its relevance. It’s on its way to extinction” (Torchia, 2009). However, neither the G7 nor the G8 has ceased to exist and the three G’s seem to have acquired their own place in the current global governance architecture. While an implicit division of labour seems to have emerged (whereby the G20 addresses most economic issues and the G8 tackles security and development), analysts have studied scenarios of competition, co-existence and cooperation for the relationship among Gx forums (Kirton, 2009; Schmucker & Gnath, 2010).

On the other hand, a Gx-centred global governance system has a significant legitimacy deficit. The Gx forums have been depicted as unrepresentative anachronisms, by excluding either other (non-Western) major economies in the case of G7/8, or simply the vast majority of the world’s states in case of the G20 (Brzezinski, 1996; Haass, 2005). Nevertheless, Gx decisions have the potential to influence non-Gx members as well. Additionally, due to the absence of a secretariat and a lacking institutional memory, the Gx has been struggling to follow up on its previous decisions and deliver on its commitments. In particular the G8 is known in civil society circles for not keeping its promises (Results, 2009), although compliance reports<sup>7</sup> by the University of Toronto show a relatively positive picture. Furthermore, because of consensual decision-making and heterogeneous preferences, the summits frequently end with vague or inconclusive statements. Consequently, critics portray the Gx summits as talking shops since they often fail to produce tangible results (DW Staff, 2007; The Economist, 2009; Münchau, 2011). And if actions are taken, they focus on the needs of the industrial rather than developing countries or are simply considered inadequate (Lee & Silver, 2009; Vestergaard & Wade, 2012).

Finally, scholars have also developed a more systematic approach for evaluating Gx performance. By monitoring Gx performance and compliance, they address the issues of accountability and continuity. The first comprehensive framework for assessing G8 governance was provided by Putnam and Bayne (1987: 260) and further refined by Bayne (20005: 12-14). He identified six criteria for judging the results of the summits: leadership, effectiveness, solidarity, durability, acceptability and consistency. Subsequently, Kirton (1989) developed another model based on six performance components. He distinguishes between domestic political management, deliberation, direction setting, decision-making, delivery and development of global governance. Now, Kirton’s framework is applied by the G8 and G20 Research Groups as well as other research groups around the world to each G8 and G20 summit resulting in elaborate performance assessments and compliance reports.

## **2.3. The European Union in the G7, G8 and G20<sup>8</sup>**

### **2.3.1. The EU in the G8, a real member?**

Initially, the ‘Western Economic Summit’ in Rambouillet was conceived as a one-time informal gathering, but when it became clear that the summit was to be repeated annually, the excluded Community member states feared to be treated as second-class member states. Smaller European countries were concerned that the bigger EU member states would use these forums to increase their influence within the EU. Therefore, they advocated strongly for representation of the European Community – the Netherlands even threatened to stop lending to the UK or France for this reason (Jenkins, 1989: 65). Also the European Commission lobbied intensively for representation at the summit based on the grounds that only the European Community was

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.g8.utoronto.ca/compliance/>

<sup>8</sup> Parts of this section are based on Debaere & Orbie (2013) and Debaere, Lesage & Orbie (2014 forthcoming)

authorized to act on certain economic subjects such as international trade. In this context, it deemed an agreement on export credits of the 1976 G8 Puerto Rico Summit illegitimate because it interfered with Community competence (Niemann & Huigens, 2011: 424).

Resistance to the Community's inclusion did not come from the non-European G8 members, but from the former French President Giscard d'Estaing. He was firmly opposed to involving the European Community arguing that its inclusion would mean a broadening of the agenda to political affairs and endanger the informal exchange of views among the leaders (Bonvicini & Wessels, 1984: 172). After long discussions and a strong resolution by the European Parliament, the European Council decided in 1977 that the President of the Commission and the rotating President of the Council would be invited to take part in those sessions that deal with items that fall under Community competence, such as international trade (Hainsworth, 1990). The non-European G8 members accepted the Community presence without difficulties.

As the participation of the President of the Council is concerned, initially, the G8 summits would take place when the Council presidency was held by an EU4 country. This arrangement intended to limit the number of participants at the G8 meetings. However, it also implied that non-G8 member states of the Community could not participate directly. This became practically impossible when both Belgium and Denmark held the rotating Council presidency in 1982. Consequently, the Belgian Prime Minister Martens was invited at the Versailles summit. Eventually, this practice became totally unworkable as the Community's membership expanded in 1986. However, the country holding the presidency operated as freely as the other G8 members, seldom acting as spokesman of the EC/EU. (Putnam & Bayne, 1987: 152-153)

Soon, the participation of the European Community was extended to cover all items. Already in 1978, the Community's presence at the summits had become uncontested. The European Community fully participated in all economic sessions and its preparations at the 1978 Bonn Summit. In 1981, the Community was allowed to take part in the political discussions and joined the preparations one year later (Putnam & Bayne, 1987: 152). In 1987, the Commission drew up for the first time a detailed working paper dealing with the problem of sub-Saharan African debt, which served as the basis for summit discussions (Hainsworth, 1990). A few years later, the G8 tasked the Commission to coordinate Western aid to the Central and Eastern European Countries after the collapse of communism resulting in the PHARE program.

The EU member states, nor the European Commission did anticipate this evolution, nor was it foreseen in the initial arrangement. According to Niemann and Huigens (2011), the increased importance of the European Commission in the G8 context is due to the flexibility and informality of the G8, the evolving European integration process as well as the Commission's capabilities, standing and entrepreneurship. Using a principal-agent perspective, they also argue that the member states' incentives to rely on the Commission changed over time. On the one hand, the European G8 members have realized that Commission adds significant value to the G8 debates. On the other hand, the G8 summits appeared not to undermine the role of the EU as some small EU countries originally feared.

When the rotating Council presidency was not held by an EU4 country, the involvement of the EU Council presidency in the G8 process largely depended on the country's commitment and its disposal of diplomatic resources. Also the fact that the Council presidency rotates on a six-month basis limited its ability to become fully involved in the G8 process. The coming into force of the Treaty of Lisbon on 1 December 2009 made an end to this changing nature of the Union's representation in the G8. At least for 2,5 years, the permanent President of the European Council represents the European Council at the level of heads of state and government. Together with the European Commission President, he forms a single EU delegation. This EU delegation replaces the two separate delegations for the European Council and the European Commission as was the case pre-Lisbon. Presidents Van Rompuy and Barroso also agreed on a rough division of labour. The former is responsible for the G8 and focuses on political and security issues, while

the latter concentrates on economic and financial matters and is in charge of the G20. However more concretely, they decide on a case-by-case basis who will take the floor (Pop, 2010; Interview #58).

The G8 summits are prepared by the personal assistants of the leaders, the sherpas. Before the Lisbon Treaty, the Commission President had its own sherpa, who was fully involved in the preparatory process. Also the rotating Council presidency could appoint a temporary G8 sherpa (e.g. Belgium in 2001 and Sweden in 2009). Since Lisbon, the EU has a single sherpa for the G8, which is the head of cabinet of the European Council President. Nonetheless, because the Council President only disposes of a small secretariat, he has to rely largely on the Commission for his substantive participation in the G8 process. Therefore, the EU's G8 sous-sherpas, who prepare subsets of the summit agenda, are officials from the European Commission.

The EU also participates in the G8 at the ministerial and working group level in which it is represented by the responsible Commissioner or Commission official. So is the High Representative of the Union for foreign affairs and security policy, Catherine Ashton, present at the G8 foreign affairs minister meetings. In some other domains the rotating Council presidency is also invited, although there is no fixed rule reflecting the informal nature of the G8. For example, the EU Council presidency attended the G8 development ministers meeting in 2009, but was not invited to the G8 development ministers meeting in 2010.

Although the EU has been granted complete participation, the EU cannot hold the presidency and host a G8 summit, depriving it from significant agenda-setting powers. One exception took place in 1995, when the European Commission organized the G8 ministerial meeting on the Global Information Society instead of the US. The meeting took place in the European Parliament and included officials from non-G8 countries as well (Ullrich & Donnelly, 1998). Consequently, opinions differ on whether the EU is a 'real' member of the G8 and whether the Commission, the Council or the EU as a whole are considered a member. For example in 2009, the official Canadian website on G8 affairs mentioned the EU as a fully-fledged member, while the German website explicitly did not. Generally, the EU is not referred to as a member, but as 'representative', 'participant' or 'attendee' (Huigens & Niemann, 2009: 12).

### **2.3.2. Reconsidering EU representation in the G7**

At the Tokyo Summit in 1986, the seven leaders decided that the finance ministers and central bank governors of the G7 countries would meet more frequently in the periods between the leaders' summits. From then on, the G7 became a stand-alone forum focusing on financial and monetary issues. In contrast to the G8, the US vetoed full involvement of the European Community in the G7, arguing that it lacked the legitimacy and authority of a sovereign state in the monetary domain. The European Community did not have the power to fix interest rates and lacked a single currency. Remarkably, France enthusiastically endorsed EC participation in the G7 in the mid-1980s (Hainsworth, 1990). For the European Commission, the question of the composition of the G7 was not considered as closed (Lamy, 1988) and during the subsequent years, it attempted several times to gain entry to the club to no avail.

The introduction of the euro in 1999 initiated intense debate on the international representation of the Eurozone in the G7. Soon, EU and G7 members agreed on the presence of the President of the European Central Bank. But the European Commission too aimed to acquire a seat at the G7 table (Jones, 1997). For most euro area members, the Commission would be overstepping its powers if it engaged in international monetary negotiations, even though the treaty allowed the Commission to determine the Union's common monetary and economic policies. Hence, at the Vienna European Council in December 1998, the EU agreed to propose to the G7 members that the president of the Euro 11 group would attend the summits in addition to the ECB president (European Council, 1998). The European Commission would

only provide assistance to the EU delegation. The US declared that it could not accept the presence of a Euro 11 chair, nor a European Commissioner fearing that G7 discussions would lose their informal character (Jones, 1999a). Nevertheless in June 1999, a compromise was reached after France, Italy and Germany agreed to remove their central bank governors from their G7 delegation. The US agreed to the presence of the Euro 11 chairman, while the Commission would not be allowed in (Jones, 1999b). Accordingly, and in contrast to the G8, only the euro area is represented in the G7 and not the EU as a whole. In other words, EU member states which are not part of the euro area such as Sweden, do not have the same (indirect) voice in the G7 as they have in the G8 through the European Council presidency.

Nonetheless, the European Commission has occasionally attended G7 meetings when discussing topics of common interest such as money laundering, the fight against terrorism or development policies (Bini Smaghi, 2006: 264). Kirton (2013: 449) has calculated that from 1992 to 2007, the EU attended 12 of the 27 meetings of the G7 finance ministers. The presence of the Commission not only depends on the topic, but also on the chair. It is less likely for the US to invite the European Commission, while an EU4 chair needs the Commission's input (Interview #32). However, according to a report of the European Commission (2012d: 24), the European Commission has been invited to the full meeting of the G7 since 2010. While the Commission's involvement in the G20 (see *infra*) might have opened a window of opportunity for Commission participation in the G7, its involvement in the G7 is probably due to its role in the assistance packages by the IMF and the EU to ailing European member states.

### **2.3.3. Becoming an official G20 member**

The East Asian financial crisis of the late-1990s made the G7 countries realise that the international financial architecture had to be strengthened by including emerging market economies. Hence in 1999, they launched the G20 forum bringing together the finance ministers and central bank governors of the G7, twelve emerging economies and the EU. In contrast to the G7 and G8, the EU was immediately admitted to the G20 as one of the 20 members although it can still not hold the presidency or host a G20 summit.

The creation of the G20 as a permanent forum for international economic cooperation resulted from the positive experience with the ad-hoc G22 and G33 summits in 1998 and 1999. The admission of the EU to the G20 can be explained from different perspectives. On the one hand, the EU was offered full membership of the G20 in order to involve indirectly the smaller EU member states who participated in the G22 or G33 meetings and would not receive a G20 invitation (G20, 2008a). On the other hand, the EU's membership of the G20 was also a way for non-European G7 deputies to exclude smaller EU member states from the new grouping (Hodson, 2011: 99). Yet, Spain and the Netherlands complained about their exclusion and unsuccessfully tried, with the French support, to join the new group. Also the Scandinavian countries argued for a rotating seat (Kirton, 2013: 69).

The EU's representation in the G20 is rather similar to the participation of the EU in the G7. The European Commission was only given a marginal role in the G20. It participated at a technical level in the EU delegation, while the representation of the EU was left to the finance minister of the rotating Council presidency and the President of the European Central Bank. During its first decade, the G20 lived a quiet existence as a consultative and consensus-building group (Bini Smaghi, 2006: 266). Therefore, because of its low political salience and the fact that the EU acquired official G20 membership status right from the start, the G20's creation did not cause any significant contestation within the EU.

In reaction to the outbreak of the global financial crisis in 2008, the G20 was upgraded to the level of heads of state and government. The first G20 leaders' summit also constituted an upgrade of the role of the European Commission in the G20. The Commission's status in the

G20 was elevated from the technical level to the highest political level with the European Commission President representing the EU next to the President of the European Council<sup>9</sup>. This sudden entrance of the Commission at the G20 is remarkable given the traditional reluctance of G7 members to involve the Commission in the G7 and the G20. Two elements might explain this evolution. First, the decision to convene an international summit at leaders' level in November 2008 was taken at a meeting of the French President Sarkozy and the European Commission President Barroso with US President Bush at Camp David (Runnigen & Viscusi, 2008). Sarkozy and Barroso envisaged an enlarged G8 summit. In this format, European Commission participation would have been secured given its involvement in the G8. A few days after this meeting, the US announced that it would invite the G20 leaders to the crisis meeting (Alexandroff & Kirton, 2010). Even though the Commission was not involved in the G20, it would have been difficult for President Bush not to invite the European Commission after their joint decision for a summit at Camp David.

Second, one of the main issues to be tackled by the G20 in 2008 and 2009 was the regulation of financial markets and services. The European Commission is responsible for proposing and monitoring the legal framework in financial services and is conceived as an influential actor in this matter (Quaglia, 2010: 134). Involving the Commission in the G20 is thus not only necessary because of the distribution of competences within the EU, it would also add a considerable amount of expertise to the G20's work. Moreover, given its agenda-setting powers and the right to initiate and draft legislation, having the Commission at the table would increase the chances of swift implementation of G20 measures by the EU. Illustrative to the fact that the EU member states acknowledged the potentially important role of the Commission in a European crisis-response are the discussions early 2008 on possible membership of the European Commission in the Financial Stability Forum, the executive arm of the G20 (Wikileaks, 2008).

When it turned out in October 2008 that the composition of the summit of world leaders would be identical to the composition of the G20 finance ministers and central bank governors, some countries worried that they would not be part of the group. Several EU member states, including Spain, Poland, the Netherlands and the Czech Republic indicated that they wanted to be included in the meeting, even though they were represented indirectly through the EU (Guebert, 2008). Despite its lobbying efforts in Washington, Poland did not manage to have a seat at the G20, but has not yet put aside its hope to join the club (WBJ, 2010; Isler, 2012). In contrast, Spain, the Netherlands and the Czech Republic succeeded in their quest for a direct representation at the G20 Washington Summit.

As far as the Czech Republic is concerned, it wanted to be involved in the G20 Washington meeting because it would take over the EU Council presidency from France in the first half of 2009. For this reason, the Czech Deputy Minister for European Affairs attended as part of the French delegation (Taylor, 2008). Similarly, Swedish officials participated in the Czech delegation for the London Summit as Sweden took over the Council presidency in the second half of 2009.

After long discussions with the US, France also met the Spanish and Dutch concerns by offering the two chairs of its national seat to Spain and the Netherlands, while France could still participate in the G20 Washington meeting as rotating EU Council president. It was in France's own interest to be accompanied by two like-minded states. In an opinion piece in the French newspaper *Le Monde*, Dutch Prime Minister Balkenende pleaded for an enhanced role of the IMF in financial regulation and oversight (Balkenende & Bos, 2008). This idea was also supported by Spain and appealed to the French. Sarkozy knew that a French message would

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<sup>9</sup> Before the Treaty of Lisbon, that is the president or prime minister of the country holding the rotating Council presidency. Since the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty in December 2009, that is the permanent president of the European Council.

probably raise suspicion from the other G20 members. Consequently, the support of Spain and the Netherlands added credibility to the position of France (Interview #30).

Next to the personal motives of the French President Sarkozy, several other elements were in support of the Spanish and Dutch G20 attendance. First, the presence of Spain and the Netherlands in the G20 could be motivated on the ground of the size of their economies. At the end of 2008, Spain was the world's eighth largest economy and the Netherlands were ranked sixteenth (Taylor, 2008). In addition, both countries dispose of some systemically important financial institutions such as the Dutch bank ING and insurance company Aegon and the Spanish bank Santander. Second, both Spain and the Netherlands could make a substantial contribution to the global response to the financial turmoil. For example, Gordon Brown's plan to rescue the British banking system, which was adopted by many other governments including the US, was based on the Dutch idea of putting money directly into banks, instead of taking over bad loans (Brouwer & Blass, 2008; Interview #30). Similarly, Spain's financial expertise allowed it to secure a seat at the G20 table. Because of a conservative regulatory policy, Spanish banks had been less badly affected by the sub-prime lending crisis and were in a much stronger position than their rivals, at least at the end of 2008 (Taylor, 2008). Lastly, the Spanish and Dutch engagement in Afghanistan helped both countries to receive an invitation for the G20 meetings in London and Pittsburgh in 2009 (Wikileaks, 2009).

Currently, Spain has secured its own seat as it has obtained the status of 'permanent guest'. Conversely, the Dutch participation in the G20 seems to be over since it has not been invited since the G20 Seoul summit in November 2010. But the informal nature of the G20 still allows the G20 presidency to invite the Netherlands, as well as other EU23 countries to certain G20 ministerial meetings and other initiatives. For example, the Netherlands was invited to the G20 agriculture vice ministers/deputies meeting May 2012<sup>10</sup> and is involved in the G20's global marine protection initiative<sup>11</sup>. Due to its expertise on inclusive green growth, Sweden participated in the G20 Development Working Group meetings under the Mexican Presidency (Interview #37).

Despite the immediate and upgraded role of the EU in the G20, some EU member states contested the establishment of the new forum. Some critical reactions came from countries that traditionally support multilateralism, namely Sweden, Belgium, Finland, Poland Luxembourg and Portugal (Nagpal, 2009). They condemned the G20's arbitrary membership, its self-proclaimed leadership and its non-transparent decision-making process. Apart from principled considerations, they also quickly realised that the impact of G20 measures would go beyond the G20 membership and could adversely affect their interests. Over time, these member states seem to have gradually accepted the existence of the G20 since 2010 onwards. Even though legitimacy will always remain an issue for the member states, they recognize the G20 as the premier forum for international economic cooperation. EU member states, including the smaller ones, acknowledge that the G20 has effectively delivered in the context of the crisis. The G20 is considered to be a new reality that cannot be ignored. For example, in a preparatory note for a meeting between the former Belgian and Spanish Prime Ministers Van Rompuy and Zapatero, the G20 is described as a 'political reality which must be taken into account'. In the 2011 global governance debate at the UN, the EU made it clear that "[t]he G20 has provided important elements of a global crisis response." The G20 has "deliver[ed] through exchange of information, peer pressure and coordination" (European Union, 2011a). In other words, effectiveness took priority over multilateralism. Importantly, there is also a recognition that measures at the G20 have effectively facilitated multilateral policies including the new Basel regulations, a

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<sup>10</sup> Denmark was also invited in its capacity of rotating EU Council president

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.g20gmep.org/>



strengthening of the Financial Stability Board and regional development banks as well as a reform of the IMF's quota and governance.

In addition, the EU soon advocated for an enlargement of the G20 agenda beyond economic and financial issues, to include also issues such as development and climate change (European Commission, 2010a). While development has been successfully adopted as a core G20 area – largely because of the Korean efforts, climate change remains largely excluded from the G20 agenda. Several G20 countries including the BRICS do not share the EU's view that the G20 should deal with climate change and prefer the UNFCCC as the main forum for negotiating climate change (Carin, Heinbecker, Smith, & Thakur, 2010). Remarkably, precisely those EU countries that were critical at the time of the creation of the G20 have now come to see the G20 as an opportunity to pursue their foreign policy priorities. For example, during its EU Council presidency in 2009, Sweden pushed hard for the G20 to engage in strong language on climate change. In the area of employment, the Belgian EU Council Presidency organised an International Forum on Decent Work which concluded that employment should be an integral part of the G20 agenda (eutrio.be, 2010). Therefore, under the Belgian leadership, the Forum called for a systematic organisation of a meeting of the ministers for employment of the G20 and the G8 prior to each G20 and G8 summit. Again, pragmatic considerations in terms of effectiveness seem to have guided the EU position, more than an attachment to the principle of multilateralism.

Quickly, the European Commission assumed the responsibility of the EU's participation in the G20. As a result of the informal division of labour between the presidents of the European Council and the European Commission, the latter takes the lead as far as the G20 is concerned. In addition, senior Commission officials represent the EU in the G20's preparatory (sous)-sherpa meetings while the EU's internal preparation for the G20 is coordinated by the Commission's services (see chapter 4). Furthermore at working group level, the European Commission is often the EU's sole representative. For example, the G20 Washington Summit established four working groups to elaborate the proposals made by the leaders. On behalf of the EU only the Commission took part in those working groups as the Czech rotating Council Presidency did not have the capacity to participate in all working groups<sup>12</sup>. Also in the G20 Development Working Group, only the European Commission participates on behalf of the EU. Hence, since the European Commission is not only represented at all levels in the three forums and involved in the preparation of the G8 and G20, but also indispensable in the internal EU coordination process for these meetings, it can be considered as the – substantive – backbone of the Union's delegation.

Table 4 provides an overview of the Union's representation in the G7, G8 and G20 in the post-Lisbon era. It is clear that the Lisbon Treaty has streamlined the EU's representation in the Gx system, at least at the highest political level. At lower Gx levels, i.e. ministerial and deputy ministerial level and in the working groups, the Lisbon Treaty does not specify the EU's representation in a straightforward way. Based on article 17§1 (TEU), the Commission argues that it holds the sole responsibility for the Union's external representation in matters of monetary and financial affairs and advocated to minimize the role of the rotating presidency in the G20. Several member states reacted strongly against these attempts and wished to maintain the Council representation. The member states referred to article 138§1 and 2 (TFEU) which stipulates that the Council may adopt measures to ensure unified representation for those matters of particular interest for the economic and monetary union that affect the euro's place in the international monetary system. Following an opinion of the Legal Service of the Council of the European Union (2010), the Commission and the member states agreed that the rotating Council

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<sup>12</sup> However, both Sweden and Belgium were involved at working group level during their respective Council presidencies in 2009 and 2010.

presidency would continue to be included in the EU delegation for G20 ministerial meetings. Nevertheless, the G20 presidency has the final say and seems not inclined to take the internal EU agreement for granted. So for the joint finance and development ministerial meeting in September 2011, the French G20 Presidency invited the Polish Minister for Development Cooperation only at the very last moment, while the presence of the responsible European Commissioner was never under discussion. Similarly, Mexico did not intend to invite the Danish rotating Council Presidency at the G20 labour and employment ministerial in May 2012, but eventually decided to do so. The representation of the rotating Council presidency at the lower levels in the G20 is thus still a sensitive matter.

	<b>G20</b>	<b>G8</b>	<b>G7</b>
<b>Heads of state and government</b>	President European Council President European Commission	President European Council President European Commission	
<b>Sherpas</b>	Senior advisor from cabinet of president European Commission	Head of cabinet of president European Council	G20 sherpa
<b>Sous-sherpas</b>	European Commission, director-general of DG ECFIN	<u>Foreign affairs</u> : European Commission, Secretariat-General DSG3.F, director <u>Finance</u> : G20 sous-sherpa <u>Political Director</u> : External Action Service, deputy secretary general	G20 sous-sherpa
<b>Finance ministers</b>	European commissioner for economic and monetary affairs President ECB Finance minister from rotating Council presidency	European commissioner for economic and monetary affairs	President Eurogroup President ECB Occasionally European commissioner for economic and monetary affairs
<b>Foreign affairs ministers</b>	High representative	High representative	
<b>Other ministerial meetings</b>	Responsible commissioner Mostly accompanied by rotating Council presidency	Responsible commissioner Occasionally accompanied by rotating Council presidency	
<b>Working groups</b>	European Commission official & Official from rotating Council presidency depending on resources, commitment and the topic.	Variable composition: e.g. Counter-Terrorism Action Group comprises the G8, European Commission, Australia, Spain and Switzerland	

Table 4. EU representation in the G7, G8 and G20 after the Treaty of Lisbon (at 8 October 2012).

## 2.4. EU coordination and impact

A final, but essential element of this literature review is to examine what we already know about EU coordination in the context of the Gx. Despite decades of EU involvement in the Gx, EU coordination prior to and at Gx meetings so far remains largely understudied. Nevertheless, by coordinating their views, the EU and its member states have the potential to exert significant influence over Gx outcomes, since they make up half of G8 membership and a quarter of the G20. However EU coordination for the Gx has not been systematically studied. The only exception is Nasra et al. (2009) which tries to explain the involvement of EU23 countries in the EU's preparation for the G7, G8 and G20, but focuses solely on internal EU aspects. In other studies, the subject is usually touched upon as part of a broader review of the Gx process or the EU's role in the Gx. Hereby, the focus mainly lies on the G8 and whether the EU speaks with a single voice, which does not necessarily imply explicit internal EU coordination in advance. This dissertation does make the distinction between coordination outcomes and processes (see next chapter).

In the early years of the G8 a meeting of the European Council was always held shortly before the summit in order to coordinate a common position on key agenda items of the summit. Studies have concluded that whenever the Community could agree on an effective joint position its views would largely prevail in the G8 communiqués (Putnam & Bayne, 1987; Ullrich & Donnelly, 1998). Fischer (2001) compared the conclusions of the G8 summit and the European Council, both under the German chairmanship in June 1999. He found that both documents were very similar and contained the same wording. Fischer concludes that “the limits of the G8 summit were set – indirectly – at the European Council as far as direct competencies of the EU were concerned”. Yet, the habit of preceding a G8 summit with a European Council meeting was not maintained during the entire history of the G8. According to Putnam & Bayne (1987: 152), this was due to the declining capacity of the G8 to produce concrete results.

EU coordination is however no guarantee for success as it not always welcomed by the other Gx members. At the 2008 Hokkaido Toyako Summit for example, the EU raised annoyance in the Japanese delegation as a united European position on climate change determined the pace of the summit negotiations (Huigens & Niemann, 2012: 112). Beside affecting the G8 process, the pressure of a unified European bloc is of course also hard to resist by non-EU G8 members. The concerted resistance of the European countries to move on the issue of agricultural subsidies at the 1990 Houston summit and their coordinated positions on the Soviet-Union and the Brazilian forests were met with irritation from the then US President Bush (Apple, 1990; Bayne, 2000: 71-72). However, more recently, US officials have complained that what they really want from the Europeans is some coherence (Gowan & Jones, 2009). This ambivalent attitude by non-EU Gx members is summarized by Pascal Lamy (2010) in one sentence: ‘Nobody listens [to the EU] because either it’s the same thing and it gets boring, or it’s not the same thing and it will not influence the result at the end of the day’.

Related to this are the complaints by non-EU Gx countries about the ‘overrepresentation’ of the EU in the Gx. Even though the EU’s share in the Gx system has decreased from a half of the G8 to a quarter of the G20 and the EU’s external representation has been seriously affected by the Lisbon Treaty, the EU is still widely considered as overrepresented in the G20 (Fidler, 2009; Rachman, 2009; Ickes, 2010; Charlemagne, 2010). Especially the presence of Spain and the Netherlands raised the annoyance of a number of Asian G20 countries about the European overrepresentation (Price, 2009). Consequently, many observers advocate a consolidation of European seats (e.g. Carin et al., 2010). Some argue that a reduction of European seats would not only increase the effectiveness of the G20, it could also make room for other countries such as an additional African representative (Subacchi, 2010). Of course, the most important obstacle

consists of resistance from the EU4, which are extremely hesitant to exchange their national seat at the table in favor of an EU voice. Moreover, consolidating the EU's representation is also hindered by the EU's internal integration process, because 'adopting a common international EU policy is analogous to adopting a common internal EU policy' (Frieden in Gstöhl, 2008: 23). In other words, a re-arrangement of the European representation in the G20 will only be successful when it is linked to a strengthening of the internal EU coordination process (Debaere & Orbie, 2013).

However, the Gx may benefit from the presence of the EU as well. Not only because the EU provides important substantive knowledge and financial resources (e.g. for development initiatives), it also functions as a constituency offering outreach to more than 20 non-Gx countries: the EU member states. For example, Kirton et al. (2010: 219) found that through the presence of the EU in the Gx forums, many of the world's other powers participate in shaping G8-centered global health governance. Also, the special relationships of non-G8 EU countries with African, Caribbean and Pacific states can be useful for the G8's ambitions with regard to conflict prevention (Kirton, 2004: 462). Consequently, the EU – Gx relationship can be described as interdependent, even mutually reinforcing. The EU can improve the effectiveness of the Gx, while the Gx can enforce the international legitimacy of the EU (Larionova & Rakhmangulov, 2009; Gstöhl, 2008).

Finally, European representation and coordination in the Gx also poses certain challenges for the EU itself. First, Jokela (2011) argues that the Gx process can undermine the core of the European multilateral project itself. Since the EU's representation in the Gx positions the member states unequally within the EU framework, the Gx process could undermine trust among EU members. Especially since the EU4 are not legally bound to adhere to a coordinated EU position, they are able to take actions that go against the interests of some EU23 countries. For example, with regard to energy policy in the G8, some EU4 countries were able to strengthen their position vis-à-vis their EU partners because they received the support from the non-EU G8 members (Bonvicini & Wessels, 1984: 180). Still today officials question "whether European actors represent the EU position in the G20, or rather defend the G20 positions within the EU" (Interview #5).

Second, Nasra et al. (2009) stress the delicate role of the European Commission in the G8 context. On the one hand, the Commission is the agent of all EU member states, representing the Union as a whole in the G8. On the other hand, the Commission's presence in the G8 basically depends upon the consent of the European G8 members. Therefore, it avoids too harsh confrontations with its European colleagues in the G8. This situation affects the role of the European Commission at least in two ways. First, the European Commission refrains from encouraging extensive EU coordination as this would be 'political suicide' (Nasra et al., 2009: 10). However in some instances, for instance on climate change at the 2008 G8 summit, the Commission may facilitate coordination among EU participants in the G8, but only on the latter's request. Second, the presence of the four EU member states constrains the Commission's room of manoeuvre in the G8 (Nasra et al., 2009). If the Commission is not fully backed by the other member states its credibility would suffer. Therefore, the Commission does not act independently and rarely takes the initiative in G8 discussions (Putnam & Bayne, 1987: 153; Huigens & Niemann, 2012: 113).



## Chapter 3

# **Conceptual and analytical framework**

This chapter lays down the conceptual and analytical foundation of this dissertation. First, it develops a definition of internal EU coordination. Research on the role of the EU in international organisations (IOs) regularly deals, implicitly or explicitly, with coordination. However remarkably, a comprehensive conceptualisation of EU coordination in the context IOs is still lacking. In this chapter, a multidisciplinary approach is used to define and conceptualize EU coordination. Subsequently, based on our definition of coordination, a scale is constructed which typifies four levels of coordination. That scaled is used in chapter five to measure EU coordination for the G7, G8 and G20. To situate coordination in the study of EU in IOs, we will also take a brief look on how coordination relates to other concepts such as actorness and effectiveness.

Second, this chapter introduces six variables that could explain the level of internal EU coordination for the G7, G8 and G20: existing policies, interests, competences, relevance, EU influence and Gx organisation. For each variable, I formulate a hypothesis and provide some details on how they are operationalised. The variables and hypotheses result from an extensive literature review and interviews with key actors in EU coordination processes. They will be applied to our cases in chapter six.

### **3.1. Defining EU coordination in IOs**

#### **3.1.1. A multiplicity of views**

The idea of coordination is omnipresent in daily life. A well-organised conference, a smoothly functioning assembly line or a winning football team all indicate a high degree of coordination. In the academic literature, coordination has been studied in multiple disciplines such as computer science, organisation theory, economics, linguistics and psychology (Malone & Crowston, 1994: 87). However, despite its wide use in theory and practice, the term coordination remains an ill-defined and ambiguous concept (Metcalf, 1994: 271). In political science, coordination is one of the contested concepts, together with terms like power and security. At the basic level, we all know what it means. Coordination brings together different parts to form an interrelated whole. But in more specific terms, defining coordination appears to be a complex task as it has been used to refer to different objectives, tasks, environments and mechanisms (Jordan & Schout, 2006: 40).

Nevertheless, to assess EU coordination for the G7, G8 and G20, it is key to have a good notion of what coordination is. Ideally, we are looking for a definition that grasps the many different forms of EU coordination in the full spectrum of international institutions. In a later stage, this would facilitate comparative research across multiple international organisations and benefit the theorizing of EU coordination.

A first logical step to find a generalizable, working definition of EU coordination is to scan the existing literature on the EU in international organisations. This research area is part of the broader study of the EU in international relations. Jørgensen (2006: 508-510) identifies four partially overlapping strands in the rich and diverse literature on the EU in international relations, each representing a different emphasis on what is to be explained. The first kind of explanandum is the focus on the EU as an *international actor*, including issues of identity, interests and policies (e.g. Elgström & Smith, 2006). In this regard, the seminal work of Sjøstedt (1977) has triggered an elaborate research agenda on the actorness of the EU in international politics. Numerous authors have unpacked the concept into different building-blocks and applied it to several individual policy areas (Jupille & Caporaso, 1998; Bretherton & Vogler, 1999, 2006; Groenleer & Van Schaik, 2007; Niemann & Bretherton, 2013). Also the more fundamental question of what kind of actor the EU is has been extensively examined (for a comprehensive overview see Koops, 2011: 147-192). A second subsection of the literature on the EU in international relations stresses



the EU's *policies* (e.g. Orbie, 2008). Over time, the EU has developed a wide array of policies with an international dimension (e.g. security, trade, development, environment, neighbourhood, etc.). Most of them are well-researched albeit rather from an individual than a comparative perspective (Meunier, 2005; Orbie & Tortell, 2009). Thirdly, the EU fosters formal and informal *relations* with most countries in the world. Most of these relations have been thoroughly reviewed (Marsh & Mackenstein, 2005; Leonard & Popescu, 2007; Shambaugh, Sandschneider, & Hong, 2007; Keck, Vanoverbeke, & Waldenberger, 2013), in particular the Transatlantic relationship (e.g. Lundestad, 2003; Serfaty, 2008). In addition, the EU has ties with regional groupings such as ASEAN or the Gulf Cooperation Council (Novotny & Portela, 2012). Finally, the EU cultivates relations with all major IOs, but especially the EU's relationship with the UN has been a subject of academic scrutiny (Laatikainen & Smith, 2006, Wouters, Hoffmeister, & Ruys, 2006, Rasch, 2006). Since the EU has made support of multilateral organisations one of its key objectives in world politics (European Union, 2003), also studies on the Union's relationship with other international institutions have flourished. The fourth approach examines *polity* features including governance, legal issues and institutional dynamics. This strand of the literature studies for example the institutionalisation of a comprehensive European foreign policy system (Smith, 2004), the treaties and legal provisions to explain what the EU is or does in world politics (Wessel, 1997; Eeckhout, 2005) as well as the Europeanization of national foreign policy institutions and policy-making processes (Gross, 2009).

In 2006, Jørgensen classified the study of the EU in IOs under the 'relations' heading. But over the recent years the EU-IO literature has grown exponentially so that it can now be associated with all four emphases (see for example the comprehensive edited volumes by Jørgensen, 2009; Blavoukos & Bourantonis, 2011; Jørgensen & Laatikainen, 2013). Scholars have studied how the EU behaves as an actor within IOs (e.g. Wouters, Bruyninckx, Basu, & Schunz, 2012). They do not only focus on the EU's actorness, but also explore other concepts such as effectiveness and performance (Laatikainen & Smith, 2006; Huigens & Niemann, 2009; Jørgensen, Oberthür, & Shahin, 2011). With regard to policies, analysts reviewed the EU's attitude towards IOs under the banner of 'effective multilateralism' (Drieskens & Van Schaik, 2014 forthcoming). Other scholars have focused on inter-organisational relations examining the links and modes of interaction between the EU and other IOs (Biermann, 2008; Koops, 2013). Inter-organisational approaches tend to zoom in on bureaucratic and organisational levels thereby also touching upon the polity dimension of EU-IO literature. Finally under this banner, institutional issues have been increasingly dealt with, both from a legal as well as a political science perspective albeit the latter to a lesser extent. Many authors have for example analysed how the EU is, can and should be represented in IOs (Bini Smaghi, 2004; Mahieu, Ooms, & Rottier, 2005; Hoffmeister & Kuijper, 2006; Gstöhl, 2008; Wessel, 2011). In addition, Costa and Jørgensen (2012) examine how IOs shape EU policies and policy-making processes. In general, nevertheless, EU-IO research still lacks consistency and coherence and "heavily relies on a wide range of pre- or a-theoretical case studies and largely unconnected attempts of tentative theorising" (Koops, 2013: 71).

In the emerging field of EU-IO studies, scholars regularly deal, implicitly or explicitly, with coordination, both as *explanans* and *explanandum*. However remarkably, a comprehensive conceptualisation of EU coordination in the context IOs is still lacking which contrasts sharply with the elaborate conceptualisation efforts for other terms such as performance and actorness. The current literature does not provide a single definition of EU coordination in IOs and authors often rely on the reader's intuitive understanding of coordination. In general, coordination has been approached from different angles highlighting several distinct aspects.

First, in the study of the EU in IOs, coordination is most commonly associated with the attempt to establish a common EU position or message. This view appears in a number of EU documents where EU coordination implies the "framing of common positions" and "promotes

the emergence of consensus” among EU member states (Council of the European Union, 2006: 146; European Commission, 2006: 8). It usually applies to UN contexts such as the UN General Assembly and ECOSOC, but also the ILO or the HRC. The Security Council is the main exemption as is explained below. Such a common EU position represents a (non-binding) framework for individual EU member states to streamline their national performance in IOs. Member states may also choose to defend a single position and agree to vote uniformly (Luif & Radeva, 2007; Rasch, 2008). Unsurprisingly, EU coordination efforts in these bodies have received ample academic attention. Many researchers have analysed the voting behaviour of EU member states in the UN General Assembly and have found that voting patterns show an increasing cohesion (e.g. Luif, 2003; Young & Rees, 2005). Other popular IOs to study EU coordination are the ILO (Johnson, 2005; Riddervold, 2009) and the HRC (Smith, 2010; Basu, 2012). The EU also develops common positions for international development conferences such as the Busan High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in 2011 or the conferences on Financing for Development in Monterrey 2002 and Doha 2008. But coordination in these settings seems to be under-examined by the scholarly community.

Alternatively, coordination may also lead to a mandate for EU actors representing the EU and its member states. This conception of coordination usually applies to those international contexts where a certain degree of delegation of negotiation authority from the principles to the agents is involved, either formally or informally. In such a principal-agent context, coordination then represents the decision-making by the principles (EU member states) towards a negotiating mandate for the agents (e.g. the European Commission, rotating Council presidency or member state as lead negotiator). This perspective has primarily been used to examine the EU’s role in international trade negotiations (Meunier & Nicolaidis, 1999; Damro, 2007, Kerremans, 2004) as well as in multilateral agreements in the areas of chemicals, air transport and environment (Delreux, 2008, 2009, 2011; Van Schaik & Egenhofer, 2005).

Second, coordination does not necessarily imply common EU action or a common EU position. In this second approach, coordination is understood as consultation or information sharing among EU member states and institutions (Smith, 2004: 94) and usually refers to foreign policy issues. Foreign policy coordination is better known as European Political Cooperation (EPC) which began in the 1970s and was upgraded by the Maastricht Treaty into a Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). The 1970 Luxembourg report described EPC as the process that was limited to regular exchanges of information and consultations, working towards a harmonization of views and coordination of positions, but acting jointly only where feasible or desirable (White, 2001: 72). Under the CFSP, systematic foreign policy cooperation was strengthened and complemented with legally binding instruments such as common strategies, joint actions or common position. But even with these instruments at hand, the process of consultation and information-sharing does not necessarily lead to concerted EU action (Keukeleire & MacNaughtan, 2008: 160). The difference with the former approach thus lies in the intentional aspect. While the first view on coordination emphasises the goal to establish a common EU position, the second view considers a common EU position as a by-product of consultation and coordination. With regard to IOs, the UN Security Council is an exemplary setting where EU coordination takes the form of consultation and information sharing. During the so-called Article 34 meetings, referring to the corresponding article in the Treaty of Lisbon<sup>13</sup>, European members of the Security Council brief their fellow EU partners about the Security Council’s activities (Verbeke, 2006; Drieskens, 2008).

Finally, Peter Nedergaard (2008) takes a broader view in his study on coordination processes in the ILO and defines coordination as ‘the act of working together’. Equating cooperation with coordination is indeed tempting since both concepts are closely related and overlap significantly.

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<sup>13</sup> Formerly known as Article 19 TEU

However, these terms are not completely interchangeable and authors still disagree whether cooperation is either a prerequisite (Smith, Carroll, & Ashford, 1995: 8) or a manifestation (Malone & Crowston, 1994: 90) of coordination. Furthermore, according to Nedergaard (2008), EU coordination encompasses bargaining and delegation processes as well as even the EU's performance in international organisations. By using coordination in a fairly inclusive sense, he has made a worthy attempt to formulate a more general definition of EU coordination in IOs, but he seems to stretch the concept slightly beyond its core meaning.

In all three approaches, several distinct aspects of coordination are (implicitly) highlighted. Some scholars emphasise the *process* of achieving a single EU position. Robert Kissack, for example, adopts a pragmatic stance by describing EU coordination in the UN system as the meeting of diplomats and officials from the governments of EU member states in any location, with the purpose of discussing an issue on the UN agenda (Kissack, 2007: 3). Also Taylor (2006) concentrates on the practices and arrangements of EU coordination in social and economic UN organisations in Geneva. In other words, he examines the question how the EU coordinates its policies. Others focus on the *outcome*, namely the capacity of member states to agree on a common position. Laatikainen and Smith label coordination as internal effectiveness which refers to the extent to which the member states can agree on 'output' to present to the rest of the UN, in the form of statements, resolutions, proposals and so forth (Laatikainen & Smith, 2006: 10). Similarly, both Frieden (2004) and Thomas (2011) analyse when EU member states can come up with a joint EU position respectively from a rational-choice and a normative institutionalist perspective. In this way, coordination appears to imply the success of reaching an EU position while failure indicates a lack of coordination. Still other authors examine the *link* between coordination and other phenomena such as the EU's influence (Smith, 2010; Dee, 2012) or performance (Jørgensen, Oberthür, & Shahin, 2011: 604-605). Also the influence of the external context on EU coordination has been examined (Riddervold & Sjørnsen, 2012). Furthermore, beside the distinction between process and outcome, other classifications of coordination are equally possible. For example, EU coordination for an IO may be Brussels-based and/or take place in the premises of that IO. Or coordination may involve all EU member states and institutions, or only those who are represented in the IO. One could also distinguish between issue- or event-based coordination where the former refers to coordination for a single policy issue to be used in multiple IOs. Event-based coordination implies the coordination for a single IO meeting.

As illustrated above, a general working definition of EU coordination cannot directly be derived from the existing research on the EU in IOs. Instead, the multiplicity of views on coordination even stresses the need for an overarching definition to understand how the different dimensions of coordination relate to each other. While it can be useful to focus on a specific aspect or manifestation of coordination, the increased attention to coordination in EU-IO literature and the proliferation of approaches requires a single definition that includes working towards a common position as well as mere consultation and integrates process and outcome. By taking one step back and looking at the more general area of EU studies, we might find a useful definition. In this broader field, two views on coordination can be distinguished.

First, coordination is understood as a mode of policy-making (Wallace, 2010: 98-100). Policy coordination represents a lighter form of policy-making compared to for instance the Community method. Policy coordination entails the mutual adjustment of national policies, decisions or actions towards common goals and is very similar to the notion of (international) economic policy coordination in economics. By focusing on policy learning, benchmarking and peer pressure, it addresses the balance between the diversity among member states and their sovereignty concerns on the one hand and the need for common EU action on the other (Borrás & Jacobsson, 2004: 186). This way of policy-making has for example been used in the context of the economic and monetary union to coordinate the macroeconomic policies of the euro area

member states (Hodson, 2010: 171). In 2000, it has been formalized as the ‘open method of coordination’ (OMC) with the adoption of the Lisbon Strategy. OMC is typically associated with social and employment policies, but has been extended to other areas as well such as education, health or research policy (e.g. Büchs, 2007; Drachenberg, 2011).

A second perspective sees coordination as a goal to make actors work together more effectively, as the objective for an organisation’s performance. This idea of coordination carries strongly positive connotations. As Kassim (2001: 7-8) notes, effective coordination delivers greater efficiency, avoids duplication of efforts and facilitates the achievement of objectives that otherwise may not be realized. Poor coordination, by contrast, is likely to result in chaos, delay and inefficiency. This focus figures prominently in public management literature and inter-organisational studies. Authors examine how different units or departments within a bureaucracy (should) cooperate to achieve the most effective or harmonious results. Coordination thus usually refers to an outcome. Also Peters (1998: 296) subscribes himself to this view and defines coordination as “an end-state in which the policies and programmes of government are characterized by minimal redundancy, incoherence and lacunae.” National administrations are the main units of analysis. In this regard, authors examine for example the formulation of European policies in EU member states. In a seminal work on national coordination of EU policy, Kassim, Menon, Peters and Wright (2001) have compared the strategies, structures and processes in ten member states to coordinate the European policies of different departments and ministries. Also coordination within the European Commission has been examined, for example by Jordan and Schout (2006: 209-229) with regard to environmental policy. In this way coordination does not only suggest the aim of a more effective functioning, but it is also closely related to the view of coordination as a policy-making process, illustrating that the different approaches to coordination are deeply intertwined.

To conclude, neither of the above approaches offer an adequate starting point to define EU coordination in IOs. Coordination through the adaption of policies is only partially useful in the study of EU coordination in IOs. Only when EU member states negotiate towards a distinct EU position, policy adaptation is involved. In cases where the common EU message represents the lowest common denominator of all member states’ positions, the policies of the actors would barely be altered. Also EU coordination processes characterised by information sharing do not necessarily lead to policy adaptation. The second perspective builds upon the normative assumption that EU coordination in IOs serves the goal of achieving a more effective and efficient functioning of the EU in IOs. However, EU coordination does not always imply common action. More importantly, scholars have increasingly rejected the claim that EU coordination strengthens the effectiveness of the EU in IOs, even though this idea is still widely shared in European policy circles, (see e.g. Smith, 2010; Van Schaik, 2010).

### **3.1.2. Towards a definition of EU coordination in IOs**

To define EU coordination in IOs, we need to start from a more abstract level if we do not want to end up with a definition based on a mere description of the phenomenon. For this purpose, the work of Malone and Crowston (1994) is particularly useful.<sup>14</sup> Based on an extensive review of the literature on coordination in multiple disciplines including computer science, organisation theory, economics and psychology, they suggest an overarching definition of coordination. Basically, coordination is managing interdependencies between activities.<sup>15</sup> For example, if two researchers share the same computer (interdependency) to finish their article

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<sup>14</sup> Nedergaard (2008) also refers to Malone and Crowston’s definition, but he focuses primarily on the output of coordination processes.

<sup>15</sup> In their definition of coordination, Malone and Crowston use *dependencies* instead of interdependencies. Since they use both terms interchangeably, I opt for interdependencies.

(activity), they may use that computer according to the first come/first serve principle. Other ways to manage the interdependency between their activities, or in other words, to coordinate the use of the computer, could be to agree on a time schedule or even to rely on a decision of the chair of the department. Malone and Crowston proceed with characterizing different kinds of interdependencies from several distinct disciplines in order to identify the coordination process used to manage them. While most of these interdependencies are less useful for the study of EU coordination, their suggested definition of coordination as the management of interdependencies between activities is compatible with EU coordination in the context of IOs.

Before applying this definition to EU coordination in IOs, it is crucial to differentiate between actors and activities. Malone and Crowston do not limit interdependencies to activities, but leave room for interdependencies between actors<sup>16</sup> as well. Because actors perform the activities, they can be viewed as “a source of interdependencies among activities” (Malone & Crowston, 1994: 97). Additionally, in a highly interdependent EU context, it is possible that the activities of certain actors influence other actors who do not necessarily perform such activities. It is thus fair to argue that coordination is also the management of interdependencies between actors resulting from activities performed by (some of) these actors. This abstract definition becomes clearer in relation to EU coordination in IOs.

By activities, I refer to the representation of (some) EU member states and/or EU institution(s) in IOs. Across the spectrum of IOs and processes of international negotiations, the European Union and its member states are indeed very well represented in all possible configurations. Either some, most or all EU member states are present, often together with the European Union itself being a participant, observer or full member (Emerson & Kaczyński, 2012). In the context of the EU, IO representation by at least one EU actor (member state or institution) implies a number of interdependencies between the represented EU actor(s) and all other EU member states and institutions. When multiple EU actors are represented in an IO, their representation also causes interdependencies among themselves. But what kind of interdependencies are we talking about?

Various interdependencies, resulting from the international representation of (some) EU member states and/or EU institution(s) are possible. What follows is a non-exhaustive list representing a mixture of interdependencies that differs from one IO to another. A first interdependency entails the possibility of a shared representative. If the EU member states agree to be represented by a single actor (e.g. the European Commission, rotating Council presidency or member state as lead negotiator), they all depend on that representative to defend their national interests. On the other hand, when EU institutions speak on behalf of the EU member states in IOs, they need the support of the member states to act legitimately. Dealing with these situations can be considered as coordination. Another interdependency may result from the pursuit of EU member states and institutions to exert greater influence in an IO. To shape international negotiations and outcomes, they may act jointly with other countries, in this case other EU member states. Managing their alliance is also seen as coordination. Furthermore, in cases where only some EU member states are represented in an IO, the excluded EU member states may depend on the represented ones for information on what is going on in that IO. A less tangible form of interdependency involves a shared reputation (Malone & Crowston, 1994: 96). Some EU actors might be concerned that other EU actors' performance in IOs might harm the reputation of the EU. Finally, on top of a de facto interdependent relationship among EU member states and institutions, the interdependency is also legally entrenched in the EU's treaties. Article 34 TEU of the Treaty of Lisbon clearly stipulates that “Member States shall coordinate their action in international organisations and at international conferences”. In addition, “Member States represented in international organisations or international conferences

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<sup>16</sup> or objects as Malone and Crowston say

where not all the Member States participate shall keep the other Member States and the High Representative informed of any matter of common interest”.

To summarize, I define EU coordination as the management of interdependencies between EU member states and institutions resulting from the international representation of the EU and/or (some of) its member states.

### **3.1.3. Process or outcome?**

Still our definition does not yet provide the conceptual clarity we are looking for. The diversity of interdependencies illustrate that this definition still entails several different aspects. This section therefore further elaborates the concept of coordination and attempts to fit the different aspects into a single framework.

First of all, a distinction needs to be made between coordination as the outcome, i.e. the degree to which coordination is achieved and coordination as the process(es) of achieving this end-result (Dunsire, 1978: 16; Peters, 1998: 296). With regard to processes, the example of the two researches working on a single computer shows that there are multiple processes possible to coordinate their computer usage. The researchers may for example apply the first come/first serve principle or they may agree that one works during the day and the other at night. In organisational theory, scholars see two general categories: interactive and non-interactive coordination processes (Hanf & Scharpf, 1978: 351). Both processes are sometimes labelled as coordination by programming and coordination by feedback (March & Simon, 1958: 182; Van de Ven, Delbecq, & Koenig, 1976: 323). Non-interactive coordination relies on pre-established plans, schedules, formalized rules, policies and procedures or even unilateral adjustment. For example, the two researchers may coordinate their computer usage according to certain traditions at the research department. Or there might exist a rule that in case of a shared computer, the most senior researcher may use the computer whenever he/she wants. In both cases, the researchers do not have to interact to coordinate. In the EU, EU member states and institutions may for example rely on EU legislation or previously agreed European Council conclusions to guide their interventions in an IO. EU actors can also unilaterally adjust their positions to manage the interdependencies resulting from their IO representation.

The second category of coordination processes involves interaction between the coordinating actors. Coordination through interaction comes in different degrees (Van de Ven et al., 1976; Malone & Crowston, 1994: 99). First, actors can merely communicate to each other without taking any decisions. The two researchers from our example could simply inform each other when they are planning to use the computer. Notice that this way of coordination does not guarantee an effective management of the use of the computer. I further specify communication into information sharing and consultation (Metcalf, 1994). Information sharing is a one-way process where actors brief each other and exchange information to keep each other up-to-date, but without the intention to receive feedback. In contrast, consultation is two-way rather than one-way. Consultation implies an active interest in what the other party is doing and involves giving feedback. While consultation involves genuine discussion, actors are still free to use each other's input and feedback can be ignored. Second, actors can also engage in group decision-making (Malone & Crowston, 1994: 99). In this process, a group negotiates on how interdependencies are managed. Actors work together to avoid open divergences or even to achieve consensus on complementary policies or objectives. Organisational studies also take individual decision-making into account since individuals often assume linkage functions between units. For the purpose of this dissertation, the individual level is not considered.

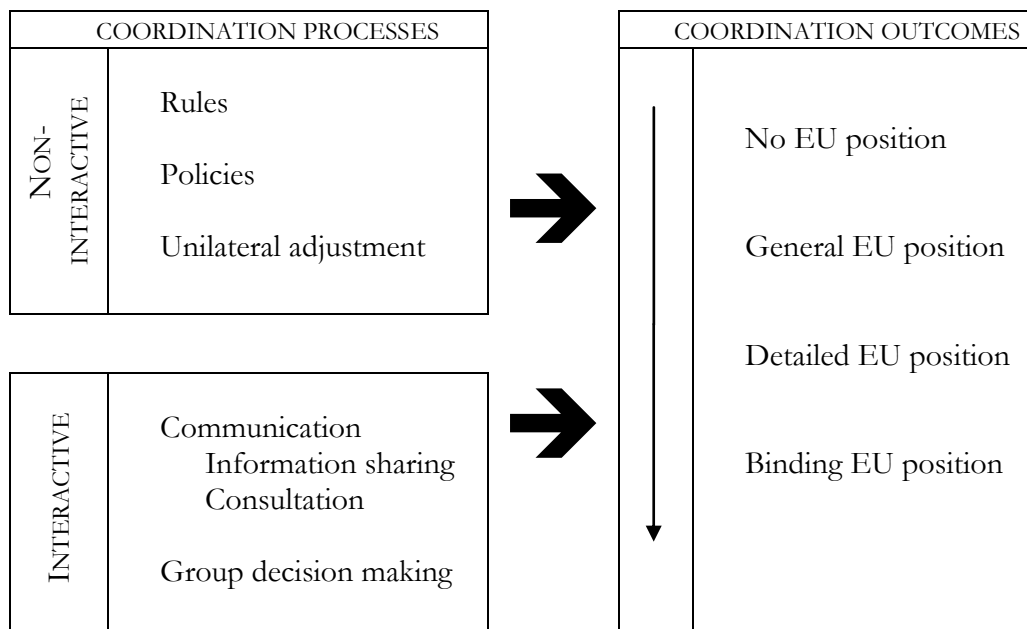
As far as outcome is concerned, coordination can be classified along several dimensions, for example elaborate vs. less elaborate (Nedergaard, 2008), binding vs. non-binding or unsuccessful vs. successful. I opt to distinguish between four possible coordination outcomes.

*No EU position.* The possibility that coordination does not result in any common EU position is a first obvious coordination outcome. A coordination process does indeed not always have an outcome, either because there is no intention to work towards an EU position or because EU member states fail to reach a common EU position.

*General EU position.* A general EU position outlines the broad principles and objectives shared by the participants in the coordination process. This might still leave substantial room for interpretation and allow for ample discretion by the representing EU member states or institutions. To agree on a general position, there is barely any give-and-take involved. In a sense, a general EU position is related to the notion of negative coordination (Scharpf, 1994: 38) which is associated with rather limited aspirations. An EU position, whether it is general, detailed or binding, may come in the form of a document or even an unwritten agreement.

*Detailed EU position.* A detailed EU position reflects the mutual interest of EU member states and institutions in a distinct, common EU position. This coordination outcome transcends the level of general principles. It is characterized by fairly specific proposals and clear deliverables and may include precise numbers and deadlines. A detailed EU position is close to positive coordination in that it may consider more innovative policy options.

*Binding EU position.* The only difference with the previous level is that this position has the status of being binding. The binding status may be legally anchored in the treaty or can be the result of a more informal agreement. In any case, this does not exclude the possibility that EU representatives do not stick to this position in the IO. The degree to which EU representatives respect the EU position refers to the single voice debate which is discussed below.



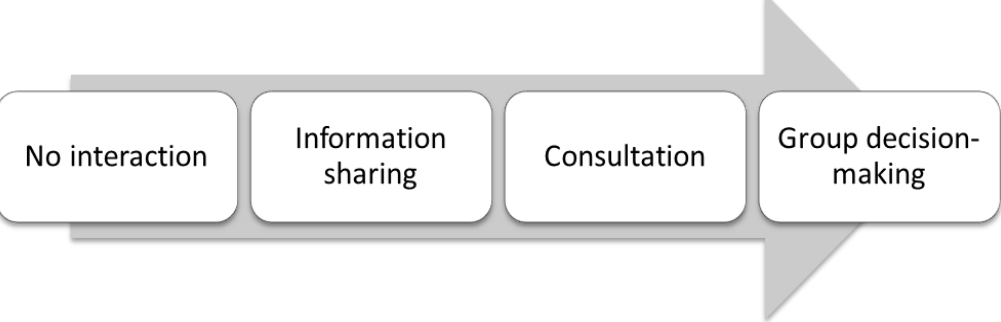
**Figure 5. Conceptual framework of EU coordination in international organizations.**

The distinction between coordination outcomes and processes, both interactive and non-interactive can be put in a single framework as illustrated in Figure 5. Decoupling process and outcome in this way has several analytical advantages. First, different dynamics are at play for process and outcome. Negotiating dynamics probably play a dominant role in explaining coordination outcomes. In contrast, the establishment of non-interactive coordination processes

such as rules and policies would be more situated in European Integration Theory. Second and related to the first, the link between process and outcome is deliberately left unspecified in this framework. This is because a single outcome may stem from different processes or combinations of processes and reversely, a single process has different possible outcomes. Furthermore, some processes are more likely to lead to a certain outcome than others. Thoroughly examining the link between process and outcome is nevertheless beyond the scope of this research but is a promising avenue for future research. Third, it raises attention to the fact that a common EU position is possible without explicit prior interaction between EU member states. For example, the EU can present a detailed position in an IO based on existing EU legislation and without additional prior interaction between the member states. Finally, the framework is useful to measure more precisely EU coordination in multiple IOs. Just stating that there is a lot of EU coordination in one or another IO does no longer suffice. Does ‘a lot’ then refer to the level of interaction or to the level of detail in the resulting EU position? Nonetheless, the framework leaves ample room for several distinct approaches to coordination. Scholars may still focus only on the outcome or on the process. But authors can use the framework to situate their approach of EU coordination within the broader concept of coordination.

The analytical distinction between interactive and non-interactive coordination processes does not prevent them to occur at the same time. In a single dossier, it is perfectly possible that actors share information while positions converge through unilateral adjustment. Or interdependencies could be managed through existing policies, but member states still want to consult each other. In this dissertation, I will concentrate on the interactive process of coordination. Where necessary I will reach out to non-interactive coordination processes, possibly to explain the level of interactive coordination. The focus on interactive coordination processes is justified given that the our research questions aim at identifying the role of different actors in the EU’s coordination process for the G7, G8 and G20. Based on the above coordination framework and definition, we can rephrase the first research question as ‘To what extent do EU member states and institutions interact to manage the interdependencies between all EU member states and institutions resulting from the representation of the EU4 and the EU institutions in the G7, G8 and G20’.

Based on the above framework and according to my focus on interactive coordination processes, I construct a coordination scale to measure EU coordination for the G7, G8 and G20 (see Figure 6). The scale entails four levels of interaction ranging from (i) no interaction, over (ii) information sharing and (iii) consultation to (iv) group decision-making. This is not the first proposal of a scale of coordination. Metcalfe (1994) developed a 9-level scale to measure coordination of national ministries in EU policy processes. His scale primarily serves public administration purposes and was further elaborated by Jordan and Schout (2006). Metcalfe’s coordination scale is however of limited use for our research question since not only



**Figure 6. Coordination scale.**

coordination outcomes and processes are put on the same dimension, but also because the upper four levels involve a central authority that imposes coordination from above.



Even though I strongly argue in this section to distinguish between coordination process and outcome for analytical purposes, I remain convinced that in the real world these two aspects cannot be viewed completely separately. Every process has a certain outcome and any outcome is always the result of a certain process. Moreover, I suppose that EU member states engage in a certain coordination process with a certain outcome in mind, a *goal*. If EU member states attend a coordination meeting to share information, they know that this will normally not lead directly to a common EU position. EU member states also realize that group decision-making is likely to result in a common EU position. However, the envisaged outcome is not always the end-result. EU member states may for instance not overcome their substantive differences in a group decision-making process. Alternatively, they can upgrade their ambitions during a meeting for example by starting with information exchange and ending up with a rather detailed EU position when preferences change during a meeting or when it appears that external circumstances require a single EU position. Therefore, every interactive coordination process is inherently linked to a certain *goal*, while the link between process and actual outcome varies per case. I assume the following process-goal links: information sharing does not aim to end in a common EU position and is thus linked to the ‘no EU position’-goal. Consultation has the implicit goal to see whether the actors share certain views. A general EU position could be derived from a consultation process. Lastly, group decision-making implies the goal to reach a detailed EU position, whether or not binding.

### **3.1.4. Coordination and cohesion**

This brief section tries to clarify how my conceptualisation of coordination fits in the landscape of other concepts related to the international role of the EU such as coherence, actorness and effectiveness. It is however not the aim of this dissertation to address these relationship more thoroughly.

Coordination is analytically most closely related to cohesion<sup>17</sup>. Cohesion can be defined by as the degree to which an entity, i.e. the EU, is able to formulate internally consistent policy preferences, where internal consistency may refer to different policies (horizontal coherence), different actors’ activities (vertical coherence), policy-makers’ values (value cohesion), policy-making processes (procedural cohesion) or policy outcomes (output cohesion) (Jupille & Caporaso, 1998: 214; Bretherton & Vogler, 2006: 32-33; Gebhard, 2011; Thomas, 2012: 2). As illustrated, authors do not agree on the exact dimensions of cohesion, though there seems to be a consensus that the output represents a crucial aspect of cohesion. Output cohesion is the extent to which the EU as a whole succeeds in formulating common positions and policies and whether the various EU actors comply with the policy that has been agreed (Jupille & Caporaso, 1998: 220; Groen & Niemann, 2012: 3).

Coordination is linked to cohesion in the sense that both concepts overlap as far as coordination outcomes and output cohesion are concerned (see Figure 7). Coordination processes, whether interactive or non-interactive, result in a certain coordination outcome. This outcome represents a substantial share of the level of output cohesion, notably for the extent to which the EU succeeds in formulating common positions and policies. The compliance of EU actors with these commons positions is then another aspect of output cohesion, which I would not equate with coordination. Coordination, and especially the process of coordination, is thus an analytically distinct step that precedes cohesion. Since this study focuses on coordination processes, in particular interactive coordination, the link between coordination and cohesion will not be further examined.

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<sup>17</sup> Some authors use the term coherence (Van Schaik, 2010; Thomas, 2012; Niemann & Bretherton, 2013) or consistency (Nuttall, 2005).

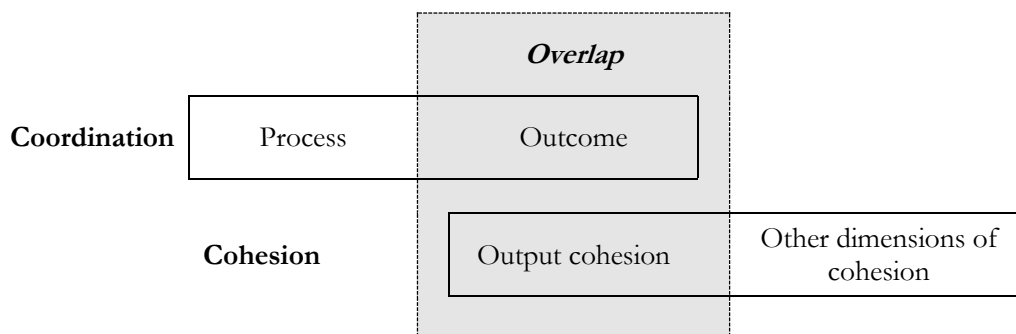


Figure 7. The relationship between coordination and cohesion.

Zooming out, cohesion has been dealt with as a criterion of actorness or the “capacity to behave actively and deliberately in relation to other actors in the international system” (Sjöstedt, 1977: 16). Jupille and Caporaso (1998) have identified four criteria of actorness: recognition, authority, autonomy and cohesion. So, coordination indirectly constitutes actorness. In turn, actorness has been linked to effectiveness, the extent to which the EU achieves its goals, although the relationship between these two concepts is often “under-specified and systematic empirical analyses of EU effectiveness are still relatively rare” (Niemann & Bretherton, 2013). It appears that actorness rather deals with the internal EU dimension, while effectiveness entails the external dimension. As Groen and Niemann (2012: 4) argue, effectiveness builds on actorness since there needs to be a certain capacity to behave actively and deliberately in order to enable the EU to act effectively. Recently, scholars have also conceptualized the term performance (Jørgensen et al., 2011). Effectiveness is considered as one of the constituting factors of EU performance. They use, however, coordination in a different way. Rather than an influencing performance through effectiveness, coordination is considered as conducive to relevance, which in its turn determines performance.

### 3.2. Explaining EU coordination in IOs

In the previous section, I proposed a definition and a scale of EU coordination to examine the EU’s coordination efforts for the G7, G8 and G20. The next section introduces six causal factors and develops ensuing hypotheses to explain the level of EU coordination for these forums.

Following from our definition of EU coordination, namely coordination as the management of interdependencies between EU member states and institutions resulting from the international representation of the EU and/or (some of) its member states, one could expect that the different kinds of interdependencies suggest the explanatory variables. After all, Malone and Crowston (1994: 91) contend that coordination processes depend on the interdependencies that are to be managed. Also Scharpf (1994) attributes coordination to the kind of dependence among actors. For example, a shared representative in IOs may require a higher degree of interaction between the represented EU actors than if each actor is represented in its own capacity. Next to actor interdependence, Van de Ven et al. (1979) test two other factors which may explain the use of different interactive and non-interactive coordination mechanisms: task uncertainty or the complexity of the issue and the size of the work unit. However, interdependencies fail to fulfil their role as explanatory factors for EU coordination in IOs and the Gx in particular due to a number of reasons. They do not provide sufficient insight in the underlying causal mechanisms. The question remains why a certain interdependency would lead to a certain coordination process. Moreover, also other factors that are not directly related to any interdependencies among the EU member states may affect the EU’s coordination efforts for IOs. Finally, the same

interdependencies may be managed by different coordination processes depending on the context.

Nonetheless, the wider literature on the EU in IOs offers a number of clues to develop usable hypotheses for EU coordination in the context of the G7, G8 and G20. We may however not be too optimistic since the literature is fragmented and any systematic research of when and why EU member states coordinate is lacking. Some careful attempts have been made by Johnson (2005), Kissack (2006) and Nedergaard (2008), all on EU coordination in the ILO. However, these authors tend to focus on the coordination outcome rather than on the process. But where appropriate, these studies will be used to build our hypotheses. In addition, the existing literature on the EU in the G7, G8 and G20 also hints at some plausible hypotheses. Suggestions from the literature were constantly tested in interviews.

As shown in Table 5, I suggest six variables which are, for heuristic purposes, structured into three explanatory areas policy, politics and polity (Wiener & Diez, 2009: 19). I take both EU-specific and IO-specific variables into account to analyse the observed patterns of EU coordination. In this way, the explanatory framework challenges the dominant focus in the scant and fragmented literature on EU coordination on the internal aspects of the EU such as the distribution of competences or member states’ preferences. Since the study of EU coordination in IOs is located at the intersection of the international and the EU level, the internal focus is of limited value and IO-specific features need to be taken into account (Jørgensen & Laatikainen, 2013: 4). Moreover, despite the growing recognition among scholars that the external context affects the EU’s behaviour, there has been little systematic attention paid to the question of how the character of the multilateral system influences, constrains or enables the EU to act (Kissack, 2010: 5). Only recently, Costa and Jørgensen (2012) have taken a first major attempt to examine the influence of IOs on the EU focusing on the causes and mechanisms of IO influence. Thus, relying on either EU-specific or IO-specific factors cannot provide a full account of EU coordination. Therefore, this research design adds a second ‘explanatory layer’ consisting of IO-specific variables on top of internal EU variables.

	<b>Policy</b>	<b>Politics</b>	<b>Polity</b>
<b>EU-specific</b>	Existing policies	Interests	Competences
<b>IO-specific</b>	Relevance	EU influence	Gx organisation

**Table 5. Explanatory variables.**

The main objective of this study is to examine the role of each independent variable in the EU’s coordination efforts for the G7, G8 and G20, rather than to understand how the individual variables interact, and how both the EU and IO side relate to each other. Although I acknowledge that some variables may only play a role in combination with (or in absence of) other variables, I consider it too early to formulate any informed hypotheses on possible combinations of factors that may lead to EU coordination. Nevertheless, based on the insights in the individual variables gained from this study, I will try to make some tentative conclusions on the relation between the causal factors at the end of this thesis.

**3.2.1. Existing policies**

Many policy issues that come up in IOs are already covered by previous internal EU discussions for example in the context of other international conferences, European Council meetings or legislative procedures. Woolcock (2012: 27) contends that “if there is a well-developed *acquis* that establishes an agreed internal policy, this will often provide the basis for EU external policies”. Jørgensen et al. (2011: 613) refer to such internal EU policy as being conducive to substantive EU coordination of external policy. It is argued that member states have a vital interest in uploading domestic EU regulations to create an international level-playing

field. However, I contest the claim that existing policy facilitates EU coordination. While existing EU policies may indeed enhance the *coherence* of the EU's external performance, I argue that agreed internal policy makes an interactive EU coordination process unnecessary. Given their limited time and resources, officials will be reluctant to re-discuss what they have already agreed upon. In his work on EU coordination for the UN bodies in Geneva, Taylor (2006: 161) raises the argument that EU member states are not inclined to upgrade EU coordination practices because there is agreement about a wide range of social and economic issues on the agenda. Following Taylor, I hypothesise that if EU policy exists on a particular issue, there will be less coordination for that issue. Also notice that this variable actually refers to non-interactive coordination as an explanation for interactive coordination.

### **Hypothesis 1**

If EU policy exists on a particular issue, there will be less coordination for that issue.

Concretely, to examine whether EU policy exists for a particular issue, I will compare Gx language with EU legislation, Council conclusions and existing common EU positions in other international settings. The main criterion is that it has to be endorsed by the 27 EU member states. Consequently, a Communication or Recommendation by the European Commission is not considered as existing policy. Furthermore, the degree to which a policy or position already exists must be seen in proportion to the Gx issue under examination. For example, there is no existing EU policy if the EU can only rely on broad principles whereas the Gx decides on specific targets.

#### **3.2.2. Interests**

The second variable entails the national interests of the EU member states, in particular the EU23. I hypothesise that EU23 countries will press for more interactive coordination for issues that threaten their national interest. This hypothesis combines two elements.

First, EU23 countries can be considered as small states if the 'smallness' of a state is defined in relation to its external environment, not as an inherent state characteristic, and refers to those states that are unable to change the basic contours of the policy context in which they act (Steinmetz & Wivel, 2010). In the context of the Gx, the EU23, i.e. those states that are not able to directly influence the G20 process, are for that reason considered to be small (Nasra & Debaere, 2012: 2). The literature on small states shows that small states tend to be proactive in EU negotiations where they do have important economic and political interests at stake. They are reactive in sectors of limited interest to them (Thorhallson & Wivel, 2006: 659). Hence, we can assume that when the EU23 have vital interests at stake in a certain area, they will act proactively and use all the instruments to their disposal to protect their interests.

Second, it can be assumed that for Gx issues in which EU23 states have a vital interest, they will direct their actions towards strengthening of EU coordination for the Gx, i.e. making it more interactive. This is due to the fact that the EU23 depend in the first place on the EU's institutional framework to influence the Gx process given the participation of the EU at all levels of the G7, G8 and G20. EU coordination is thus key for the EU23 to make their voice heard in the Gx. Absence of coordination can lead to situations in which Gx decisions threaten national interests, or in which an EU23 country that has something original to say, misses an important opportunity to make its point at one of the most influential political forums in the world. In addition, EU coordination may also serve to bind the EU4 to the position of an EU23 country. Although being the most obvious instrument, strengthening EU coordination is only one way to shape Gx policy discussions. Other options are for example acquiring a seat at the Gx table or lobbying other G20 participants (Van de Graaf, Lesage, Nasra, Orbie, & Vermeiren, 2009). The first strategy may be useful in other IOs, but in the Gx context it has proven to be very difficult,

unsustainable or even unrealistic as has been illustrated by the attempts of Spain, the Netherlands and Poland to secure G20 membership. Besides, the temporary presence in the Gx as rotating EU Council president only offers very limited opportunities to have an impact on Gx developments. In other IOs, defending vital interests through national representation does represent a viable alternative and offers an important exit option in discussions to strengthen EU coordination. Member states retain the possibility to defend their own national interests when EU coordination would lead to a compromise in which their national interests are not sufficiently reflected (Frieden, 2004). For example in 2003, Spain and Greece resisted attempts by the European Commission to strengthen EU coordination in the ILO because this could lead to various issues concerning fishing and maritime transportation – where Spain and Greece have strong national interests – knowing that they could defend their national positions themselves in the ILO (Nedergaard, 2008). The second tactic consists of approaching other G20 participants, be it countries or other international institutions. This is however not self-evident given the confidential nature of the Gx and the perception in some G20 countries that the EU is already over-represented.

To conclude, since EU23 states will act proactively when vital interests are at stake and since EU coordination is the most feasible way to protect these vital interests in the Gx context, I suggest that there will be more coordination for policy issues that touch upon the national interests of (some) EU23 countries.

### **Hypothesis 2**

If a particular issue touches upon the national interests of (some) EU23 countries, there will be more coordination for that issue.

In operationalizing this variable, my main concern is whether EU23 countries believe that they risk to be negatively affected by Gx activities. According to the pragmatist approach of this dissertation, I do not distinguish between material or ideational interests. An EU23 state may as well legitimately fear that the Gx obstructs the pursuit of a core value or prominent policy idea as it may be concerned that the Gx alters its national representation in an IO. In both instances, I expect EU coordination to be more interactive. Since most dossiers involve a certain key interest of one or several EU23 countries, this variable will be assessed in relation to other dossiers under examination.

### **3.2.3. Competences**

EU coordination, either as process or outcome, is often linked to the level of European integration, which is reflected in the distribution of competences. Dee (2012: 190) states that in IOs, the EU performs best in areas where the EU member states are most integrated, where that integration is then reflected in the level of EU competences, and consequently where the member states then speak with one voice. Also Nuttall (1992) argues that the stimulus for developing new coordination mechanisms comes from closer integration. More precisely, it is common to state that the level and pattern of coordination, and the actors involved will vary depending on the subject and its positioning within the EU's pillar structure. It is assumed that the EU has a common stance whenever first pillar issues are at stake (Brantner & Gowan 2009: 47), an assumption that has survived the formal abolition of the pillar structure since the Treaty of Lisbon. In their study on EU preparation for the Gx, Nasra et al. (2009) have tested the argument that in cases where there has been a significant transfer of responsibilities to the EU, the member states dispose of adequate mechanisms to control the EU representatives. This would enable the member states to keep the EU representatives sufficiently close to their preferences, reducing the desire to seek additional coordination. Nonetheless, Nasra et al.

tentatively conclude that the distribution of competences only offers a partial explanation for the involvement of the EU23 in the EU's preparatory process for the Gx.

Indeed, scholars still disagree whether and to what extent EU coordination is determined by the distribution of competences. While Johnson (2005: 144) claims that the level of EU coordination is related to EU competences, Laatikainen and Smith (2006: 16) argue that no neat correlation can be found between internal coordination and EU competences. Nevertheless, as a widely asserted explanation for EU coordination and given the confusion about its explanatory value, it is worthwhile to include it in the analysis. Hence in issues where EU possesses extensive competences, we expect a higher degree of EU coordination.

### **Hypothesis 3**

There will be more coordination for issues in which the EU possesses extensive competences.

Operationalization of the competences variable is based on the Lisbon Treaty. The treaty lists three principal categories of competence, (i) where the EU's competence is exclusive, (ii) where it is shared with the member states and (iii) where the EU is limited to supporting, coordinating and supplementing the action of the member states. A special category is foreseen for economic and employment policy in which the EU is only allowed to coordinate policies (Craig, 2010: 159). Competences not attributed to the EU by the treaties fall within the competences of the member states.

In short, exclusive competence implies that only the Union can legislate and adopt legally binding acts. In areas of shared competence, the member state can exercise competence only to the extent that the Union has not exercised or has decided to cease to exercise its competence within any such area. Consequently, the amount of shared power held by the member states in these areas may diminish over time, in favour of the EU. The third general category of competence allows the EU to take action to support, coordinate, or supplement member state action, without entailing harmonization of member states' laws (Craig & de Burca, 2011). Extensive competences, as used in the hypothesis, is my own term to refer either to those areas where the EU has exclusive competences or to those areas of shared competences where the EU has already taken action.

#### **3.2.4. Relevance**

Nedergaard (2008) has found that in the context of the 2005 International Labour Conference extensive EU coordination meetings were organized when a clear and apparent potential for conflict between ILO and EU policies loomed. Riddervold (2009: 2) confirms by saying that EU member states coordinated for the ILO's Maritime Labour Convention to avoid conflict with existing EU regulation. More generally, Brantner and Gowan (2009: 39) suggest that the relevance of an IO is constitutive of the willingness of EU member states to coordinate. When EU member states consider an IO as irrelevant in a particular issue, it is unlikely that they will devote their limited time and resources to coordination. I define relevance in a fairly inclusive sense. In basic terms, an IO is considered relevant if it matters, if the IO should be taken into account. More precisely, when an IO affects the position of countries in the EU or internationally or influences domestic politics or policies, it is relevant. A country may also perceive an IO as relevant if it affects other countries. A variant is a situation in which a government considers the Gx relevant, but illegitimate, which might be a reason not to insist on coordination, as that would just help to legitimize the Gx.

Preliminary research on EU coordination in the G8 and G20 underlines the variable relevance as an explanatory factor for coordination. In the early years of the G8, a meeting of the European Council was always held shortly before the G8-summit in order to coordinate a common position

on key agenda items of the summit. This habit fell into disuse since the summits became less results-oriented – and thus less relevant – after 1980, according to Putnam and Bayne (1987: 152). According to Fischer (2001: 129) the prevailing opinion among EU4 countries is now that “there is no reason for coordination for the G8 if the position of the [EU4] does not interfere with coordinated EU positions or policies”. In a similar vein, the US attitude towards multilateral organisations is heavily determined by the perceived performance or effectiveness of such bodies (Foot, MacFarlane, & Matanduno, 2003: 269). More recently, Nasra et al. (2009) test the hypothesis that when the policy implications of the discussions in the Gx are concrete and predictable, the incentives for involvement, and thus coordination, will be high. They tentatively conclude that implications of Gx measures are indeed a key factor in explaining EU coordination.

The hypothesis that relevance determines EU coordination particularly applies to the EU23. For the EU4, in contrast, relevance does not necessarily trigger EU coordination since they still have the opportunity to shape Gx discussions directly.

Finally, in our analysis, we must bear in mind that the causal relationship between relevance and coordination might be bi-directional. On the one hand, the level of EU coordination may be higher in certain cases because EU member states perceive the Gx more relevant in that issue area. On the other hand, EU coordination may also lead to a better understanding and knowledge of the Gx which might result in higher relevance scores.

#### **Hypothesis 4**

When the Gx is perceived as more relevant in a certain policy issue, there will be more EU coordination for that issue.

Since relevance is a very broad concept, we decompose it into three slightly overlapping indicators: (i) a general perception of the Gx relevance, (ii) an evaluation of its impact and (iii) the functions performed by the Gx. Data on those three indicators will primarily be gathered through an online survey and complemented by interviews and other sources.

The general perception measures the intuitive feeling about the Gx. Four broad, rather popular role conceptions have been identified. The G7, G8 or G20 can be seen

- as an irrelevant ‘talking shop’ or ‘photo opportunity’ for world leaders
- relevant as a meeting of individuals, but with limited impact
- as a forum giving relevant impulses to global governance
- as a steering body in global governance

The impact indicator focuses specifically on the impact of the Gx on their country in a certain policy area. Perceiving the Gx as a steering body in global governance does not necessarily imply that a country is also directly affected by Gx measures. In this study, impact is conceived in a comprehensive way since no distinction has been made for different aspects that could have been affected such as discourse, budget or legislation.

To deepen our understanding of the relevance of the Gx, we have analysed which functions the G7, G8 and G20 perform. Kirton (2004) distinguishes six possible functions of Gx summits in global governance: domestic political management, deliberation, direction setting, decision making, delivery and development of global governance. These functions have been rephrased and adjusted to make them more specific and accessible for policy-makers. The six following functions have been used in this analysis:

- Enhancing the prestige of the leaders/ministers back home
- Trust-building & fostering personal relationships

- Setting the global agenda
- Taking relevant decisions
- Delivering on its commitments
- Steering global governance

These functions provide an indication of the relevance of the Gx as some of the six functions mainly play at the local site of the summit while others reach out to the international, and global levels. Following the reasoning of Kirton (2013: 39), enhancing the prestige of the ministers is, by definition, focused on governing within the domestic state. Trust-building, agenda- setting, and decision making take place at the intergovernmental level among the members of the group, although these dimensions can extend to outsiders as participants or targets of influence. Delivery can be done by others beyond those who made the decision. The development of global governance embraces the planet as a whole. Consequently, it can be assumed that the Gx is more relevant for the EU23 when it acts as a steering committee, rather than as a forum for trust-building.

Analytically, relevance differs from interests in the sense that the Gx may be perceived as relevant by an EU23 country without touching upon the its vital interests. Gx activities could for example be targeted at African countries. Only the impact indicator could potentially interfere with the interests variable, although it is theoretically possible to identify areas that are not considered as vital by the EU23, but in which the Gx does have some impact.

### **3.2.5. EU influence**

This hypothesis tests the widespread belief that a coordinated EU position strengthens the influence of the EU in IOs (Laatikainen & Smith, 2006; Jørgensen, 2009, Van Schaik, 2010: 19). According to Paasivirta and Porter (2006: 48), EU coordination depends on “a substantive and realistic judgment that more is achieved by the EU’s member states when acting together than any state could manage alone”. Or as Rasch (2008: 23) has put it, “let’s unite and the world will listen to us”. This general idea seems to determine the EU’s coordination efforts in several IOs and policy domains. For example, EU member states recognize that acting collectively can increase their influence on international environmental negotiations (Laatikainen & Smith, 2006: 18). The same logic applies in the context of the ILO where some EU member states prefer coordination within the larger IMEC group of industrialized market economies over EU coordination partly because IMEC is a stronger bloc and has the potential to exert greater influence (Kissack, 2006: 173). Hence I include the hypothesis that there will be more coordination if the EU is seeking greater influence over the Gx processes and outcomes.

However, one might argue that this claim does not vary since an actor is always trying to maximize its influence. While this might be true, EU coordination is not necessarily helpful to achieve this goal. Research has increasingly shown that under some circumstances, EU coordination does weaken rather than strengthen the influence of the EU. First, a common EU stance might spark the automatic opposition of the EU’s negotiation partners. Since EU coordination has the potential to strengthen EU influence over negotiation outcomes, it might increase the degree of opposition by the EU’s negotiation partners which in turn can undermine the EU’s influence (Van Schaik, 2010: 194-195). By adopting a common position, the EU often irritates its negotiation partners, who either claim that the Europeans would lose negotiating flexibility (Merlini, 1984: 200), or fear that the EU would become too dominant. Second, Smith (2006) has found that EU coordination in the Human Rights Council requires too much energy from the involved EU member states that there is little time left for outreach, i.e. for lobbying negotiation partners. Third, EU coordination may be conceived as inappropriate in certain instances. For example in the context of the ILO, EU coordination prior to IMEC coordination



meetings was deemed unproductive by some EU member states since the purpose of IMEC was a general discussion which would not work if 15 or 25 members all repeated the same thing (Kissack, 2006: 173). Also for the G8, it has been argued that a common EU position is not always desirable given the risk of polarizing the debate within the G8, while this forum should primarily serve as a creative think-tank of ideas (Huigens & Niemann, 2009: 25-28). By testing this hypothesis, it will be examined to what extent the EU is aware of this challenge and under what circumstances it does or does not coordinate to increase its influence. Information on this variable will be derived from interviews and via the online survey. More specifically, we are looking for beliefs and perceptions of EU policy-makers about this hypothesis rather than examining whether EU coordination has actually increased the EU's influence in the Gx.

#### **Hypothesis 5**

There will be more coordination if the EU is seeking greater influence over the Gx processes and outcomes.

### **3.2.6. Gx organisation**

The sixth and final variable refers to the way in which the Gx forums are organized. More precisely, I hypothesise that EU coordination is more likely to occur if Gx processes match with processes in the EU. For example, the rhythm of EU meetings does not necessarily meet the tight deadlines of the Gx, although many working groups or Council configurations meet relatively frequently. In this case, there is simply no possibility to gather timely feedback from the member states. Moreover, the agendas of Council meetings, COREPER and working groups are often heavily overloaded. This severely limits the opportunity to discuss Gx issues at length and to engage in group decision-making. Besides, the structure of the Gx system is not straightforward. Some issues are only dealt with at the summits and preparatory sherpa meetings, while other topics are (additionally or only) discussed in dedicated working groups and/or at sectorial ministerial meetings. This organisational structure is also very flexible and changes over time. In this way, it is difficult for the EU to develop a structured EU coordination process. Furthermore, the Gx often deals with multidimensional issues such as food security, energy or climate change. These themes may be on the agenda of multiple working groups under different ministerial responsibilities. In this case, the division of labour between the corresponding EU bodies to coordinate may seem unclear and hinder EU coordination attempts.

A final aspect related to the organisation of the Gx will also be taken into account: the informal character of the Gx. Since this does not or barely vary across the Gx forums, it may not explain differences between individual Gx forums or policy areas. Nevertheless, it could have an overall influence on EU coordination and is therefore included in our comparative analysis. According to Huigens and Niemann (2009: 28-30), the informal and non-binding nature of the Gx process influences the capacity of the Union to act in the Gx system. Hence we can assume that the informal and club-like nature also affects the EU's coordination processes for the Gx. EU23 countries may be deprived of actual information from within the Gx process which may impede EU coordination.

#### **Hypothesis 6**

EU coordination is more likely to occur if Gx processes match with processes in the EU.

### 3.2.7. Alternative explanations

Next to the six hypotheses outlined above, other explanations might account for EU coordination as well. Firstly, individuals may play an influential role in the EU's coordination attempts for the Gx. Some officials are more active than others with regard to the Gx as a result of their personality, professional background or a genuine interest or concern. Also personal relations between officials may facilitate (or hamper) coordination efforts. Nevertheless, I adopt a structural stance and conceive the role of individuals rather as a catalyst for EU coordination. The capacity of individual officials to establish long-lasting effects is limited without an enabling environment characterised by one or more of the six factors above.

Secondly, EU coordination for the Gx may stem from legal provisions in the EU Treaties. The Treaty of Lisbon and the preceding Treaties contain a number of articles that justify or require the coordination of national positions in (some) international contexts. Generally, EU member states and the EU institutions have the duty to cooperate loyally as laid down in article 4§3 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU). This principle of sincere cooperation relates to the internal functioning of the EU as well as its external action. Case law by the Court of Justice of the European Union has further specified the role of this principle with regard to the EU's representation in international forums. In his analysis of the EU's legal status in IOs, Hoffmeister (2007: 65-67) considers the pursuit of common EU positions as one aspect of this duty. However, his interpretation slightly differs from the Opinion of Advocate General Maduro in the case *Commission v. Sweden*, where Maduro stresses that “[t]he unity of international representation of the Community and its Member States does not have an independent value; it is merely an expression of the duty of loyal cooperation under Art. 10 EC” (Casolari, 2012: 13). So while this duty aims to ensure that the member states’ do not jeopardise the EU's policies and objectives, it does not explicitly require EU coordination in international contexts. Additionally, it is worth noticing that, according to our conceptualisation of coordination, even an obligation to act in a united way would not necessarily involve interactive EU coordination.

Furthermore, some treaty provisions call for coordination in specific instances. Most explicit is article 34§1 TEU that stipulates that the “Member States shall coordinate their action in international organisations and at international conferences”. Eeckhout (2011: 228) points out that the scope of this provision is limited to the CFSP, in the light of article 40 TEU. In addition, and also regarding CFSP, article 32 TEU states that “[b]efore undertaking any action on the international scene or entering into any commitment which could affect the Union's interests, each Member State shall consult the others within the European Council or the Council”. The coordination of monetary and economic policies is foreseen in article 138§1 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) which states that “the Council, on a proposal from the Commission, shall adopt a decision establishing common positions on matters of particular interest for economic and monetary union within the competent international financial institutions and conferences”. So far, the Council has never implemented this provision, even though it could adopt a common position by qualified majority voting (Piris, 2010: 306). Moreover, this article only involves those member states that are part of the euro area. With regard to development cooperation, the article 210 TFEU states that “the Union and the Member States shall coordinate their policies on development cooperation and shall consult each other on their aid programmes, including in international organisations and during international conferences”. Finally, article 218 TFEU outlines the procedure to negotiate agreements between the Union and third countries or international organisations. After nominating a negotiator for the EU, the council “may address directives to the negotiator”, which implies the coordination of a common EU position.

However, none of these provisions does unequivocally demand for coordination among all EU member states in the context of Gx meetings or some only apply to a certain part of the Gx

agenda. In addition, the Treaty does not always specify to what extent the member states should coordinate. Does an exchange of information meet the Treaty's requirements on coordination or should the member states work towards a common stance. Nor is it clear whether it involves all member states or only those participating in the international organisation or conference. But more importantly, the informal and non-binding nature of the Gx systems significantly challenges the legal obligations to coordinate. For example, article 210 TFEU does not apply because the Gx forums are no formal international organisations (Fischer, 2001: 129) and the Gx discussion do not lead to an internationally legally binding agreement (Delreux, 2011: 19). Likewise, the EU is strictly speaking not a member of the G8 and G7 reducing the possibilities to enforce an obligation to coordinate before the Court of Justice. Hence because the relevant treaty provisions are rather vague and ambiguous, apply only partially, are heavily challenged by the Gx context and have never been mentioned during interviews, I do not include the legal facets as an explicit hypothesis but I will refer to it when necessary.

## Chapter 4

### **Methods**

Empirical analysis of the Gx process and EU coordination for the Gx is methodologically challenging. It is hard to find relevant Gx documents and EU documents on the Gx given the informal character of the Gx. There is no secretariat for the G7, G8 or G20. All discussions take place on an informal basis and there are no official records of Gx meetings. Only the leaders release a public communiqué which summarizes the outcomes of one year of Gx meetings. The communiqué does however not provide sufficient insight in the underlying substantive discussions.

In addition, these rare written sources are difficult to access since the Gx process is surrounded by secrecy and confidentiality. There is a prevailing code of conduct among G8 members that information circulating among them is handled carefully and kept within a closed circle of people (Nasra et al., 2009: 5). As other researchers working on the Gx have experienced, without insider status, there are serious limits to know what takes place at Gx meetings, what is discussed and what is agreed (Baker, 2006: 15; Huigens & Niemann, 2009: 10-11). Being aware of what is on the Gx agenda is important to study EU coordination for the Gx. It enables me to identify which Gx topics could have been subject of EU coordination.

Also within the EU, the Economic and Financial Committee (EFC), which coordinates G20 finance matters, has a comparable secretive nature and is strictly shielded from the outside world or even other EU bodies and member states' ministries (Grosche & Puetter, 2008: 534). Representatives in the EFC are moreover difficult to catch for an interview since they are based in their capitals and only come to Brussels for EFC meetings.

Furthermore, the rise of the G20 in 2008 has led to some frictions between European G20 and non-G20 member states. Therefore, the Gx process is a delicate theme within the EU making officials reluctant to openly discuss this matter. In addition, documents resulting from EU coordination processes are usually for internal use only since they often deal with sensitive issues and entail strategic negotiation positions. For this reason, my requests to the Council's General Secretariat for access to a draft letter from the President of the Council (Ecofin) to Alistair Darling, then President of the G20, as well as the Draft EU Guidelines for the G20 Labour and Employment Ministers' Meeting on 18-19 July 2013 were declined because:

*“Disclosure of the information contained in the requested document would weaken the future position of the EU in the framework of such multilateral negotiations as it would reveal the negotiation position and the EU strategy and would prejudice relations between the European Union and the non-EU members of the G20.”* (Letter from the Council's General Secretariat, 11 October 2012)

Because of these challenges, I have to rely on multiple data sources to gather a sufficient amount of information on a particular event, process or hypothesis. Therefore, the empirical part of this dissertation is based on primary and secondary literature, elite interviews and the results of an online survey. Each data source is elaborated below. According to a pragmatist perspective (Hellmann, 2009: 640), I aim at a proper balance between proven techniques based on prior problems with similar problems on the one hand (interviews and literature) and innovation based on the novelty of the problem at hand on the other (survey). More importantly, by using different data sources – which is also referred to as data triangulation – I can also cross-check the results from one source with another. In this way, it reduces reliance on one particular type of data and enhances the overall validity of this study (Yin, 2009).

Using interviews, official documents and an online survey to assess six hypotheses in eight cases easily leads to a highly complex web of empirical data. Complexity as a result of abductive reasoning can be controlled by tools such as structured, focused comparison and descriptive statistics (Friedrichs & Kratochwil, 2009: 719). Structured, focused comparison allows us to find patterns of similarity and difference across the cases (George & Bennett, 2005: 67-72). It is

structured in the sense that the same questions are asked for each case and focused in that it only deals with certain aspects of the case. Furthermore, the survey results will be analysed by using simple descriptive statistics such as frequency counts and cross-tabulation.

**4.1. Literature**

To address the two central research questions, many types of written sources have been examined. First, I used official documentation such as communications from the European Commission, EU press releases and memos, economic forecasts as well as communiqués and (non-public) reports of the Gx. Second, via several contacts and during the interviews, I had access to confidential documentation including (draft) EU Terms of References and Guidelines for G20 meetings, non-published position papers and working papers. Third, I referred to the Treaty of Lisbon to assess hypothesis three on competences. Fourth, as far as secondary literature is concerned, I used academic books and articles, policy briefs by think tanks and press articles from quality media. Finally, during a two-week research visit to the University of Pittsburgh, I had access to the archives of the delegation of the European Commission to the USA. There, I gained more insight in the EU’s role during the first years of the G8, G7 and G20.

**4.2. Interviews**

In total, this research draws upon 88 in-depth semi-structured expert interviews. The interviewees represent 14 different countries or institutions (see Table 6) including EU4 and EU23 countries, EU institutions, rotating G8, G20 and EU Council presidencies and old and new member states. Also OECD, IMF and WTO officials have been interviewed. The interviews cover many different policy domains: finance, development, agriculture, employment, energy, climate, trade and foreign affairs. They have been conducted at the respective ministries or at the permanent representations to the EU, thus mostly in Brussels, but also in Paris, London, Luxembourg, Den Hague, Stockholm and Washington. Of all interviews, 22 have been taken by colleagues at the Ghent Institute for International Studies, while I was (mostly solely) involved in 66 of them. Fifteen interviews have been taken during 2008-2009 in the context of the paper by Nasra et al. (2009) on the involvement of the EU23 in EU coordination for the Gx, the other 73 from 2010 to 2013.

Belgium	16
Denmark	1
European Commission	18
European Council	1
Finland	2
France	10
Germany	1
Luxembourg	1
Netherlands	1
Poland	2
Sweden	7
UK	5
OECD	2
IMF	20
WTO	1

**Table 6. Number of interviews by national or institutional affiliation.**

The interviewees are officials who are closely involved with or participate in Gx affairs and/or EU coordination processes for the Gx. I interviewed for example several sherpas and sous-sherpas as well as members of the EU bodies that discuss Gx matters. Interviewees were identified via organograms, official documents in which contact details were displayed or by snowball sampling when people were recommended by other interviewees. For each interview, I prepared a guiding list of questions which was usually sent to the interviewee in advance. But the interviews were only semi-structured in the sense that actual questioning depended on the interviewees' responses. All interviews have been conducted on the condition of anonymity. I guaranteed that nothing would be attributable to them given that often sensitive issues were discussed<sup>18</sup>. Therefore, in this dissertation, interviewees are referred to by a general reference. In the text, interviews are labeled with a number that corresponds to an item in the list of interviews as found in Appendix A. The list provides the date of the interview as well as a general indication of the interviewee's affiliation. Interviewees are quoted either as EU4 official, EU23 official or by institution or international organisation (e.g. European Commission, European Council, OECD, WTO or IMF). To strengthen the validity of the findings, I confronted the interviewees with how the interview is used in chapters five and six of this dissertation. Where necessary, I adjusted the quote to be fully backed by the interviewees. Most interviews will be directly used in the next chapters, others only serve to gain case knowledge and general understanding.

### **4.3. Survey**

#### **4.3.1. Sampling**

To complement the literature and the interviews, I organized an online survey for government officials in the EU member states and institutions. More specifically, the survey has been used to measure the relevance of the Gx (hypothesis four), the influence of a common EU position (hypothesis five) and the level of coordination (research question one). The survey gathered information on seven policy areas in the G7, G8 or G20: financial & economic affairs, trade, labour & employment, energy, climate change, food & agriculture and development. The survey has been conducted from January to February 2013, which is a rather neutral period in Gx affairs. The previous Gx summit dated from June 2012 (G20) with the next summit following in June 2013 (G8). In this way, I tried to reduce any possible influence of topical Gx issues on the survey results.

The survey, made with Qualtrics software, was sent to 631 officials in the 27 EU member states and EU institutions. This sample has been constructed by using the non-probabilistic sampling method of judgement sampling. When the target population is hard to identify, very specific and of limited availability, non-probabilistic sampling is the most appropriate way to build a list of respondents (Kitchenham & Pfleeger, 2002: 17). This is indeed the case for our population of European government officials who (are supposed to) work on Gx affairs. Judgment sampling is one non-probabilistic sampling method which implies that the researcher creates the sample by looking for what the researcher believes is the best representation of the population.

For each member state, the following officials were included in the sample: the minister's head of cabinet and a senior official<sup>19</sup> in the administration for each policy area and in the Foreign

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<sup>18</sup> I also preferred to take written notes rather than using a tape recorder. This reduced reluctance to provide delicate, but valuable information.

<sup>19</sup> The actual positions of the senior officials differ from one member state to another and range from director-general to even policy advisor. This is because always, the most appropriate official is chosen. In some member states, the director-general holds the general responsibility for international affairs, where other member states have a single unit dealing with the G-groupings. In that case the head of that unit is selected.

Affairs Ministry; the ambassador and *antici* at the permanent representation to the EU; the officials at the permanent representation in charge of the seven policy areas; the official at the central bank who attends the Economic and Financial Committee Alternates meetings. For the G8 EU member states, also the sherpa for the G8 and G20 as well as the G20 assistant sherpa have been selected. For the European Commission, the Council and European Central Bank, a similar selection has been made without, of course, permanent representation officials. These selection criteria resulted in a list of 759 officials of which 128 were ineligible due to missing contact details, personnel turnover or explicit unwillingness to participate in the survey. In January 2013, 631 officials were personally invited to participate and received two additional reminders.

Two specific measures have been taken to improve the response rate. First, the respondents were guaranteed absolute anonymity. In other words, we are by no means able to trace back the respondents' name, nationality or rank. This is a radical, but essential measure to ensure the highest possible response rate. Often, national administrations consider Gx issues as sensitive and confidential, especially in the financial sphere and in G8 member countries. Moreover, the sample includes high-ranked officials who might be reluctant to openly share their views on the Gx forums. Nevertheless, the respondents were asked to indicate whether they belong to a G8 member country (EU4), a non-G8 member country (EU23) or an EU institution (EUi). These categories reflect the assumption that the views will more likely diverge between G8 and non-G8 members than within each category.

Second, the survey has been kept as concise as possible and entailed only six closed questions. The questions were chosen very selectively as the challenge was to gather a maximum of information with a minimum of questions. For example, legitimacy issues were deliberately not included in one of the six questions because that topic had already been sufficiently addressed in the interviews and the literature. When one would have a pressing issue or pertinent remark, a final possibility was provided to give additional comments or remarks (which has been extensively used). Because we aimed to keep the survey as short as possible, there was no room to ask additional questions to cross-check answers to test the internal validity and consistency. Furthermore, survey participants had to specify on what policy areas they are working. There were eight options and multiple responses were possible:

- Financial & economic affairs
- Trade
- Labour & employment
- Energy
- Climate change
- Food & agriculture
- Development
- Foreign affairs

Hence, for those questions that specify per policy area, the survey respondents were only able to see response options in their domain of expertise. For example, energy experts could only assess the G20's impact on their country in the area of energy and not for development. Only for foreign affairs officials, all options were visible. By doing this, the survey remained focused and concise, while it also enhanced the quality of the responses.

These efforts led to a response rate of 25,4%, representing 160 officials who completed all questions. In total, 200 officials started the survey of which 40 abandoned before the end of the survey. Those 40 incomplete response sets are not included in the response rate, but can and will be used in the analysis<sup>20</sup>.

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<sup>20</sup> Including the 40 uncompleted responses makes a response rate of 31,7%



### 4.3.2. Representativeness

When conducting a survey, the main concern is whether the respondents are representative for the total population – that “they are not systematically different in any meaningful way from the overall group” (Baruch & Holtom, 2008: 1153). Response rates are commonly considered the most important indicator of the representativeness of a survey sample and overall data quality. Low response rates increase the likelihood of non-response bias, which is the bias introduced when respondents within the sample have very different attitudes or characteristics to those who do not respond (Fleming & Bowden, 2009: 285).

It is however difficult to assess whether a response rate of 25,4% is adequate. In the literature there is no consensus on a minimum response rate. As Sheikh and Mattingly (1981: 293) have put it, “there is no safe level of response rates below 100%”. Some scholars do have suggested a minimum response rate level, but these suggestions were based on assertions rather than data (Baruch & Holtom, 2008: 1141; Roth & BeVier, 1998, suggest 50% as the minimal level; Fowler, 1984, suggests 60%; and De Vaus, 1986, argues for 80%). Moreover, for the past several decades response rates have been declining for all types and manner of surveys (Sheehan, 2006; Lee et al. 2009: 1811). And as far as e-mail surveys are concerned, response rates are generally about 20% lower than surveys by mail (Shih & Fan, 2009).

What makes it more difficult to evaluate our response rate is that similar surveys are very rare, leaving us without a reference point. Can we compare the response rate of a survey of high-ranked government officials with response rates of surveys of consumers, college students or voters? One well-known survey in more or less the same setting is the survey in the context of the research project ‘The European Commission in Question’. No less than 4621 European Commission officials have been asked about their conception of Europe’s future jurisdictional architecture and their role in a changing EU (see e.g. Hooghe, 2012). The survey was administered by YouGov, a professional market research company, and achieved a response rate of 41%. Another example is a survey by Bradford (Cooper & Antkiewicz, 2008: 331) on the reform of G8 summitry and the Heiligendamm Process. The survey was sent to “more than 150” high ranked government officials and prominent academics and researchers. This resulted in 76 respondents of which 30 officials and 46 experts.

Recent survey research literature even suggests that response rates are a poor measure of not only non-response bias but also data quality (Lee et al. 2009: 1811). Therefore, instead of focusing on the response rate, it is key to investigate any possible non-response bias because of systematic differences between respondents and non-respondents (Sheikh & Mattingly, 1981: 293). However, due to absolute anonymity, I am unable to know who did and did not participate in the survey. There are nevertheless a couple of elements that we do know. First, the response rate is approximately the same across the EU4 (23,6%), EU23 (25,1%) and EUi (34,2%)<sup>21</sup>. In addition, four EU member states are less represented in the sample than other member states. Because of mostly missing contact details, only 58 out of 104 potential respondents from Greece, Ireland, Malta and Romania have received a survey invitation. I do not consider this as a reason for serious concern since I have no indication that these countries have played any significant role in the coordination processes for the Gx.

Second, we also have a clue why officials did not participate in the survey. In total 10 officials have contacted me with a reason for their non-participation. Three officials indicated that they had not the time to complete the survey. Seven other officials stated that they are not involved in Gx affairs and EU coordination and have insufficient background and experience to participate. Indeed, in some countries, there are very few – if any – government officials that deal with the G7, G8 or G20. Hence, it can be assumed that a majority of the non-respondents consider

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<sup>21</sup> In absolute numbers that is for the EU4: 26/110, for the EU23: 121/483 and for the EUi: 13/38

themselves unsuitable to participate. It is also more likely that especially those officials with a pronounced opinion (positive or negative) about the Gx have taken part in the survey. We may thus conclude that if a response bias has occurred, it is a bias towards motivated and rather well-informed officials which is – for the purpose of this research – not problematic at all.

A final remark has to be made with regard to the absolute number of respondents. The survey enables us to create subsets of, for example, EU23 trade experts or finance officials from the EU institutions. However, given that only 160 people completed the survey, these subsets tend to be very small in absolute numbers. For example, there are eight EU4 survey participants working on development or five EUi respondents working on financial and economic matters. Hence, we have to be careful to draw any conclusions solely based on the survey results. Therefore, it is even more important to cross-check the survey results and triangulate with written sources and elite interviews. For the same reason, the EU4 and EUi will be mostly treated as a single category when discussing the survey results. This is possible since it appears that the EU4 and EUi do generally not hold completely opposite views with regard to the topics of the survey.

### 4.3.3. Survey design

The first three questions<sup>22</sup> of the survey focus on the three components of relevance as explained in the analytical framework: general perception, functions and impact. The first question measures the officials' general perception or intuitive feeling of the Gx forums. To this end, we asked every respondent to describe the G7, G8 as well as the G20 as one of the following broad categories:

- as an irrelevant 'talking shop' or 'photo opportunity' for world leaders
- relevant as a meeting of individuals, but with limited impact
- as a forum giving relevant impulses to global governance
- as a steering body in global governance

To further specify this general feeling, the respondents had to evaluate which functions the G7, G8 or G20 perform in the policy areas that they had indicated in the beginning of the survey. Multiple functions could be picked.

- Enhancing the prestige of the leaders/ministers back home
- Trust-building & fostering personal relationships
- Setting the global agenda
- Taking relevant decisions
- Delivering on its commitments
- Steering global governance

Subsequently, the respondents were asked to assess the impact of the Gx on their country in their area of expertise. To keep the survey short and simple, respondents rate the Gx impact on a simple 5-point scale ranging from no impact to very high impact. No distinction has been made for different aspects that could have been affected such as discourse, budget or legislation.

In the literature on survey design, there is a controversy about whether to include a 'don't know' (DK) response category (Francis & Busch, 1975). Proponents of a DK option argue that respondents may lack the information or experience to form an attitude. Forcing the respondents, who genuinely do not know the answer, to choose one of the response options may lead to inaccurate data. The DK category then offers a proper exit option. On the other hand, a DK option may discourage people who do have information to generate a meaningful answer from expressing it. What is more, DK responses often result not from genuine lack of opinions,

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<sup>22</sup> A full copy of the survey can be found in Appendix B

but rather from question ambiguity, socially undesirable attitudes or from giving an answer to satisfy the interviewer (Krosnick & Presser, 2010: 282-284). Nevertheless, I have opted to provide a DK category for questions two and three, while not for question one. Question one on the general perception represents the core of the survey. It can be assumed that officials who are (even minimally) familiar with Gx affairs do have a basic opinion on the Gx. When they are unable to form an opinion on the first question, it would make little sense to continue. The two subsequent questions on functions and impact are more specific. There is a real chance that respondents are unable to evaluate the functions or impact of the Gx forums. In case a respondent could not answer these questions for whatever reason (e.g. genuinely do not know, question ambiguity or no response option that matched his/her opinion), I preferred that they picked the DK option and continued with the next question, rather than they would give a ‘false’ answer or even completely abandon the survey. Moreover, as said, I considered it inappropriate to include additional follow-up questions to distinguish ‘real’ from ‘false’ opinions. Finally, many studies may have shown that data quality does not improve when a DK option is explicitly included in questions (e.g. Krosnick et al., 2002). But these authors do not claim that including a DK option makes data unreliable either.

A fourth question gauges the extent to which officials agree with the statement “A common EU position strengthens the EU's influence in the G7, G8 or G20”. There were six response options: strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, strongly agree and no opinion. By using a 5-point Likert scale the midpoint ‘Neutral’ has been included. Studies have shown that “a substantial minority of people hold attitudinal positions which are genuinely neutral” (Sturgis, 2012: 21). O’Muircheartaigh et al. (O’Muircheartaigh et al. in Krosnick & Presser, 2010: 274) found that adding midpoints to rating scales improves the reliability and validity of ratings. Furthermore, Raaijmakers (2000: 213) advises to include both a separate DK response category and a midpoint for scales. Therefore, also a ‘no opinion’ category has been provided. Nevertheless, only a very small minority has indicated to have no opinion<sup>23</sup>.

The two final questions deal with EU coordination for the Gx. One question aims to map the level of coordination for each policy domain. As illustrated in Table 7, the coordination scale used in the survey does not fully correspond with the scale as presented in this dissertation. Instead of group decision-making, I provided the two options ‘formulating general EU principles’ and ‘negotiating a detailed EU position’. This is however not problematic since these two options imply a form of group decision-making. In contrast to the general term group decision-making, they are more specific and comprehensible for survey respondents. For this thesis, I merged both options into group decision-making because the distinction between general EU principles and a detailed EU position is difficult to make. Moreover in terms of process and interaction between EU4 and EU23 countries, both forms do not fundamentally differ. Finally, the options ‘formulating general EU principles’ and ‘negotiating a detailed EU position’ tend to emphasise an outcome rather than a process.

Scale in the survey	Scale in this dissertation
No coordination	No coordination
Information exchange	Information exchange
Consultation	Consultation
Formulating general EU principles	Group decision-making
Negotiating a detailed EU position	Group decision-making

**Table 7. Coordination scales used in this research.**

<sup>23</sup> 2,63% for the G7; 2,47% for the G8 and 1,85% for the G20.

Another question asks to indicate how satisfied the respondents are with the level of internal EU coordination for the Gx on a five-point Likert scale from very satisfied to very dissatisfied. In addition, they could also specify why they are possibly dissatisfied by checking one or more of the four following reasons: insufficient, too restrictive, too time-consuming and not taken seriously at G-level. Finally, an extra open question left room for additional comments on EU coordination or the Gx in general.

## Chapter 5

### **Findings on Research Question 1**

This chapter examines the level of internal EU coordination for the G7, G8 and G20. In a detailed manner, it maps out the different processes for each Gx forum by focusing on the what, how, where and who. It provides a comprehensive overview of the (informal) procedures, the actors and committees involved and the evolution over time, from 2008 to 2012. To assess the level of internal EU coordination for the G7, G8 and G20, I chiefly rely on interviews with key players in the EU's coordination processes and official documents. This qualitative assessment is complemented by results from the survey. By 'triangulating' these multiple data sources, each aspect of the EU's preparation for the G7, G8 and G20 is scored on the coordination scale. To recall, the scale entails four levels of interaction ranging from (i) no interaction, over (ii) information sharing and (iii) consultation to (iv) group decision-making (see chapter three). This chapter proceeds by first looking at how coordination has developed for the G20. Next, the level of internal coordination for the G8 and G7 will be assessed. Finally, the role of the European Parliament is also briefly discussed, before some tentative conclusions are drawn.

## **5.1. G20**

Before 2008, the G20 meetings of finance ministers and central bank governors have barely been discussed within the EU. The online archives of the Council do not provide any indications that the EU's participation in the G20 finance ministers and central bank governors meeting would have been a subject of discussion within the EU before 2008. The G20's upgrade from the ministerial level to the level of heads of state and government has drastically changed this situation. Since 2008, the EU has adapted its internal preparatory process to the newly emerging G20 structures by developing flexible and ad hoc coordination procedures (Debaere, Lesage & Orbie, 2014 forthcoming). EU coordination evolved along with the expansion of the G20 structure and agenda. Since 2008, three phases can be discerned. In the first phase, the EU concentrated on coordination for the G20 summits. This phase covers the first three G20 summits in Washington, London and Pittsburgh. Secondly, from the end of 2009, with the Pittsburgh Summit as a turning point, and until the 2010 Seoul Summit, the EU elaborated its coordination processes for the finance track and developed some best practices. Starting in 2011, the third phase is characterized by a further expansion of EU coordination to other policy areas under the sherpa track such as agriculture and labour.

### **5.1.1. Phase 1: focusing on the summits**

Shortly after the US announcement in October 2008 that the first G20 summit was to be held on 15 November, the then French president and EU presidency holder called an extraordinary meeting of the European Council to hammer out a common EU message to the G20 summit. Sarkozy stated that "[w]e will speak with a unified European voice on the financial crisis" (EurActiv, 2008a). Hence, in the meeting of 7 November 2008, the European Council agreed upon a common EU message for the G20 Washington Summit, a document of five pages which has been called 'agreed language'. Being attached to the Council presidency conclusions, the agreed language was publicly available (European Council, 2008a). The document was the result of "rich, long, intense, unusual, informal and free" discussions (EurActiv, 2008b) and contained several principles upon which a new financial system should be built. It even outlined a timetable to implement these principles.

In the ensuing months, the EU continued on the same path to coordinate for G20 meetings. The ECOFIN Council endorsed 'terms of reference' for the EU's participation in the G20 meeting of finance ministers and central bank governors (Council of the European Union, 2009a). The European Commission also claimed its role in the EU's preparatory process for the G20. In its communication to the Spring European Council meeting, the Commission set out its

views on the European contribution to the G20 and suggested a number of deliverables for the second G20 summit in London in April 2009 (European Commission, 2009a: 16-19). Subsequently, the European Council adopted in March 'agreed language' for the London Summit (European Council, 2009a). In particular, the 27 aligned their positions on a strengthening of the IMF and the regulation of financial markets.

The G20 meetings of finance deputies in July 2009 and finance ministers in September 2009 were prepared at preceding ECOFIN Council meetings by respectively an exchange of views and a discussion at an informal lunch (Council of the European Union, 2009b; Hofmans, 2009). Subsequently at its June 2009 meeting, the European Council has asked "the Council and the Commission to ensure that a coordinated EU position is thoroughly prepared in advance of the 24/25 September 2009 G20 Summit" (European Council, 2009b). Accordingly, the G20 Pittsburgh Summit was prepared in a similar way as the first two summits. An 'agreed language' was annexed to the conclusions of the preceding informal European Council meeting of 17 September (European Council, 2009c). The document presented the EU's position on trade, jobs, financial market reform including bankers' bonuses, reform of international financial institutions and climate change.

This first phase of EU coordination was targeted at the G20 summit level. All first three G20 summits were prepared at preceding European Council meetings. Still, EU coordination was very much ad hoc, especially for the meetings of G20 finance (deputy) ministers. EU coordination was "basically at the discretion of the rotating EU Presidencies, in cooperation with the Commission" (EU Presidency, 2009). Additional informal ECOFIN and European Council meetings were organised to prepare the EU position. In addition, EU coordination among the 27 member states was challenged by preceding informal gatherings of the EU4 and the other European G20 participants (Nasra et al., 2009). For example, in February 2009, before the EU started its internal coordination process for the London Summit, Germany convened a meeting in Berlin with the European participants to the G20 in order to forge a common position ahead of the G20 London Summit. Obviously, this move outraged excluded member states such as Sweden, Belgium and Poland (Tasovac, 2009).

Process-wise, EU coordination for the G20 summits was clearly group decision-making. The agreed language resulted from negotiation and bargaining in which all EU member states had the opportunity to voice their concerns and influence the EU's position. While the EU finance ministers exchanged views for the G20 deputy finance ministers meeting, the preparation for the ministerial and leaders' level exceeded mere consultation. Yet, this process remains largely dominated by the EU4. An EU23 official (Interview #5) noted that "EU coordination for the G20 proceeds according to the rhythm indicated by the EU4". Nevertheless, in some instances the EU23 were able to influence the EU's position for the G20 (Nasra & Debaere, 2012: 18).

Substantively, internal EU discussions on the G20 were overshadowed by the debate on who is in and who is out (Nagpal, 2009; see also chapter two). Nonetheless, the member states managed to formulate an EU position that covered all aspects of the G20 agenda. In that sense, the agreed language as annexed to the European Council conclusions was rather detailed, while still leaving substantial room for interpretation and discretion by the EU participants in the G20. This led to a number of incidents which fuelled the perception in some EU member states that the EU4 defend their national interests in the G20 rather than respecting an EU position (Interview #21). For example, at the G20 London Summit of April 2009, the leaders endorsed a list of the OECD with a classification of countries that can be considered tax havens (Lesage, 2010). At the preceding European Council, the EU4 assured not to support such a listing and promised that no EU member states would be listed as a tax haven. Despite this informal agreement, the EU4 and the European Commission agreed at the London Summit to attach the OECD-list, including three EU member states, Belgium, Austria and Luxembourg, in the list of

‘grey’ countries<sup>24</sup>. At the ECOFIN Council the day after the London Summit, those member states concerned reacted angrily at what they perceived as a ‘betrayal’ by their European partners (Nasra et al., 2009). Another example concerns the G20 decisions on the reform of the IMF. Also in London, the G20 agreed to accelerate the next IMF quota review from 2013 to January 2011. At their next summit in Pittsburgh, the world leaders specified that at least 5% of the IMF quota should be shifted from over-represented countries to under-represented emerging economies. Both decisions were perceived by some EU23 member states as *faits accomplis* and undermined the idea that all aspects of the IMF quota and governance reform should be negotiated as a single package (Interview #5).

To summarize, the first phase of EU coordination for the G20 reached the level of group decision-making although EU coordination was still very much ad hoc. Initial internal EU coordination efforts during the first year of the upgraded G20 process reflected to a large extent the struggle between the EU4 and EU23 where the former wanted to keep control over the process and the latter aimed to have their interests properly defended.

### 5.1.2. Phase 2: establishing best practices

As illustrated, there was still considerable room for improvement for the emerging coordination processes. While involving the EU23 at the highest political level in the EU’s preparation for the G20, EU coordination did not sufficiently accommodate their concerns. Despite prior internal EU coordination, the EU23 were still confronted with unexpected G20 outcomes, either because the European G20 participants neglected the EU agreed language or because new issues popped up at the G20 meeting which had not been coordinated in advance.

Against this background, Sweden held the rotating EU Council presidency in the second half of 2009 and participated in this capacity for six months in the G20 process. Sweden had the intention to be as transparent as possible to the other EU member states (Interview #24). This was partly in response to Luxembourg who urged Sweden to strengthen internal coordination for the G20 after the tax havens debacle (Interview #20). But also Sweden itself considered the EU coordination efforts so far as inadequate to protect its interests in the G20. For example, but most importantly, Sweden was worried about the G20’s leadership role on IMF reform. In the IMF, Sweden possesses the largest voting share in its Nordic-Baltic constituency and therefore frequently represents this constituency in the Fund’s Executive Board. When a reform of the size or the composition of the Executive Board would take place, Sweden would be likely to be among the first victims (Debaere, 2010: 152). Hence, to address the concerns of the EU23, the Swedish Presidency aimed to develop “a more formalized, [...] well-structured and efficient EU coordination process” (EU Presidency, 2009). But the Swedes realized that a balance had to be struck between the need for detailed positions and the advantage of more principles-based strategic guidelines to handle negotiations. On this balance, a Swedish non-paper on EU coordination for the G20 stated the following:

*“In terms of the degree of coordination it is unrealistic to aim at an EU language that in every respect would constitute a binding commitment for EU Member States. Indeed, it has to be respected that the Member States that have a national representation in the G-20 also need to represent their own countries’ views. [...] At the other extreme, EU language with no formal status whatsoever, would make the EU very weak and would not constitute an acceptable solution, in particular for those Member States that have no other representation than through the EU language and the EU Presidency.” (EU Presidency, 2009)*

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<sup>24</sup> The countries listed as “grey” on the OECD’s list represent jurisdictions that have committed to the internationally agreed tax standard, but have not yet substantially implemented the standard.



The transparency of the Swedish Council Presidency was particularly reflected in the outreach efforts for the G20 sherpa meetings (Interview #24). For the first time, the EU Council presidency circulated the sherpa documents among all 27 EU member states to obtain comments and suggestions, but the documents were not discussed at physical meetings. Based on the input of the member states and previously known European positions, Sweden could formulate a European standpoint and defend it in the sherpa talks ahead of the Pittsburgh Summit of September 2009. This level of transparency was unseen for the G20 and happened for all sherpa meetings in the second half of 2009. However, the Swedish attempts to coordinate for the sherpa process was severely constrained by the closed character of the sherpa network (Interview #24). Especially the US, holding the G20 presidency that time, was opposed to any distribution of G20 documents outside the sherpa group. To this end, documents were sometimes electronically secured or even attached to the wall.

To prepare an EU position for the other G20 meetings, Sweden scheduled two additional informal Council meetings, an ECOFIN and a European Council meeting (see supra). However, all these efforts did not immediately materialize in a substantially strengthened coordination process. The Pittsburgh Summit was prepared in the same way as the Washington and London Summit with an agreed language attached to the conclusions of the preceding European Council. Therefore, I consider the EU coordination for Pittsburgh still under the first phase. Nevertheless, by the end of 2009, the EU had developed some best practices to coordinate for G20 meetings, due to the hard work of the Swedish rotating Council Presidency (Interview #8 and Interview #21).

### ***Finance track***

Phase 2 comprises these best practices and sets off shortly after the G20 Pittsburgh Summit in September 2009. In the second phase, the internal EU coordination process became informally organised around the two tracks in the G20 process, the finance track and the sherpa track (see also chapter two). In the finance track, the G20 finance ministers, central bank governors, and their deputies take care of the economic and financial items on the G20 agenda. EU coordination for the finance track situates at three different levels<sup>25</sup>. First, the EU negotiates a common position, the so-called ‘terms of reference’ (henceforth ‘TOR’), for the G20 deputy finance and ministerial meetings. The TOR for the G20 deputy finance minister meetings are prepared in the Economic and Financial Committee (EFC) and its sub-committees<sup>26</sup> based on background papers drafted by the Commission in liaison with the rotating Council presidency. Subsequently, these TOR are forwarded to the ECOFIN Council, which approves them as the non-binding EU position for the G20 finance ministers meetings. The procedure is run for every G20 finance (deputy) ministerial meeting and automatically invites all the non-G20 EU member states to give input. In contrast to the publicly available agreed languages in Phase 1, the TOR is a confidential document.

Second, the EU member states formulate a letter for the G20 partners. It is a short position paper outlining the priorities and red lines of the EU. The letter is drafted by the EFC, approved by ECOFIN and signed by the finance minister of the rotating Council presidency and the European Commissioner for Economic and Monetary Affairs, before it is sent to the G20 presidency. Subsequently, the G20 presidency distributes the letter to the other G20 members. This letter is not publicly available and focuses on the G20 ministerial level. It must not be confused with the open letter of the Presidents Van Rompuy and Barroso to the other G20 leaders. This way of communicating the EU’s position to the other G20 members was used at

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<sup>25</sup> Based on several interviews but especially Interview #56

<sup>26</sup> For example, the Financial Services Committee (FSC), the Sub-committee on IMF-related questions (SCIMF).

least twice, ahead of the ministerial meetings in Saint Andrews on 6 and 7 November 2009 and in Washington on 23 April 2010 (Council of the European Union, 2009c; TOR, 2010a). I have no evidence of any letters sent since.

Third, the EU may occasionally prepare ‘common language’ for G20 working groups. This was for example the case on IMF reform and on financial safety nets. EU coordination for working groups only happens ‘on demand’ which makes the EU reactive rather than proactive at working group level.

The adoption of TOR for G20 meetings has become an established practice and represents the main coordination instrument for the G20 finance track. These documents are for internal use of the EU delegation and set out the priorities for the EU as a whole and its members at the G20 meetings. The TOR follows the agenda of the G20 and is structured per session of the G20 meeting. It is a “rolling document” (Interview #56) in the sense that it evolves together with the G20 process and agenda. Each TOR builds upon the previous one. Illustrative is that the TOR for the G20 Deputies meeting on 27-28 February 2010 contained 3000 words, while for the October 2010 meeting the TOR already counted more than 8000 words (TOR, 2010b; 2010c).

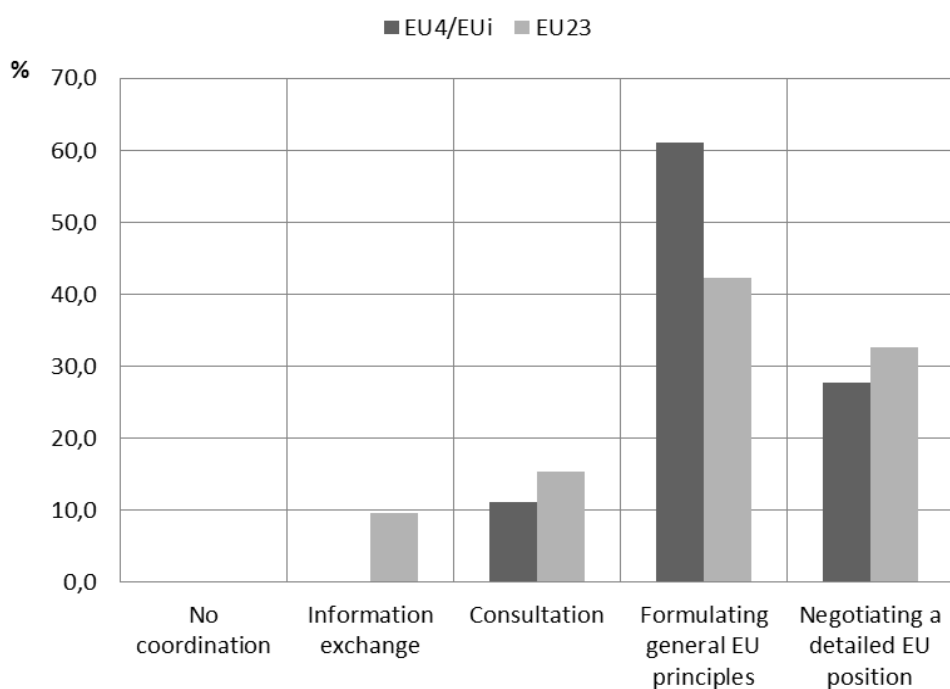
With regard to the content<sup>27</sup>, the TOR usually starts with a statement on the global economy and the economic situation in Europe. Next, the EU outlines its contributions to the G20 Framework for Strong, Sustainable and Balanced Growth. It also formulates some expected outcomes from the G20 partners, in particular the US, China, Japan and the oil-exporting countries. These demands are rather detailed and focus on specific reforms or sectors. In 2010, the G20 finance (deputy) ministers also held several sessions on the reform of the IMF. Also in this dossier, the EU had developed a clear and delineated view on all major aspects of the Fund’s quota and governance reform. Furthermore, a section is devoted to financial regulatory and supervisory reform. Here, the EU tries to maintain the momentum and increases the pressure on the other G20 members to implement their commitments by stressing its internal progress on this matter. In addition, the TOR also briefly deals with other, non-strictly financial items in the finance track such as energy subsidies and climate finance. More precisely, the EU supports and contributes to the process to rationalise and phase out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies in the medium term, as agreed at the G20 Pittsburgh Summit. The EU also urges the G20 to make progress on climate finance, particularly to urgently mobilize fast-start funding. For the latter, there is a dedicated working group on the international financial aspects of climate change under the supervision of the EFC (Interview #56).

Hence, EU coordination for financial and economic affairs, as well as for energy and climate issues on the finance track can be classified as group decision-making. While on some issues consultation among the member states suffices to formulate a common EU position, the process of agreeing on the TOR definitely reaches the level of group decision-making. This classification fully corresponds with the results from the survey<sup>28</sup> (see Graph 1). Survey participants describe internal EU coordination for G20 financial and economic affairs as a process of formulating general EU principles and negotiation a detailed EU position. This view is shared by officials from the EU23 as well as the EU4 and EU institutions (EUi). As explained in chapter four, the coordination scale used in the survey did not explicitly include the option of group decision-making, but the options ‘formulating general EU principles’ and ‘negotiation a detailed EU position’ can be equated with group decision-making.

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<sup>27</sup> This is based on all Terms of References of 2010. Therefore, it only applies to this period. It provides however a notion of how elaborate this document usually is.

<sup>28</sup> Some survey questions, including this question on coordination, provided a don’t know option (see chapter four). As this option primarily served to avoid forced responses or early fall-out, this category is not reflected in the graphs, nor taken into account when calculating the relative values for each ‘substantive’ option. Complete survey results can be found in Appendix C.



**Graph 1. Internal EU coordination for the G20 on financial and economic affairs. Source: survey.**

### *Sherpa track*

Parallel to the finance track, the sherpa track prepares the G20 leaders' summits. Besides the summits, the sherpa track thus covers the sherpa meetings and other possible new, mostly non-economic issues on the agenda such as development, global marine protection or anti-corruption. Whereas the 27 EU member states have plenty of opportunities to shape the EU's position in the finance track, the member states' involvement in the sherpa track is rather limited.

In contrast to earlier attempts by Sweden to involve the EU23 in the sherpa network, EU coordination for the sherpa meetings had become limited to informative briefings by the EU G20 sherpa, a senior Commission official, to COREPER in the margin of G20 meetings. Thereafter, the G20 presidency – if held by an EU country – presents its views and ideas for the G20. The briefings in COREPER are not intended to elicit much feedback from the member states. But the EU23 do not show much interest either. There are usually very few questions or comments (Interview #15). Hence, I describe EU coordination for sherpa meetings as information sharing.

The EU's position for the sherpa meetings is prepared within the European Commission and primarily based on existing EU positions and policies (Interview #61). According to a survey respondent, the EU G20 sherpa has "the full access to and backing of the relevant Commission Directorate-Generals to deliver high-quality substance". The TOR for the G20 finance track is then only one element the Commission takes into consideration. Coordination for the finance and sherpa track tend to be two independent processes. A Commission official described it as if there is a "clear stop line" after the coordination sequence through the ECOFIN-filière (Interview #57).

With regard to the G20 summits, internal EU preparation has been significantly altered since the Pittsburgh Summit. In Phase 2, the European Council does no longer attach an agreed language to the council conclusions. Instead, the 27 EU heads of state and government discuss

the G20 agenda based on a joint letter from European Council President Van Rompuy and European Commission President Barroso (European Council, 2010a; European Council, 2011a; European Council, 2012a). A brief summary of these consultations is included in the European Council conclusions. Subsequently, Presidents Van Rompuy and Barroso integrate this input in a second joint letter to their G20 counterparts ahead of the summit (e.g. European Council, 2011b). The first letter to the EU heads of state and government was written only by President Barroso in May 2010 (European Commission, 2010a). Afterwards, President Van Rompuy stepped in for the letter to the G20 members, which was then continued as a joint practice.

During this second phase, and also under the sherpa track, a G20 Development Working Group was established and the G20 labour and employment ministers met in Washington. Nevertheless, neither development nor labour and employment was subject to explicit internal EU coordination (see *infra*).

To summarize, Phase 2 marks a further institutionalization of the EU coordination processes for the G20. In October 2009, the European Council has “called on the Council and the Commission to ensure thorough preparation by the European Union of future G20 meetings” (European Council, 2009d). This statement can be interpreted as an informal mandate for the Council and the Commission to coordinate an EU position for G20 meetings. They acted accordingly. For the finance track, EU coordination is predominantly a group decision-making process and now happens “quasi automatically” (Interview #20). It covers all aspects on the finance agenda, including financial facets of energy and climate change. In 2010, EFC and ECOFIN also extensively discussed the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty with regard to the external representation of the EU in the G20 (see chapter two). For the G20 summits, EU coordination at the European Council was scaled back from group decision-making to consultation. Also the attempts by Sweden to intensify EU coordination for sherpa meetings failed. Coordination did not surpass the level of information sharing in COREPER.

Finally, it is worth noting that the role of the Swedish Council Presidency has been crucial to deepen the EU’s preparatory process for the G20. Here, a parallel can be drawn with EU coordination for the UNSC, or the so-called Article 34 meetings. The idea for the briefings came from Spain, supported by France. But it was under the Swedish rotating Council Presidency in 2001 that the weekly coordination meetings for the UNSC have been established (Luif, 2003: 18). The practice was later standardised by the Council in 2002 (Marchesi, 2008: 13).

### **5.1.3. Phase 3: adapting to an expanded agenda**

Phase 3 covers the period 2011-2012 and entails the Cannes and Los Cabos Summits. During this phase, coordination processes for the finance track remained largely in place, at least as far as the TOR are concerned. The TOR have been further improved by introducing a new section at the beginning containing the main messages of the EU’s position. This was meant to enhance the usability and comprehensibility of the document which had become too long and covering too many subjects (Interview #40).

The major innovation in the third phase is related to the enlargement of the G20 agenda under the sherpa track. Since the Pittsburgh Summit the G20 agenda has been gradually expanding. This crystalized under the French G20 Presidency in 2011 with a number of new G20 ministerial meetings on development, agriculture and labour and employment. The subsequent Mexican G20 Presidency has also organised ministerial conferences on trade as well as on foreign affairs. The EU has adapted itself to this new situation, albeit not on a uniform and comprehensive way. As we will see, the EU’s response in terms of preparation and coordination differ substantially over the several policy areas.

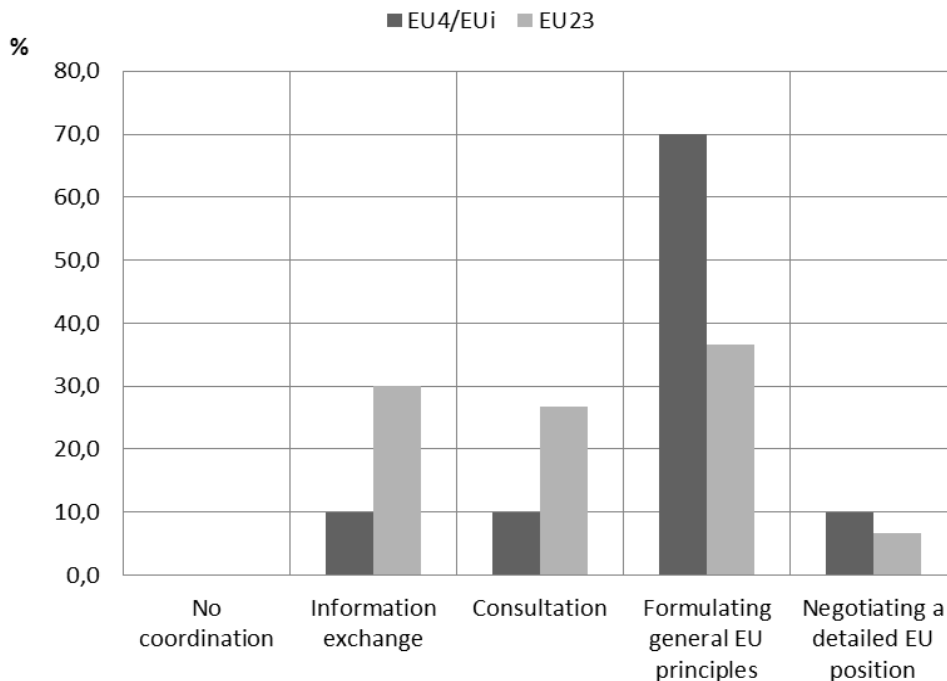
First, the current EU preparation process for the G20’s work on labour and employment has its roots in 2010. For the first G20 employment ministers meeting in April 2010, the EU member

states were not involved in advance. But at the following EPSCO Council, the EU ministers for social policy and employment were briefed during lunch (Council of the European Union, 2010a). Later in 2010, the EU member states held several discussions on the external dimension of EU employment and social policies. These discussions responded to the intensified international attention by several IOs including the G20 on the social dimensions of globalization. One of the conclusions was that the EPSCO Council should hold regular, and efficiently prepared debates on this matter (Council of the European Union, 2010b).

Since 2011, a more structured coordination mechanism has been in place. This informal procedure has been applied to the G20 employment ministerials in September 2011, May 2012 as well as in July 2013. The process starts a few months before the meeting with a briefing to the EPSCO Council by the G20 presidency or the European Commission about the state of preparation (Council of the European Union, 2011a; Council of the European Union, 2011b). Ahead of the G20 meeting, the EU member states formulate 'EU Guidelines' for the EU and its member states in the G20. At a meeting of the Social Questions Working Party, a preparatory body for the EPSCO Council, the rotating Council presidency gathers comments from the member states after which the text is finalized through written consultation (Interview #14). The Guidelines are finally approved by the Council (Council of the European Union, 2011c). After the G20 meeting, the European Commissioner and the Council presidency debrief the member states in the EPSCO Council. This process is only directed to the G20 ministerial meetings. The EU does not coordinate internally for the preparatory G20 Task Force on Employment, but the Task Force may be discussed in the context of the above coordination process (Interview #62).

The Guidelines for labour and employment first present the G20 process and the state of preparation (Council of the European Union, 2011d; Council of the European Union, 2012a). Next, it proposes a number of EU policies and initiatives in the field of employment that may contribute to the G20 discussions. Subsequently, it states which policy priorities the EU should stress at the G20. Nevertheless, this section is rather a presentation of the G20 employment agenda and the topics under discussion. In the first Guidelines, the four mentioned priorities were exactly the same as the priorities set out by the French G20 Presidency. Each priority was explained and followed by a short list of issues the G20 would address. The priorities and objectives in the Guidelines for the Mexican G20 employment ministerial were more elaborated and slightly more detailed. It however still lacks any indications of a substantive EU position with regard to these priorities. In this context, it is telling that one EU23 official noted in the survey that there is too little role for the member states in creating a real common position of the EU to the G20 meetings of ministers for employment and social affairs.

Hence it is reasonable to score EU coordination for labour and employment as consultation with characteristics of group decision-making. Consultation because the content of the Guidelines suggests that coordination did *de facto* not involve much decision-making. Nevertheless it shares features of group decision-making since the entire group of EU member states had the opportunity to modify and shape the Guidelines. This ambiguity is also reflected in the survey results. EU23 experts in labour and employment issues are divided whether internal EU coordination in the employment field is a process of information exchange, consultation or group decision-making (Graph 2). The EU4/EUi labour experts in turn consider coordination mainly as a process of formulating general EU principles.



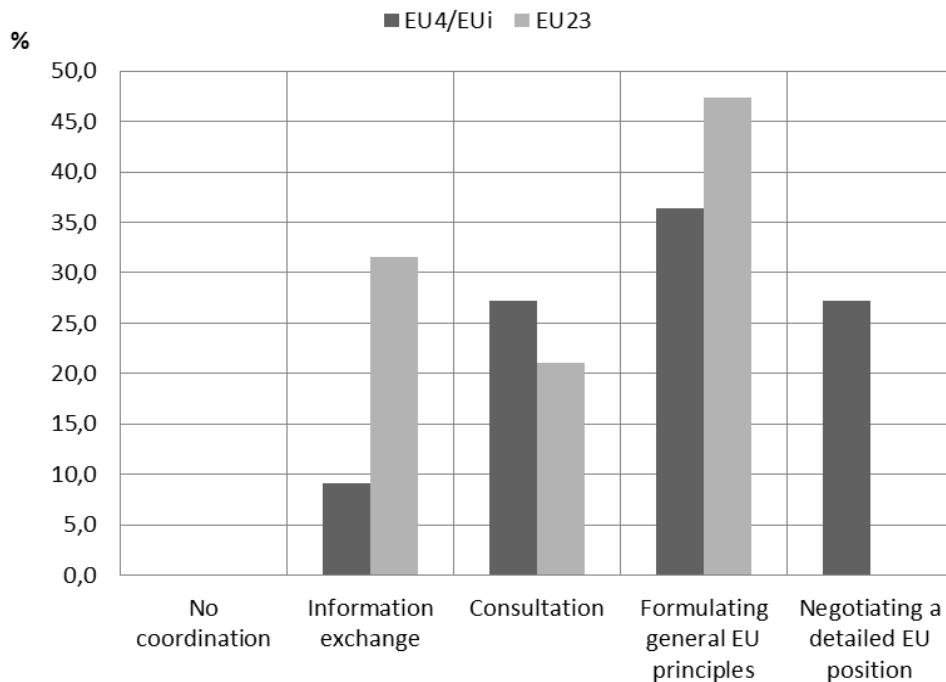
**Graph 2. Internal EU coordination for the G20 in the area of labour and employment.**  
Source: survey.

Second, the G20 ministers of food and agriculture have met twice, in 2011 and 2012<sup>29</sup>. In both cases, the meeting has been preceded by a briefing by the G20 presidency or the European Commission in the Council of EU ministers of agriculture (Council of the European Union, 2010c; Council of the European Union, 2011e Council of the European Union, 2012b). Similar to the preparatory process for labour and employment, the member states also prepare EU Guidelines in the Working Party of Agricultural Attachés. The Guidelines are drafted either by the Commission with regard to issues under EU competence (e.g. price volatility) or by the rotating presidency (Interview #60). The Guidelines set out the priorities for the EU as a whole and its member states at the G20 agriculture meeting. This coordination sequence then closes with a debriefing at the following Council (Council of the European Union, 2011f; Council of the European Union, 2012c).

Regarding substance, the Guidelines for G20 agriculture ministers meetings are slightly more ambitious than those for labour and employment, at least in 2012. In 2011, the document was still a mere presentation of the priorities and topics of the G20 meeting (Council of the European Union, 2011g). Although it stated that “[t]he objectives of the EU [...] can be summed up as follows”, it immediately proceeded by explaining the main topics of the agenda by using wording such as “discussions will identify measures [...] that could [...]” or “[t]he discussions will address the following issues”. The Guidelines in 2012 were more advanced (Council of the European Union, 2012d). After mentioning the objectives for the G20 agriculture meeting, the EU stated to what extent it endorsed these objectives. In addition, the EU member states also commented on a draft of the joint report of several international organisations by emphasising some issues and adding other elements where it was deemed necessary. Hence, I rate EU coordination for the G20’s agricultural work between consultation and group decision-making, but leaning towards the latter. A qualitative analysis of interviews and documents leads to the same ambiguous conclusion as for labour and employment, which can neither be resolved by the survey. Again, EU member states do not agree whether EU coordination for G20 agriculture affairs assume less

<sup>29</sup> In 2012, the meeting was held at the level of vice-ministers, although a ministerial meeting was envisaged.

interactive forms such as information exchange or consultation, rather than more interactive forms implying group decision-making (Graph 3). However, the perception of the EU4/EUi appears to be more positive than that of their EU23 colleagues, although it concerns the same process.



**Graph 3. Internal EU coordination for the G20 in the area of food and agriculture.**  
Source: survey.

Third, contrary to employment or agriculture, EU coordination for the G20's development agenda is limited to informative briefings by the European Commission to CODEV, the EU's Working Party on Development Cooperation. These briefings are held at regular times and are mostly accompanied by a written info note. There is no intention at all to involve the EU23 in the formulation of the Commission's position in the G20 DWG nor in the G20 meeting of development ministers<sup>30</sup>. Nevertheless in the survey, the EU4/EUi development experts describe this as consultation, while their EU23 would call it information exchange (Graph 4).

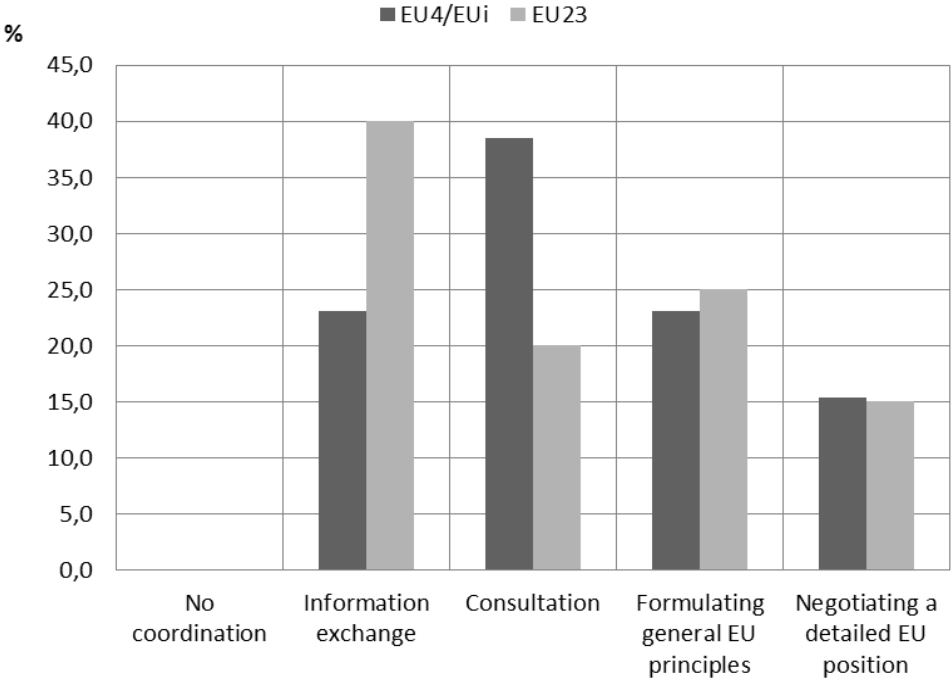
Since the member states do not work towards a common EU message, there are usually very few comments on the Commission's presentation in CODEV (Interview #17). Therefore, I classify EU coordination for G20 development issues as information sharing. The first briefing dates back to 2 December 2010 when the member states were debriefed on the G20 Seoul Summit (Council of the European Union, 2010d)<sup>31</sup>. This implies that the EU23 were not involved in the preparation of the priorities and deliverables in the Seoul Consensus on Development or its implementation plans through their EU membership<sup>32</sup>. Moreover, the European Commission was very reluctant to brief the EU23 on the G20's development work. A

<sup>30</sup> So far, the G20 development ministers have only met once, in a joint meeting with their finance counterparts on 23 September 2011.

<sup>31</sup> CODEV also submitted a presidency paper on the impact of the global economic and financial crisis on developing countries as a reference document to the European Council in March 2009 in preparation of the G20 London Summit.

<sup>32</sup> However, the Korean G20 Presidency reached out, on a bilateral basis, to non-G20 countries some including the Netherlands to formulate its development agenda. In addition, the work on financial inclusion, one of the pillars of the G20 development agenda, is the responsibility of the finance ministers and is coordinated through the EFC and ECOFIN (e.g. TOR, 2010d).

handful of countries, in particular Finland, had to lobby hard for the Commission to involve the member states (Interview #19 and Interview #22).

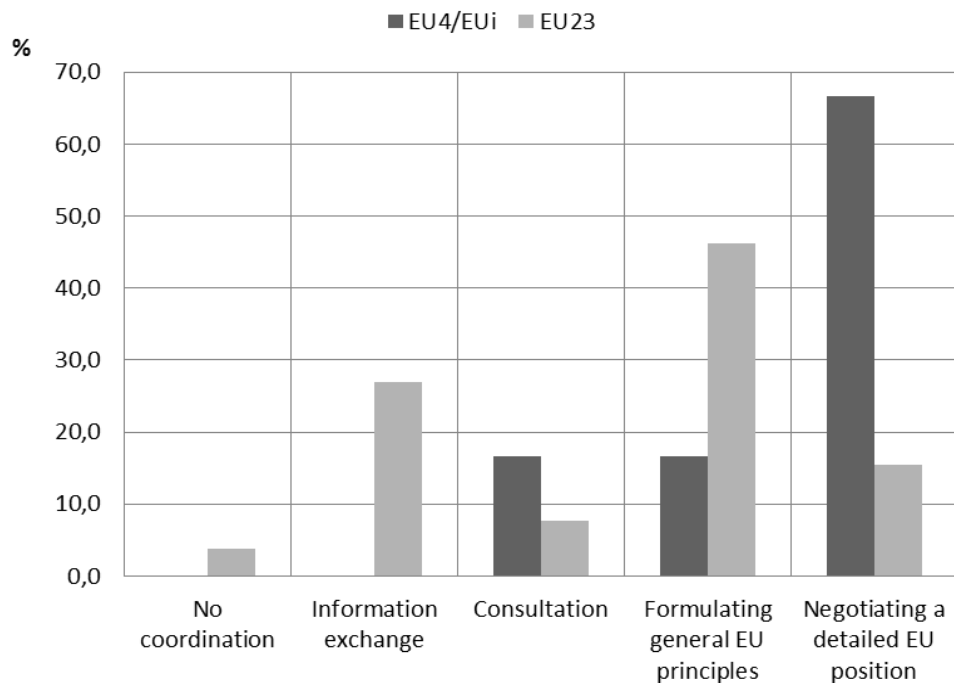


**Graph 4. Internal EU coordination for the G20 in the area of development. Source: survey.**

Fourth, the European Commission regularly briefs the EU member states on trade issues in the Trade Policy Committee (former Article 133 committee). The Commission provides an analysis of what has been discussed and indicates what it will defend in the future. These briefings take place whenever it is appropriate. Since there is no dedicated G20 body for trade issues, this may be in the margin of the summit (Council of the European Union, 2011h), a sherpa meeting (Council of the European Union, 2013) or an occasional trade ministerial meeting<sup>33</sup> (Council of the European Union, 2012e). This coordination process situates between information sharing and consultation. The conclusions of the Trade Policy Committee meetings show that the member states comment on the Commission’s presentation, but it is unclear to what extent these comments actually feed into the Commission’s position in the G20. Based on the survey results (Graph 5), one would conclude that internal EU coordination for trade matters is rather a group decision-making process since it is conceived by trade experts as a process of formulating general EU principles (EU23) or negotiating a detailed EU position (EU4/EUi). However, officials might have picked those group decision-making forms because on trade a clearly established EU position already exists. A strong existing EU policy gives EU members states the feeling that there are indeed general EU principles on trade available, even without explicit interactive coordination. It is likely that their responses are informed by these existing policies.

<sup>33</sup> So far, the G20 trade ministers have only met once on 18-20 April 2012.





**Graph 5. Internal EU coordination for the G20 on trade issues. Source: survey.**

Finally, as far as the G20 summits are concerned, the practice of Presidents Van Rompuy and Barroso to send joint letters to the European Council and G20 members seems to be eroding. I have no indications of a letter to the G20 ahead of the Los Cabos Summit. Nevertheless, the summit has been discussed at the preceding European Council meeting based on a joint letter by both presidents (European Council, 2012a; European Council, 2012b). With regard to the 2013 St. Petersburg Summit, the G20 has been put on the agenda of the preceding European Council meeting in May (European Council, 2013a), but the Council conclusions did not include the usual statement on the G20. Probably, the G20 has not been discussed at that meeting because only in July Presidents Van Rompuy and Barroso sent their letter to the EU heads of state and government (European Council, 2013b). In this way EU coordination for the summits has been downscaled from consultation to information-sharing. In addition, it also appears that no letter has been sent to the other G20 leaders.

Although the G20 summit centralizes all the work that has been done by the sherpas, ministers and working groups, internal EU coordination for these different aspects and policy domains does not reach the summit level. The position of the European Council and European Commission presidents is informed by the informal discussion at the European Council meeting, but there is no explicit common approach that includes the leaders of the EU4 countries. Moreover at the actual summit, there is usually insufficient time for coordination between the European leaders (Interview #33). It is also said that “the leaders do not want to be coordinated” (Interview #61). Exceptionally, the leaders may coordinate a common response on the spot. For example, at the 2011 Cannes Summit, President and chair Sarkozy took the EU participants in a separate room. While the G20 meeting was paused, the EU had to sort out how it would react on the plethora of questions about the EU’s handling of the euro crisis (Interview #87).

To conclude, EU coordination for the G20 seems to have settled during Phase 3. Coordination for the finance track has matured and the adoption of the TOR has become an established practice. For the other policy areas under the sherpa track, as well as for the sherpa meetings itself, the EU coordinates to a varying extent. There is no uniform way to prepare the G20 meetings. It remains to be seen whether EU coordination at European Council level, driven

by the presidents of the European Council and Commission, will be maintained. The variety of coordination practices and the involvement of several Directorate-Generals of the Commission and numerous Council bodies has also increased the need for supervision of the EU's preparation for the G20. The Secretariat-General of the European Commission fulfils this role and oversees this process. It acts as a hub through which the separate issues are funnelled and it prepares the position of the EU sherpa in the G20 (Debaere, Lesage & Orbie, 2014 forthcoming).

## **5.2. G8**

Compared to the G20, EU coordination for the G8 is much less extensive. While still informal, the coordination process for the G20 is also a more established practice than the EU coordination efforts for the G8. EU coordination for the G8 takes place at three different levels: the European Council, COREPER and at Council meetings. First, the upcoming G8 summit may be discussed at a preceding European Council meeting. This happened before the 2011 Deauville Summit (Interview #65) and the 2012 Camp David Summit (European Council, 2012b). The European Council conclusions occasionally refer to these discussions in a very brief manner. For example, the conclusions ahead of the Camp David Summit just stated that “[t]he European Council was informed of the state of play regarding preparations for the G8 summit”.

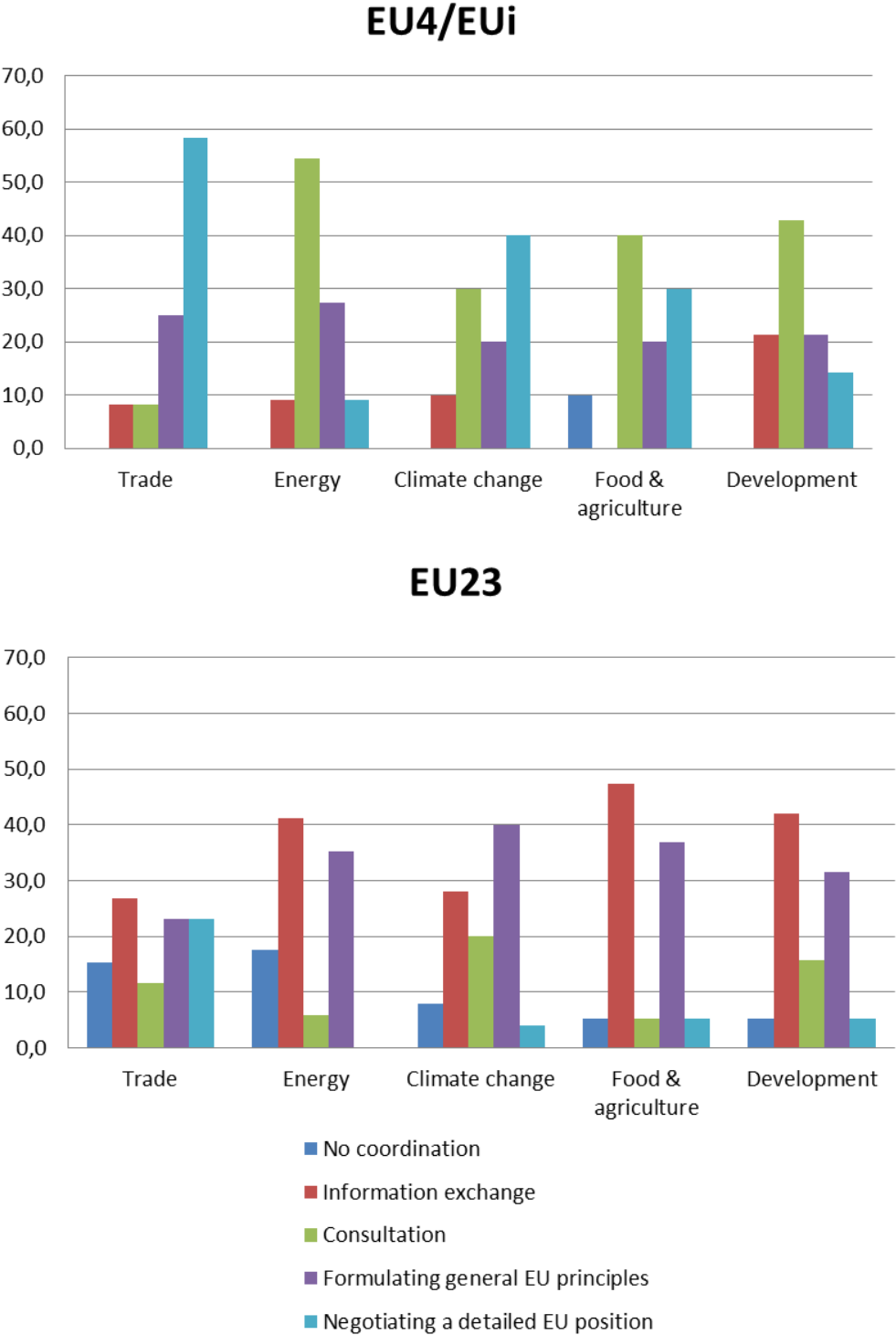
Second, the EU sherpa for the G8 briefs the EU member states in COREPER. These briefings represent the EU's main coordination instrument in the context of the G8. Some interviewees say that COREPER is briefed before and after G8 summits (Interview #49 and Interview #65), while others contend this only occurs after the summit (Interview #2 and Interview #58). One interviewee doubted whether a briefing took place after the Camp David Summit because of the heavily loaded agenda of COREPER (Interview #61). At least, this illustrates the ad hoc nature of EU coordination for the G8. The briefings are purely informative and focus on the summit rather than on the sherpa meetings. The EU sherpa clarifies the agenda, the different positions and the decisions taken (Interview #58). He also explains how this relates to the activities of the EU (Interview #49). Usually, these moments take around 15 minutes and do not elicit any feedback from the member states. One interviewee also mentioned another coordination method for the G8 (Interview #64). When the G8 draft communiqué reaches its final stage, the G8 foreign affairs sous-sherpa (FASS) would prepare a note for COREPER. However, this practice could not be confirmed by other sources.

Third, the G8 may also figure on the agenda of other Council meetings, depending on which G8 ministerial meetings are held. The organisation of ministerial meetings is the prerogative of the G8 presidency. Between 1998 and 2009, each G8 presidency been organised several different ministerial meetings. In 2008 and 2009, Japan and Italy scheduled respectively six and seven different ministerial meetings in areas such as energy, environment, employment, foreign affairs, and justice and home affairs. However since the emergence of the G20 at leaders' level, this tradition seems to be in decline with now maximum one additional ministerial meeting beside one of the foreign affairs ministers. For example in 2011, France organised a ministerial G8 meeting on drug trafficking.

EU coordination for G8 meetings at ministerial level is very limited. Typically, the member states are not involved at all. Only under the Italian G8 Presidency in 2009, Italian ministers (de)briefed their EU counterparts on G8 meetings on development, energy, environment and justice and home affairs in the respective Council configurations (Council of the European Union, 2009d; 2009f; 2009g; 2009h). Both for energy and environment, the briefing was accompanied by a written note that sets out the main subjects of the G8 meeting. Italy has also put the G8 on the agenda of a General Affairs and External Relations Council meeting (Council of the European Union, 2009e). Remarkably, there were no similar briefings on the 2009 G8

meetings of agriculture ministers nor employment ministers. Furthermore, no evidence was found of any briefings or other coordination attempts for ministerial G8 meetings in 2008, 2010, 2011 and 2012. The only exception is development cooperation, where the member states are occasionally briefed in CODEV on the work of the G8 in the area of development.

The survey results (Graph 6) do not provide an unambiguous picture of EU coordination for the G8. For the EU4/EUi, coordination for the G8 on trade, climate change and food and agriculture is perceived as a group decision-making process, albeit with varying combinations of



**Graph 6. Internal EU coordination for the G8 per policy area according to the EU4/EUi and the EU23 (in percentage). Source: survey.**

formulating general EU principles and negotiating a detailed EU position. On energy and development, coordination is seen as information exchange. This contrast starkly with the above analysis that coordination does not substantially vary across different policy domains on the G8 agenda and is limited to briefings which implies information exchange or consultation. It is however possible that the existing substantial trade acquis and a clear EU position on climate change might have led to an overestimation of actual EU coordination for the G8 on these topics. With regard to the EU23, survey respondents do not fundamentally differ in their perception on coordination for the G8 in the different policy areas. However, they seem to disagree whether coordination can be described as information exchange or formulating general EU principles. This is probably also the result of confusion between the actual coordination process and the availability of existing EU positions and policies.

### **5.3. G7**

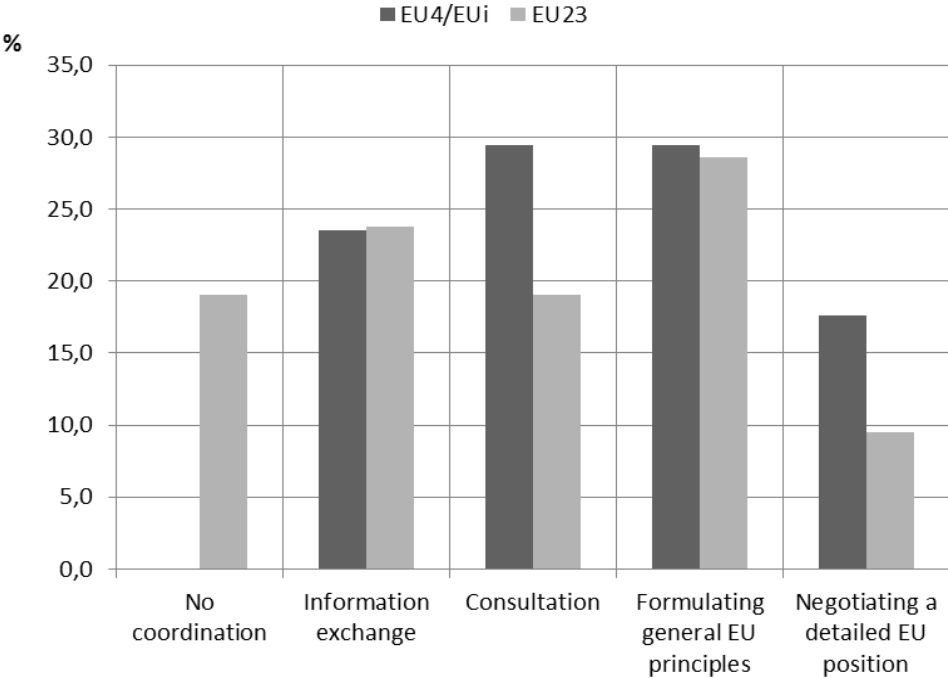
Coordination for the G7 has its origins in the European Council meeting of December 1998 in Vienna where an agreement was reached about the representation of the euro area in the G7. The member states also agreed “that as an integral part of Community representation at the G7 Group, there should be an informal preparation on EMU issues in the Euro 11 before meetings” (European Council, 1998). Accordingly, internal EU coordination does still take place before G7 gatherings, although not for every G7 meeting. Internal EU coordination for the G7 tends to concentrate on the ministerial meetings and takes place in two different groupings (Interview #50). General issues, topics that matter to all EU member states, are discussed in the EFC based on preparations by the European Commission.<sup>34</sup> Monetary issues are prepared by the EFC in its euro area configuration, the so-called Eurogroup Working Group in which only the euro area member states, the European Commission and the ECB are represented. The Eurogroup Working Group for example drafts the speaking notes of the Eurogroup president in the G7 (Interview #56). The preparation of the Eurogroup Working Group is forwarded to the Eurogroup at the level of ministers of finance. Subsequently, the ECOFIN Council, comprising all 27 finance ministers, finalizes both work streams in a single ‘terms of reference’ (Interview #12). However, the G7 is only discussed in the margin of an ECOFIN meeting i.e. during a breakfast or lunch meeting (Interview #1). After the G7 meeting, there is a debriefing by the European Commission and the EU4 in EFC (Interview #12 and Interview #52).

Coordination mechanisms for the G7 are not as full-fledged as for the G20 finance track. In terms of scope, intensity and frequency, coordination for the G7 cannot match coordination for the G20. Nevertheless, coordination for the G7 is a process of group decision-making. Written position papers are circulated among all EU member states which allows the EU23, in particular the euro zone countries, to be substantively involved (Nasra et al., 2009: 5). For example, member states keep sometimes certain issues out of the terms of reference (Interview #12).

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<sup>34</sup> To address the most urgent topics, the EFC might resort to teleconference systems and ad hoc meetings (Bini Smaghi, 2004: 238).

When looking at the responses of the survey participants in Graph 7, it immediately appears that with regard to EU coordination for the G7, there is a great degree of confusion. Respondents from G7 and non-G7 members are completely divided about the level of internal EU coordination. This could have several reasons. For instance, since the emergence of the G20, EU coordination for the G7 is in decline (Interview #45 and Interview #56). Officials could doubt whether EU member states still coordinate since the G20 has become so prominent. Another reason is that because of the secrecy of the G7 and the EFC process, respondents are simply not aware of any coordination attempts for G7 meetings. Moreover, the press does usually not report about EU coordination for the G7, while it tends to cover internal EU coordination ahead of G20 meetings (see e.g. Strupczewski, 2011).

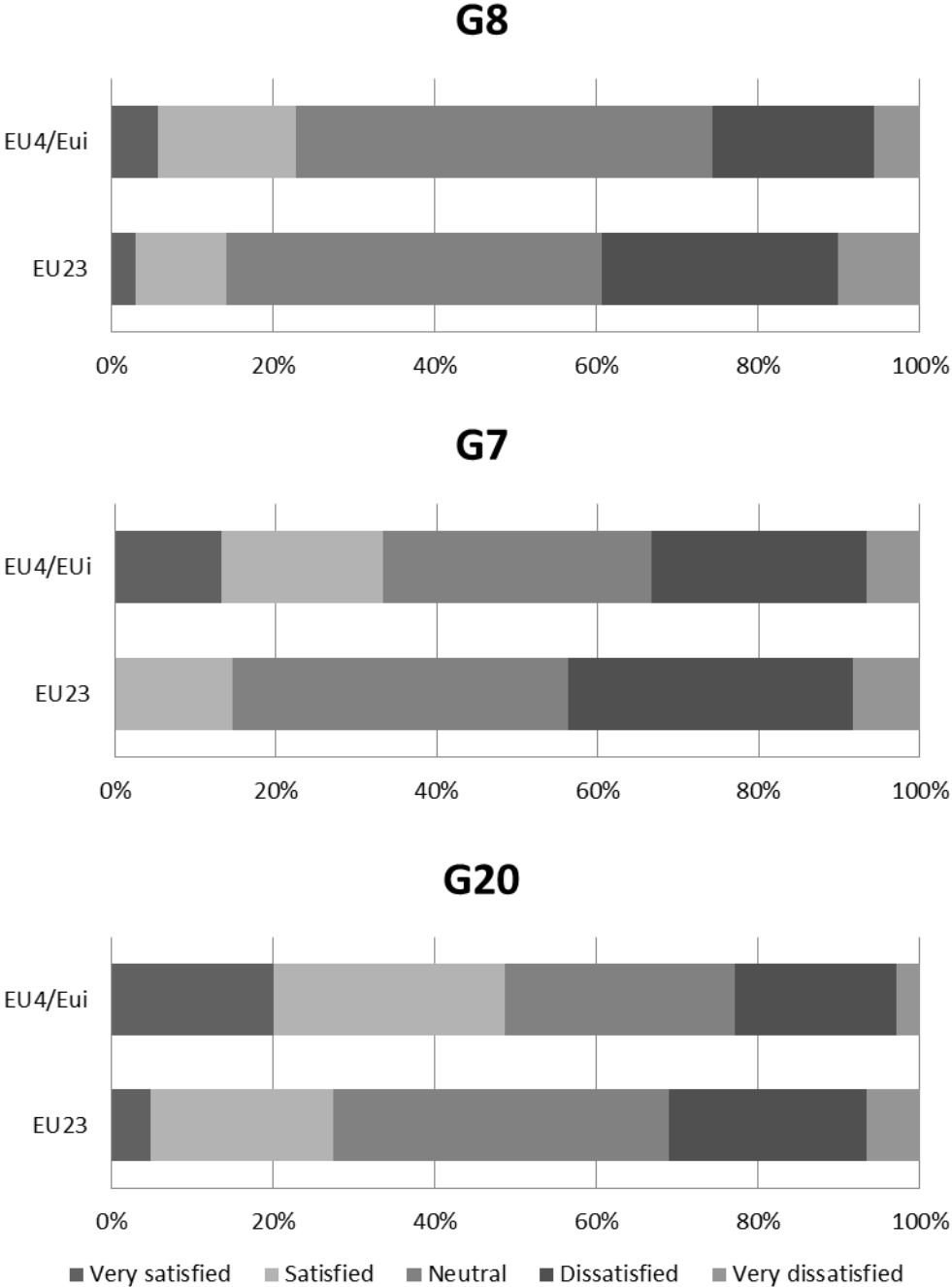


Graph 7. Internal EU coordination for the G7. Source: survey.

### 5.4. Diverging expectations about EU coordination

Although most issues on the agendas of the G7, G8 and G20 appear in one way or another on the EU’s agenda, the overall level of coordination across the Gx system remains rather low. In general, coordination takes the form of information sharing or consultation thereby limiting the active, but indirect involvement of the EU23 in the Gx process. Consequently, EU23 countries are rather sceptical about EU coordination for the Gx. This section first briefly illustrates the dissatisfaction of EU23 with survey results before highlighting the implications of the non-binding character of EU coordination.

First, as shown in Graph 8 the EU23 are generally rather dissatisfied, while the EU4/EUi are relatively satisfied with the current coordination processes<sup>35</sup>. With regard to coordination for the G7, almost half of the EU23 respondents were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. Coordination for the G8 was evaluated more or less the same by the EU23. In turn, EU4/EUi respondents appear to be divided on the G7 but are rather neutral about G8 coordination. The EU23 were most positive about EU coordination for the G20, although only approximately one fourth explicitly stated to be (very) satisfied. Coordination for the G20 also satisfies the EU4/EUi respondents most, with a small 50% being (very) satisfied. Remarkably, however, a significant minority of the



**Graph 8. Evaluation of EU coordination for the G7, G8 and G20. Source: survey.**

<sup>35</sup> These results are slightly positively biased. Depending on the forum, a certain number of respondents (both EU4/EUi and EU23) have left this question open, but ticked at least one of the four reasons why they would be dissatisfied. Hence, the negative views of these officials (accounting for approximately 5 to 10% of the respondents who answered either with the scale or specified their dissatisfaction) are not incorporated in the average values.

EU4/EUi respondents is not satisfied with coordination for the G7 (1/3<sup>rd</sup>), G8 (1/4<sup>th</sup>) and G20 (1/5<sup>th</sup>).

More specifically and presented in Table 8, about one third of the EU23 officials who answered this question considers coordination for the G7, G8 and G20 insufficient. However, it appears that the EU23 are concerned about the quality rather than the quantity of internal EU coordination. After all, more coordination also requires more resources (Interview #16). Instead, a “[m]ajor problem with EU internal coordination is that significant minority/majority constituency views are not necessarily communicated”, according to an EU23 survey respondent. Another EU23 official complained of not having “enough input from the EU G7,G8 and G20 Members to have a proper debate”. Contrary to my expectations, also a considerable share of EU4/EUi respondents deem EU coordination insufficient. However, too strong EU coordination may also insufficiently meet the requirements of the EU4. For example, EU coordination may require too much time, as indicated by some EU4/EUi respondents.

Furthermore, although coordination for the Gx forums has more or less become an established practice, it remains surrounded by informality and uncertainty. The lack of clear rules on internal EU coordination for the Gx and how those coordination efforts are translated to the Gx context raises expectations that cannot always be met. In particular the non-binding character of internal EU coordination challenges the trust of EU23 in EU coordination for the Gx and the performance of the EU and its member states at Gx-level.

G7	EU23		EU4/EUi	
	A	R (%)	A	R (%)
<b>Insufficient</b>	15	28,8	4	25,0
<b>Too restrictive</b>	4	7,7	0	0,0
<b>Too time-consuming</b>	2	3,8	2	12,5
<b>Not taken seriously at G-level</b>	13	25,0	2	12,5

G8	EU23		EU4/EUi	
	A	R (%)	A	R (%)
<b>Insufficient</b>	38	34,5	7	18,9
<b>Too restrictive</b>	5	4,5	1	2,7
<b>Too time-consuming</b>	8	7,3	4	10,8
<b>Not taken seriously at G-level</b>	19	17,3	3	8,1

G20	EU23		EU4/EUi	
	A	R (%)	A	R (%)
<b>Insufficient</b>	32	27,8	5	13,5
<b>Too restrictive</b>	5	4,3	1	2,7
<b>Too time-consuming</b>	10	8,7	6	16,2
<b>Not taken seriously at G-level</b>	14	12,2	4	10,8

**Table 8. Causes of dissatisfaction of EU coordination for the Gx in absolute numbers (A) and as shares of responses on this question (R%). Source: survey.**

On the one hand, EU23 states realize that the TOR or Guidelines should respect the informal nature of the G20 and that a stricter EU position might not be appropriate (Interview #16). If the TOR is too strict, the EU could be blocking a G20 agreement. Therefore, a balance has to be struck between strict and workable (Interview #56). It is illustrative that the survey results do not indicate that EU4/EUi would feel too restricted by EU coordination, although one could guess that this might have been problematic in the G20 context. One EU4 interviewee notes that he would not accept something in the TOR or Guidelines which would restrict his country (Interview #42).

On the other hand, they do expect the EU participants in the Gx including the EU4 to respect the outcomes of internal EU coordination processes. After all, the TOR for the G20 finance track and the Guidelines for G20 agriculture and employment ministerial meetings state typically state that “[t]his note sets out the priorities for the EU as a whole and its members”. EU4 interviewees agree that coordination not only ensures that the EU representatives speak with authority, but also makes sure that the EU4 and the European Commission present a common message (Interview #45). However, EU23 officials do yet not fully trust the EU representative and the EU4, although, since the incidents about tax havens and IMF reform, there have been no major examples of the EU4 going clearly against the interests of the EU23. “[S]ticking to the common position agreed up-front by all European members of G-groupings” is the EU’s key issue according to one of the EU23 respondents. Two more officials also emphasised this frustration. “The problem is not that the EU position is not taken into account in the G20 [...] but that all EU countries do not adhere fully to the coordinated position”. The other respondent confirms “it is a fundamental problem, that in spite of large efforts to co-ordinate common EU positions in advance of G20-meetings, the large EU member states which participate in the G20 meetings often do not respect the outcome of the EU-coordination efforts”. Nevertheless, it needs to be said that for the G20 only 12% of the EU23 respondents feels that EU coordination is not taken seriously at Gx meetings. For the G7, that share accounts for 25%.

## **5.5. The European Parliament and the Gx**

Given its key role in internal EU decision-making, it is imperative to also shed a light on the role of the European Parliament in the preparation for Gx processes. It however appears that the Parliament is completely absent from internal EU coordination. National parliaments are only marginally involved in the Gx process. Since the Canadian G8 Presidency in 2002, speakers of the parliaments of the G8 countries have held annual consultations (Hajnal, 2007: 76). In 2010, Canada launched a similar initiative for the G20. The European Parliament was invited to participate in the G8 speakers’ meeting for the first time in 2007 and it has participated in all G20 speakers’ consultations. Yet, the impact of these annual meetings of the presidents and speakers of the national parliaments on the Gx process and outcome is very limited. There is no direct interaction between the parliamentary meeting and the meeting of the heads of state and government (European Parliament, 2012). Illustrative is that these consultations are never mentioned in Gx documents and communiqués. Nor did this aspect come up during my interviews.

The role of the European Parliament in the EU’s preparation for the G7, G8 and G20 is very modest. For Gx ministerial and working group meetings, the Parliament is not substantively involved in EU coordination for the Gx. The member states do not demand the opinion, advice or approval of the Parliament during the drafting of the TOR or Guidelines. And since the Parliament has no representatives in the Council bodies where coordination takes place (EFC, Social Questions Working Party, CODEV, COREPER), it does not directly participate in the briefings or negotiations. Moreover, according to article 218 TFEU, the Parliament’s approval of Gx outcomes or parliamentary consultation during the negotiations is not required, since the Gx does not produce formal international agreements. The only opportunity for the Parliament to participate in the preparation for G8 and G20 summits is at European Council level where the president of the European Parliament addresses the 27 leaders at the beginning of the European Council meeting.

Despite the limited involvement in the EU’s coordination process for the Gx, the European Parliament is relatively active on G20 matters. First, the Parliament usually holds a plenary debate before or after each G20 summit. For the G20 meetings in London, Pittsburgh and Cannes, the Parliament this has resulted in a resolution (European Parliament, 2009a; 2009b; 2011a), while for

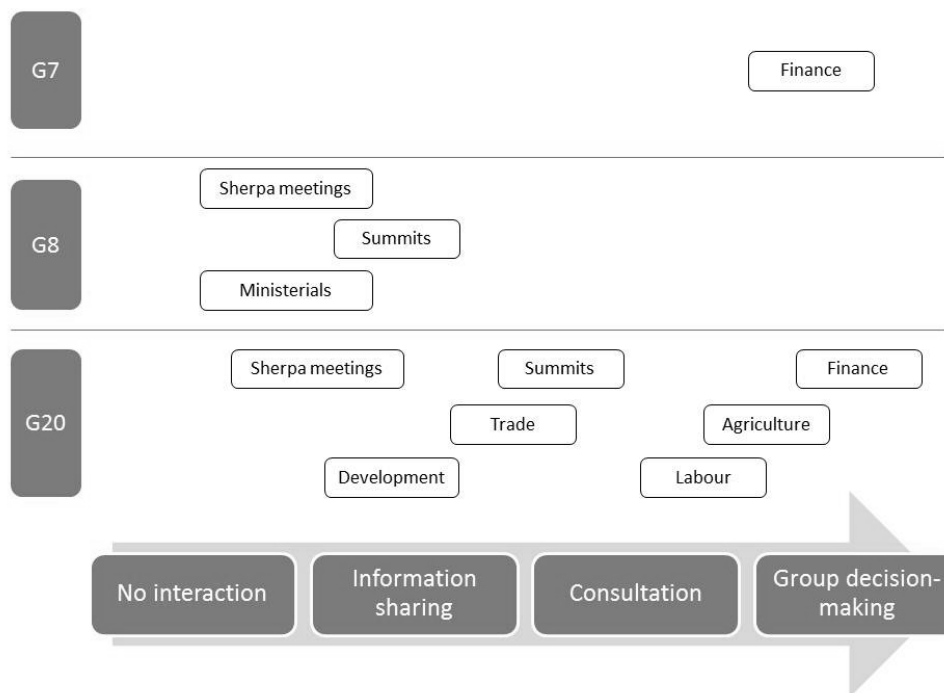


the Toronto and Seoul Summits no texts have been adopted. These debates may involve briefings by Commission or Council officials. Second, the MEPs often ask oral or written questions mostly to the European Commission, but also to the Council. The questions cover a wide range of aspects including G20 outcomes, relevance, EU representation, positions and strategies of the Commission and so on. Third, the services of the European Parliament issue reports and organise conferences about actual G20 topics (Maier & Bassot, 2012). However, all these activities are not the result of a structured process, but depend on the interests of the Parliament and its members. They are concentrated on G20 affairs and only have the purpose of being informed.

Nevertheless, the European Parliament is certainly keen to be more involved in the preparation of G8 and G20 summits. During 2012, the secretariat of the Parliament conducted an intensive brainstorming exercise to prepare the European Parliament for a much more complex and challenging environment. In the final report 'Preparing for Complexity', a separate section was devoted to the G8 and G20 in which the Parliament outlines a clear vision on its role vis-à-vis these processes (Welle, 2013). It states that since the G8 and G20 play an increased role in agenda setting, the preparation of the summits "should not be considered out of the scope of the European Parliament". For example, the Parliament could "give its opinion based on a report from the President of the European Council when he endorses or prepares the EU position for the G20 meetings". The Parliament also wants to "[c]heck how the Commission implements the commitments taken at G20 summits". Furthermore, the Parliament sees for itself a role to improve the democratic legitimacy of G8 and G20 processes and calls for a greater involvement in the "preparation phase of G20 Summits, at presidential, political and expert levels". Therefore, the president of the European Parliament "could have a dedicated Sherpa to prepare meetings". Remarkably, the report sees "no urgent need for a Single European Seat [in the G20] nor for a fully-fledged negotiation mandate proposed by and given to the European Commission". This contradicts with earlier calls by the European Parliament for a single EU seat in the IMF (Cronin, 2006).

## **5.6. Concluding remarks**

To summarize, EU coordination varies greatly across the Gx system (see Figure 8). In general, the EU coordinates more extensively for the G20 than for the G8 and G7. But also for the G20 itself, a wide array of coordination processes are observed ranging from information sharing to group decision-making. While not all G8 affairs reach to all EU member states, the 27 member states are to one or another extent involved in the EU's preparatory process for all G20 issues under consideration. Or as a survey respondent stated: "We coordinate enough issues". However, EU coordination, and by extension the way in which the EU position is respected at Gx level, is still cause of much concern for the EU23. Additionally, coordination for the G8, and to a lesser extent for the G7, is not as institutionalized as for the G20. Moreover, the highly informal and confidential nature of the G7 process and the responsible EU body EFC constrains the attempt to thoroughly and comprehensively map EU coordination. Nevertheless, EU coordination for the G7 appears to be rather strong, at least for when it happens.



**Figure 8. Level of coordination for the G7, G8 and G20.**

Within the EU, the Gx remains a matter of the Council and the Commission, while the European Parliament plays an insignificant role. In general, EU coordination is facilitated by the European Commission, rather than the rotating Council presidency. The Commission prepares drafts, provides information and (de)briefs the member states. Since the Commission is also omnipresent in the Gx system, it holds theoretically an extremely powerful position. The Commission may choose the frequency and the level of detail of its briefings and whether it provides an accompanying written note. It may decide whether it asks input from the member states. And by drafting the TOR and the Guidelines, it has a crucial influence on the content and formulation of the EU's position (Interview #12). Nevertheless, the Commission's position is constrained by the EU4 on the one hand and the EU23 on the other. The EU4 wish to maintain a comfortable room of manoeuvre in the Gx and do not always consider coordination as desirable. Conversely, the Commission (and the EU4) cannot always ignore the demand of the EU23 to strengthen EU coordination. One interviewee describes the role of the Commission as schizophrenic (Interview #5). The European Commission is the representative of the EU including the smaller member states, but the large member states decide on the presence of the Commission in international institutions such as the Gx or the FSB. The Commission has thus to strike the right balance between these two camps, a struggle which is discussed throughout the remainder of this study.

Furthermore, some member states, in particular France and Sweden, have played a significant role in the development of EU coordination processes for the G20. Holding the rotating EU Council presidency (France in 2008, Sweden in 2009) and G20 presidency (France in 2011), both countries were crucial catalysts for EU coordination as they managed to initiate, establish and extend coordination processes. France laid the ground for EU23 involvement by organising an additional European Council meeting ahead of the first G20 summit in Washington. During its G20 presidency, France also expanded existing coordination practices to new policy areas such as labour and agriculture. Sweden, in turn, unsuccessfully tried to strengthen coordination for G20 sherpa meetings, but managed to deepen and settle coordination for the finance track.

When an EU4 country holds the Gx presidency, it is more likely that the EU23 will be involved in the Gx process. For example, both during the Italian (2009) and French (2011) G8 presidencies, the EU member states were more informed than when Canada (2010) or the US (2012) chaired the G8. Nonetheless, coordination for the G8 does not exceed the level of information sharing, even if the chair is an EU country. France would probably also not be as eager to coordinate for G20 issues if it did not hold the presidency in 2011. A European Gx chair does however not guarantee greater EU23 involvement. As G20 president in 2009, the UK did not introduce any new substantial EU coordination practices with a lasting impact. On the contrary, the UK was rather worried about what would come out of the coordination process since it might undermine the chances for a successful London Summit (Interview #27).

Finally, the survey also yielded very interesting results. While it has not proven to be essential in determining the level of EU coordination, it reveals other aspects that have not been captured by the interviews. First, the response patterns show that the EU4/EU<sub>i</sub> perceive the level of EU coordination systematically higher than the EU23. Only for finance and development in the G20, both groups more or less converge. More precisely, the survey results demonstrate that on the one hand, the EU23 put much more emphasis on information exchange than the EU4/EU<sub>i</sub>. On the other hand, the EU4/EU<sub>i</sub> more often indicate that the EU negotiates a detailed EU position. Hence, the EU23 feel that they are merely informed on Gx issues and that coordination is rather a one-way process from Gx-members to non-Gx members. This while the EU4/EU<sub>i</sub> view coordination rather as a two-way process where all member states have the opportunity to raise their voice and express their concerns and ideas. The divergence of perception of EU coordination between the EU23 and the EU4/EU<sub>i</sub> – and to a limited extent within each group as well – is remarkable since it concerns one and the same process.

Second, the construction of the coordination scale that has been used in the survey pointed at another interesting aspect. The first three levels of the scale are clear processes: ‘no coordination’, ‘information exchange’ and ‘consultation’. The two subsequent levels are however formulated as processes but emphasise a certain outcome: ‘formulating *general EU principles*’ and ‘negotiating a *detailed EU position*’. The results as shown in this chapter suggest that the EU4/EU<sub>i</sub> tend to emphasise outcomes, while the EU23 focus on processes. This hints at two different perspectives on EU coordination for the Gx. On the one hand, the EU23 see coordination predominantly as a way to know what is going on in the Gx and what they should expect to come out of it. It also serves to be informed of what the EU representatives are going to say and possibly, to provide input for that EU position. Therefore, the EU23 probably focus more on how and the extent to which they are involved rather than any possible EU position resulting from this process. On the other hand, informing the EU23 is not the first concern of the EU4/EU<sub>i</sub>. Understandably, they are mainly concerned with their participation and performance in the Gx. In this context, it is useful to know the outcomes of EU coordination and to be aware of any existing EU policies on Gx matters. Hence, this may explain why the EU4/EU<sub>i</sub> tend to stress the categories ‘formulating general EU principles’ and ‘negotiating a detailed EU position’.

During the interviews, I could sense these two different mind-sets, although it is very hard to demonstrate this with some quotes. I noticed this by how quick the interviewees could recall coordination processes, how detailed they spoke about coordination or what their main concerns were. Generally, the EU4, and to a lesser extent the European Commission, consider EU coordination as secondary to their own performance in the Gx. It is something that they come across along their participation in the Gx process. For the EU23, in contrast, the framework of EU coordination is the main and often only lens through which they look at Gx processes.

Third, it also appears that the EU4/EU<sub>i</sub> have a much more coherent view on EU coordination processes for the G8 and G20. In almost every policy domain, one or two responses stand out. In contrast, and both for the G8 and G20, the EU23 remain divided between several different levels of coordination. This might suggest that EU23 respondents are

less aware of or even less interested in EU coordination processes for the Gx. Especially officials in the EU23 capitals are less familiar with those EU coordination processes in Brussels. This may lead to over- or underestimation or even pure speculation on the level of EU coordination. At first sight, this argument seems to contradict my previous point that EU coordination is considered crucial by EU23 countries in order to be in touch with Gx processes. However, it rather puts things in perspective. Most EU23 officials have generally a rather superficial knowledge of the Gx system. As long as much coordination for the Gx remains limited to briefings and information exchange, they do not need to form a clear opinion about Gx activities. Consequently, most EU23 states follow the work of the G7, G8 and G20 only from a distance but if they do, EU coordination is their primary instrument.

## Chapter 6

# **Findings on Research Question 2**

While chapter five has explored the level of coordination for the G7, G8 and G20, this chapter attempts to explain why that level of coordination varies across the Gx system. Internal EU coordination does not only appear to differ across the three Gx forums, but also within a single Gx forum such as the G20. As set out in the introductory chapter, eight cases have been selected for this research question, each comprising one or several dossiers (see Table 1). This chapter examines how each of our six variables play in these cases and dossiers. As explained in chapter three, those variables are existing policies, interests, competences, relevance, EU influence and Gx organisation. However, this chapter is not structured by the cases but by hypotheses and variables. In this way, the focus lies on the explanatory value of the variables. It allows us to systematically compare the role of a single variable across the different cases. Before beginning with the existing policies variable, a brief introduction to the cases and dossiers is provided. Subsequently, we discuss each hypothesis for the eight cases. In addition some concluding remarks are made at the end of each section. The next chapter endeavours to integrate these variables into a single explanatory framework.

## **6.1. Introduction to the cases**

### **6.1.1. G20 – Finance**

The first case focuses on the financial and economic agenda of the G20. As seen in the previous chapter, EU coordination for this policy domain is most advanced. All issues in the finance track are subject to group decision-making and appear in the TOR. In this case, I will concentrate on four issue areas, which cover most of the G20's finance agenda: global economy, financial regulation, tax havens and IMF reform.<sup>36</sup>

#### *Global economy*

So far, G20 discussions on the global economy have centred around three main topics: fiscal stimulus/consolidation, the Framework for Growth and the euro crisis. First, in 2008-2009 the G20's top priority as crisis committee was a massive package of budgetary stimulus. To prevent the global economy from further sliding into recession, the G20 coordinated national fiscal stimuli and provided additional resources for the IMF (Cooper & Thakur, 2013: 105). From the second half of 2009, the idea of fiscal consolidation gained prominence and the G20 started exploring strategies to coordinate the exit of stimulus programs. However, the question remained how to address the risk of another downturn in global demand. Second, to ensure a lasting recovery and in an attempt to tackle global economic imbalances, the G20 launched in Pittsburgh the "Framework for Strong, Sustainable and Balanced Growth" (hereafter 'Framework for Growth'). Within this framework, the G20 countries committed to develop a process to set out macro-economic objectives, develop policies to achieve these objectives and together assess progress (IMF, 2009a). With the support of the IMF, the G20 countries are still fully engaged to the so-called Mutual Assessment Process (MAP). However, an in-depth analysis of the process so far confirms the popular view that the G20 fails to capture a significant share of the potential benefits due to a lack of political will to overcome domestic interest groups and to agree on the way the costs of policy coordination should be shared (Butler, 2012: 491). Third, also the situation in the euro area has been an increasing concern of the G20. The euro zone troubles have largely overshadowed the G20 meetings in 2011 and 2012. In itself a regional crisis, the multiple and overlapping fiscal, banking and institutional design crisis had/has the potential to spill over from Europe to the rest of the G20 (Cooper & Thakur, 2013: 110). Nevertheless, the

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<sup>36</sup> Parts of the finance case, notably on compensation, tax havens and IMF reform are based on Nasra and Debaere (2011 & 2012).

role of the G20 in solving Europe's sovereign debt crisis is limited. According to Kiekergaard (2011), the 2011 Cannes Summit served foremost as a deadline for the EU to deal decisively with its economic and financial crisis, which is probably the G20's most important contribution.

### ***Financial regulation***

Since financial sector failures, both of private financial institutions and by supervisors and regulators, were at the heart of the global financial crisis, financial market reform has been one of the core activities of the G20. At the first G20 leaders' summit in Washington a comprehensive action plan and clear timetable was formulated, not only to respond to the financial turmoil but also to re-establish the overall financial system to prevent future crises. The G20 program on financial market regulation has since been growing substantially in terms of institutions targeted, level of detail and instruments covered (Pickford, 2013: 18). Among other things, the G20 has tackled capital and liquidity standards, remuneration policies and the regulation and the supervision of hedge funds, credit rating agencies and derivatives markets.

*Capital and liquidity standards.* One of the reasons of the global financial crisis was the gradual erosion of the level and quality of the capital base of financial institutions. In addition, many banks were holding insufficient liquidity buffers. Already prior to the first G20 leaders' summit, an international regulatory response had been developed under the umbrella of the FSF (Helleiner & Pagliari, 2008: 2). In order to improve the banking sector's ability to absorb financial and economic shocks, the FSF and the BCBS sought to extend the capital requirements for banks, to enhance the countercyclical character of regulatory capital and to tackle the trend to transform loans into risky securities. The G20 provided high-level political support for this effort at the 2008 Washington Summit by requesting the financial regulators to "set out strengthened capital requirements for banks' structured credit and securitization activities" (G20, 2008b). Subsequently, the G20 managed to maintain the momentum which resulted in a swift conclusion of the 'Basel III' agreement by November 2010. Although this new framework for bank capital and liquidity standards will not be fully in place until 2019, it is widely considered as one of the main accomplishments of the G20 (Helleiner, 2011: 2).

*Remuneration policies.* In the wake of numerous bank bailouts, the culture of bank bonuses came under increased criticism from both policy-makers and public opinion. The problem of remuneration in the financial sector entails both its excessive level and its structure, notably the fact that bonuses tend to induce high risk-taking and short-termism to the detriment of long-term stability. Hence in 2008, the G20 leaders called the financial institutions to promote stability with clear internal incentives and to avoid compensation schemes which reward excessive short-term returns or risk-taking (G20, 2008b). In London, the G20 endorsed the 'Principles for Sound Compensation Practices' issued by the FSB, the executive arm of the G20 (FSB, 2009a). The FSB standards include – inter alia – the possibility for financial institutions to reclaim the variable component if it is paid on the basis of data that proved to be misstated. The FSB does not, however, attempt to place any kind of cap on the amounts banks pay out to their employees. Later, the FSB elaborated these principles and submitted detailed specific proposals on global standards on pay structure to the G20 Pittsburgh Summit (FSB, 2009b). However since Pittsburgh, it seems that the momentum is gone, shifting the attention to the implementation of the FSB's standards. At the request of the G20, the FSB undertakes on-going monitoring and public reporting, focusing on the remaining gaps and impediments to full implementation of the compensation standards (G20, 2011a).

*Regulation and supervision of financial markets.* To strengthen the financial infrastructure, the G20 also targets other actors in the financial system. The G20 Washington Summit declaration stated that all financial markets, products and participants must be regulated or subject to oversight (G20, 2008b). Later, in London, the G20 explicitly asked for regulation and oversight of

systemically important hedge funds. Hedge funds or their managers should be registered and required to disclose appropriate information, including on their leverage. They should also ensure adequate risk management (G20, 2009a). Subsequently, the G20 extended the scope of regulation to OTC derivatives. The Pittsburgh communiqué states that all standardized OTC derivative contracts should be traded on exchanges or electronic trading platforms and cleared through central counter-parties by end-2012. Derivatives that are not centrally cleared should be subject to higher capital requirements (G20, 2009b). Finally, the G20 has also addressed the role of credit rating agencies, non-bank credit activity (so-called ‘shadow banking’) and financial institutions that are ‘too big to fail’ (Buckley, 2013).

### ***Tax havens***

Offshore financial centres, or ‘tax havens’, specialize in attracting foreign financial activity and investment, thereby mostly making use of a policy mix of zero tax rates, banking secrecy and weak regulation. As a result of the global economic crisis and a number of tax evasion scandals in Liechtenstein and Switzerland that came to light in 2008, tolerance towards tax havens dropped rapidly. Especially since Western governments’ fiscal difficulties mounted, appetite to recover lost tax revenues from tax havens grew correspondingly. Consequently, the issue topped the agenda of the G20 London Summit where leaders attached a list of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) with a classification of countries that had not signed at least 12 agreements to exchange tax information. The OECD’s blacklist has led to a record number of nearly 600 tax information exchange agreements, according to the French G20 Presidency (French G20 Presidency, 2011: 8). Subsequently, the G20 has maintained the pressure on non-cooperative jurisdictions by tasking the Global Forum on Transparency and Exchange of Information for Tax Purposes to monitor the compliance with the international standard on information exchange (G20, 2011a; 2012a).

### ***IMF reform***

Following the financial crisis, world leaders realized that an effective reform of the IMF’s institutional structures is indispensable to face today’s economic and financial challenges (Hunt, 2008). Established in the wake of the Second World War, the IMF does no longer reflect the global economic and financial reality. For example, before the 2010 IMF reform, the combined quota<sup>37</sup> share of Belgium and the Netherlands surpassed the quota of China. And one third of the 24 seats in the Executive Board (EB), the main governing body of the IMF, are held by European countries (even though some of them represent a group of countries or constituencies). The overrepresentation of Western countries in the IMF in terms of shares and chairs has led to an accumulation of monetary reserves by emerging markets, especially China, and the creation of rivalling regional arrangements.

In order to regain the emerging markets’ confidence in the Fund, the G20 took up a leadership role in the IMF reform debate. In 2009, the G20 leaders not only trebled the resources available to the IMF, they also initiated a new review of the quotas and a reform of the Fund’s governance (G20, 2009a; 2009b). In October 2010, the G20 ministers of finance and central bank governors agreed that the emerging markets and developing countries should be given a greater representation in the Executive Board “through 2 fewer advanced European chairs” (G20, 2010a). The agreement also included the possibility for a second alternate Executive Director for all multi-country constituencies and a commitment to move to an all-elected EB (replacing an EB with five appointed seats). With regard to the quotas, the aggregate quota share of the EU decreases from 32,9 to 30,2%, with Belgium, France, the Netherlands and the UK accounting for

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<sup>37</sup> The quota reflect the members’ financial contributions to the IMF and determine their voting weight and borrowing capacity.



the greatest losses (IMF, 2010). Ironically, after the quota review, a large number of overrepresented European states have now become underrepresented themselves<sup>38</sup>.

### **6.1.2. G20 – Development<sup>39</sup>**

Where coordination for G20 finance matters reaches the highest level on our coordination scale, EU coordination for development issues in the G20 is positioned on the other extreme. Coordination consists of informative briefings by the European Commission to CODEV, without the intention to involve the EU23 in the formulation of the Commission's position.

Since 2008, the G20 has not only positioned itself at the centre of global economic governance, it has also emerged as a forum to discuss development cooperation among traditional Western donors and emerging market economies. Since the 2010 Seoul Summit, development has represented a substantial share of the G20's process. The launch of the G20 development agenda raised high expectations. Alexander (2011: 9), for example, considered the G20's work on development as a turning point in the history of international development efforts. Indeed, with the 'Seoul Development Consensus for Shared Growth' and the related Multi-Year Action Plan agreed at the Seoul Summit, the G20 for the first time embarked on a structural development agenda. However, lacking a convincing narrative and implementation capacities, the G20 has not yet demonstrated its specific added-value in the global governance of development (Schulz, 2011).

The G20's work on development departs from the two-way interconnection between the financial crisis and the economic situation of low-income and other developing countries: on the one hand, the developing world was badly hit by the global financial crisis, but on the other hand, part of the global recovery has to come from low-income countries as new sources of global growth (Kharas, 2010). To address both aspects, the G20 countries concentrate on nine pillars of which four deal with enhancing growth potentials (infrastructure, human resource development, trade, and private investment and job creation), the next four deal with managing social and economic risks (financial inclusion, growth with resilience, food security, and domestic resource mobilization), and the ninth pillar supports the others by enhancing knowledge sharing. An overview of these pillars and their main issues can be found in Table 9. The G20's work on development is guided by the following six core principles:

- Focus on economic growth.
- Global development partnerships (which, among other things, includes due respect to equality among partners and national ownership).
- Global or regional systemic issues (stressing the need for global and regional cooperation on issues that require coordinated action).
- Private sector participation.
- Complementarity (avoiding duplication and "focus on areas where the G20 has a comparative advantage").
- Outcome orientation ("focus on feasible, practical and accountable measures" to address "blockages to significantly improving growth prospects for developing countries").

The G20's view on development differs from the G8 approach by focusing on growth rather than on welfare and poverty (Kharas, 2011). The G20 also seeks to address longer-term structural issues rather than pledging money for specific projects.

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<sup>38</sup> IMF shareholders are over- or underrepresented when their actual quota share does not correspond with its quota share according to the quota formula (calculated quota share).

<sup>39</sup> Parts of the development case are based on Debaere and Lesage (2012) and Debaere (2014 forthcoming).

<b>1. Infrastructure</b>	
Action plan for multilateral development banks	Conduct information and needs assessment; Improve investment climate for infrastructure; Facilitate regional integration;
High-Level Panel Report on Infrastructure Financing	Review MDB Action Plan; Identify ways to scale up financing.
<b>2. Human Resources</b>	
Standardized Indicators	Develop internationally comparable and practical indicators of skills for employment and productivity in developing countries
Support for national strategies	Strengthen national and regional vocational education and training institutions and programs; Identify barriers to increasing investment in skills development and productivity.
<b>3. Trade</b>	
Duty-Free Quota-Free access	Promote DFQF free market access for the least developed countries.
Trade Facilitation	Increase support for trade facilitation; Strengthen the role for South-South cooperation
Trade Finance	Maintain Aid for Trade levels beyond 2011; Reinforce the role of the private sector
Regional Trade Integration	Identify barriers to regional trade integration in Africa
<b>4. Private Investment and Job Creation</b>	
Private investment promotion	Promote the best standards for responsible investment in value chains. Develop indicators to measure benefits from such investment.
Innovation Challenge	Provide a platform for innovative solutions to be brought to scale and to showcase entrepreneurship aimed at solving social challenges
Improve Business Environment	LICs should develop action plans to strengthen financial markets in order to boost SMEs; support the regulatory framework for investment
<b>5. Food Security</b>	
Enhance Policy Coherence and coordination	Strengthen agricultural research systems through results-based mechanisms; Fulfil our existing commitments on food security and sustainable agricultural development; Identify bottlenecks and opportunities to increase policy coherence for food security
Mitigate Price Volatility Risk	Develop options on how to address risks associated with food price volatility; Improve information on food stocks; ensure access to humanitarian supplies; Promoting responsible agricultural investment
<b>6. Resilient Growth</b>	
Developing Social Protection	Identify lessons learned from use of social protection mechanisms in developing countries; prepare best practice guidelines for their use;
Migrant Remittances	Implement the General Principles for International Remittance Services and other initiatives aimed at reducing the cost of transferring remittances
<b>7. Financial Inclusion</b>	
Implement G20 Financial Inclusion Action Plan	Launch Global Partnership for Financial Inclusion (GPFII); increase access to private financial services; Scale up successful SME financing models.
<b>8. Domestic Resource Mobilization</b>	
Strengthen Fiscal Systems	Identify capacity needs of developing countries for enhancing efficiency and transparency of tax administration; and broadening the tax base and combating tax avoidance and evasion.
Prevent Erosion of Fiscal Status	Expand efforts to counter the erosion of developing countries' tax bases and highlight the adverse impacts of tax evasion by non-cooperating jurisdictions on development.
<b>9. Knowledge Sharing</b>	
Scale up knowledge sharing	Broadening knowledge sources, improving brokering functions, strengthening the dissemination of best practices.

**Table 9. Summary of the nine pillars of the G20 development agenda. (Alexander, 2011)**

The commitments in the Multi-Year Action Plan (MYAP) are implemented by the G20 Development Working Group (DWG) which reports to the sherpas and consists of delegates from the G20 countries and the European Commission, as well as representatives from relevant international institutions. In addition, Spain and Singapore (on behalf of the Global Governance Group) are also present (Alexander, 2011). For each pillar, two to four G20 members are appointed as lead countries or co-facilitators and prepare the work in the run-up to the DWG meetings. The EU leads the trade pillar together with the UK and Argentina. Beside trade, the EU also considers food security, infrastructure, resilient growth and private sector investments as its priorities.

### 6.1.3. Other G20 cases

Beside finance and development, three other policy domains on the G20 agenda are examined: employment, agriculture and trade. The level of coordination for these areas is situated between finance and development and is primarily characterized by consultation. Though coordination for trade issues is leaning towards information sharing, while coordination for labour and employment as well as agriculture contain elements of group decision-making.

With regard to labour and employment, the G20's two core priorities have been to improve the quality of jobs and to stimulate youth employment. First, quality employment is pursued by – among other actions – promoting international labour standards and expanding and implementing nationally defined social protection floors. For example, the G20 labour and employment ministers committed “to making gradual progress towards implementing national social protection floors including *inter alia* access to health care, income security for the elderly and persons with disabilities, child benefits and income security for the unemployed and working poor” (G20, 2011b). However, it has to be noted that the initial, and most important, G20 work on social protection floors has been conducted in the framework of the G20 DWG, more precisely under the resilient growth pillar. But while the EU member states had not been given the opportunity to provide input for the DWG discussion through CODEV, a section on social protection floors was included in the EU Guidelines for the G20 labour and employment ministers meeting in September 2011. This implies that the EU23 were only involved in a relatively late stage of G20 decision-making on this matter. Second, to address youth unemployment, the G20 has set up a G20 Task Force on Employment (TFE) to exchange knowledge and experience on strategies to link education and training to jobs and successful institutional coordination mechanisms (G20, 2011b). Building on this exercise, the G20 for example promotes apprenticeships and on-the-job training (G20, 2012a).

Another G20 case focuses on the activities on food and agriculture during 2011 and 2012. To address the challenge of food security, the G20 food and agriculture ministers adopted and implemented an “Action Plan on Food Price Volatility and Agriculture” (G20, 2011c). The action plan is the result of close cooperation between the agriculture (deputy-)ministers and the DWG<sup>40</sup>. A couple of elements should be highlighted. First, to increase food market information and transparency, the G20 has created an Agricultural Market Information System (AMIS) which involves the main producing, exporting and importing countries. By monitoring, analysing and forecasting trends in international food markets, AMIS functions as an early-warning system that detects conditions that warrant the attention of policy makers (G20, 2011c). Second, the G20 aims to stimulate agricultural production and productivity. In this context, it has launched the International Research Initiative for Wheat Improvement (IRIWI) and AgResults. AgResults provides economic incentives to private sector actors in smallholder agriculture to develop

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<sup>40</sup> The DWG dealt with issues such as food reserves and nutrition. The G20 finance track has also contributed to the G20's work on food security as they assessed the functioning of agricultural commodities' derivatives markets (Interview #37).

innovative technologies with the potential to yield high development impacts (AgResults, 2012). Third, the G20 also touched upon the issue of biofuel policies, but under the pressure of big biofuel producers Brazil and the US, the G20 could only agree on the need to further analyse the relationship between biofuels production and food availability and price volatility (G20, 2011c). However, ten international organisations submitted a joint report to the G20 meeting in which they have explicitly recommended to “remove provisions of current national policies that subsidize (or mandate) biofuels production or consumption” (FAO et al., 2011: 27). But the G20 did only welcome the report and discussed its recommendations (Tran, 2011). Fourth, the G20 food and agriculture ministers took the important decision in 2011 to “remove food export restrictions or extraordinary taxes for food purchased for non-commercial humanitarian purposes by WFP [World Food Programme] and agree not to impose them in the future” (G20, 2011c). This decision is however based on a similar commitment by the G8, taken at the 2008 Hokkaido Summit. Therefore, this matter is discussed in the G8 development case.

Finally, the G20’s trade agenda entails two main issues<sup>41</sup>. First, at the 2008 Washington Summit, the G20 leaders have vowed to “refrain from raising new barriers to investment or to trade in goods and services, imposing new export restrictions, or implementing WTO inconsistent measures to stimulate exports” (G20, 2008b). This standstill commitment has been reaffirmed at each consecutive summit and the WTO, OECD and UNCTAD have been asked to monitor the situation. Although there have been signs that certain G20 countries have not kept their promises and continued to impose protectionist measures (Beattie, 2009; Lynn, 2010), a global protectionist surge did remarkably not materialize in contrast to what had been anticipated by many observers and policy-makers (Rodrik, 2009; De Ville & Orbie, 2011: 3). Second, since 2010, each G20 communiqué also contains a passage on the WTO’s Doha Development Agenda (DDA) in which the leaders call for a successful conclusion to the DDA with an ambitious and balanced outcome. Therefore the G20 also usually sends a political message to the WTO’s ministerial conferences. However so far, the G20’s declaratory support has not yielded any significant progress towards the conclusion of the DDA.

#### **6.1.4. G8 – Development**

To recall, internal EU coordination for the G8 and development issues in particular is limited to general briefings by the EU sherpa in COREPER. When the G8 development ministers meet, the development ministers from all EU member states may occasionally be informed in the Council. This happened in 2009, but not in 2008 and 2010.

Although the G8’s agenda has been heavily reduced since the upgrade of the G20, still a substantial share of the G8’s official agenda is devoted to development issues. In this study, I will focus on two main topics that figured on the agenda during 2008-2012: support for health-related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and food security. First, since 2000 the G8 has put considerable effort in supporting progress towards the health-related MDGs. G8 initiatives include the launch of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, providing more than 100 million insecticide-treated nets to protect people from malaria and raising more than US\$1,5bn for the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (G8, 2011a). Since 2008, the G8 has mainly reaffirmed earlier commitments, took new, but rather general commitments and identified remaining gaps and challenges to address. In 2010, the G8 adopted the Muskoka Initiative on Maternal, Newborn and Child Health which channelled US\$7,3bn of funding towards global action to reduce maternal and infant mortality and improve the health of mothers and children in the world's poorest countries (G8, 2011a).

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<sup>41</sup> For other trade issues that are discussed within the G20 DWG under a separate pillar of the G20’s development agenda, I refer to the G20 development case.

Second, ensuring food security has been a key concern of the G8 since 2008. At the 2008 Hokkaido Toyako Summit, the G8 first acknowledged the negative impacts of rising food prices and proposed a set of mid- to long-term measures to tackle food security issues. In Japan, the leaders also committed “to remove export restrictions [...that...] hinder humanitarian purchases of food commodities” (G8, 2008a). That decision was picked up by the G20 in 2011 (see supra). The G20’s commitment is now however blocked at the WTO because some WTO members are reluctant to transpose a G20 decision word for word into a WTO proposal (WTO, 2011). Under the Italian G8 Presidency of 2009, the leaders launched the L’Aquila Food Security Initiative (AFSI) in which 40 actors committed to providing US\$20bn over three years including US\$6bn new money. Before the L’Aquila Summit, also the first ever meeting of G8 agriculture ministers was held to discuss international food trade and the impacts of the global economic crisis on food security (Margulis, 2012: 246). In 2010 and 2011, the G8 followed up on the AFSI and in 2012, a new initiative has been taken: the New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition to accelerate the flow of private capital to African agriculture.

Finally, in the past couple of years, the G8 has shifted focus from ODA commitments towards accountability in order to improve and assess the effectiveness of its actions (Interview #58). The 2010 Canadian G8 Presidency has started an accountability exercise to evaluate past G8 commitments on development since 2005 (Cargill, 2010: 16). The subsequent G8 presidencies have also produced accountability reports. However, the accountability issue will not be examined for our six hypotheses since it chiefly concerns an internal reporting exercise. The EU does for example not need any specific competences to provide data on how it has contributed to certain G8 objectives. Nor could it develop a certain policy to approach the accountability process. Moreover, although the EU figures in the G8 accountability reports, these documents have no impact on the EU or its member states and there is no need to maximize one’s influence in this data collection exercise.

### **6.1.5. G8 – Energy/climate**

Based on the G8 agenda from 2008 until 2012, three different issue areas have been identified for examination. First, the G8 countries made a couple of specific commitments on climate change. In 2008, the G8 leaders endorsed the target of reducing global emissions with at least 50% by 2050 (G8, 2008b). One year later, at the G8 L’Aquila Summit, it was recognized that the increase in global average temperature above pre-industrial levels should not exceed 2°C. Therefore, the G8 also supported the goal of developed countries to reduce greenhouse gas emissions with at least 80% by 2050 compared to 1990 (G8, 2009). However, the G8 failed to set medium-term goals to achieve these targets and did not made concrete financial commitments to developing countries (Van de Graaf, 2013: 134).

A second dossier on the G8 agenda was the creation of a new framework for international cooperation on energy efficiency. The idea, put forward by the EU, entered the G8 agenda in 2007. At the energy ministerial meeting in June 2008, an agreement was reached to establish a voluntary partnership, the International Partnership for Energy Efficiency Cooperation (IPEEC) between the G8 countries, the EU and China, India and South Korea. Brazil and Mexico later joined the initiative. IPEEC became operational in 2009, under the Italian G8 Presidency. It aims to compile best practices, exchange information and conduct joint research and development (Lesage, Van de Graaf, & Westphal, 2010: 6).

Finally, the G8 also discussed carbon capture and storage (CCS) to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. This technique captures CO<sub>2</sub> emissions before they enter the atmosphere and stores it underground. The issue was first discussed at length at the 2007 Heiligendamm Summit. Subsequently in 2008, the G8 leaders pledged to launch 20 large-scale CCS demonstration projects globally by 2010 (G8, 2009). Support for CCS has been reaffirmed in 2009 and 2010. In

addition, the G8 repeated its commitment from 2007 to encourage the development of CCS technology by identifying sources of financing and creating an enabling policy and regulatory framework (G8, 2009).

Apart from the briefings in COREPER by the EU G8 sherpa, there is no established internal EU coordination practice for energy and climate matters on the G8 agenda. On both issue areas, Italy briefed the member states in the respective Council configurations during its G8 presidency. Commission officials recall that the member states were mainly informed about IPEEC, in particular because the European Commission wanted the EU to become a member of IPEEC (Interview #47 and Interview #63).

### **6.1.6. G7 – Finance**

Coordination mechanisms for the G7 are not as full-fledged as for the G20 finance track. Nevertheless, coordination for the G7 is a process of group decision-making. Written position papers are circulated among all EU member states which allows the EU23, in particular the euro zone countries, to be substantively involved.

Given the G7's highly informal nature, it is very hard for an insider to know the actual agenda of G7 meetings. Especially the rise of the G20 made the G7 to turn back to its informal roots of the Library Group. Since 2010, G7 meetings have not always led to a communiqué and any public statements have been kept very short. Usually, the G7 meets in the margin of G20 and IMF meetings or via telephone conference and G7 gatherings often deal with a single topic (Interview #32).

Over the last couple of years, most G7 discussions can be classified under two main headings: global economy and monetary affairs<sup>42</sup>. On the global economy, the G7 participants exchange views, monitor international economic trends and discuss policy measures. Messages by the G7 reflect shared broad principles and are often meant to calm financial markets. In contrast to the G8 and G20, the G7 rarely makes clearly identifiable commitments. From 2010 onwards, the economic situation in the euro zone has often been on the agenda of the G7. The G7 finance ministers issued specific statements on economic developments in for example Ireland, Greece, Spain<sup>43</sup>. Typically, these statements do not contain more than a couple of sentences mainly to welcome the measures that have been taken.

Secondly, the involvement of central banks allows the G7 to coordinate monetary policy. On the one hand, the G7 may deem it appropriate to send a message of confidence to the markets, albeit often in vague terms. For example, the G7 central banks declared in September 2011 to “stand ready to provide liquidity to banks as required” (G7, 2011a). In October 2008, the G7 expressed that it was “concerned about the recent excessive volatility in the exchange rate of the yen”, by which it gave green light to Japan to intervene in its currency market (G7, 2008a; Guha, Minder, & Nakamoto, 2008). On the other hand, the G7 central banks may also decide to intervene jointly in foreign exchange markets. As a reaction to the outbreak of the financial crisis in Autumn 2008, the Federal Reserve, the ECB, the Bank of England and the central bank of Canada as well as Sweden and Switzerland coordinated a reduction of their respective interest rates (G7, 2008b; Dougherty & Andrews, 2008). Later, in response to exchange rate volatility of the yen after the earthquake in Japan in March 2011, the G7 central banks again decided for a concerted intervention in exchange markets (G7, 2011b).

To a very large extent, the agendas of the G7 and G20 overlap. Therefore, I refer to the G20 finance case as far as existing policies, interests and competences are concerned with regard to the global economy.

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<sup>42</sup> The G7 has also discussed other topics including financial market reform and trade, although mostly in 2008 and 2009 (according to the G7 communiqués)

<sup>43</sup> For a full list of G7 statements see <http://www.g8.utoronto.ca/finance/index.htm>

## 6.2. Hypothesis 1: Existing policies

### Hypothesis 1

If EU policy exists on a particular issue, there will be less coordination for that issue.

#### 6.2.1. G20 – Finance

##### *Global economy*

In general, the EU can only to a limited extent rely on policies or positions on the global economy that have been agreed much in advance because such a position obviously depends on the economic situation of the moment, both in the EU as in the world economy. Nevertheless, the EU can draw from parallel internal discussions on a diverse range of economic subjects.

With regard to the debate in the G20 on fiscal stimulus versus consolidation, the EU could initially not rely on a common crisis approach since the EU's response to the crisis came quite late and was not very well coordinated. The policy responses were rather chaotic and mostly on a national level because policy coordination was complicated by an uneven exposure of individual member states to shocks, the uneven capacity and resources to provide rescue and the temptation to free ride (Dabrowski, 2010: 42-43). Nevertheless, on 12 October 2008, general principles have been agreed to guide concerted action at the level of the Eurogroup (Council of the European Union, 2008a). At the end of October, the European Commission published a general action plan to support economic activity and announced that it would propose a detailed framework for recovery, what was to become the European Economic Recovery Plan (European Commission, 2008a). Because these efforts to forge a coordinated approach came quite late and remained rather vague, they have only been mentioned by a general reference in the agreed language for the first G20 summit in Washington on November 2008: "The unity of the Heads of State or Government of the European Union in coordinating responses to the financial crisis has been a key factor for responsiveness and effectiveness" (European Council, 2008a). After the G20 Washington Summit, in December 2008, the European Council has endorsed the European Economic Recovery Plan, a stimulus program proposed by the European Commission which "form[s] part of the EU's contribution to closer international macro-economic cooperation" (European Commission, 2008b: 17). This recovery plan coordinates the national budgetary stimulus packages and EU funding. In total, this amounts to around 200bn euro or 1,5% of the EU's GDP.

While the European Economic Recovery Plan was not yet fully implemented, the European Commission called in March 2009 for an "orderly reversal of macroeconomic stimuli" (European Commission, 2009a). Soon, a consensus emerged within the EU and at G20 level that credible exit strategies should be put in place (G20, 2009a; 2009b; European Council, 2009c). After the Pittsburgh Summit, the EU member states elaborated such a coordinated exit strategy and outlined a number of principles on which such exit should be based (Council of the European Union, 2009i). Subsequently, this approach served as a basis for further EU positions in G20. For example, the principles were included in the EU TOR to "serve as a basis for the discussion on principles at the G20 level" during the first half of 2010 (TOR, 2010b). This coordinated exit strategy also enabled Commission President Barroso to urge the G20 to "set out general guiding principles for exit from the crisis, as the EU has already done, taking into consideration different national or regional circumstances" (European Commission, 2010a). Later, when the attention tentatively shifted from austerity to growth ahead of the Los Cabos Summit, the EU was able to build upon similar discussions at the informal European Council meeting of May 2012 (European Council, 2012c).

For the discussions under the G20 Framework for Growth, it seems that the EU can rely on extensive existing policies and mechanisms. Indeed, the G20's MAP is rather similar to the EU's formal mechanisms for policy coordination under the Stability and Growth Pact (Interview #12). The Pact requires the member states to report their planned and actual budget deficits to the European Commission. If a country breaches the agreed-upon 3% of GDP deficit ceiling, the Council may recommend the member states to take corrective action or may even impose financial sanctions (Morris, Ongena, & Schuknecht, 2006). Since 2011, the Stability and Growth Pact has been strengthened by the 'six-pack', 'two-pack' and 'fiscal compact' to tighten EU surveillance of economic and fiscal policies (Buti & Carnot, 2012). For example, under the Macroeconomic Imbalance Procedure, the EU tries to identify potential risks early on, prevent the emergence of harmful macroeconomic imbalances and correct the imbalances that are already in place.

In the context of the Framework for Growth, the advanced state of EU policy coordination, in particular at the level of the euro area, provides the necessary data and analyses of the economic and budgetary situation in the EU and its member states. Hence the TOR refer to the Stability and Growth Pact as one of the pillars of the EU's contribution to the MAP, next to the Europe 2020 strategy and the strengthening of the economic governance of the EU and the euro area (TOR, 2010d). In addition, the EFC regularly prepares common understandings on the US and Japanese economies, which are used to prepare Gx meetings (Bini Smaghi, 2004: 238). However, all these intensive efforts to coordinate economic and fiscal policy are only partially useful. The EU cannot rely on existing positions when it comes to agreeing on a methodology and institutional set-up for the MAP or the indicators to assess global economic imbalances. Consequently, those issues are explicitly addressed in the TOR. The EU has for example asked that in the discussion on global imbalances, the euro area should be considered as a single entity (TOR, 2010d; 2010e).

As input for the G20 talks on the euro zone crisis, the EU may directly draw upon the iterative discussions in the EU. From 2010 onwards, the problems in the euro zone have been at the top of the agenda of almost every meeting of the European Council and the Eurogroup. In this sense, there is always an existing position available, even though this position may only 'exist' for some days or weeks. This actually renders additional EU coordination on the euro crisis ahead of G20 meetings unnecessary. Occasionally, the EU's measures to respond to the euro crisis were incorporated in the TOR.

### ***Financial regulation***

The EU could not rely on previously established EU positions and policies to participate in the G20 talks on financial regulation. As Woolcock (2012: 87) contends, the EU's domestic acquis in financial markets has lagged well behind that for goods, which has deprived EU financial diplomacy of a common internal policy base. Until 2008, financial regulation in the EU was driven by the effort to create a single market for financial services, particularly after the introduction of the euro. Under the overarching framework of the Financial Services Action Plan and the subsequent White Paper on Financial Services, several legislative pieces have been adopted to regulate – inter alia – bank capital requirements (CRD I in 2006), securities and derivatives markets (MiFID in 2004) and insurance companies (Solvency II, prepared before the crisis but adopted in 2009) (Quaglia, 2010; Véron, 2012: 3). However, this existing financial regulatory framework could not be used as the EU's negotiation position for the first G20 summits because of two reasons.

First, when the financial crisis hit the EU in September 2008, the financial regulatory acquis was not complete (Woolcock, 2012: 95). Legislative measures were in place to create a single financial services market, but implementation was not really satisfactory. Moreover, the various



legislative packages disguised underlying differences between member states on how to regulate financial markets. Many of the directives allowed for substantial flexibility for the member states that “left scope for a continued variation in national approaches and standards”, according to Woolcock (2013: 335). By the end of 2007, the EU finance ministers started recognizing the need to strengthen regulatory standards and cooperation in supervision. In October 2007 and May 2008, the ECOFIN Council produced Road Maps to identify several areas of financial supervision, stability and regulation which had to be analysed and addressed (Council of the European Union, 2008b). However, initial attempts to coordinate a regulatory response to the crisis were still hampered by disagreement among the member states on the degree of regulation needed (Crosbie, 2008) and where such coordination should take place (at the EU or international level) (Quaglia, Eastwood, & Holmes, 2009: 83).

Second, the framework that the EU had developed before the crisis tended towards an international consensus that was shaped by Anglo-American regulatory principles (Posner, 2010; Posner & Véron, 2010). Since the 2007-2009 crisis revealed the inadequacies of the Anglo-American – and thus also European – financial regulatory framework, the EU could not build upon this to formulate its position in the context of the post-crisis G20 summits. In addition, important areas of the financial sectors, such as hedge funds, were at that time not regulated at EU level (Lannoo, 2011: 4).

Although the EU lacked suitable existing policies for participating in the first G20 summit, an implicit EU-wide consensus about how to stop the financial turmoil emerged from the large number of meetings organised by the French and Czech rotating Council Presidency at the end of 2008 and the first half of 2009 (Interview #24). Nonetheless, at that stage, the EU did not yet focus on specific regulatory issues except those that had an immediate effect, but only agreed on a general statement favouring cooperation on supervision (Woolcock, 2012: 111). Interviewees stated that at such a general level, there was no disagreement among the member states, since all member states acknowledged the significance of this approach (Interview #41). Also the report of the High-Level Expert Group on EU Financial Supervision, chaired by Jacques de Larosière, has been helpful in developing common principles and priorities. The de Larosière report was published in February 2009 and laid the basis for further financial market reforms in the EU, especially on financial supervision (de Larosière, 2009; Martínez-Pardo del Valle & Zapata Cirugeda, 2010: 35). According to the Dutch, this report enabled the EU to play a leading role in the reform of the international financial system (Balkenende & Bos, 2009).

Soon after the first G20 summit, the EU started implementing its response to the financial crisis. By the end of 2012, the EU had legislation in place or was advancing legislation to regulate credit rating agencies (CRA I, II, III), hedge funds (AIFMD), over-the-counter derivatives (EMIR), bank capital (CRD II, III, IV) and remuneration policies (AIFMD, CRD III & IV). In addition, the EU’s supervisory framework has been substantially reformed with the creation of the European Systemic Risk Board and three European Supervisory Authorities (Lannoo, 2013). These policy initiatives were taken in response to the G20’s commitment to “regulate all financial markets, products and institutions” (G20, 2008b). For the subsequent G20 meetings, the EU relied on these internal legislative efforts. However, the EU did not only use its newly developed financial regulatory and supervisory framework as a basis for further substantive G20 policy discussions, but especially to raise and maintain the pressure on the other G20 countries to deliver on the commitments they have made in the G20.

### ***Tax havens***

According to the European Commission, “[t]he EU has a long-standing and well-established policy on good governance in tax matters” (European Commission, 2013a). The EU system is built upon the principle of automatic exchange of information. In this regard, the member states

adopted the Savings Taxation Directive in 2003 which set up an automatic exchange of information mechanism regarding income from savings between EU member states, except for Belgium, Austria and Luxembourg who were allowed to apply a transitional system. On direct tax as well, the Mutual Assistance Directive<sup>44</sup> provides for information exchange between tax authorities. Finally, as a result of a directive on recovery of tax claims of May 2008, one member state may request assistance from another in the recovery of claims relating to taxes, duties and levies (European Commission, 2009b). In response to the 2008 Liechtenstein tax affair, the ECOFIN Council underlined the importance of implementing the principles of good governance in tax matters, namely transparency, exchange of information and fair tax competition (Council of the European Union, 2008c). At that time, the objective was still not to target tax havens per se, but to reach an agreement with as many third countries as possible on common principles of cooperation and transparency (European Commission, 2009b). However by December 2008, the EU finance ministers informed the European Council that it would continue to fight against tax havens (Council of the European Union, 2008d). Nevertheless, the idea to publish a list of tax havens has not been endorsed by the Council. In contrast, the European Commission explicitly asked to draw up a list of ‘uncooperative jurisdictions’ or tax havens ahead of the G20 London Summit (European Commission, 2009a). Hence, it is not surprising that the Commission allowed for the publication of the OECD tax haven list which included three EU23 countries. Since the G20 London Summit, the issue of non-cooperative jurisdictions has been a recurrent theme in EU coordination for the G20 (e.g. TOR, 2010c).

### ***IMF reform***

As far as IMF reform is concerned, the EU had adopted common positions in the past, but these could not be used for the upcoming IMF reform discussions in 2009-2010. For example, for the Fund’s quota and voice reforms of April 2008, the EU agreed on a common position (Vucheva, 2008). Among other things, the EU member states were ready to accept a lower voting share to give a bigger say to emerging economies. However, the EU could not rely on this existing position for the next quota and governance reform, even though these negotiations started only one year later under the aegis of the G20. This is because the new reform round included new issues and a new package deal had to be negotiated. Furthermore, the power relations – and the underlying economic data – among the key members had changed, even over this relatively short period of time. This also altered the negotiation position of the EU. Consequently, the EU member states had to redefine their negotiating position as they could no longer ignore certain demands from other IMF shareholders.

To conclude, the EU could only to a limited extent rely on existing policies and positions to enter financial and economic G20 discussions because there was no policy available (IMF reform), the existing policies were outdated (financial regulation) or EU policies were developed parallel to the G20 process (euro crisis). The EU could only draw from existing legislation or previous Council conclusions for the debate on fiscal consolidation or stimulus and to a certain extent for tax matters. This did, however, not refrain the EU from talking these issues through in advance. These findings tentatively confirm our hypothesis that the EU is more likely to coordinate in the absence of existing EU policies and positions. An EU23 official confirms that the argument that there is no need for EU coordination because of existing policies is less applicable to finance matters since these issues are rapidly evolving (Interview #12).

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<sup>44</sup> Adopted in 1977, amended in 2004.

### 6.2.2. G20 – Development

For the G20 DWG, the European Commission's main argument for limiting EU coordination to information sharing is that it already acts according to previously agreed positions and standard policies (Interview #19, Interview #59 and Interview #61). This is also explicitly stated at the end of each G20 info note for CODEV (Council of the EU, 2013, Interview #44). One survey respondent confirms that "the EU's extensive collaboration on development policy means that the EU members of the G20 start from very common positions, although there is no coordination of positions". Moreover, an EU23 official argues that the European Commission has always the right to talk about those existing policies with other countries (Interview #17).

Indeed, the Commission disposes of many documents and policies both at the EU and international level that it can use to formulate its position in the G20. On top of the numerous Council conclusions on various subjects, there are a couple of key documents outlining the EU's development policy: the European Consensus on Development, the Financing for Development accountability reports, the Policy Coherence for Development Work Programme 2010-2013 and the more recent Agenda for Change (European Union, 2006; European Commission, 2010b; European Commission, 2011a). These documents have a broad scope and together they deal with almost any possible development issue (Interview #17). The Agenda for Change even signals a shift in EU development policy towards a stronger focus on growth with a main emphasis on finding new ways to engage with private sector money (Gavas, Herbert, & Maxwell, 2011). This is also the overarching direction of the G20 development agenda since the focus on economic growth and private sector participation represent two of the six core principles that underpin the Seoul Development Consensus.

Given the wealth of existing EU policies and positions on development, the EU usually reaffirms existing commitments in the G20 (Interview #59). The classical example is trade. Whereas trade discussions in the G20 DWG aim to expand duty-free-quota-free (DFQF) access for least developed countries (LDCs), the EU already provides 100% DFQF access to exports from LDCs under the 'Everything But Arms' trade initiative. Furthermore, the EU has considerable experience with regard to regional integration in Africa in order to increase intra-regional trade. Given its own internal market policies, the EU can rely on extensive knowledge on non-tariff barriers, rules of origin and harmonizing regulatory policies. Besides, regional integration, another topic under the trade pillar, is also put forward as a key principle in the EU's economic partnership agreements with African, Caribbean and Pacific countries.

For most other pillars, an EU policy or a common EU message has equally been previously agreed upon. In the pillar on private investment and job creation, the agenda of the European Commission is to push for equal standards on responsible investment for all, based on existing OECD guidelines and Corporate Social Responsibility agreements in the context of the ILO.<sup>45</sup> Similarly for the work in the domestic resource mobilization pillar, the European Commission may use the EU positions that have been agreed in the context of the international conferences on Financing for Development in Monterrey, 2002 and Doha, 2008 (Council of the European Union, 2001; 2008e). Under the resilient growth pillar, the G20 attempts to gather support for the implementation or expansion of national social protection floors, but this issue is discussed in the next section. Another important item in this pillar is the issue of migrant remittances. The G20 has agreed to reduce the average cost of transferring remittances from 10% to 5% by 2014. Intra-EU remittances are legally regulated by the Payment Services Directive, but there is no EU-wide approach for extra-EU transfers.<sup>46</sup> Nonetheless, an EU position on this matter has been formulated in 2005 at a General Affairs and External Relations Council meeting and reaffirmed

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<sup>45</sup> Minutes from meeting between CSO's and staff from the European Commission on 18 February 2011.

<sup>46</sup> However, 14 member states are already voluntarily applying all or part of the requirements to some extra-EU transfers

ahead of the Doha Financing for Development follow-up conference of 2008 (Council of the European Union, 2005; 2008e). The EU can also rely on experience with a number of international initiatives on remittances in which EU institutions and member states are (indirectly) involved such as the G8 Global Remittances Working Group and the General Principles for International Remittance Services of the World Bank and the Bank for International Settlements.

### **6.2.3. Other G20 cases**

On labour and employment, the EU representatives in the G20 can easily start from existing initiatives and practices (Interview #14). On social protection floors, relevant EU positions have been agreed in the contexts of the ILO and the UN ECOSOC meetings (EU Presidency, 2010). In these forums, the EU promotes the development of a social protection floor, defined according to the circumstances of each individual country. Moreover, while the Commission asks the input of the member states ahead of the G20 labour ministers meetings, it also considers the G20 meetings as “a good opportunity for the EU to bring to the G20 its experiences and agreed policies in dealing with these issues”, for example its EU 2020 strategy and its flagship initiatives: "Agenda for new skills and jobs", "European Platform against poverty and social exclusion" and "Youth on the move" as well as the "Youth Opportunities Initiative" (Council of the European Union, 2011d; 2012a). Finally, as far as the G20 Task Force on Employment are concerned, the input of the Commission is based on previously agreed policies (Interview #62).

In the Action Plan on Food Price Volatility, the G20 takes very few substantive decisions and contains only vague references to the most difficult issues facing agricultural producers (Blas, 2011). Instead, the action plan mainly sets priorities and promotes international cooperation in agricultural research and development. On such a general level, the overall EU policy orientation towards agricultural development is captured in several policy documents, and mainly in the ‘European Consensus on Development’ (European Union, 2006). These documents reiterate that agriculture and rural development are crucial for poverty reduction and growth. In addition, the EU monitors commodity prices in the EU and at world level based on which it can contribute to AMIS, the Agricultural Market Information System (e.g. European Commission, 2010c). However, existing EU positions are less relevant for the launch of concrete initiatives such as AgResults and IRIWI. Finally regarding biofuels, the EU representatives in the G20 may act according to the targets set out by the European Council in 2007 and the ensuing legislative framework which is now under revision (European Council, 2007a; European Union, 2009; European Commission, 2012a).

With regard to trade, there is first a broad common policy base for all WTO-related matters. At the general level, the EU has frequently stated that it “will continue to strive for a comprehensive, ambitious and balanced conclusion of the Doha Round” (European Council, 2008b). So far this general statement suffices since the G20 has not (yet) entered into the details of the DDA (for which the EU then could fall back on its regular negotiation mandate for the DDA). When the G20 develops a message to the biannual WTO ministerial conferences, the EU can rely on the regular work in the EU’s Trade Policy Committee (Interview #13).

Second, although the EU has long been denounced as a protectionist actor, especially in agriculture, over the past fifteen years it has embraced a free trade agenda (De Ville & Orbie, 2011). Consequently, one would expect that the EU assumed a strong stance against protectionism. Indeed by early 2008, President Barroso warned against increasing protectionism and in October 2008, the Commission started monitoring potentially trade restrictive measures planned or implemented by the EU’s key trading partners (European Commission, 2012b). However, the EU member states did not explicitly support the Commission’s anti-protectionist call. In October 2008, the EU finance ministers still merely agreed “to take into consideration

potential cross-border effects of national decisions” (Council of the European Union, 2008b). Hence, at the time of the first G20 leaders’ summit, there was no explicit ready-to-use EU position against protectionism. In the EU’s agreed language for the 2008 G20 summit, the EU member states only called for “the promotion of free trade through the rapid conclusion of the Doha Round” (European Council, 2008a). Nevertheless, the French rotating EU Council Presidency did mention “the necessity to fight protectionism” in a preparatory note on the international financial architecture ahead of the Washington Summit (Council of the European Union, 2008f). This peculiarity was probably due to internal tensions. France was accused by other member states for resorting to protectionism (Goldirova, 2008; EurActiv, 2009a). The Czech Republic even called for an extraordinary European Council meeting to discuss the risk of a protectionist trend taking hold across the Union (EurActiv, 2009b). It is illustrative that it took until the preparation of the G20 London Summit of April 2009 before all EU member states together explicitly rejected all forms of protectionist measures (European Council, 2009a).

#### **6.2.4. G8 – Development**

Many of the topics discussed in the G8 also figure prominently on the EU agenda (Nasra et al., 2009). Especially in the field of development, the EU has elaborated policies which feed its positions in the G8 (Interview #25). A Commission official has argued that in the G8, the European Commission does not pursue any new ideas, but brings policy lines to the table which have been supported by the Council. A first example is its commitment to the MDGs. All EU member states signed up to the MDGs and the EU has linked its development policy objectives to the MDGs (Holland, 2008: 348). Consequently, the G8 discussions from 2008 to 2010 to accelerate progress on the health-related MDGs did not require additional internal EU coordination in advance. For the Muskoka Initiative on Maternal, Newborn and Child Health, the European Commission pledged € 50 million in EU funding for the years 2011-13. But no new commitments were made since the EU could fall back on previously agreed EU budgets of the European Development Fund and the ‘Investing in People’ programme covered by the Development Cooperation Instrument (Interview #57). The money will be invested through the Global Fund against AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation as well as the European MDG Initiative (European Parliament, 2011b).

With regard to food security, there was no need to coordinate an EU position explicitly for the G8 either. Before the 2008 Hokkaido Toyako Summit, this issue has been extensively discussed during Spring and at the preceding European Council meeting on 19 and 20 June 2008 (European Council, 2008b). The European Council declared that it would promote “a more coordinated and longer-term international response to the current food crisis, in particular in the UN, in international financial institutions and in the context of the G8”. Ahead of the summit, the European Commission also announced its intention to propose a new €1 billion fund to stimulate agricultural development and fight hunger (Barroso, 2008). As announced and in line with the G8 commitment to take all possible measures to ensure food security (G8, 2008a), the €1 billion Food Facility had been launched by the end of 2008. This financing instrument could in turn serve as a basis for discussions on food security under the 2009 G8 presidency. The EU’s contribution to the L’Aquila Food Security Initiative was indeed financed through the Food Facility (G8, 2010). Hence, no additional coordination was needed for the EU’s pledge at the L’Aquila Summit. For the G8 commitment to remove export restrictions on humanitarian food purchases, the EU has not imposed any restrictions on food aid (Interview #38). Moreover, a Commission Regulation authorizes the member states to export agricultural products without the requirement of an export license only when it is meant for free distribution for humanitarian aid purposes (European Union, 2008).

More generally, other financial commitments by the EU in the G8, including pledges to increase Official Development Assistance, do not raise new money and come from the Union's current budget (Interview #58 and Interview #59). For example, the Commission's contribution to the G8 Deauville Partnership of 2011 in support of the Arab Spring is included in the budget of the European Neighbourhood Policy (European Council, 2011c).

### **6.2.5. G8 – Energy/climate**

Throughout the history of international climate policy, the EU has been a leading actor in the combat on climate change, especially by regularly proposing the most stringent climate protection measures and commitments (Oberthür & Pallemarts, 2010: 53). Many G8 decisions on climate change have long been advocated by the EU, most notably the endorsement of the 2°C target by the G8 in 2009. Already in 1996, the EU pronounced that policies to mitigate anthropogenic climate change should restrict the global mean temperature rise to 2°C above preindustrial temperature (Randalls, 2010: 598). This target continuously guided EU climate policy since all policy measures have been developed to achieve this goal (Oberthür & Pallemarts, 2010: 33). For example, in 2007, the 27 EU environment ministers stated that a reduction of global emissions of up to 50% by 2050 compared to 1990 was required to meet the 2°C objective (Council of the European Union, 2007). At the subsequent European Council meeting, the EU emphasised that developed countries should collectively reduce their emissions by 60% to 80% by 2050 compared to 1990 (European Council, 2007a). Both commitments were picked up by the G8 leaders respectively in 2008 and 2009. While the G8 failed to set medium-term goals to meet the targets, the EU agreed in 2007 on three key objectives for 2020: reduce 20% of greenhouse gas emissions from 1990 levels, increase energy efficiency to save 20% of EU energy consumption and raise the share of renewable energy in the total energy consumption in the EU to 20% (European Council, 2007a). On top of the broad common policy base, the EU representatives in the G8 can also draw upon existing EU positions for other international forums such as climate change negotiations under the UNFCCC framework (Interview #29).

IPEEC and measures on CCS also represent the implementation of an agreed EU position. Early 2007, the EU environment ministers committed “to expanding [their] strategic partnerships and bilateral activities with third countries, in particular in relation to energy efficiency and renewable energy, as well as to emerging technologies, such as carbon capture” (Council of the European Union, 2007). The idea of an international scheme for international cooperation on energy efficiency has originally been put forward by the European Commission as part of its 2006 policy framework, the Energy Efficiency Action Plan (European Commission, 2006). The EU lobbied for this proposal to gain traction in the United Nations, the Gleneagles Dialogue<sup>47</sup> as well as under the German G8 Presidency in 2007. Nevertheless, the idea of an another international agreement was met with reluctance by the US and large emerging economies. Eventually, with the support of Japan, the EU successfully tabled this proposal at the G8 summit in 2008, where it resulted in the creation of IPEEC. However, IPEEC represented a much looser form of cooperation and thus a significant shift away from the original idea to establish a binding international agreement that would immediately be open to worldwide membership (Nasra et al., 2009: 8; Lesage, Van de Graaf, & Westphal, 2010: 169). Although the EU23 were briefed in the Council by the Commission throughout the process, they showed little interest in the issue (Interview #47).

Finally, since 1998, the European Commission has been funding technology research for carbon capture and storage (CCS) through successive Framework Programmes. By 2005, a working group on CCS had been established to explore the needs and obstacles for a policy and

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<sup>47</sup> A group of 19 developed and developing countries plus the EU convened since the 2005 UK G8 Presidency

regulatory framework on CCS. Subsequently in March 2007, the European Council endorsed a Communication by the European Commission that set out the EU approach to CCS (European Council, 2007a). Two major tasks have been identified: (i) to develop an enabling legal framework and economic incentives for CCS within EU and (ii) to encourage a network of demonstration plants across Europe and in key third countries. These goals were uploaded to the G8 in 2008. Moreover, already in January 2008, the European Commission initiated a legislative process to enable the safe operation of CCS in Europe and to remove unintended barriers in existing legislation to CCS. Concluded in 2009, the CCS Directive 2009/31/EC represented the world's first example of dedicated CCS legislation. (Chiavari, 2010)

#### **6.2.6. G7 – Finance**

As illustrated above, the EU can only to a limited extent rely on policies or positions on the global economy that have been agreed much in advance as such a position depends on the economic situation of the moment. But since the economy has always been a major topic on the EU agenda, the EU can draw from internal discussions on a diverse range of economic subjects. Moreover, when the G7 meets ahead of G20 gatherings, the EU representatives can also build their interventions on agreed positions for the G20.

Similarly for monetary issues, EU representatives, in particular ECB officials, cannot rely on previously agreed policy positions but need to formulate up-to-date positions depending on the current economic situation.

#### **6.2.7. Concluding remarks**

Existing EU policies and positions seem to play an important role in explaining the level of internal EU coordination for the Gx forums. First, coordination appears to correlate with the availability of EU positions. In the areas of development, energy/climate, trade and labour & employment, the EU representatives can rely on a broad common policy base. Coordination on these issues tends not to exceed the level of consultation. On the contrary, intensive EU coordination for financial and economic affairs in the G20 and G7 goes together with relatively limited EU positions and policies. Second, officials from the EU4, the European Commission as well as the EU23 have often referred to the wide array of agreed policies as an explanation for the level of coordination. Since the EU can rely on previously agreed policies, it is said that there is no need for additional coordination.

However, a more precise evaluation of the explanatory value of the existing policies variable reveals a slightly nuanced picture. On the one hand, this variable only seems to explain why EU coordination is limited to information-sharing or consultation. It has been extensively illustrated that when the EU representative can rely on previously agreed policies, there is no need to engage in a group decision-making process. Hence, the availability of EU policy seems to be sufficient to keep coordination at the level of information-sharing or consultation. Nevertheless, the existence of a common EU policy does not exclude the option of group decision-making. Especially when vital interests are at stake as for example in the tax haven dossier, member states may wish to explicitly reaffirm certain messages or secure a guarantee that their interests will be taken into account.

On the other hand, the reverse statement that the absence of existing policies in its turn leads to higher degrees of coordination does not seem to hold very well. The examined cases do not provide convincing evidence that a lack of previously agreed policies is a decisive factor for organising EU coordination, and group decision-making in particular. First, the study contained only a very few policy dossiers in which the EU could not rely on an existing position, such as financial regulation and IMF reform. Future research should look for additional cases in which the EU cannot rely on agreed policies. Second, these limited number of cases also threatened

vital interests of several EU23 countries, were additionally characterized by a large degree of G20 relevance and required strong EU influence in the G20. During the interviews, these aspects seemed to be more important to account for EU coordination than the lack of agreed policies. I have no indications that a group decision-making process had been established especially because no political *acquis* existed for an issue. In other words, a mere absence of EU policies does not necessarily lead to intensive EU coordination. After all, the fact that no common EU position exists has often a particular reason, mostly because the member states simply could not agree. Without other incentives (e.g. strong interests at stake), it is unlikely that deep divergences between member states will be settled just for the sake of an upcoming Gx meeting.

While a low level of coordination is often legitimized by the extensive possibilities to rely on existing policies, there are two important pitfalls to this argument. First, confusion may arise between what is formally endorsed by the member states on the one hand and Communications and Recommendations by the European Commission on the other. A Communication is a policy document with no mandatory authority and sets out the Commission's own thinking on a topical issue. A recommendation, in turn, enables the Commission to establish non-binding rules for the member states. Consequently, both instruments do not represent a joint position supported by all EU member states. It is thus possible that on a certain issue or theme only a Commission Communication exists, while there is no usable Council position at hand. This may create the illusion to policy makers and observers that a common EU position is available and that EU coordination is unnecessary. In this study, however, there are no examples found where only a Commission Communication or Recommendation exists.

But more importantly, this aspect also plays at another level. In some policy areas, both a Council decision and a Commission Communication exists. This is particularly the case for development. The Agenda for Change is a Communication published by the European Commission in October 2011 outlining the Commission's development policy framework (European Commission, 2011a). The member states adopted a political statement on the Commission's document nearly six months later (Council of the European Union, 2012f). The member states "welcomed", rather than endorsed this Communication and expressed their priorities for development cooperation at the European level. While the Council mostly supports the Commission's ideas, both policy frameworks do not fully overlap. In some areas, the member states go further than the Commission, while in others they limit ambitions (Keijzer, 2012). For EU representatives in the Gx, especially the European Commission, this may not only create confusion, but also has strategic implications. It can be asked whether the European Commission follows its own Agenda for Change or whether it acts in line with the agreed position of the member states. With regard to the G20 DWG, where only the European Commission is represented, this boils down to the question whether the Commission represents itself or the EU, including all its member states. Of course, the European Commission is legally allowed to pursue its own development policy, next to the member states (see *infra*). But this may also indicate that the Commission refrains from coordinating with the member states and asking them to provide substantive input because the member states' views diverge from the Commission's position. A group decision-making coordination process for the G20 DWG may result in EU Guidelines or agreed language which would limit the Commission's room of manoeuvre in the G20 and against which the member states could hold the Commission accountable. Finally, knowing this also raises the assumption that the Commission also assertively puts forward its own development policy lines in the G20, but this seems not to be the case.

A second pitfall entails the challenge posed when new issues unexpectedly pop up at Gx meetings. As one survey participant has put it: "we need to find a way of dealing with issues that come up during G-meetings and would be binding on all countries, even those who are not present at the meeting". Issues that could not have been coordinated in advance have been described as "very dangerous" by an EU23 interviewee (Interview #27). Usually, existing policies



and positions guide the interventions by EU representatives on unexpected issues. But while the EU coordinates – to a greater or lesser extent – for nearly all topics on the G20’s agenda, there is still the possibility that the G20 deals with subjects that have not been prepared in advance. Two examples illustrate how the EU reacts in such situations. First, at the G20 Pittsburgh Summit, the world leaders specified that at least five 5% of the IMF quota should be shifted from over-represented countries to under-represented emerging economies. The desire by some G20 members to agree on a specific percentage had not been anticipated by the European G20 participants and had thus not been coordinated in advance. The deal was made between the US and the EU4. The EU4 also involved the Swedish rotating Council Presidency, but since no clear EU position was available, “the rotating presidency could only watch” (Interview #27). Second, shortly before the G20 Cannes Summit in 2011, the Greek Prime Minister announced that it would organise a referendum on the conditions of an EU bailout deal thereby causing panic among policy makers and in the financial markets (Kyriakidou & Papadimas, 2011). For the G20 leaders as well, the Greek move was a major point of concern. On the side-lines of the summit, several emergency meetings have been organised in different configurations of the leaders of the euro countries France, Germany, Italy and Spain, the Presidents of the European Commission and the European Council , the European Commission for economic affairs, the IMF managing director and even US President Obama. In addition, the president of the Eurogroup and the Greek Prime Minister himself have also been summoned to Cannes (Kyriakidou & Papadimas, 2011; Taylor & McBride, 2011; Taylor, 2011). Under severe pressure, the Greek Prime Minister eventually cancelled the idea of a referendum. These ‘mini-Euro summit’ forged a common European response to the Greek referendum crisis, indirectly involving all EU member states. However, such high-level coordination meetings (together with the Eurogroup president) are not always feasible.

### 6.3. Hypothesis 2: Interests

#### Hypothesis 2

If a particular issue touches upon the national interests of (some) EU23 countries, there will be more coordination for that issue.

#### 6.3.1. G20 – Finance

In general, most financial and economic matters on the G20 agenda directly touch upon interests of many, if not all EU23 countries. Often, the same countries are concerned, in particular Belgium, the Netherlands and Sweden. This could (at least partially) explain the active role of these countries in EU coordination for the G20 finance track.

#### *Global economy*

At the height of the global financial crisis, an internationally coordinated crisis response was in every EU member state’s interest. By March 2009, the global economy had entered the deepest and most widespread recession since World War II. Economic growth in the EU was expected to contract by 4% in 2009 and unemployment rates hit a post-war record (European Commission, 2009c). Central and Eastern European Countries were particularly hard hit by the crisis as a result of their large degree of openness and high share of manufactured products in their export structure (Gardo & Martin, 2010: 22). And given that many European banks had invested hundreds of billions of dollars in Central and Eastern European economies, a possible collapse of the European periphery posed an additional existential threat to the EU’s banking sector (Gros, 2009: 2). Hence, all EU23 countries had a key interest in averting the global economic downturn.

Following from substantial stimulus measures and automatic economic stabilizers, many EU member states soon suffered from sharp fiscal contractions. In Autumn 2009, the European Commission's economic forecast saw government deficit in the EU rising from 2,3% in 2008 to 7,5% in 2010 (European Commission, 2009d: 20). As the European public debt crisis worsened severely from mid-2010, the state of European public finances represented a vital concern for all EU member states. Although the potential direct impact of the G20 on deficit reduction in the EU is very modest, EU leaders could use the G20's political backing to take painful decisions on the path to fiscal consolidation. Nevertheless, a strong G20 declaration in support of fiscal consolidation was not self-evident since other G20 members including the US and India were still advocating to maintain public fiscal support (Singh, 2010; EurActiv 2010).

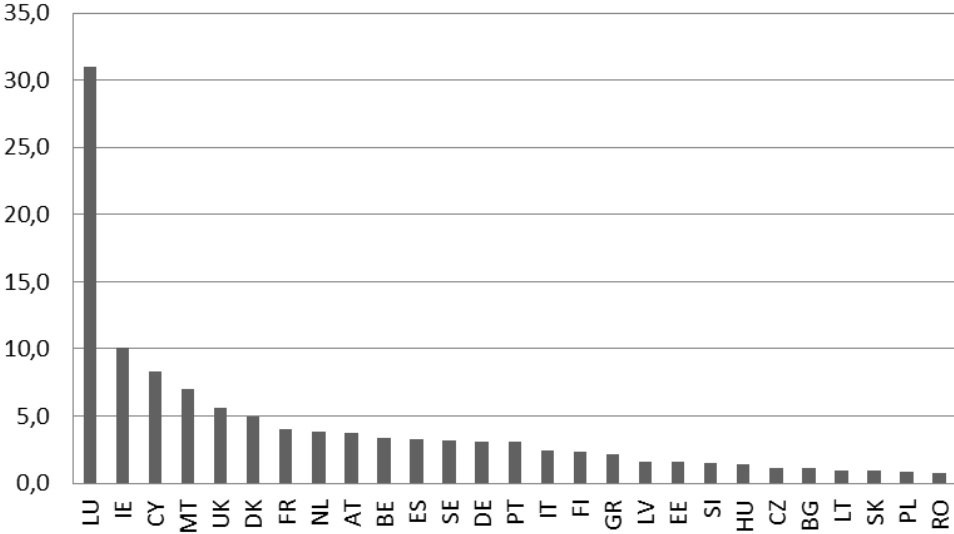
While the fiscal stimulus/consolidation debate deals with the direct recovery from the recession, the Framework for Growth and the related MAP focus on the medium to long-term. In this process of macro-economic policy coordination, the interests of the EU23 are less direct and acute. Of course, European countries share a common interest in multilateral surveillance, as they are affected by developments in other areas of the world, be it the US, Japan or emerging market countries (Bini Smaghi, 2004: 238). As Frenkel, Goldstein and Masson (1990: 10) argue, "economic policy actions, particularly those of larger countries, create quantitatively significant spillover effects or externalities for other countries". In this context, it is illustrative that some EU member states welcomed that the G20 asked Germany to stimulate its domestic demand (Interview #32). After all, any changes in Germany's fiscal and economic policies are likely to have a profound impact the European economic situation. Nonetheless, compared to other financial and economic matters on the G20 agenda, the Framework for Growth is less important for the EU23 since no EU23 country is directly addressed. Internal EU affairs are only analysed in the reports of the IMF which feed the MAP. Sometimes, this leads to rather specific recommendations by the Fund's staff as for example "the ECB should continue providing ample liquidity" or "the EU countries should do more to enact measures to mobilize labour markets, while commitments under the Euro Plus Pact are not sufficiently ambitious, concrete or binding" (IMF, 2012). However, these specific recommendations are not reflected in the G20 Action Plans that result from this exercise (G20, 2011d, 2012c). In G20 documents, the EU and euro area are dealt with on an aggregate level. Any commitments concerning the EU are either on behalf of one or more EU4 countries or represent decisions that have already been taken in the EU or Eurogroup. Furthermore, as part of the MAP, seven systemic G20 members were identified as having substantial imbalances that warranted more in-depth analysis. Next to China, India, Japan and the US, three EU countries are included: France, Germany and the UK. So, the EU or euro area has not been picked although the EU asked that the euro area should also move to the second stage of the G20 exercise if one or several G20 euro area members were to be selected for this second stage (TOR, 2010b).

Finally, it is clear that the euro crisis was a crucial concern of every EU member state. At a certain point, the survival of the euro zone and even the EU was at stake and possible scenarios of a euro zone breakup were seriously studied across the world (The Economist, 2011, Binham & Alloway, 2011). Chancellor Angela Merkel went as far as saying that the crisis of the euro was nothing less than an existential threat for Germany and for Europe (Majone, 2012: 2). All EU23 countries, both euro and non-euro, had a key interest in every matter related to the euro crisis, whether it be financial support to ailing euro countries, the governance of the euro zone or the role of the ECB. Hence, any discussion in the G20 on the euro zone's troubles could directly touch upon the interests of the (euro-)EU23. The G20 might for instance influence internal EU debates by favouring one or another viewpoint. Research has shown that (small) EU member states may influence EU policy processes by referring to an external authority (such as the G20) to make validity claims (Ulbert & Risse, 2005; Nasra & Debaere, 2012). Alternatively, the G20

could trigger a breakthrough in certain EU dossiers by increasing the pressure on the EU or (some of) its member states.

**Financial regulation**

Generally for financial regulatory issues, the stakes are high as the financial sector is considered as a fundamental part of the national economy with repercussions on all the other economic sectors (Zysman in Quaglia, 2010: 28). In particular, a number of EU23 states have strong interests in G20 talks on financial regulation as they have significant financial sector and are important players in the international financial system.



**Graph 9. Monetary financial institutions' assets to GDP ratio in the EU as of December 2009 (excluding central bank assets). Source: own calculations based on ECB data.**

Graph 9 shows the assets-to-GDP ratio, a commonly used indicator for the size of a country's banking sector (Dermine & Schoenmaker, 2010), for the 27 EU member states in 2009. In ten non-G20 EU member states, the banking sector was at least three times the size of their economies. Especially Luxembourg, Ireland and Cyprus had (and still have) a huge banking sector of respectively 31, 10.1 and 8.3 times larger than their GDP. To compare, in 2010, total bank assets in the EU were 349% of GDP, while only 78% in the US<sup>48</sup> and 174% in Japan (EBF, 2011: 17). Furthermore, several small EU countries are home of the world's largest banks. The world's 100 biggest banks are headquartered in 26 different countries. Thirteen of them are located in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands or Sweden (Barth & Prabha, 2012). Unsurprisingly, three 'EU23 banks' figure on the FSB's list of 29 systemically important financial institutions.<sup>49</sup> Since the financial crisis, these so-called SIFIs have also been targeted by the G20 to become subject of greater regulatory scrutiny (FSB, 2011).

Hence, financial regulation is certainly in the interest of these EU23 countries. On the one hand, countries with a large banking sector and/or large banks are exposed to severe financial distress. These countries may face high costs in case of a public bailout. Consequently, enhanced financial regulation and supervision including increased bank capital requirements could reduce

<sup>48</sup> Consider that in the US a large proportion (around 25-35% of US GDP) of financing takes place through securities markets rather than through bank lending (PWC, 2011: 12).

<sup>49</sup> Dexia , ING and Nordea

these risks and the bailout costs involved. On the other hand, too much regulation can result in a flight of capital and jobs to other global financial centres. A reduction in financial services activity could entail a significant loss of output in advanced economies, in particular when highly skilled services are involved (Dermine & Schoenmaker, 2010: 4).

In addition, the participation of Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Sweden in the Basel Committee for Banking Supervision (BCBS)<sup>50</sup> illustrates their important role in the global banking system. The former and current chair of the BCBS even come from the Netherlands (Nout Wellink) and Sweden (Stefan Ingves). As members of the BCBS, Belgium, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Sweden are directly exposed to any G20 statement in the area of banking regulation and supervision. The G20 has the potential to influence the debates in the BCBS and therefore touches upon the interests of these EU23 countries.

Finally, some EU member states have adopted policies that are more advanced than those of other countries. These frontrunners have a vital interest in uploading their policies to the EU and the G20 to create a level playing field. One example is remuneration policy in which the Netherlands and Sweden played a very active role. Sweden prohibited the bonus system in state-owned firms even before the FSB issued its principles on sound compensation practices and already in 2004, the Netherlands aimed to limit the variable pay to 50% of total remuneration. Yet, this was too controversial at the time and the proposal was omitted in the final 2004 Dutch Banking Code (Ferrarini, 2005). In its 2009 Banking Code, the Netherlands provides a restriction of variable compensation to one year's salary (Berkowitz, 2009). Having one of the strictest remuneration schemes, the Dutch Finance Minister suggested that the Dutch Banking Code could serve as a model not only for the EU but also for G20 action (AFP, 2009; Balkenende, Bos, Verhagen, & Timmermans, 2009).

### ***Tax havens***

Taxation policies and in particular banking secrecy are policy issues that represent strong national interests for Luxembourg and Austria. Both countries possess an extensive financial sector in which banking secrecy forms a cornerstone. Austria and Luxembourg consider the EU as an important platform to defend their banking policies. The EU's internal market rules directly affect their banking sector. Moreover, the EU constitutes the only platform through which they may, even if it remains indirect, voice their concerns in the G20 regarding these dossiers (Interview #20). In this light, they considered it imperative to agree on a common EU position for the G20 summit in London, where the issue topped the agenda.

### ***IMF reform***

Most EU member states, both small and large, were overrepresented in the IMF and realized that concessions in terms of quota shares were unavoidable. Yet, some EU23 member states, in particular Belgium and the Netherlands, had a particular interest. Leading their respective constituencies, they had a seat in the Fund's Executive Board, representing the fourth and seventh biggest shares of quotas in the IMF (Nasra & Debaere, 2012). Also Sweden would likely be among the first victims of a reform of the size or the composition of the Executive Board (Debaere, 2010: 152). Sweden possesses the largest voting share in its Nordic-Baltic constituency and therefore frequently represents this constituency in the Fund's EB. To safeguard its interests, the Swedish Presidency aimed to develop "a more formalized, [...] well-structured and efficient EU coordination process" for the G20 (EU Presidency, 2009). Together with Switzerland, Belgium, the Netherlands and Sweden meet as the so-called G4. The G4 is an informal network originally set up to serve as a counterbalance to the G7 and used for information sharing and discussion on IMF reform issues (Interview #7). The G4 feared that the issue of European

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<sup>50</sup> A global standard-setting body best known for its international standards on capital adequacy, the Basel accords.

consolidation would be agreed on within the G20, in which they are not or only indirectly represented. Hence, EU coordination could “increase the predictability and the chances of G4 interests being taken into account” by the EU4 and the other G20 members (Swedish position paper, 2010).

### **6.3.2. G20 – Development**

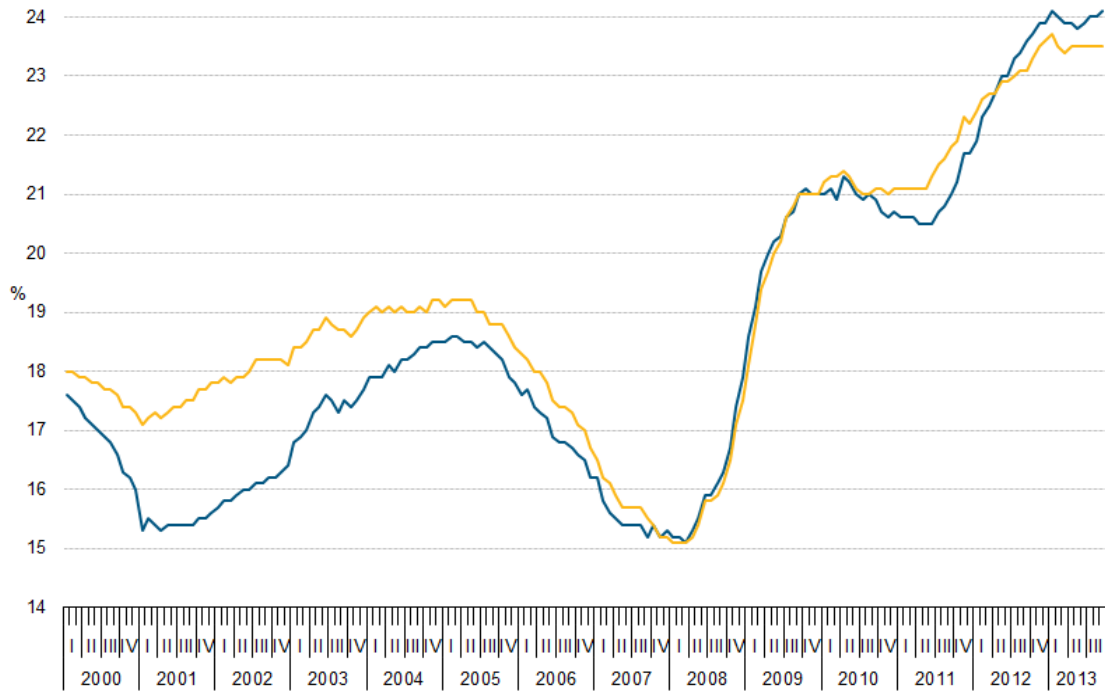
For the EU member states and the EU23 in particular, the stakes in the G20 development agenda are much lower than in the above-mentioned financial and economic affairs. According to a European Commission official, many topics are uncontroversial, so there is no need for internal EU coordination (Interview #59). When running through the work of the G20 DWG, it is indeed hard to find any dossiers with the potential to touch upon the EU23’s interests. Consequently, only a handful of EU countries including Finland, Denmark and the Netherlands showed particular interest in G20 development issues. With Finland being the most vocal, they pushed for more EU coordination in this area. Eventually, on explicit demand from these member states, the Commission briefed the member states at working party level, in CODEV.

Nevertheless, there are a couple of G20 activities in which the EU23 may have an interest, albeit less direct and less tangible. First, the G20 may influence ideas, put emphases differently or shape the direction of future development cooperation. This is not necessarily in line with the preferences of the EU23. In addition, the DWG often develops indicators and standards, for instance to measure the economic value-added and job creation of private investment. Some EU member states could have different opinions about which criteria to include or exclude. Certain EU23 countries might for example prefer to focus more on gender equality or the environment – two aspects which are now relatively absent in the Seoul Consensus on Development. Second, the G20 can create new international institutions and forums in which the EU23 are not represented. These institutions may compete with other organisations that do include the EU23. In this way, the EU23 might see their influence on the global scene diluted. However, most of these G20 initiatives tend to be open for non-G20 members as well<sup>51</sup>. In itself, the G20 can also influence or even work against other institutions such as the UN. Especially for certain EU member states such as the Nordics, this could be challenging. These countries are generally conceived of as progressive donors that put development high on their political agenda. Traditionally, the UN takes a central position in these countries’ development policies. But so far, the relationship between the G20 and the UN has not been considered as problematic by EU23 development officials (Interview #17 and Interview #19). The G20 is rather seen as complementing the work of the UN. Third, the G20 often asks other international organisations to produce reports and studies on a wide range of development topics. Non-G20 members of these organisations, including the EU23, may not welcome that the staff devotes time and resources to the G20 instead of their own organisation.

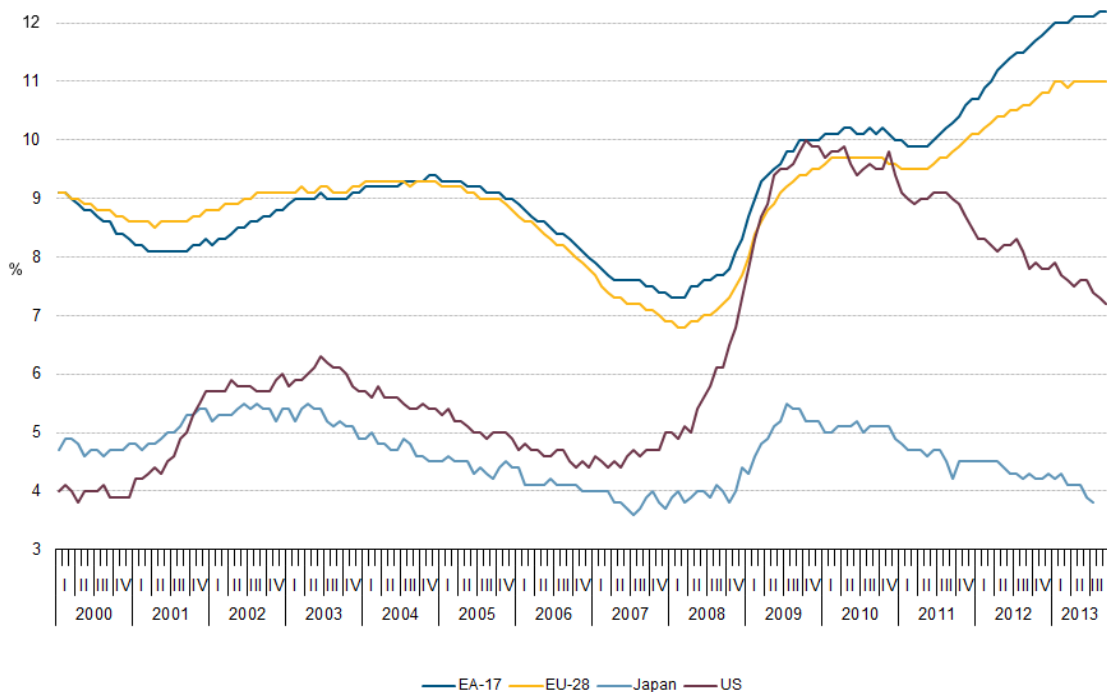
### **6.3.3. Other G20 cases**

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<sup>51</sup> e.g. AMIS or AgResults



**Graph 11. Unemployment rates EU-28, EA-17, US and Japan, January 2000 - September 2013 (%)**  
 Source: Eurostat.



**Graph 10. Youth unemployment rates, EU-28 and EA-17, January 2000 - September 2013 (%)**  
 Source: Eurostat.

In the post-2008 crisis era, labour and employment issues have been a key concern of many EU member states. As shown in Graphs 10 and 11, unemployment has been considerably affected since the start of the crisis. Despite substantial cross-country differences, unemployment

in the EU particularly skyrocketed when the global financial crisis spilled over into a euro zone crisis. At that time, unemployment rates in the US and Japan started to decline again. Low-skilled and young workers were severely hit by the recession. Especially for Spain, Portugal, and Greece – where youth employment rates have been already low since 2000 – one can observe a sharp drop particularly after 2008, which can be attributed to the impact of crisis (ECB, 2012; Eichorst, Hinte, & Rinne, 2013).

However, in contrast to economic and financial affairs, G20 talks on labour and employment do only indirectly touch upon the EU23's interests, and in a less negative way. G20 activities contribute to improving the quality of jobs and tackling (youth) unemployment, objectives that are shared by many countries and are rather uncontroversial (Interview #39). The G20 encourages countries to put employment policies at the centre of economic and financial policies, but the risk that EU23 countries would have to radically change policies is very low. The G20 compiles best practices and sets priorities rather than it makes clear policy choices. One interviewee bluntly asks “who does not want more and better jobs?” (Interview #14). The G20 may however affect the member states interests at the discursive level. Depending on whether a country approaches social and employment policies from a market-oriented or an interventionist standpoint, the G20's support for social rights may be welcomed or raises concerns. Within the G20, this divide also plays between the UK and France where the former would like to focus more on jobs, while the latter seeks to emphasise the social dimension of globalization (Interview #43). Yet, it is questionable whether EU23 interests are actually at risk by the G20's language on labour and employment.

Compared to trade and employment, food and agriculture issues on the G20's agenda have the largest potential of putting the EU23's interests at risk. Addressing food price volatility may entail significant economic policy reforms. Such reforms often go hand in hand with strong domestic interests (Clapp, 2012). First, many EU member states including several Central European countries have invested in feedstock-based fuels to meet the EU's target for a 10% share of renewable energy in transport. The Central European countries now fear the collapse of the conventional biofuels industry since international protest against biofuels is growing. Within the EU, for example, their strong biofuel lobby resists a lowering of the 10% target (EurActiv, 2013a). Hence, they would not welcome G20 statement against biofuels either. It however remains to be seen whether the EU4 will take their interests into account in the G20 since France and the UK are pushing for strong G20 action on biofuels (Blas, 2011). Second, commodity market regulation may also mitigate price volatility of food products. As illustrated earlier, the regulation of financial and commodity markets directly touches upon the interests of the EU member states. Third, reducing restrictions on food exports may yield significant benefits for EU member states since the EU is a large importer of farm products (Fritz, 2011: 6). The G20's Action Plan on Food Price Volatility vaguely refers to these structural economic reforms but did not make clear policy choices. Instead, it has shifted attention to less politicized aspects such as increasing agricultural production through crop research and technology transfer (Clapp, 2012). Finally, in 2011, the European Commission developed proposals to reform the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Some EU member states such as the Netherlands, Belgium and Ireland deemed it possible that the G20 could have an impact on the reform of the CAP (Interview #36). For this reason, they wanted to be closely involved with the G20's work on agriculture.

Although most, if not all EU23 countries have a general interest in concluding the DDA, the G20's discussions on the DDA do not immediately put the EU23's vital interests at stake, especially given this matter is dealt with by the G20 on a rather general level. The typical call for a conclusion of the Doha round is not controversial and expectations for a breakthrough at G20 have generally been very low. Hence EU coordination in the form of group decision-making is less relevant, while information sharing or consultation might suffice for the EU23. However, the

G20 would touch upon the interests of the EU23 if it starts negotiating the details of the DDA. Then, the EU4 will be able to protect their own national interests, even though only the European Commission has the authority to negotiate about trade issues. For this reason, the European Commission is reluctant to discuss the details of the DDA in the G8 or G20 context since it would also bring the diverging preferences of the EU4 to the table (Interview #38 and Interview #48). But if this would happen, interviewees believe that internal EU coordination for G20 trade issues would be improved (Interview #13 and Interview #38). Furthermore, G20 language on protectionism seems to be more important to the EU23. They would like to see that the G20 members deliver on and even extend their ‘standstill commitment’. During the briefings in COREPER on the G20, one of the few questions to the EU sherpa dealt precisely with this subject (Interview #15).

#### **6.3.4. G8 – Development**

Even more than in the G20 case, development issues in the G8 context rarely trigger the interests of the EU23. Of course, since the MDGs are a product of the entire international community, any progress made towards the achievement of the MDGs is in the interest of every EU23 country. However, the risk that G8 initiatives supporting the MDGs have an impact on EU23 policies or budgets is very low since for instance non-G8 members are not obliged to contribute to those initiatives.

In contrast, the issue of food security does have the potential to touch upon the interests of EU member states. In particular, the related aspect of biofuel policies would be followed with large suspicion by non-G8 countries. However, there is little chance that the G8 will discuss that matter soon since the policies of the US, Canada, Russia and several EU member states on, inter alia, grain based biofuel production and export bans had been widely criticized as causal factors of the 2008 global food crisis. They were even reluctant to add food security to the G8’s agenda for that reason (Margulis, 2012: 245).

Nevertheless, it has not always been the case that G8 development issues do not touch upon the EU23’s interests. In 2005 at the G8 Gleneagles Summit, the leaders decided to cancel the debts of the most indebted developing countries with the World Bank, IMF and African Development Bank. In contrast to many other G8 development actions, this decision had financial implications for some of the EU23 that are prominent members of the multilateral institutions involved (Interview #66). Some of the EU23 with high outstanding loans through multilateral institutions were alarmed by this decision and tried to alter the G8’s proposals, without success. Nonetheless, at the level of the Bretton Woods institutions countries such as Belgium and the Netherlands could actually influence the modalities of the decision (Nasra et al., 2009: 10). Although this decision clearly touches upon the interests of the EU23, it has not been coordinated in the EU before the Gleneagles Summit.

Similar to the G20 development case, the G8 may also indirectly jeopardize EU23 interests, for example by setting priorities or by making certain fundamental ideological choices. Compared to the G20, it is however less likely that the G8 would shape the direction of development policy in a way that goes against European development policy principles and priorities. The G20 combines multiple different views on development. It explicitly aims at finding new cooperation structures between old and new donors, which may modify established development paradigms.

#### **6.3.5. G8 – Energy/climate**

Although EU climate policy is foremost driven by norms including the adherence to multilateralism, sustainable development and the precautionary principle, it also serves economic and energy security interests. The EU could not only build competitive advantage through innovation in ‘green technologies’, it could also reduce its dependency on imported fossil fuels by



increasing energy efficiency and shifting to renewable energy (Van Schaik & Schunz, 2012). Moreover, pursuing a binding post-Kyoto climate regime with clearly defined targets and timetables that are based upon sound science would create a global level-playing field, which is in the interest of the EU member states. Otherwise, failure to do so might decrease the ambition of the member states and their willingness to implement EU climate policies.

However, the risk of the G8 affecting the interests of some EU23 countries in a negative way is rather low. In the G8, the EU is by far the most ambitious actor on climate policy. The fact that G8 decisions do not reach the same level of ambition does not mean that they imply negative consequences for climate policies of the EU and its member states. By endorsing certain climate targets – albeit not necessarily as ambitious as the EU would have wanted –, the G8 aims to address global warming by which it contributes to rather than obstructs the achievement of EU (and thus EU23) climate objectives. Nevertheless, more specific environmental issues, such as climate finance or forestry, have direct consequences for several EU23 countries (Groen & Niemann, 2012: 5-6). However, apart from supporting provisions on these matters that have been adopted under the UNFCCC framework (G8, 2011b), the G8 has not discussed these issues in detail.

Energy efficiency has been described as an area of low controversy (Van de Graaf, 2013: 137). Indeed, energy efficiency improvement can be achieved without making a choice between different energy sources. Hence, measures to increase energy efficiency do not affect a country's energy mix, which is still considered as highly strategic. Although IPEEC deals with a relatively uncontested theme of energy efficiency, it may cause institutional overlap or add to the fragmentation of the institutional landscape of global energy governance. In this way, it has the potential, although limited, to go against the interests of the EU23. IPEEC does for example not include any EU23 country. But several EU23 member states are involved in the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership (REEEP), which also comprises businesses, NGOs and financial institutions (see [www.reeep.org](http://www.reeep.org)). Besides promoting energy efficiency, REEEP also focuses on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and improving access to clean energy in developing countries (Florini & Sovacool, 2009: 5246). Even though IPEEC and REEEP have rather different mandates, those EU23 states may conceive IPEEC as an institutional competitor for REEEP.

Finally, while CCS touches upon the vital interests of certain EU23 countries that are heavily reliant on coal, in particular Poland, those interests are mainly jeopardized by internal EU developments rather than by G8 language on CCS. For example, Poland has been brought to the European Court of Justice for not complying with the European CCS Directive that requires member states to assess the CCS-readiness of new coal plants (EurActiv, 2013b). Furthermore, the European Commission is also considering requiring member states, such as Poland, to develop national CCS strategies (Keating, 2013). In contrast, Poland has nothing to fear from the G8. By providing general support to CCS, the G8 has only reaffirmed what had already been agreed by the EU member states, including Poland. In addition, the G8 target to launch 20 large-scale CCS demonstration globally by 2010 does not affect Poland directly.

### **6.3.6. G7 – Finance**

Following a similar reasoning as in the G20 finance case, G7 discussions on the global economy and the euro zone crisis have a high potential to touch upon the interests of the EU23. The same accounts for monetary issues. Especially in times of crisis, financial and monetary stability is a key concern for every EU member state. In addition, some G7 officials consider the G7 as an informal preparatory body for G20 meetings (Torchia, 2009). In this role, it can also discuss dossiers that touch directly upon the interests of the EU23, such as IMF reform. Those issues do however not figure on the G7's public agenda.

Interestingly, this is the only case where officials have said that EU coordination depends on whether the G7 discusses EU-related matters (Interview #16 and Interview #32). Internal EU coordination does not take place for every G7 meeting and depends on the subject. The EU is more likely to negotiate TOR for dossiers that involve all EU member states.

### 6.3.7. Concluding remarks

Based on this section, the interests hypothesis can be confirmed. The extent to which a particular issue touches upon the national interests of (some) EU23 countries appears to be a very strong variable, especially in explaining high levels of internal EU coordination.

On the one hand, the causal relationship between significant interests and a high degree of EU coordination has been illustrated by many interviews and written sources (see also chapter 5). The G20 finance case has convincingly demonstrated that EU23 countries explicitly demand for EU coordination because the G20 discusses dossiers in which they have strong national interests (e.g. tax havens and IMF reform). They consider internal EU coordination as a key instrument, if not *the only* instrument to protect their interests in the G20. While it remains difficult to identify the relationship between a variable and the precise level of coordination, the findings in this section suggest that EU coordination is very likely to take the form of group decision-making when clear EU23 interests are at stake. More than information sharing and consultation, group decision-making allows the EU23 to influence the EU4 and to translate their interests into the EU's position. Therefore, EU23 countries will most likely insist to engage in a group decision-making process. Furthermore, it needs to be emphasised that EU23 interests only boost EU coordination processes to the group decision-making level when they are directly and in a negative way exposed to Gx activities. The G20 and G7 finance cases show that EU23 countries will primarily press for EU coordination when they run the risk to experience a negative impact from the Gx. However, an explicit call by the EU23 is not sufficient to actually reach that level of coordination. Other variables such as existing policies or EU influence may counter an EU23 demand. For example, the EU4 and even the European Commission may resist such demands if they deem group decision-making undesirable or inappropriate. More precisely, and as it will be explained later, it depends on the extent to which they consider prior EU coordination useful to shape and influence G20 policy-making processes.

On the other hand, for those cases and dossiers that do not put the EU23 interests directly at risk, EU coordination seems to be much less urgent<sup>52</sup>. In many dossiers (e.g. trade, biofuel policies, climate, CCS), one or several EU23 countries do have certain key interests at stake. However mostly, these interests are hardly threatened by the Gx. This is due to several reasons. Firstly, Gx discussions are often held at a very general level. Only when the Gx start negotiating the details of a certain dossier, EU23 interests are exposed to possible harmful Gx decisions. Secondly, Gx activities also often serve the interests of the EU23 in a positive way. In this case, EU23 are less inclined to coordinate and if they do, information sharing or consultation may suffice. The G8 cases on development and climate as well as the G20 labour case could serve as examples. Thirdly and often in combination with the first two aspects, the EU23 interests may be sufficiently covered by existing EU policies, as illustrated by the G20 trade case.

## 6.4. Hypothesis 3: Competences

### Hypothesis 3

There will be more coordination for issues in which the EU possesses extensive competences.

<sup>52</sup> In this way, the interests variable is very closely related to the other hypothesis that the relevance of the Gx affects the level of EU coordination. The relationship between these two variables will be addressed later in this study.

### **6.4.1. G20 – Finance**

According to an opinion of the Legal Service of the Council on the EU's representation in the G20 (2010), the G20 most typically deals with matters that primarily correspond to the competence of the member states or with issues of shared competence between the EU and its member states and which cannot be treated separately.

#### ***Global economy***

The competences for economic policy, such as fiscal and structural policies, have largely remained the responsibility of national policy makers. As stipulated in article 2§3 TFEU – and qualified by article 5 TFEU – , the EU only holds a competence to provide arrangements for coordinating the economic and employment policies of the member states. So the EU provides the framework for coordination, while competences remain in member states' hands (Trybus & Rubini, 2012: 77). An example of such a coordination framework is the Stability and Growth Pact, including the six-pack and two-pack. Under this framework, governments remain fully sovereign in setting the level and detailed composition of their spending and revenues and they can run smaller deficits or larger surpluses than they committed themselves to (von Hagen & Wyplosz, 2008: 1). Hence, stimulus or austerity programmes as discussed in the G20 are clearly a matter of the member states.

Requiring input from different policies, the Framework for Growth is one of those cases where several policy areas under different competence regimes are treated together. As said, fiscal policy and structural reforms fall under the responsibility of the member states. Issues related to the development of the single market are shared competence between the EU and the member states (article 4 TFEU). For monetary policy and for exchange rate policy competences have been transferred to the euro area level since the introduction of the euro (article 3 TFEU). Given this diverse pattern of EU competences, two concerns were raised regarding the MAP: (i) how the EU as a whole would provide input to the collection of plans and (ii) how EU participants would interact with other G20 members. The solution for the former was for the member states, the Commission and the ECB to provide data on their area of competence. To address the latter issue, the member states and EU institutions hold orientation discussions in Brussels and just ahead of G20 meetings, but each member state or institution speaks according to its area of competence at the G20 itself (Butler, 2012: 478).

With regard to euro area matters, the ECB is thus solely responsible for monetary policy within the euro zone (Woolcock, 2013: 86). Other aspects related to the euro crisis fall predominantly under the competence of the member states. According to article 136§1 TFEU, it is up to the euro area countries to adopt measures to strengthen the coordination and surveillance of their budgetary discipline. Illustrative to the limited powers of the EU in tackling the euro crisis is the fact that the euro zone's two bailout funds, the EFSF and its successor the ESM, have been established outside the EU order. The EFSF is a private company while the ESM is an international financial institution (Cotterill, 2012). To create the ESM, article 136 TFEU even had to be amended to allow for the establishment of a stability mechanism to safeguard the stability of the euro area as a whole (European Union, 2011b).

#### ***Financial regulation***

In the area of financial market regulation, the question of competences is also complicated by the linkage between different policy areas (Woolcock, 2012: 32). Discussions on financial regulation and financial supervision are heavily intertwined but whereas financial regulation is largely carried out at the EU level, financial supervision is executed at the national level (Quaglia, Eastwood & Holmes, 2009: 70). To establish a single market for financial services and to achieve the objective of free movement of capital, financial regulation is the shared competence between

the EU and the member states (article 64 TFEU). Nevertheless, as stipulated in article 65 TFEU, the member states have retained the competence for the supervision of financial institutions<sup>53</sup>.

On remuneration, one may notice that according to article 153§5 TFEU pay, other than equal pay, is explicitly excluded from Community competences. The level of pay falls within the contractual freedom of the social partners at a national level and thus within the competence of member states. Yet, the European Commission has published several Recommendations on remuneration policies in the financial services sector. Binding restrictions on financial sector remuneration such as an EU wide cap on bankers' bonuses have also been included in the CRD III & IV directive on banking capital and the AIFM directive. According to the European Commission, the national sovereignty of the member states remains hereby untouched since the Commission's initiatives do neither aim at harmonizing the level of fixed pay nor at modifying national labour law (European Commission, 2009e). It does not limit the amount an individual can be paid, but merely regulates the ratio of salary to bonus.

### ***Tax havens***

With regard to taxation, a distinction has to be made between indirect taxation such as VAT and direct taxation such as income taxes. While indirect taxation is a shared competence between the EU and the member states, direct taxation remains the sole responsibility of the member states (HM Government, 2012: 10). Based on article 113 TFEU, the EU is allowed to harmonize indirect taxation in the Union. And although the EU has no specific competences on direct taxation, the European Commission may use article 115 TFEU to propose legislation on harmonizing direct taxation only if necessary to ensure a proper functioning of the single market (HM Government, 2013: 18). Article 115 (formerly article 94 EC) serves for example as the legal basis for the Savings Directive (Heidenbauer, 2010). Hence, the EU possesses indirect competences to take measures on tax information exchange. Nevertheless, with regard to tax havens in particular, the EU lacks the power to make member states comply with the OECD-criteria.

### ***IMF reform***

Because the IMF's governance reform deals with member states' national representation in the Fund, the EU decision-making process regarding these institutional matters remains intergovernmental, in contrast to IMF policy discussions such as exchange rate policies. Even though the European Commission and the European Parliament have made various calls to consolidate the EU's representation in the IMF, EU institutions do not have any formal role in this debate. Nonetheless, there are two concrete 'EU mechanisms' through which EU member states coordinate their positions. In Brussels, member states discuss IMF issues, both substantive and institutional, in SCIMF. In this subcommittee, member states attempt to agree to common positions on IMF governance matters. In Washington, member states coordinate their positions in an informal group, EURIMF, which meets one to three times a week. The group, which is complemented with representatives from the Commission and the ECB, shares information and coordinates member states' positions regarding issues on the EB's agenda (Eurodad, 2006).

## **6.4.2. G20 – Development**

The competence for development policy is shared between the EU and the member states. However, unlike other policy areas under shared competence, the treaty explicitly allows for member state action. When the EU exercises its competence this "shall not result in Member

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<sup>53</sup> The establishment of a single supervisory mechanism was therefore heavily contested as some have argued that it lacks a sound legal basis (Lannoo, 2012).

States being prevented from exercising theirs” (article 4§4 TFEU). Hence, the member states’ bilateral aid programmes continue to occupy an important place (Vanhoonacker, 2011: 83). Furthermore, EU development cooperation and that of the member states should complement and reinforce each other (article 208 TFEU) and they are both supposed to consult and coordinate their policies (article 210 TFEU). With regard to trade, which is one of the pillars of the G20 development agenda, the EU possesses exclusive competences (article 3 TFEU).

### **6.4.3. Other G20 cases**

Traditionally, the scope for EU action in the field of social and employment policy is limited. On social policy, the Treaty of Lisbon is ambiguous. On the one hand, it is an area of shared competence, albeit only “for the aspects defined in this Treaty” (article 4§2 TFEU). On the other hand, social policy is also included in the special category of article 5 TFEU as an area in which the “Union may take initiatives to ensure coordination of Member States’ social policies”. Articles 153 to 161 TFEU are meant to further specify the aspects of social policy which are shared competence. However, they do not provide explicit guidance as to which areas fall within shared competence and which do not. Moreover, the wording of articles 153 and 156 TFEU suggests that social policy does not come within shared competence, but is rather covered by the category of article 5 TFEU dealing with economic, employment and social policies or even by the weaker category of article 6 TFEU of supporting, coordinating, and supplementary competence<sup>54</sup>. It is for example stated that the Union shall support and complement the activities of the member states and the Commission is for example encouraged to foster cooperation and coordination (Craig, 2010 : 169).

Similar to economic policy and to a certain extent social policy, employment policy is treated separately in article 5 TFEU. The member states have primary responsibility for the coordination of employment policies. Article 5§ provides that the Union may, however, take initiatives “to ensure coordination of the employment policies of the Member States, in particular by defining guidelines for these policies”.

The G20’s agenda on food and agriculture primarily involves areas under shared competence since agriculture is listed in article 4§2 TFEU. In certain areas the EU has already exercised its competence meaning that the EU may conduct an autonomous policy in these areas. These include action to increase agricultural productivity in a sustainable manner, stabilise markets, control price volatility, assure the availability of supply and guarantee food security (European Commission, 2013b). Based on the same treaty article, both the EU and the member states share also competence with regard to research (e.g. agricultural research), technological development and development cooperation. The exercise of that competence by the Union shall however not result in member states being prevented from exercising theirs.

As said, trade policy is an exclusive competence for the EU (article 3 TFEU), which implies that the EU rather than individual member states is responsible for commercial policy and trade agreements with non-EU countries. One interviewee points to the exclusive competence of the European Commission on trade as a reason why there is no need for an upgrade of the current coordination process for trade in the G20. The EU23 trust the Commission in that it will keep an eye on the EU4 (Interview #13).

### **6.4.4. G8 – Development**

Whether it concerns development in the G8 or G20 context, the competence for development policy is shared between the EU and the member states (see supra). But with regard to the G8, two additional elements should be raised. First, the European support for the MDGs is implicitly

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<sup>54</sup> Social policy is however not included in article 6 TFEU

included in the Lisbon Treaty. Article 208§2 (TFEU) stipulates that the member states and the Union shall comply with the commitments and take account of the objectives that they have approved in the context of the United Nations. This refers, among others, to the MDGs. In addition, the primary objective of the EU's development policy, namely to reduce and eradicate poverty (article 208§1 TFEU), is fully in line with the MDGs.

Second, although the EU and its member states share competence in the area of development cooperation, the European Commission (and the EEAS) enjoys a great autonomy in the allocation of development aid. EU development policy is financed by two main sources. On the one hand, the European Development Fund (EDF) supports action in the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACP) and the EU's Overseas Countries and Territories. The EDF is an extra-budgetary fund as it is funded by member states' voluntary contributions and is subject to its own rules (Gavas, 2010). On the other hand, all geographic funds for non-ACP countries as well all thematic development programmes serving all developing countries are financed by the normal EU budget, from the budget heading "EU as a Global Partner". Under this heading, the main instrument for pursuing the EU's development policy is the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) (EU-Platform, 2010: 10). According to article 17§1 (TEU), the execution of the budget and the management of, inter alia, development programmes is the responsibility of the Commission. Funding from the EDF and the DCI is thus allocated by the European Commission (European Commission, 2012c). Consequently, the European Commission is able to decide autonomously the size and destination of the Union's financial contributions to G8 initiatives. Finally, as said, the EU possesses exclusive competences on trade in goods including the issue of food export restrictions.

#### **6.4.5. G8 – Energy/climate**

Article 4 TFEU lists environment as an area of shared competence between the EU and its member states. Although shared competence implies that the member states cannot exercise their competence when the EU has taken action in a certain area, the member states are still allowed to take more stringent protective measures (article 193 TFEU). Besides, the EU may also develop environmental policy in the context of other areas such as the internal market, transport policy, common agricultural policy or trade policy (Corthaut & Van Eeckhoutte, 2012: 149). Article 191§1 TFEU outlines the objectives of EU environment policy. It should pursue to preserve, protect and improve the quality of the environment, but also promote measures at the international level to deal with regional or worldwide environmental problems, and in particular combating climate change. Article 191 also provides for external powers of the EU and the member states on environment policy, stipulating that "[w]ithin their respective spheres of competence, the Union and the Member States shall cooperate with third countries and with the competent international organisations". However, it seems that in practice, most international environmental agreements are concluded based on internal competences (Klamert, 2011: 20).

With regard to energy, the Lisbon Treaty introduces for the first time an individual energy chapter, reflecting the growing political importance of the field. So far, decisions in the field of energy have been made in the context of other competences including environment, technology, competition and internal market policies (Lesage, Van de Graaf, & Westphal, 2010: 94). The goals of EU energy policy, which is an area of shared competence, are listed in article 194 TFEU and include the promotion of energy efficiency and energy saving as well as the development of new and renewable forms of energy. EU energy policy shall however not affect the member states' right to determine the conditions for exploiting their energy resources, their choice between different energy sources and the general structure of their energy supply.

#### **6.4.6. G7 – Finance**

The competences for economic policy, such as fiscal and structural policies, fall primarily under the responsibility of the national member states. Monetary policy, in contrast, is an exclusive competence of the Union, at least for the member states whose currency is the euro (article 3 TFEU). As stipulated in article 127§2 TFEU, the ECB is in charge of defining and implementing monetary policy, conducting foreign exchange operations and managing the official foreign reserves of the member states. Consequently, the ECB decides autonomously whether and how it participates in joint G7 currency market interventions, with the only caveat that intervention should be consistent with the general orientation formulated by the ECOFIN Council (Baker, 2006: 123)

#### **6.4.7. Concluding remarks**

Based on the findings sketched in this section, the hypothesis that there will be more coordination for issues in which the EU possesses extensive competences needs to be refuted. No convincing elements have been found in support for a direct link between competences and internal EU coordination for the Gx. This confirms the findings of Nasra et al. (2009) and Laatikainen and Smith (2006: 16) that no neat correlation can be found between internal coordination and EU competences. This study provides several examples that are characterized by the same level of EU coordination, while falling under different competence regimes. For instance, issues of financial regulation and financial supervision on the G20 agenda are both subject of group decision-making, but the former is an area of shared competence, while the latter remains the competence of the member states. Furthermore, internal EU coordination for the G20 DWG is limited to information sharing, no matter how the distribution of competences for the different DWG pillars is organised. Even on trade aspects of the G20 development agenda, coordination does not exceed the level of information sharing, although trade is an exclusive EU competence. With regard to other trade issues such as protectionism or the DDA (which are of course also exclusive EU competence), EU coordination tends to be more interactive (consultation), although not as interactive as our hypothesis would suggest. In addition, the picture becomes even more blurred when taking into account those areas of shared competence in which the EU has already taken action and thus assumed competence on that specific issue. Examples can be found in most cases and include the dossiers climate, CCS, agricultural productivity and tax information exchange. EU coordination varies significantly for all these dossiers although the EU has taken action in each of these areas.

The explanatory value of the distribution of competences for EU coordination for the Gx is significantly challenged by the fact that talks in the Gx-context do seldom follow the distribution of competences within the EU. For example, discussions may have a trade, development and finance dimension at the same time. EU coordination rather follows the political reality of the Gx than an internal EU logic. As the Legal Service of the Council has observed, the G20 typically deals with issues of shared competence between the EU and its member states which cannot be treated separately. As a consequence, EU coordination processes deal with Gx policy clusters as a whole, such as finance or development.

It is however too soon to completely ignore competences as a factor for EU coordination for the Gx and for the EU's role in the Gx in general. First, the findings might suggest that extensive competences rather lead (indirectly) to less EU coordination. The distribution of competences may for instance form the basis of the existing policies variable and in this way indirectly influence EU coordination. Areas of exclusive competences will only consist of common EU policy because policy may only be initiated by the European Commission at the European level. According to its exclusive competences, the European Commission could also have been

mandated in the past to conduct international trade negotiations. The Commission might fall back on this mandate for discussions in the G20 context without asking for a new mandate.

Moreover, the distribution of competences may also influence the degree of autonomy that the European Commission can enjoy. The European Commission has for example a substantial budget for development aid which it may allocate autonomously. For this reason, the Commission does not need to coordinate with the EU23 to decide on the Union's financial contributions to G8 initiatives. However, the G8 development case is also characterized by a wide array of existing EU policies and a low risk that the G8 affects EU23's vital interests. The low level of EU coordination for this cases can thus not convincingly traced back to the distribution of competences or its derivative 'autonomy'.

Second, the distribution of competences seems to play an important role for the role of the EU in the Gx and the extent to which the European Gx participants coordinate on the spot. The distribution of competences determines who is authorized to speak on behalf of the EU, either the European Commission or the rotating Council presidency. In international settings, the European Commission is often the main advocate of strong EU coordination<sup>55</sup>. In the margin of Gx meetings, the Commission tends to assume a coordinating role in those areas in which it possesses exclusive competences (e.g. trade) or for issues where there is a clear Community dimension (e.g. climate) (Interview #49, Interview #61 and Interview #46).

### 6.5. Hypothesis 4: Relevance

**Hypothesis 4**  
When the Gx is perceived as more relevant in a certain policy issue, there will be more EU coordination for that issue.

As explained in the chapter four, I assess the relevance of the Gx in a particular policy area by using three indicators: (i) a general perception of the Gx relevance, (ii) an evaluation of its impact and (iii) the functions performed by the Gx. Where appropriate, this section also analyses whether legitimacy concerns influence internal EU coordination. Before we discuss the individual cases, it is useful to give the general perception of the G7, G8 and G20 as assessed by all survey respondents. This should help us to situate the perceived Gx relevance in the individual policy areas.

When looking at the results of the question on the general perception of the Gx relevance (Graph 12), the first important observation is that the EU attaches a relatively high degree of relevance to the G7, G8 as well as the G20. At least 50% of the respondents situate all three forums in the upper two categories, namely as a forum giving relevant impulses to global governance or as a steering body in global governance. For the G20, these two categories together account even for 77% of which 20% sees the G20 as steering body in global governance. Surprisingly, also 10% of the respondents perceive the G7 as steering committee. Generally, few officials perceive the forums as irrelevant talking shops. However compared to the G7 and G20, the G8 scores somewhat higher as an irrelevant talking shop and slightly lower as a steering body in global governance.

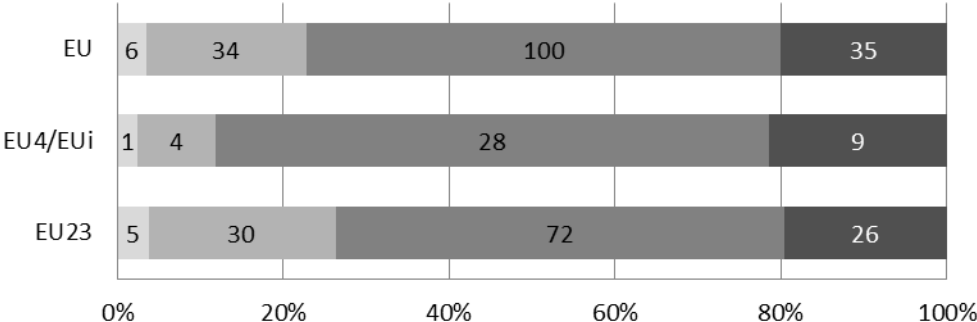
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<sup>55</sup> e.g. in the ILO (Nedergaard, 2008), WHO (Van Schaik, 2011: 705) or in the area of development cooperation (Baroncelli, 2011: 642).

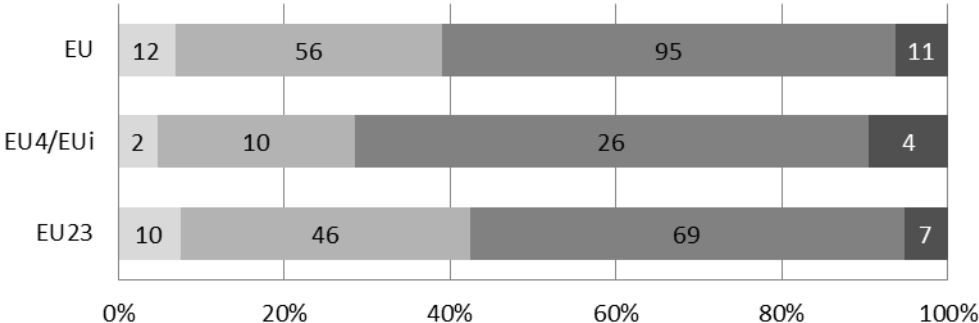


Remarkably, the EU23’s general view on the G20 and G8 does not fundamentally differ from the EU4/EUi. The EU4/EUi give a slightly greater weight to the G8 and G20’s role as a forum that gives relevant impulses to global governance. But still, the scores of both forums on the extreme categories are approximately the same for both the EU4/EUi and the EU23. In contrast, the views of both groups on the G7 diverge more substantially. One fifth of the EU4/EUi officials consider the G7 as a steering body, compared to only 7.6% of the EU23 respondents. Moreover, according to 60% of the EU4/EUi respondents, the G7 still gives relevant impulses to global governance (40% of EU23).

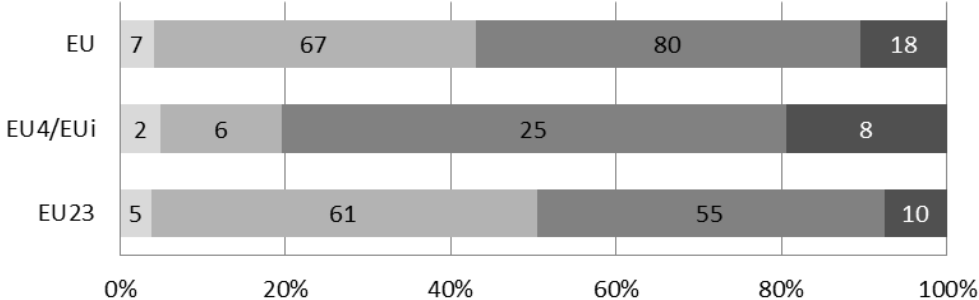
**G20**



**G8**



**G7**



- as an irrelevant 'talking shop' or 'photo opportunity' for world leaders
- relevant as a meeting of individuals, but with limited impact
- as a forum giving relevant impulses to global governance
- as a steering body in global governance

Graph 12. General perception of Gx relevance. Absolute values included. Source: survey.

### 6.5.1. G20 – Finance

Unsurprisingly, the G20 is seen as most relevant in the area of finance. This clearly reflects from the survey results (Graph 13). If the results are filtered by the areas of expertise as specified by the respondents, we may see how finance experts perceive the G20.<sup>56</sup> It appears that more than 90% of all finance experts consider the G20 either as a forum giving relevant impulses to global governance or as a steering body in global governance. None of the finance respondents conceive the G20 as an irrelevant talking shop.

It is indeed widely acknowledged that the G20 played a key role in tackling the global financial crisis and prevented the global economy from further sliding into recession. Although many countries were already developing national crisis responses before the first G20 summit, the G20 showed a striking degree of coordination concerning national and international stimulus packages (Cooper & Thakur, 2013: 83). As Pisani-Ferry (2012) notes, this is a significant achievement for a group of heterogeneous countries with little tradition of dialogue and joint action. In addition, the G20 produced plans to stabilize financial markets and to coordinate regulatory reform. With regard to tax havens, the G20 has considerably contributed to a new global momentum against tax avoidance and evasion. As said, almost 600 new tax information exchange agreements have been signed since the G20's tax haven crackdown in London 2009.



**Graph 13. Finance experts' perception of the relevance of the G20 in general. Absolute values included. Source: survey.**

However since 2010, overall G20 relevance in financial and economic affairs seems to be in decline<sup>57</sup>. The summits in Toronto and Seoul were overshadowed by deep disagreements. In Toronto, the EU and the US clashed on the question whether to focus on stimulus spending or deficit reduction, while the Seoul Summit was marked by mutual accusations by the US and China about manipulating their respective currencies (EurActiv, 2010a; Weisbrot, 2010). Later, the G20 was also criticized for its incapacity to resolve the euro crisis (Goodliffe & Sberro, 2012). Headlines in the Financial Times such as “Summitry again proves its own irrelevance” (Münchau, 2011) or “G20 reform: Time to take action – or risk irrelevance” (Giles, 2012) indicated that the G20 was no longer considered as the decisive crisis committee of 2008-2009. Nevertheless, a large share of the respondents still attached considerable importance to the G20 in the area of finance, even though the survey was conducted early 2013.

<sup>56</sup> One must however be aware that this only indicates how different officials perceive the Gx in general and does not necessarily say something about the relevance of the Gx in a particular issue area since this question intentionally measures the Gx relevance in general. But since finance experts probably know the G20 best in the finance area, we can assume that their assessment of the G20's relevance in general is heavily motivated by the G20's work on financial and economic issues. Hence, it is a good indication of the G20's relevance in finance.

<sup>57</sup> Of course, this does not take into account the relevance of the G20 as a forum for informal discussion among world leaders. This aspect continues to be important even if the G20 does not produce any concrete results.

Finally, as far as IMF reform is concerned, the G20 was the driving force behind the 2010 IMF quota and governance reform. It did most of the political heavy lifting and the final IMF reform deal was concluded at the G20 finance ministerial meeting in Gyeongju, Korea on 22-23 October 2010, instead of at the IMFC<sup>58</sup>. Discussions in the IMFC, the Fund's political advisory group at minister's level, were rather debriefings of G20 conversations (Interview #9). This is not unusual. As a result of the Fund's large membership and the IMFC's limited strategic role, real policy coordination on IMF issues occurs outside the Fund's governance framework, in exclusive informal forums such as the G7 and G20 (IMF, 2009b). Even more than the G20, the G7 has become the effective locus of decision-making in IMF governance and crisis lending (Stone, 2011: 58). For example, the decision to reduce the European representation in the EB with two fewer advanced European seats was precooked by the G7, led by the US, in the margin of the G20 meeting<sup>59</sup>.

The transfer of de facto decision-making powers from the IMF to the G7 and G20 is an evolution that is followed with deep concern by the G4 and other EU23 countries (Interview #6, Interview #7 and Interview #27). It is telling that this aspect is also explicitly highlighted in the survey by an EU23 official: "It is highly problematic that the G20 tries to establish itself as a global standard setter and decision maker for, for instance, financial issues, economic issues and IMF issues". Another EU23 respondent shares this view and stresses that "at IMF level it is important for the non-G20 EU countries that decisions are taken at the IMFC level and not hijacked by the G20". As a consequence of this criticism, the EU has stated in its TOR for the G20 that "[t]he reform process should be fully anchored within the relevant IMF bodies, and should engage all members of the IMF". (TOR, 2010f)

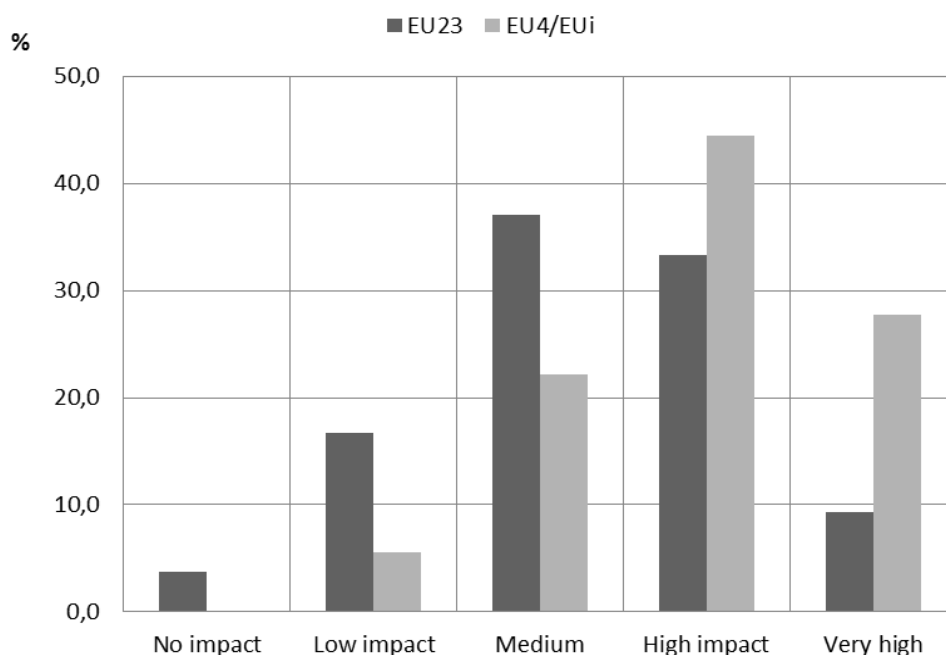
### ***Impact***

According to the survey respondents and as shown in Graph 14, the impact of the G20 on the EU in financial and economic affairs is relatively high, especially when compared to the G20's impact in other policy areas (see *infra*). As expected, the EU4/EUi experience more impact than the EU23. As one interviewee has pointed out, the G20 decisions in other policy domains are not of the same kind than those in the finance realm which justifies the difference between the EU's Terms of References and the Guidelines (Interview #61).

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<sup>58</sup> The final G20 agreement was afterwards endorsed by the IMFC and the Executive Board.

<sup>59</sup> Personal notes from conference on the challenges for the Netherlands and Belgium in the changing international financial architecture, Clingendael, Den Hague, 22 October 2012.



**Graph 14. Perceived impact of G20 in financial and economic affairs. Source: survey.**

While the G20 is conceived as a highly relevant forum to address global economic issues, the impact of those G20 talks on the EU is less clear. It is hard to imagine that EU (member state) economic policies would change considerably only because of a certain G20 statement or discussion, all the more since the EU and EU4 participate in those discussions. The G20 may nevertheless support certain options, making some policy ideas more or less viable. G20 talks may also focus the minds of EU policy-makers. For example, according to Shorr, the G20 Los Cabos Summit was in some ways a preparatory meeting for the European summit one week later (EUBusiness, 2012). In exceptional instances, the G20 has set a deadline for the EU to come up with a comprehensive plan to address the euro zone’s challenges (Kennedy, Argitis, Neuger, 2011). Nevertheless paragraphs on the euro crisis usually remain very general and are basically declarative, committing euro zone members to “take all necessary policy measures to safeguard the integrity and stability of the area, improve the functioning of financial markets and break the feedback loop between sovereigns and banks” (G20, 2012a). At Los Cabos, the European member also reaffirmed their will to strengthen EU integration and listed many of the steps they had already taken to resolve the crisis (Goodliffe & Sberro, 2012: 6). The impact of the MAP on the EU is also relatively limited. One official argues that the indicative guidelines for assessing large and persistent imbalances are not that relevant anymore (Interview #32). Especially since some key indicators such as current account surpluses and real exchange rates are absent or softened (Giles, 2011).

The impact of the G20 on European financial regulatory initiatives is more visible.<sup>60</sup> On the one hand, G20 ideas and decisions trickle down into EU legislation through initiatives of the European Commission (Interview #41). Several officials have contended that the G20 is often used by the Commission, the EU4 or the rotating Council presidency to put pressure on the member states and to advance EU legislation (Interview #8 and Interview #41, see also Debaere, 2011). Indeed, the Commission extensively refers to the G20 in documents that accompany

<sup>60</sup> However, as Véron (2012: 4-5) notices, some initiatives were given G20 endorsement but would probably have gone ahead anyway. The agenda as set by the G20 is perceived as a necessary response to the crisis which should have been made in any case. This perception also lives in EU23 countries that criticize the G20’s agenda-setting role (Interview #8).

legislative initiatives such as impact assessments, frequently asked questions or Communications. For instance in an impact assessment for the AIFM directive to regulate hedge funds and private equity, the proposed directive is considered as fully consistent with the G20 appeal for appropriate regulation and oversight. Furthermore, the Commission explicitly expressed the hope that this EU level initiative will give the discussions on AIF regulation in international forums such as the G20 a further impetus and contribute to an international agreement on principles at least (European Commission, 2009f).

In this regard, it is noteworthy that G20 norms were used to defend as well as to criticize the proposed directive. For example, the British hedge fund industry criticized the scope of the draft AIFM directive claiming that it goes beyond the recommendations of the G20. The Commission's proposal would envisage virtually all hedge fund managers which is in contrast with the G20's emphasis on *systemically important* hedge funds (Persson, 2009). US funds were also concerned that the rules may limit their access to European investors, whichever version would finally be adopted by the EU (Tait, Hall, & Wiesmann, 2010). The European Commission tried to side-line any hint of a political plot against the UK by framing the proposed regulation as a priority that was set at the G20 talks and not just an EU initiative (EurActiv, 2010b). Similarly, it responded to American concerns that the EU decision to act on hedge funds was in line with the G20 commitments (EurActiv, 2010c).

While G20 measures figure frequently in internal EU financial regulatory debates, the G20 is only rarely mentioned in the final legislative texts. This is not only because the G20 is in itself an informal body without any binding authority, but also because the G20 only defines the scope for financial regulation. It provides the 'titles' describing where reform should occur, rather than providing detailed proposals (House of Lords, 2009). Furthermore, the EU23 have also been very reluctant to recognize the G20 as a legitimate global decision-making body. Therefore, they asked to remove all references to the G20 from legislative EU documents, especially in the early months after the emergence of the G20 in 2008 (Interview #9). Yet, EU member states have by now shown a more tolerant attitude towards references to the G20.

On the other hand, the G20 has set deadlines that the authority of the heads of state and governments de facto made binding. This was for example seen in the negotiation of the Basel III accord on bank capital, leverage, liquidity, and risk management, which was published in 2010 after less than two years of negotiations, compared to its predecessor (Basel II) which took six years to complete (Véron, 2012: 4-5). Also within the EU, G20 meetings are considered as deadlines. Shortly before the Seoul G20 Summit in November 2010, the EU reached a compromise on the AIFM directive. In an accompanying memo, the European Commission claimed that the deal is "another example of how the EU is leading the way in implementing our G20 commitments" (European Commission, 2011b). German and Belgian officials confirmed that this deal would allow the EU to hold its head high at the G20 Seoul Summit (EurActiv, 2010d; Cahill, 2010).

As far as tax havens are concerned, the prospect of a G20 summit publishing blacklists and coordinating sanctions had a major impact on tax havens (Lesage, 2010: 7). Ahead of the London G20 Summit in April 2009, EU23 countries Belgium, Luxembourg and Austria agreed to ease their banking secrecy rules as they feared to appear on the tax haven list (France24, 2009). Despite these efforts and the commitment by the EU4 that no EU member state will figure on the list, Belgium, Luxembourg and Austria eventually appeared on the 'grey list' as a result of a late-night deal between France, the US and China (Watt, Elliott, Borger, & Black, 2009). Consequently, Luxembourg lobbied the Swedish Council Presidency in 2009 to strengthen the internal European preparation for G20 summits (Interview #20). By September 2009, all three EU member states have signed enough bilateral tax agreements to be removed from the list (Groendahl, Jucca & Graham, 2009).

With regard to IMF reform, the impact of the G20 on the EU member states is particularly high. The G20 did not only provide the political declaratory support for the reform process, but also engaged in negotiating the details of the final quota and governance reform package.

Three cases illustrate that the G20 decisions on IMF issues have a strong and clear impact on EU member states. First, the decision to allocate \$250bn of Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) to all IMF shareholders was taken at the G20 (2009c), at the highest political level and without much debate (Interview #77). A general SDR allocation affects the balance sheet of every IMF member country's national bank since it increases the reserves (IMF, 2009c). Countries with a strong balance of payments position do not necessarily welcome such a general SDR allocation since it may entail opportunity costs. At the Fund's request, they may have to trade their hard currencies for SDRs of countries with a weaker balance of payments position (de Jager, 2010).

Second, a compromise on the size and composition of the Fund's EB has been settled in G20 context. The G20 agreed that emerging markets and developing countries are to be attributed a greater weight in the EB through 2 fewer advanced European chairs (G20, 2010a). Although the G20 did not specify which advanced European countries should abandon their EB seat, it was clear from the beginning that the EU23, rather than the EU4 were targeted (Interview #77). Indeed, in the end, the reduction of two advanced European seats fell upon the shoulders of the EU23 and Switzerland, but ironically enough in the benefit other (candidate) EU member states. Belgium and the Netherlands agreed to merge their full chairs into a rotating one. Switzerland will rotate on a halftime basis with Poland. Turkey will enter the EB in a rotating scheme with Hungary and the Czech Republic. The Nordic-Baltic constituency contributes by including the Baltic states in their current rotating scheme (Lesage et al., 2013: 565).

Third, also the 14<sup>th</sup> general quota review has been agreed upon in the G20, while the IMF staff provided the possible scenarios (Interview #9). A quota reflects a member's financial contribution to the IMF and determines its voting weight and borrowing capacity. Hence, any change in a member's quota has not only immediate financial implications, but has also important consequence for a country's position and standing in the Fund. One G4 official (Interview #23) summarized quite frankly how the G4 experience the G20 leadership role in the IMF's quota review: "We hate it when the G20 decides on specific packages that have an impact on the G4, while they we not around the table. In particular money issues should be discussed within the IMF". For this reason, EU23 countries deemed EU coordination for G20 discussion on IMF reform necessary. This also appears for example from a Belgian working note for a meeting between the Belgian and Spanish Prime Ministers in November 2009:

*"It is evident that a thorough and structured EU coordination process prior to such meetings is indispensable to address the concerns of the EU member states who are only indirectly represented, but bound to implement G20 conclusions which may have financial consequences, such as contributions to IMF resources."* (Belgian working note, 2009)

### **Functions**

To assess more precisely the relevance of the Gx, the survey also gauged the functions of the Gx forums in several policy areas. Graph 15 shows the G20's 'functional profile' in finance matters, as well as in four other policy domains to put it in perspective<sup>61</sup>. In finance, the G20 appears to have a strong role in steering global governance, while it functions less as a forum for trust-building. This corresponds with the observed general relevance of the G20. More than in other policy areas, the G20 also seems to take relevant decisions on economic and financial

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<sup>61</sup> Six possible functions were provided: Enhancing the prestige of the leaders/ministers back home; Trust-building & fostering personal relationships; Setting the global agenda; Taking relevant decisions; Delivering on its commitments and Steering global governance as well as a Don't know-option (See chapter four).

issues. Indeed, one third to a half of all commitments<sup>62</sup> made by the G20 leaders fall in the realms of macroeconomics or finance (see Table 10). Nevertheless, when it comes to compliance and delivery, the “G7, G8 and/or G20 have hardly shown any capacity to organise effectively implemented policy solutions”, according to one EU23 survey respondent and as reflected in the survey results.

<b>G20 summits</b>	<b>Macroeconomics</b>	<b>Finance</b>	<b>Total commitments</b>
<b>Washington</b>	8 (8%)	58 (61%)	95
<b>London</b>	14 (16%)	22 (25%)	88
<b>Pittsburgh</b>	30 (23%)	24 (19%)	128
<b>Toronto</b>	15 (25%)	11 (18%)	61
<b>Seoul</b>	28 (18%)	24 (16%)	153
<b>Cannes</b>	N/A	91 (32%)	282
<b>Los Cabos</b>	66 (37%)	18 (10%)	180

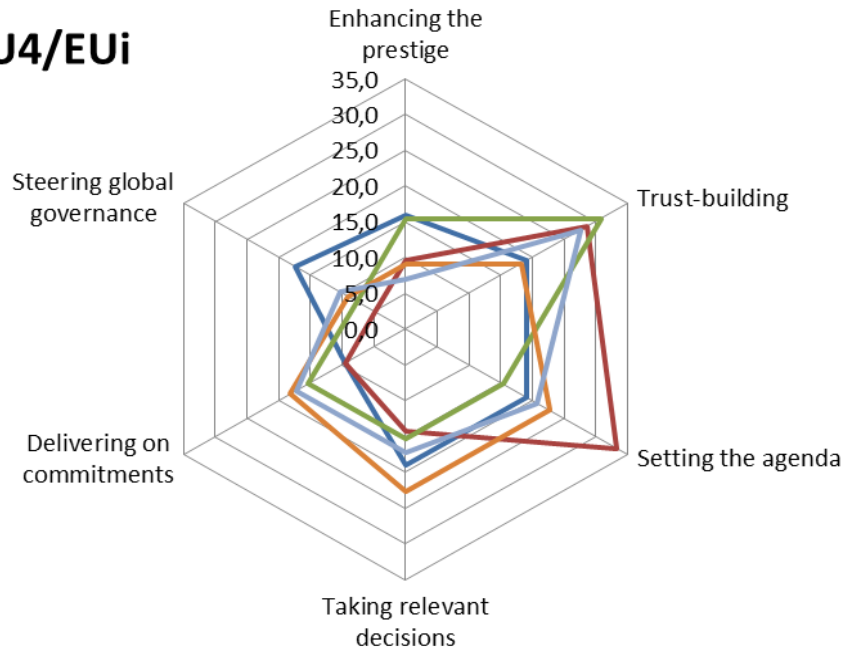
**Table 10. Number of commitments. Source: Kirton, 2013: 438; Compliance reports Seoul, Cannes & Los Cabos (G20 Research Group & IORI, 2011; 2012a; 2012b).**

In the finance realm, the EU4/EUi and the EU23 share more or less the same views, with the only exception that the EU23 attribute a greater agenda-setting role to the G20 than the EU4/EUi. However, an EU23 survey respondent qualifies this by stating that “[t]he G20 in so far as it has a leadership role tries to set the global agenda rather than sets it”. Overall for finance matters, the G20 scores relatively high for those functions which are more relevant to EU23 countries. As Kirton (2013: 39) argues, steering global governance embraces the planet as a whole and taking relevant decisions occurs at the intergovernmental level among the members of the group, but may extend to outsiders as participants or targets of influence.

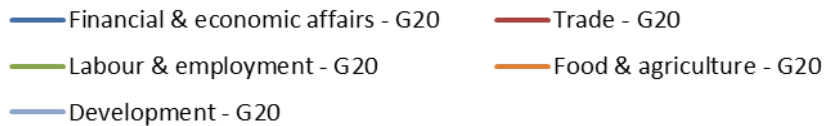
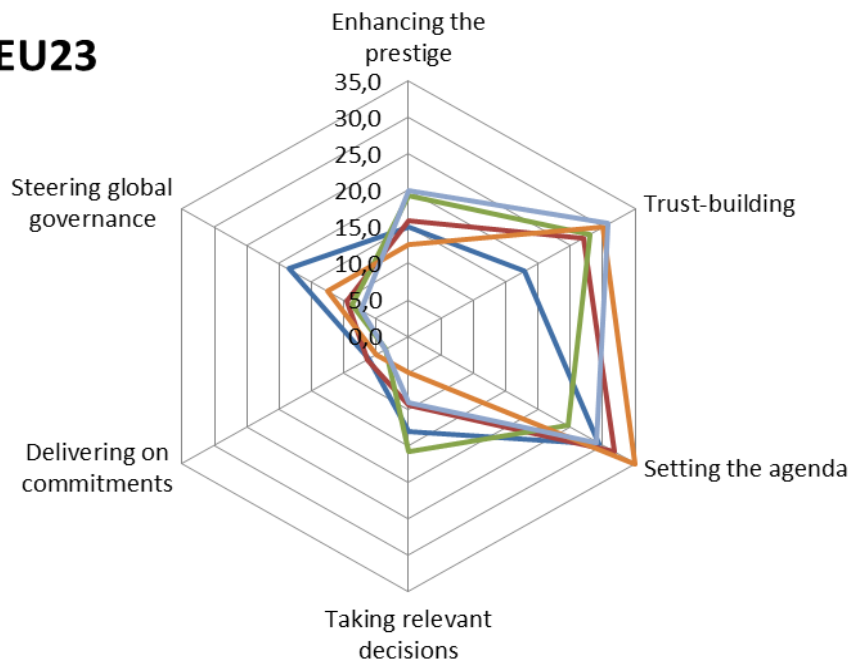
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<sup>62</sup> The G20’s commitments are monitored by the G20 Research Group at the University of Toronto and the International Organizations Research Institute of the National Research University Higher School of Economics. They define a commitment as a discrete, specific, publicly expressed, collectively agreed statement of intent; a promise by summit members that they will undertake future action to move toward, meet or adjust to an identified target.

## EU4/EUi



## EU23



**Graph 15. Functions of G20. Source: survey.**

The survey results show a much more pronounced capacity for the G20 to steer global governance in the finance realm than in any other policy area. As illustrated above, the G20 indeed issues instructions to and even reforms existing international organisations such as the IMF or the FSB. But whether the G20 has actually consolidated its role of steering committee in global governance is still subject for debate (see e.g. Cooper, 2010). For some analysts, providing strategic guidance, vision, and a sense of direction for the global economy is the G20's primary



function (Bradford & Lim, 2011: 4). Especially in 2010 and 2011, when the G20 agenda broadened to include non-financial topics and the focus shifted to longer-term macroeconomic governance, G20-watchers observed a shift from crisis committee to steering committee. Daniel Price, former US G20 sherpa, saw in this evolution the release of a G20 version 2.0 (Price, 2011). More sceptical observers, however, remain doubtful of the G20’s capacity to act as a steering committee because of its problems at both the input and output side (Wade & Vestergaard, 2011; Schirm, 2011: 4; Gnath, Mildner, & Schmucker, 2012). The G20 still excludes the vast majority of the world’s states, even though it represents almost 90% of global GDP. With regard to output, achievements of the G20 including stronger international financial regulation and effective macroeconomic coordination have been portrayed as modest and insufficient (Vestergaard & Wade, 2012).

**Legitimacy**

As mentioned in our analytical framework, EU member states might be reluctant to coordinate if they consider the G20 illegitimate since EU coordination would just help to legitimize the G20. The G20’s legitimacy is indeed considered by EU23 states as highly problematic (Interview #6 and Interview #23). It will always remain an issue for the member states (Interview #61), although they have more or less recognized the G20 as the premier forum for international economic cooperation (Interview #11). However, I have no indications that legitimacy issues negatively influence EU coordination efforts, at least in the area of finance and economics. On the contrary, EU23 finance policy-makers even seem to be more alert for possible ‘illegitimate’ G20 decisions that may influence them. Consequently, they are more likely to insist on EU coordination to know what is coming from a forum with significant legitimacy issues.

**6.5.2. G20 – Development**

Development experts conceive the G20 slightly less relevant as their finance colleagues, but still more than 80% considers the G20 as forum that either gives relevant impulses to or steers global governance. These results are confirmed by interviews showing that not only the EU4, but also the EU23 generally perceive the G20 as highly relevant in the area of development cooperation, especially at the political level. Currently, it is the only arena in which high-level representatives of the old donors club, the OECD-DAC meet regularly with counterparts from the emerging economies to outline strategic directions in development (Schulz, 2011: 2). As a forum for dialogue between old and newly emerging donors, the G20 ‘softens the old borders’ between OECD and non-OECD donor countries, which is seen as one of its key strengths (Interview #22). The main ambition of the traditional donor countries is to engage the emerging



Graph 16. Development experts’ perception of the relevance of the G20 in general. Absolute values included. Source: survey.

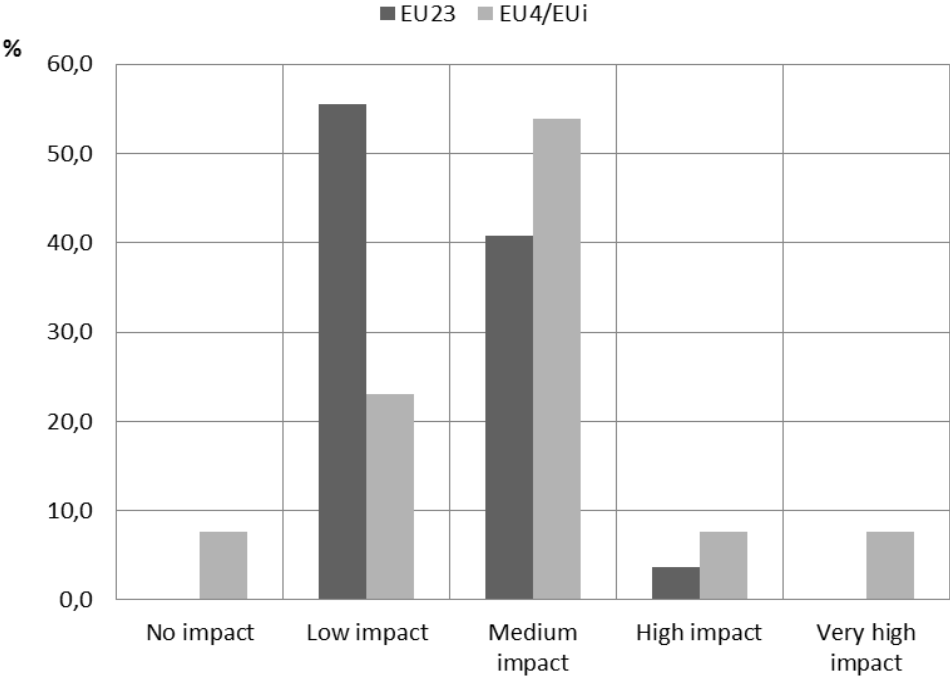
markets as responsible development actors, even if this only results in a voluntary engagement from the BRICs to a non-binding G20 text. Moreover, for some EU member states, the G20 is the ideal forum to “buy them [the BRICs] into the EU’s development agenda” (Interview #19).

The G20’s role in development also has implications on the broader multilateral scene. As it often tasks multilateral development banks and international institutions to produce joint reports, it enhances inter-institutional relations and improves contacts between officials of these development-related institutions (Interview #59). Furthermore, the G20 gives political impulses to negotiation processes in other international institutions such as the discussions in the OECD-DAC on aid effectiveness in the context of the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan (Interview #22).

**Impact**

The impact of the G20’s development agenda on the EU and its member states is significantly lower than in the finance realm. The member states are not directly affected by G20 decisions, not at least because there is no money involved in the G20 MYAP (Interview #59). Furthermore, EU development policy is more advanced than what the G20 does (Interview #17). The G20 is about developing common standards and indicators, identifying obstacles and sharing best practices. Carin (2013) describes the G20 DWG as “a harmless discussion forum attempting to reach a common understanding about good practices”. He also argues that the impact of the DWG is severely constrained because the expertise and assent of the finance ministers is required for most of the potential actions in the development area including on food security, financial inclusion, human resource development and infrastructure. More generally, analysts are not overly positive about the G20’s performance in the development area. Schulz (2011) contends that the G20 development agenda has had so far limited added value to on-going global development processes. Observers describe it as fractured and too broad, lacking a coherent narrative and disconnected from the overall G20 framework (Callaghan, 2013: 2).

The relatively low level of impact on development policy in the EU is also shown in the survey results. More than 95% of the EU23 development experts and 75% of the EU4/EUi



Graph 17. Perceived impact of G20 in development. Source: survey.

experience a low to medium degree of impact. It is important to note that also 27% of the EU23 development experts participating in the survey could not estimate the G20's impact in development and answered "don't know".<sup>63</sup> For finance, this category accounted for 6,9% of the EU23 finance officials. This is particularly high when compared to the EU4/EUi of which none picked the "don't know" option in either case.

### ***Functions***

In the area of development, the G20 is perceived to primarily build trust and foster personal relationships between G20 officials. Graph 15 shows that development experts of the EU4/EUi as well as the EU23 attribute a significant trust-building role to the G20. The G20 brings diverging mind-sets closer and facilitates contacts between officials from the G20 members' administrations (Interview #22). Lim (2011) suggests that the G20 cannot only serve "as the premier forum for international cooperation but also as a premier marketplace for development approaches and practical case studies based on the actual experiences of its member countries". Hence, dialogue, trust and equal partnership are key aspects in this role conception. Besides trust-building, the G20 also seems to play an important agenda-setting role for development cooperation, especially in the eyes of EU23 officials. This is clearly reflected in the survey results as well as in the interviews. Officials have argued that the G20 suggests which sectors are important to focus on and that it has the important capacity to put certain problems on the international agenda (Interview #17 and Interview #22). Both aspects, trust-building and agenda-setting, also figure prominently in an analysis of the G20's role in development by the London-based Overseas Development Institute (Te Velde, 2012). The paper suggests six functions of the G20 in development: identifying gaps in global economic governance; putting the spotlight on development issues; sharing experiences; building trust and consensus; building global norms and standards; improving policy coherence for development. The first five functions represent one or another form of trust-building or agenda-setting. This corresponds completely with the perception of the survey respondents.

### ***Legitimacy***

It can be argued that the G20 has – to a certain extent – filled a gap in global economic governance since no international institution was really able and willing to assume the leadership in tackling the global financial crisis. In the realm of development, in contrast, the G20 seems to be just another player in an already busy international arena. Consequently, the G20 can easily be seen as a competitor for the UN, for example. Nevertheless within the EU, the G20's legitimacy seems to be much less contested for development than for financial and economic matters. It is acknowledged that the G20 is not a legitimate forum, but the increased attention of the world's most important countries to development is welcomed. One interviewee has suggested that the G20's legitimacy has to be found in its output: "when the G20 accomplishes good things, that's fine" (Interview #17). In CODEV, legitimacy of the G20 is thus not really a subject of discussion, although some EU23 countries remain careful in supporting the political agenda of forums in which they do not directly participate (Interview #10).

### **6.5.3. Other G20 cases**

The extent to which the G20 pays attention to a certain issue area does not necessarily determine the degree of relevance of the G20 in that area. For example, since the Pittsburgh Summit in 2009, G20 leaders have put employment at the heart of policies and declared that strengthening growth and creating jobs is a top priority. From 2010 onwards, G20 labour

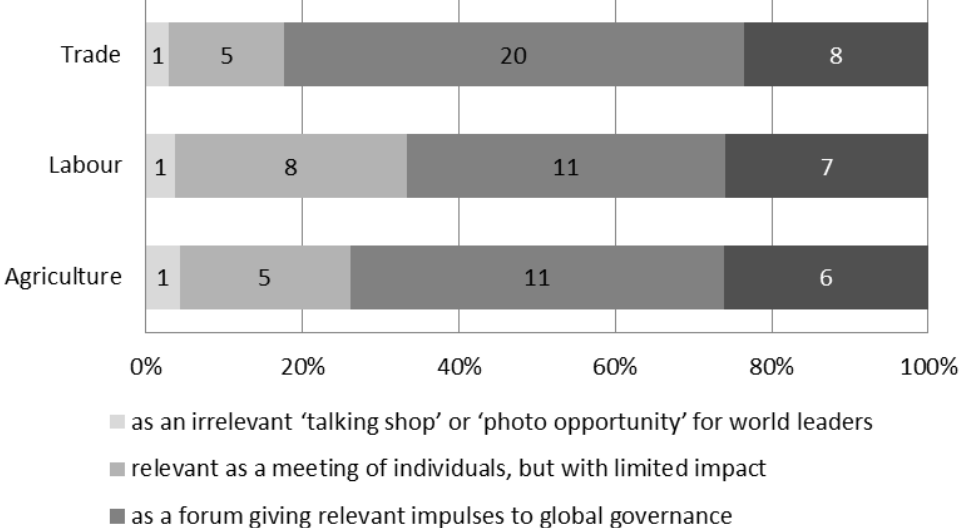
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<sup>63</sup> This category is not shown in the graphs.

ministers have met annually. Nonetheless, one third of the survey respondents working on labour and employment issues consider the G20 as an irrelevant talking shop or only relevant as a meeting of individuals, but with limited impact (see Graph 18). That share is significantly larger than in the G20 finance and development cases.

Regarding commodity price volatility, the French G20 presidency has been very vocal and organised a ministerial meeting on that matter. Unlike its work on development for example, the G20's initiatives in the area of food and agriculture have made media headlines (e.g. Blas, 2011). Though, also in this policy domain, the G20 is seen as less relevant by survey respondents compared to other policy areas.

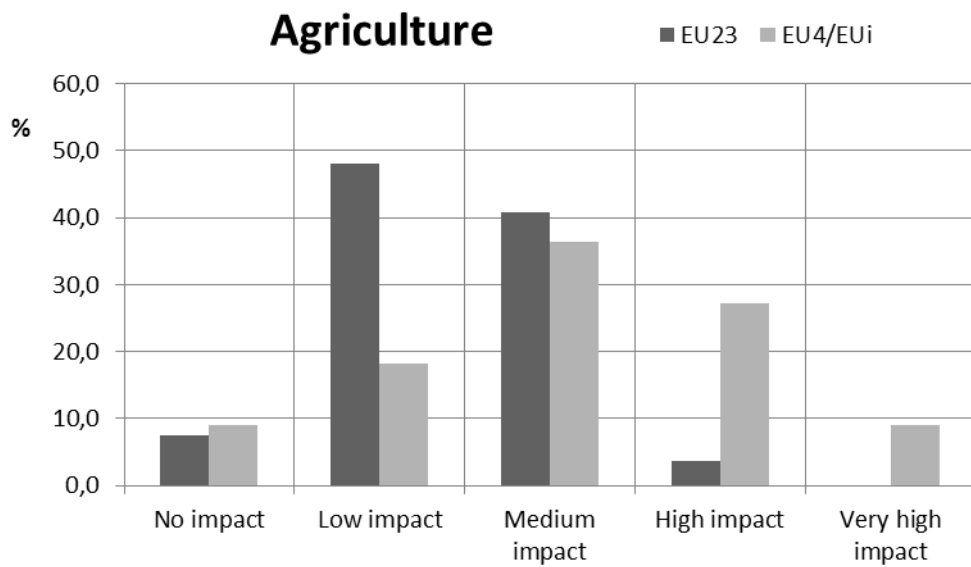
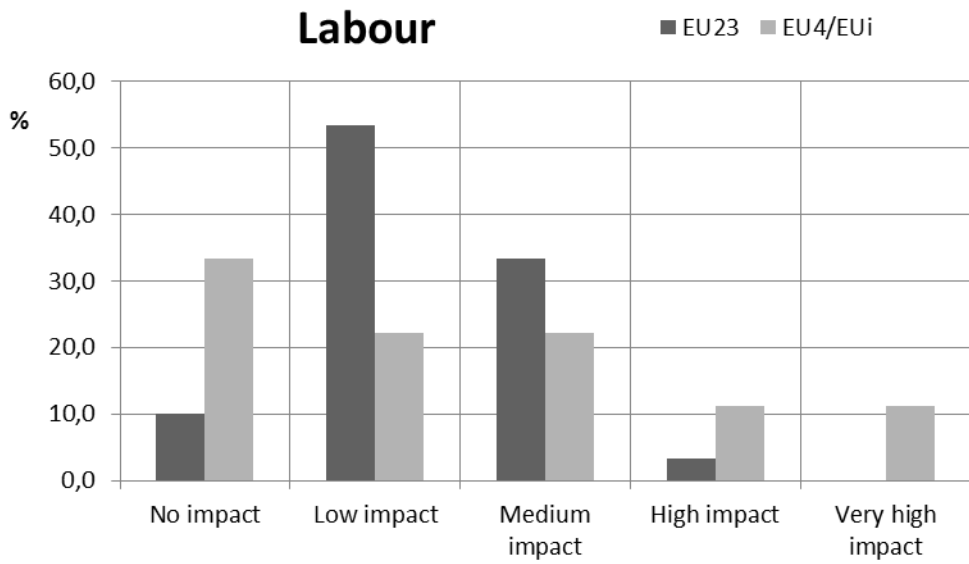
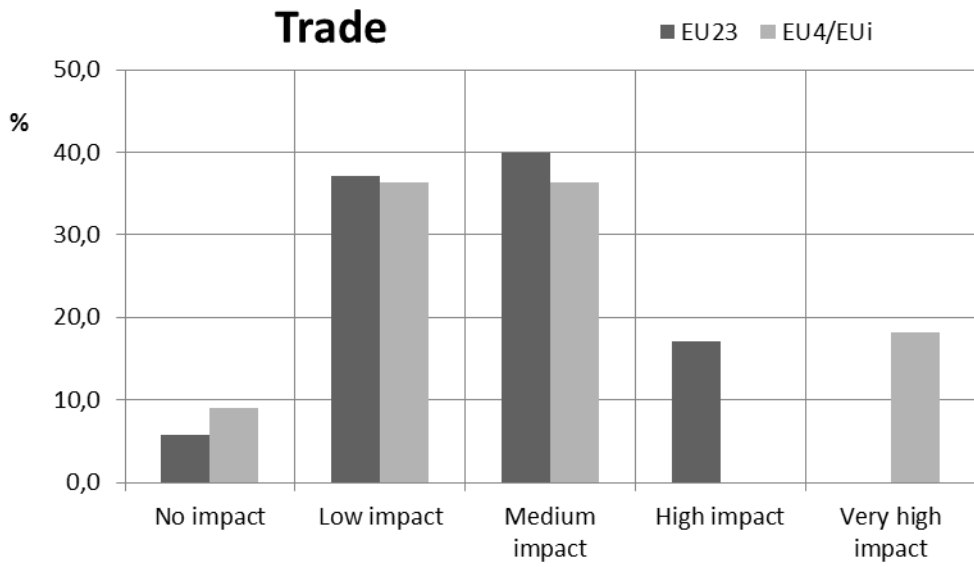
The G20's trade agenda, in contrast, is less developed and less 'institutionalized'. Trade is not discussed in a dedicated working group or ministerial meeting, but by the sherpas. Apart from its anti-protectionism pledge, the G20's track record on trade is rather modest. The G20 has not been able to make meaningful progress on the DDA. But still, survey participants see considerable potential in the G20 as a forum to shape and steer global governance, a response pattern that is similar to the G20 development case.



**Graph 18. Perception of the relevance of the G20 in general, by trade, labour and agricultural experts. Absolute values included. Source: survey.**

**Impact**

The significant minority view among labour specialists that the G20 is either irrelevant or has a limited impact is also reflected in the next question. According to more than half of the EU23 respondents, the impact of the G20 on employment is low. This view is to a considerable extent shared by the EU4/EUi as most respondents experience low impact or no impact at all (Graph 19). A European Commission official agrees in an interview that the impact of the G20 regarding employment is low to none (Interview #61). However, the EU4/EUi are also more divided. Still 20% thinks that the impact of the G20 is high to very high. Compared to labour and employment, the G20's food and agricultural policies are more detailed and entail more specific elements (Interview #61). Consequently in this policy domain, the impact of the G20 appears to be higher, at least according to the EU4/EUi respondents. One EU4 interviewee for example sees an increased attention to agricultural productivity in the meetings of the European ministers of agriculture as a result of the focus by the G20 on this issue (Interview #42). For the EU23, the impact of the G20 in employment and agriculture issues is rather similar, notably low to medium. Finally, the degree of G20 impact in trade matters is perceived as rather low by all survey participants.



**Graph 19. Perceived impact of G20 on labour & employment, food & agriculture and trade. Source: survey.**

## ***Functions***

With regard to the functions of the G20 in the areas of employment, agriculture and trade, it immediately stands out that the EU4/EUi attribute different functions to the G20 depending on the policy domain, while the EU23 respondents assign one dominant role to the G20 (see Graph 15). In employment, agriculture as well as trade, the EU23 chiefly stress the functions of agenda-setting and trust-building. To considerable extent, the G20 also serves to enhance the prestige of the ministers and leaders in their home country. The EU4, in contrast, emphasise other functions and distinguish between different issue areas. The response pattern of the EU4 is also confirmed by several interviews.

As far as labour and employment is concerned, officials stress two main goals or functions. First, the G20 is a forum to exchange knowledge, ideas and best practices (Interview #43 and Interview #86). Rather than coordinating policies, it is about sharing experiences to see which policy actions work. The G20 functions as a place where employment officials meet each other and compare policies. This conception of the G20 refers to the relatively high score on the function trust-building and fostering personal relationships in the survey. Second, G20 labour ministers aim to ensure that employment stays high at the international political agenda (Interview #39, Interview #43 and Interview #62). “As an authoritative body, it is key that the G20 takes employment issues seriously”, as said by an EU4 official (Interview #43). The G20’s political support for issues such as social protection floors contributes to the work of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), while at the same time it is important that also the media pick these messages up (Interview #43). This second functions not only indicates an important agenda-setting role for the G20 but also suggests that the G20 enhances the prestige of the leaders and ministers back home. However only the latter clearly stems from the survey results.

In the field of agriculture, the G20 is more focused on decision-making and keeping track of its commitments. In an interview, a European Commission official argues that there is no other place than the G20 where decision are followed up in such a systematic and detailed way. Every meeting, the G20 members monitor initiative after initiative and identify any new deliverables (Interview #60). The functional profile of the G20 regarding food and agriculture is well summarized by the Mexican deputy minister of agriculture who has stated that “the G20 is a valuable mechanism to analyse experiences, establish priorities, and reach agreement on actions to address global challenges” (Mexican G20 Presidency, 2012b). However, the more the G20 engages in decision-making, the more it risks to evoke criticism from non-G20 countries. A survey participant from an EU23 country has made the following remark:

*“I don’t see the necessity to strengthen a separate platform whereas other international fora with greater participation of countries like FAO or WFP exist. G7, G8 and G20 are more or less discussing platforms for their members but it should be avoided that the big countries dictate their policies on the rest of the world.”*

The counter-argument is that the G20’s relationship with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is complementary where the FAO acts as a think-tank for the G20. Moreover, because of the informal nature and the limited and exclusive membership of the G20, it is said to be possibly more innovative and ambitious (Interview #60).

Finally, for trade issues, the G20 acts foremost as an agenda-setter. This corresponds with the views illustrated above. The G20 gives relevant impulses to global governance, but its specific impact is however relatively limited.

#### 6.5.4. G8 – Development

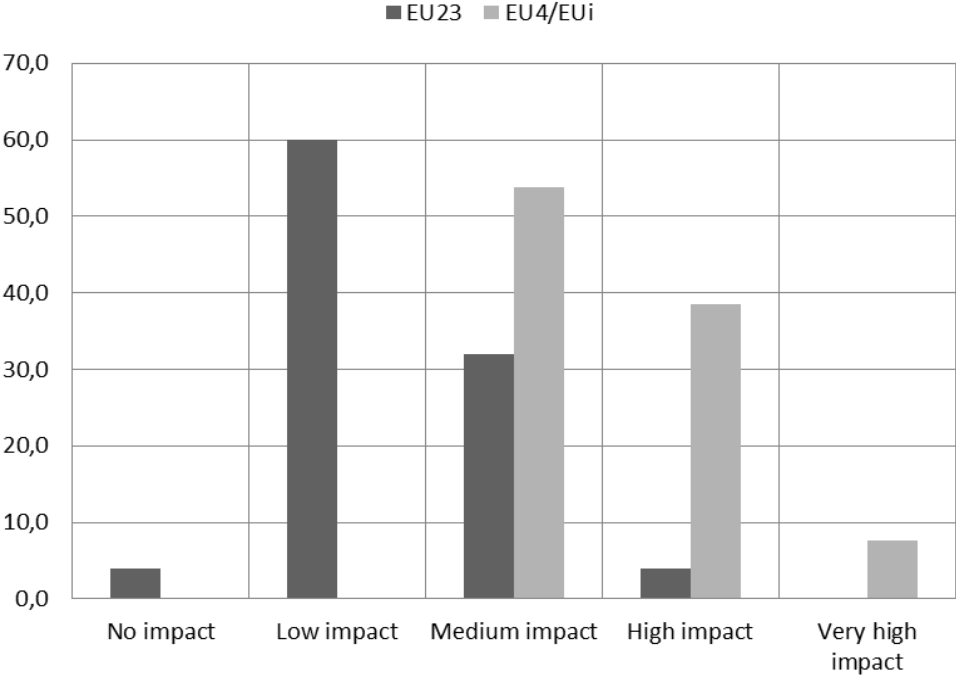
Development cooperation has been a core part of the G8 agenda since its inception in the mid-1970s. Discussing relations with developing countries was even one of the primary goals for the first G8 summit in Rambouillet (see chapter two). The importance of development cooperation for the G8 has been illustrated by Larionova and Rakhmangulov (2012) who found that one third of all commitments ever taken by the G8 is related to development assistance. Although the G8 work on development has received much criticism from civil society, it must be given credit for achieving some real results on aid, debt relief and the pursuit of non-income MDGs (Kharas, 2010).

The survey results confirm that in the area of development the G8 matters. Although the G8 has lost some momentum (Interview #65), still three quarters of the development experts believe that the G8 gives relevant impulses to global governance or acts as a steering committee (see Graph 20). That share accounts for only 60% if we take all respondents across the different policy domains together (see supra). Nevertheless, the G8 appears to be less relevant than the G20 with regard to development. Approximately 25% of the development experts conceive the G20 as a steering body in global governance, while only 10% attribute this role to the G8.



Graph 20. Development experts' perception of the relevance of the G8 in general. Absolute values included. Source: survey.

With regard to the survey respondents' assessment of the impact of the G8, Graph 21 immediately shows the difference between the EU23 and the EU4/EUi. The EU4/EUi claim to experience a rather high impact from the G8 in the development field. This contrasts to the G20 development case where the impact of the G20 seems to be low on the EU4/EUi. In turn, the EU23 feel considerably less affected by the G8, comparable to the G20. As illustrated earlier, the EU's pledges in the G8 context indeed do not involve new money or touch upon the EU23's national budgets, but directly affect the budgets and policies of the EU4. The impact of the G8 on the EU4/EUi may also situate at the discursive and political level. The view by the EU4/EUi respondents may additionally have been informed by the reputation of the G8 as an influential development actor resulting from the 2005 Gleneagles Summit.

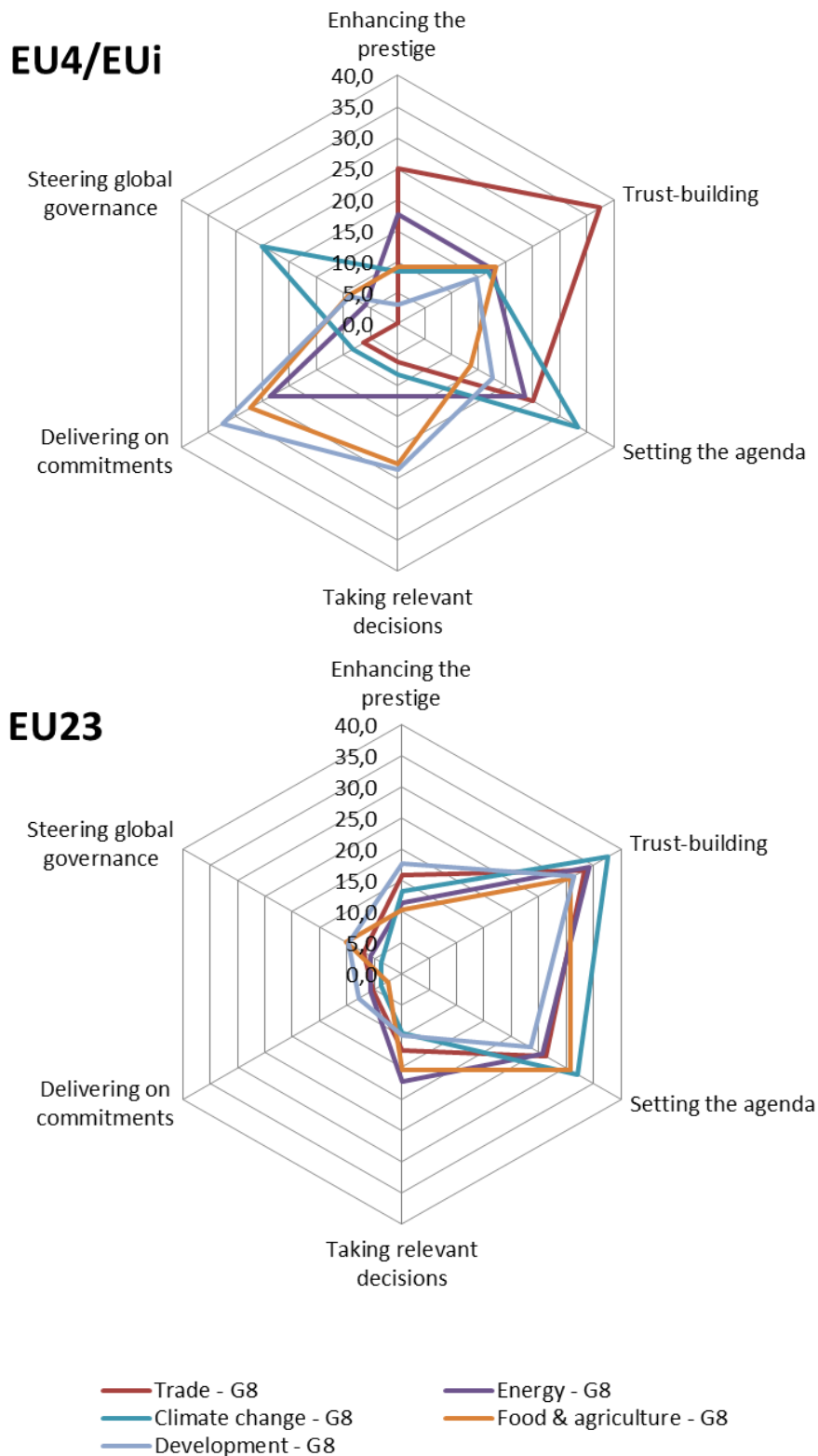


Graph 21. Perceived impact of G8 in development. Source: survey.

**Functions**

With regard to the G8 in the development field, the literature highlights two main functions. First, the G8 is considered as a forum that has the capacity to set the international development agenda. It channels global attention towards certain themes and regions and tries to maintain the momentum to address pressing issues. Cargill, for example, argues that “the value of the G8 [...] has come through its championing of causes [...] and its promotion and endorsement of existing or new initiatives [...] and processes” (2010: 16).





Graph 22. Functions of G8. Source: survey.

Second, observers also identify the G8 with decision-making and the implementation of those decisions. Illustrative is the high share of G8 commitments with regard to development cooperation (Larionova and Rakhmangulov, 2010). Well-known decisions include the elimination of the debts of the poorest developing countries in 2005 and the launch of the Global Fund to

fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Although the G8 has not been able to fully meet its aid pledges, it has raised substantial resources to improve maternal health and played a key role in reversing the previously declining trend in aid to Africa (Kirton, 2010: 24; Cargill, 2010: 14). Nevertheless, compliance in the realm of development has been below the 1996-2008 overall average. Since 1996, the average compliance score on development commitments 72%. This is slightly below the summits' overall average from 1996-2008 of 77.5% (Keachie, Kirton & Guebert, 2010: 5).

These two views on the G8's role in the development area are also reflected in the survey results (Graph 22). According to the EU4/EUi, the G8 primarily takes relevant decisions and delivers on its commitments. This image is also shared by the agriculture experts of the EU4/EUi who work on food security issues. One survey participant working for a European Union institution notes that:

*"In the area in which I work (development, in particular food and nutrition security) the impact of G8 has been strong and commitments have been followed up; on the other hand, the G20 has been far more limited in terms of interest, follow-up and relevance."*

The EU23, in contrast, rather emphasise the roles of agenda-setter and forum trust-building and enhancing personal relations. The EU23 and the EU4/EUi thus hold completely opposite views. But remarkably, and as for the G20, the EU23 do not distinguish between the individual policy domains. The G8's 'functional profile' remains constant over the various areas. And as Graph 15 shows, this also applies, albeit to a slightly lesser extent, to the G20. This might indicate that the EU23's knowledge of the G8 and G20 is limited and superficial. It is telling that on average 14,2% of the EU23 respondents answered "don't know" on this question which only confirms this impression (only 1,5% of EU4/EUi officials answered "don't know").

### ***Legitimacy***

Finally, as far as legitimacy is concerned, the same logic applies as in the G20 development case. Legitimacy concerns do not have any impact on the (low) level of EU coordination for G8 development issues. Although the EU23 do not automatically attribute any relevance to the G8, they know that the G8 cannot be ignored (Interview #1). Thus any effort made by the G8 towards the achievement of the MDGs for example is welcomed. Some EU23 countries also contribute to G8-led initiatives, such as Sweden and the Netherlands in the L'Aquila Food Security Initiative (AFSI, 2012).

### **6.5.5. G8 – Energy/climate**

Based on the survey, the perceived relevance of the G8 with regard to climate and energy does not substantially differ from the G8 relevance in the development field. Especially given the relatively low number of respondents for these subsets<sup>64</sup>, the observed differences are not significant. The majority of the energy and climate experts considers the G8 as a forum that gives relevant impulses to global governance, while one third to one fourth sees the G8 as an irrelevant talking shop or a meeting of individuals with limited impact (see Graphs 23 & 24). The share of respondents that regard the G8 as a steering body accounts for approximately 10% which is less than half of the similar share in any other G20 case.

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<sup>64</sup> For example, 18 officials assessed the relevance of the G8 in the area of energy.

According to Lesage, Van de Graaf and Westphal (2010: 178), “[a]ll observers, including G8 leaders, now agree that the G8 is not capable of shaping the world’s energy future on its own”. The relevance of the G8 in the area of energy and climate is indeed considerably undermined by its composition (Interview #63). The absence of major energy producers and consumers such as China, India and Brazil hinders the G8 to have a balanced debate on energy and climate. Nevertheless, the G8 has been organising dialogue emerging markets through the Heiligendamm Process or the Gleneagles Dialogue, or by involving them in G8 initiatives such as IPEEC. However, these G8-led outreach efforts have been abandoned since the G20’s emergence as the premier forum for international economic cooperation in Pittsburgh, 2009. Alternatively, the G8 is relevant as a forum for thorough discussion and brainstorming (Interview #34).



**Graph 23. Energy experts’ perception of the relevance of the G8 in general. Absolute values included. Source: survey.**



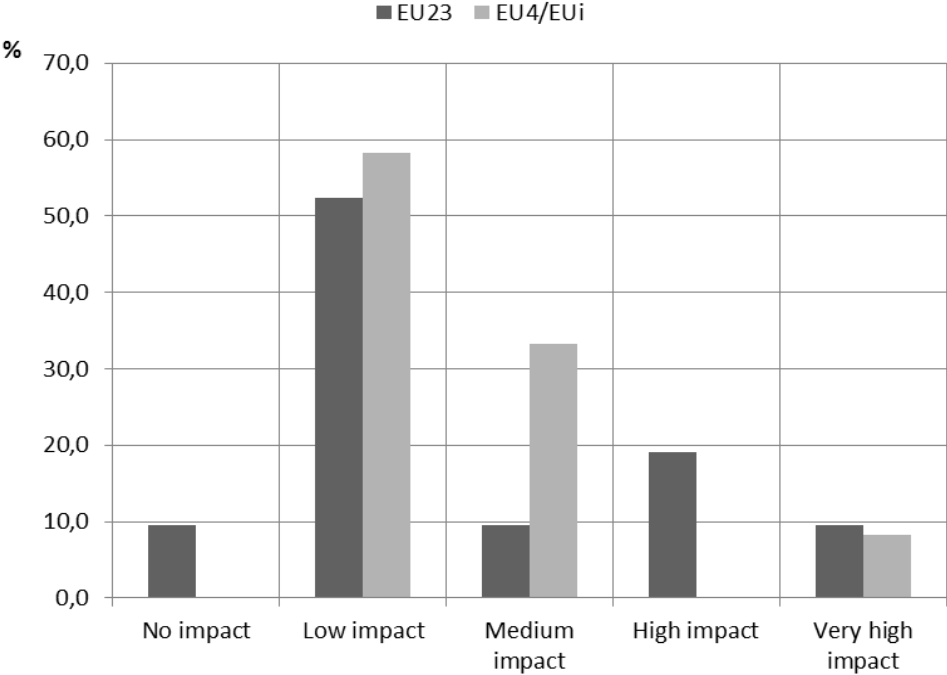
**Graph 24. Climate experts’ perception of the relevance of the G8 in general. Source: survey.**

### *Impact*

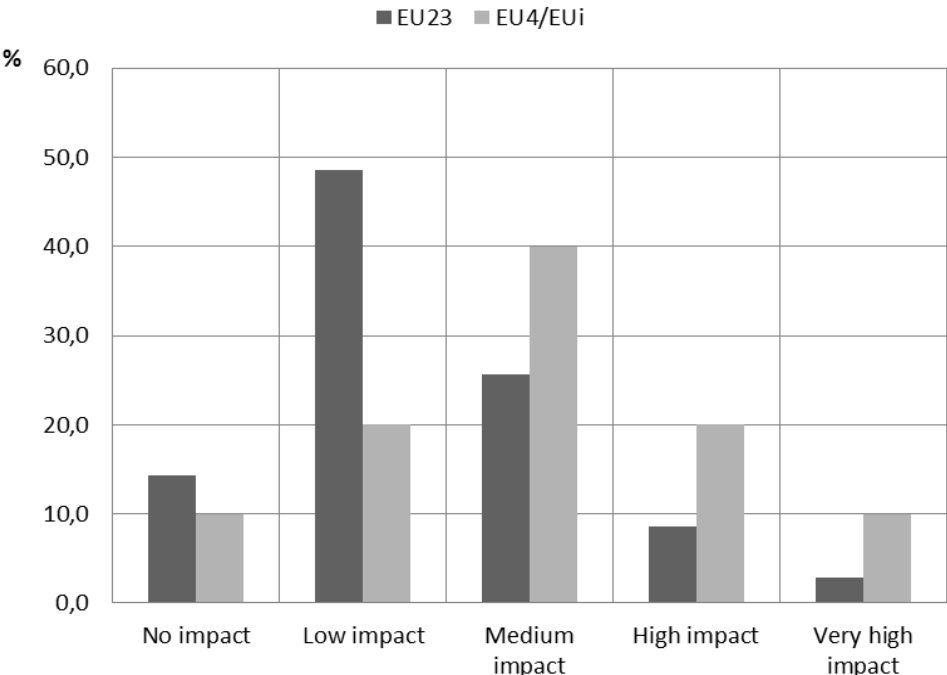
On the one hand, the G8 has taken a couple of substantial decisions with regard to energy and climate change. It has established new institutions such as IPEEC and tasked others to develop scenarios, background documents and policy proposals. By endorsing norms and targets, the G8 has given impulses to multilateral climate change negotiations and contributed to the political momentum. On the other hand, those decisions did not directly affect the policies of the EU and the member states. EU climate policies were much more ambitious and advanced than what has been discussed in the G8 framework. This explains why survey respondents have indicated that they experience a low degree of impact by the G8 in the area of energy and climate change

(Graphs 25 & 26). In the EU23 countries, both energy and climate experts perceive a low degree of impact, similar to their development colleagues. Nevertheless, a few officials report a high or very high impact. As far as the EU4/EUi are concerned, the G8's impact on their energy policies is low, whereas on climate change the G8 impact is perceived as medium. In both areas the G8 impacts appears to be significantly lower than in development.

Rather than through the EU, G8 decisions on energy may affect EU23 countries via the International Energy Agency (IEA). The IEA is regularly tasked by the G8 to implement



Graph 26. Perceived impact of G8 in energy issues. Source: survey.



Graph 25. Perceived impact of G8 in climate issues. Source: survey.

decisions, provide expertise, and monitor progress. G8 measures that trickle down to the IEA are often critically received by EU23 members of the IEA as they were not aware of those decisions, let alone involved in the decision-making process. Consequently, the legitimacy of the G8 on energy matters is an rather issue in the IEA, than in the EU (Interview #63).

### ***Functions***

As said, the EU23 survey respondents do not seem to attribute different functions to the G8 for the individual policy domains (Graph 22). In their view, the G8 is believed to serve mainly as a forum for trust-building and agenda-setting. The EU4/EUi officials agree with the trust-building and agenda-setting role, but assign two additional functions to the G8 in the area of energy of which delivery on its commitments is the most important. On top, the G8 also enhances the prestige of the leaders back home. This is a feature that seem to appears to a much lesser extent in the other policy domains, with trade as the only exception. All energy experts share the view that the G8 is not steering global governance which corresponds with existing research on the G8's role as a steering body in global energy governance. The analysis of Van de Graaf and Westphal (2011) suggests that “the G-clubs have a limited record as global energy steering committees but are nevertheless well placed to take small, incremental steps that bring us closer to a sustainable, low-carbon energy system”.

On climate change, the G8 appears to have a rather distinct profile, at least according to EU4/EUi respondents. Unlike in other policy domains, the G8 steers global environmental governance and sets the international agenda. The G8 endorsement of the 2°C target in 2009 is illustrative here since it is the first time such a target has been formally adopted in a leading international forum (Harvey, 2009). Within the EU, the G8's capacity to steer global environmental governance is not necessarily seen as potentially dangerous. Rather the G8 is used pragmatically to make progress on multilateral climate change negotiations. Although the UNFCCC framework is still seen as the primary forum to negotiate a binding climate agreement, the G8 or G20 could be useful places to create consensus among the key players and prepare for a global climate deal (Interview #29).

Furthermore, EU4/EUi climate experts do not see a role for the G8 as far as the four other functions are concerned. It is however remarkable that the pronounced weight of the ‘steering global governance’-function is not translated into high scores for the delivery and decision-making functions. Nevertheless, G8 climate commitments represent 13% of all commitments from 2005 to 2009, whereas development and health commitments accounted for respectively 9% and 10% over the same time period<sup>65</sup>. This might imply that the G8 steers global environmental governance not by taking relevant decisions, but by setting the agenda. Peichert and Meyer-Ohlendorf (2007) confirm this suggestion by asserting that the G8 summits in 2005 and 2007 “reflect the exertion of strong leadership through consistent political agenda setting”.

### **6.5.6. G7 – Finance**

As soon as the G20 first met at the level of heads of state and government in November 2008, observers predicted the end of the smaller and less representative G7 (The Economist, 2008). In particular when the G20 proclaimed itself as the premier forum for international economic cooperation in September 2009, former IMF managing director Dominique Strauss-Kahn stated that the G7 is on its way to extinction (Torchia, 2009). By the end of 2009, this was indeed the prevailing opinion among policy makers, especially from non-G7 countries. One EU23 interviewee argued in March 2010 that the G7 was increasingly losing relevance. It was only

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<sup>65</sup> Own calculations based on Kirton & Guebert (2009) and Keachie, Kirton & Guebert (2010)

concerned with general analyses and issued statements on the economic situations and exchange rates, which were often meaningless and without much impact on the financial markets (Interview #5). However, the G7 soon reaffirmed its role as an important group in global economic governance by for example a joint intervention in exchange markets after the earthquake in Japan early 2011 (Harding & Cookson, 2011).

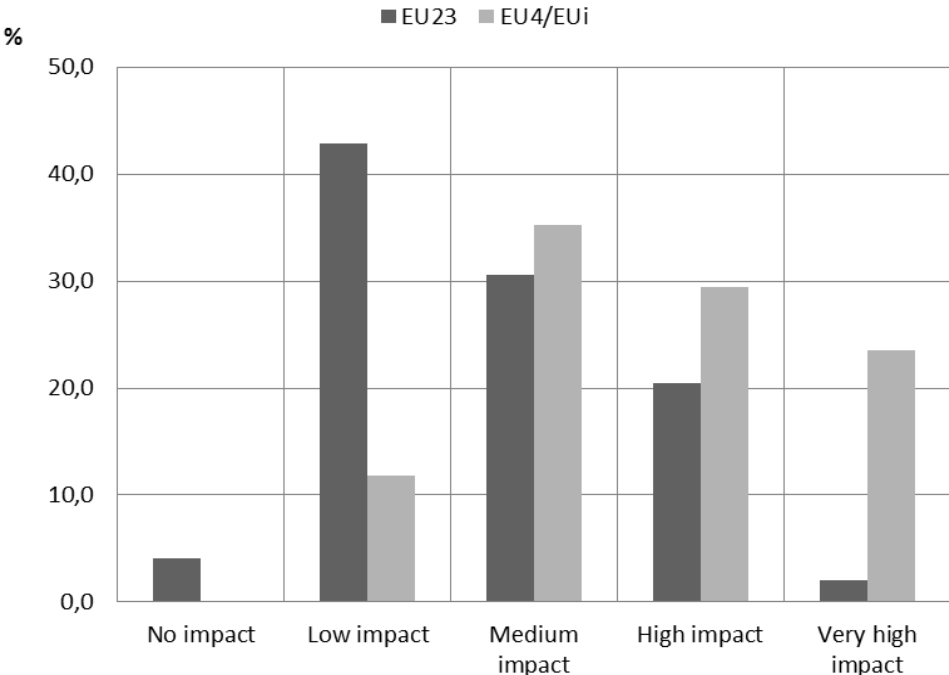
Both views are clearly reflected in the survey results. On the one hand, 40% of the finance experts consider the G7 relevant as a meeting of individuals, but with limited impact (Graph 27). No other case in this study has a higher share of respondents that have picked this category. On the other hand, the G7 is still seen as a steering body in global governance by more than 20% of the respondents working on financial and economic matters. This is not as much as for the G20, but significantly more than for the G8.



Graph 27. Finance experts' perception of the relevance of the G7 in general. Absolute values included. Source: survey.

**Impact**

This divide also stems from the scores for the impact question. A trend can be observed towards a low to medium degree of impact, which confirms the considerable number of respondents that perceive the G7 relevant as a meeting of individuals, but with limited impact



Graph 28. Perceived impact of G7. Source: survey.

(Graph 28). However, it would be wrong to state that the impact of the G7 is negligible. Half of the EU23 respondents experience a medium to high degree of impact and half of the EU4/EUi survey participants perceive a high to very high impact.

Since the G7 does not work towards clear policy objectives and deliverables – or at least does not release them publicly (Baker, 2006: 117) – , its impact is less visible. Nevertheless the G7 remains an influential body as a caucus group in the G20. As mentioned, the G7 had a large stake in the G20's decision to reform the IMF's executive board by two fewer advanced European seats. What is more, the G7 might even play a role in internal EU decision-making. Often, important policy measures are talked through in the G7 context (in particular between the EU4 and the US) before they are put forward within the EU<sup>66</sup>.

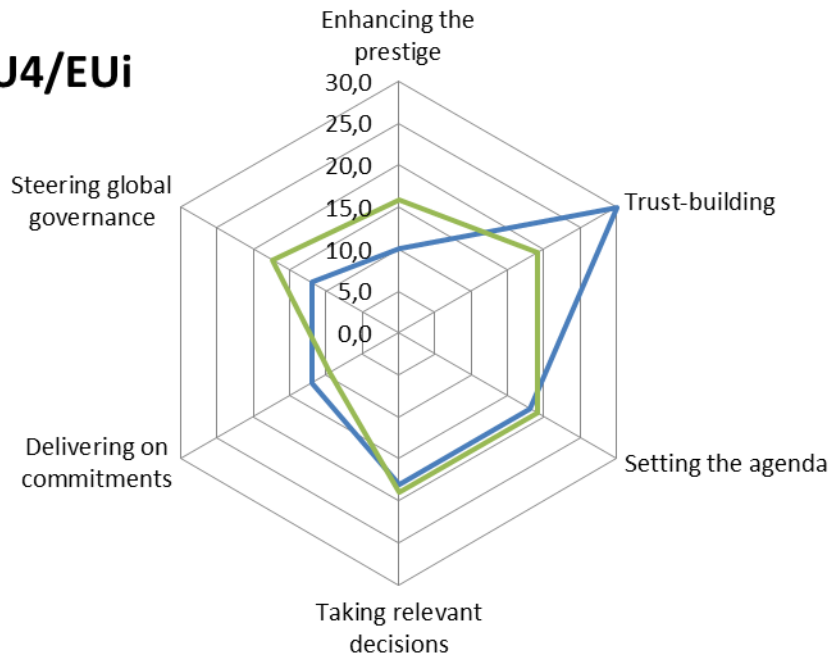
### ***Functions***

In his seminal work on the G7, Baker (2006, 117) argues that “the G7 process has proved effective in raising consciousness, setting agendas, creating networks and lighting fires under civil servants and bureaucrats”. He concludes that, given the G7's limited decision-making role, less emphasis can be placed on issues of compliance and delivery on its commitments. When looking at the survey results (Graph 29), this image of the G7 can only be confirmed. Both EU23 and EU4/EUi finance officials emphasise the role of the G7 in trust building and enhancing personal relationships. Since the G7 gathers a very limited number of officials who share similar professional and educational backgrounds in a highly informal setting, it is not surprising that G7 deputies tend to be “on first name terms” (Baker, 2006: 115). In this respect, the G7 clearly differs from the G20. According to survey participants from the EU23 as well as the EU4/EUi, the G7 is more aligned with the G20 in terms of agenda setting and taking relevant decisions. Although the G7 is typically not associated with explicit decision making, this function does quite prominently appear in the responses of the EU4/EUi. This is probably because, first, G7 participants are obviously more aware of decisions that are taken in the G7 context. Second, the G7 central banks tend to act when necessary and take decisions that have real impact. For example, Fratzscher (2008) has found that the G7 has been fairly effective in managing the exchange rates of the US dollar, the yen and the euro.

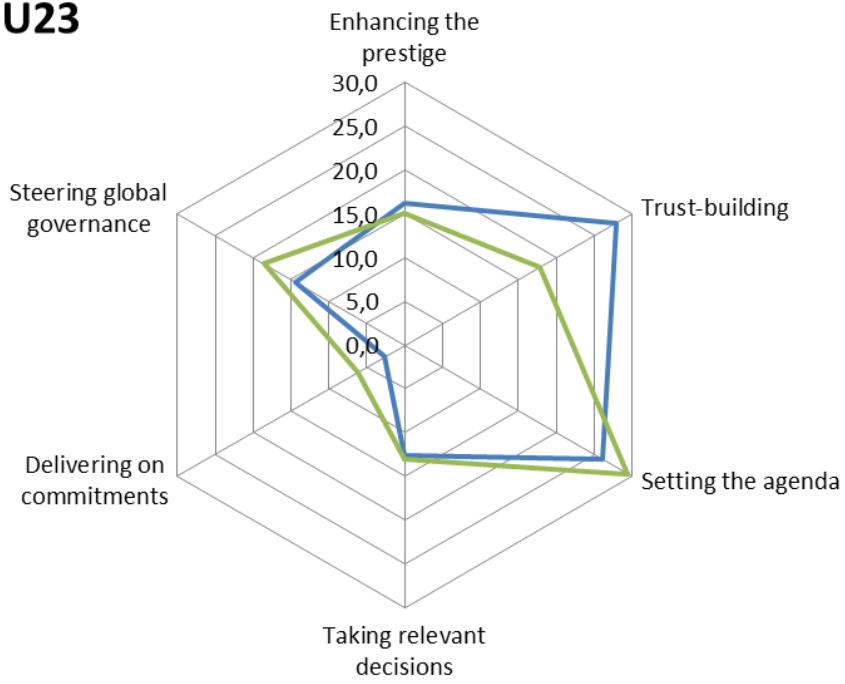
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<sup>66</sup> Personal notes from conference on the challenges for the Netherlands and Belgium in the changing international financial architecture, Clingendael, Den Hague, 22 October 2012.

### EU4/EUi



### EU23



— Financial & economic affairs - G7    — Financial & economic affairs - G20

Graph 29. Functions of G7 and G20 in financial and economic affairs. Source: survey.



**Table 11. Summary of the general findings on the relevance variable.**

Cases	General relevance	Impact		Functions	
		EU23	EU4/EUi	EU23	EU4/EUi
G20 - Finance		Medium – high	High – very high	Steering, agenda-setting	Steering
G7 - Finance		Low – high	Medium – very high	Trust-building, agenda-setting	Trust-building
G20 - Agriculture		Low – medium	Medium	Agenda-setting, trust-building	Decision-making
G20 - Labour		Low	None – low	Trust-building	Trust-building
G20 - Trade		Low – medium	Low – medium	Agenda-setting, trust-building	Agenda-setting, trust-building
G20 - Development		Low – medium	Medium	Trust-building, agenda-setting	Trust-building
G8 - Climate		Low	Medium	Trust-building, agenda-setting	Steering, agenda-setting
G8 - Energy		Low	Low	Trust-building	Delivery, agenda-setting
G8 - Development		Low	Medium - high	Trust-building	Delivery, decision-making

### 6.5.7. Concluding remarks

The rich empirical data that has been provided in this section is summarized in the overview Table 11. The cases are ranked by their degree of coordination from most interactive (group decision-making) to least interactive. In this way, the table demonstrates that all three indicators of the Gx relevance variable correlate with the level of internal EU coordination, at least as far as the EU23 are concerned.

First, the degree of impact experienced by the EU23 corresponds with the level of EU coordination. The G20 finance case is the only case in which the EU23 are to a medium-high degree affected by the G20. Correspondingly, coordination in the entire G20 finance case takes the form of group decision-making. The impact of the G7 on the EU23 is still considerable, albeit not as high as the G20. EU coordinates for the G7 is also a group decision-making process, although the EU does not coordinate for all G7 agenda items. Cases with less impact such as the G8 cases similarly imply less interactive coordination processes. This observed correlation is likely to point at a causal link too. An EU23 survey participant stated that “at least in files/topics that have impact on internal EU-decision making the EU Member States that participate should consult with all Member States and relevant EU-institutions before G7/8 en G20 meetings take place”. In this way, it is very difficult to treat impact separately from the interests variable. It might be theoretically possible to identify areas that are not considered as vital by the EU23, but in which the Gx does have some impact. However, in practice, the findings on both concepts quasi fully overlap. Especially in those cases where they have vital interests at stake, the EU23 countries experience a high degree of impact and vice versa. Second, internal EU coordination is also related to the functions that the EU23 attribute to the Gx. The more a Gx forum acts as a forum for trust-building and developing personal relations, the lower the degree of coordination. Conversely, the more the Gx is perceived as a steering body in global governance, the more EU coordination is organised as an interactive process.

The EU4/EUi, in turn, have a much more nuanced view on the relevance, impact and functions of the Gx. Moreover, neither the impact, nor the functions of the Gx correlate with the degree of coordination. For example on development, the impact by the G8 on the EU4/EUi is experienced as medium to high. In this domain, the G8 is mainly seen as a forum that produces relevant decisions and delivers on its commitments. Nevertheless, EU coordination in the G8 development case is almost non-existent. According to the EU4/EUi, the G8 is a steering committee and sets the international agenda in the area of climate change. In this role, it has a medium impact on the EU4/EUi. Still, the level of internal EU coordination in this area remains very low. These findings suggest that the EU23's perception of the relevance of the Gx is more important in determining EU coordination than the perception of the EU4/EUi. In case the EU23 attribute a low level of relevance and impact to the Gx, the EU4/EUi are not inclined to coordinate with the EU23, even though they might consider the Gx as relatively relevant (e.g. G8 development and climate cases). It appears that the EU4/EUi are not going to coordinate if the EU23 do not ask for it. Consequently, and as suggested in the analytical framework, the relevance hypothesis can only be confirmed with regard to the EU23.

In chapter three, the suggestion has also been raised that the legitimacy concerns related to the Gx might hinder EU coordination. EU member states might be reluctant to coordinate if they consider the G20 illegitimate since EU coordination would just help to legitimize the G20. Our findings indicate that legitimacy issues do not negatively influence EU coordination efforts. On the contrary, EU23 policy-makers even seem to be more alert for possible ‘illegitimate’ G20 decisions that may influence them. Consequently, they are more likely to insist on EU coordination to know what is coming from a forum with significant legitimacy issues.

In addition, two other points should be raised. First, the assessment by the EU23 survey participants of the Gx functions provided very interesting results. The EU23 do not distinguish between the individual policy domains and assign one dominant role conception to the Gx which focuses heavily on trust-building and agenda setting. In contrast, according to the EU4/EUi, the Gx functions differ depending on the policy area. On the one hand, it is normal that officials from Gx member countries and the EU institutions have a better knowledge of the Gx than their colleagues from non-Gx countries. They should be better placed to provide a nuanced and accurate description of the Gx role and functions. On the other hand, I expected that also the responses of EU23 survey participants would have been more diverse. Now, the survey results imply that for example a Portuguese development official and a Swedish energy official attribute almost exactly the same the functions to the G8 in their respective policy domains. What is more, the functions of the G8 largely resemble those of the G20, although the functions for the latter seem to be slightly more diverse.

As said, this might indicate that the EU23’s knowledge of the G8 and G20 is limited and superficial. This could be a cause as well as an effect of the generally low level of EU coordination. According to the EU23’s idea of the Gx as forums for trust-building and agenda-setting, it is understandable that the EU23 would not feel the need to engage in intensive coordination processes. Alternatively, based on the general briefings by the EU G8 sherpa in COREPER, it is difficult for EU23 countries to construct a detailed image of what the G8 is and does. Moreover, those briefings are directed at the member states’ permanent representatives in COREPER and do not necessarily reach EU23 officials working specifically on individual policy domains, let alone officials that are based in the capitals.

Second, the survey results in this section should not be over-analysed. Given the limited number of survey respondents for each individual case, the differences across the various cases may not be over-estimated. These findings provide a general understanding of Gx relevance, but cannot account for precise differences in EU coordination between the cases. EU coordination processes for trade and development in the G20 have different characteristics and are embedded in different contexts, although both cases are approximately equally relevant. Conversely, major differences in relevance do not necessarily imply completely opposite coordination practices. In the area of labour and employment, the G20 is considered as rather irrelevant without much impact. Still, EU coordination in this domain is more interactive than for example in the G20 development cases. To explain these peculiarities, other factors are to be taken into account.

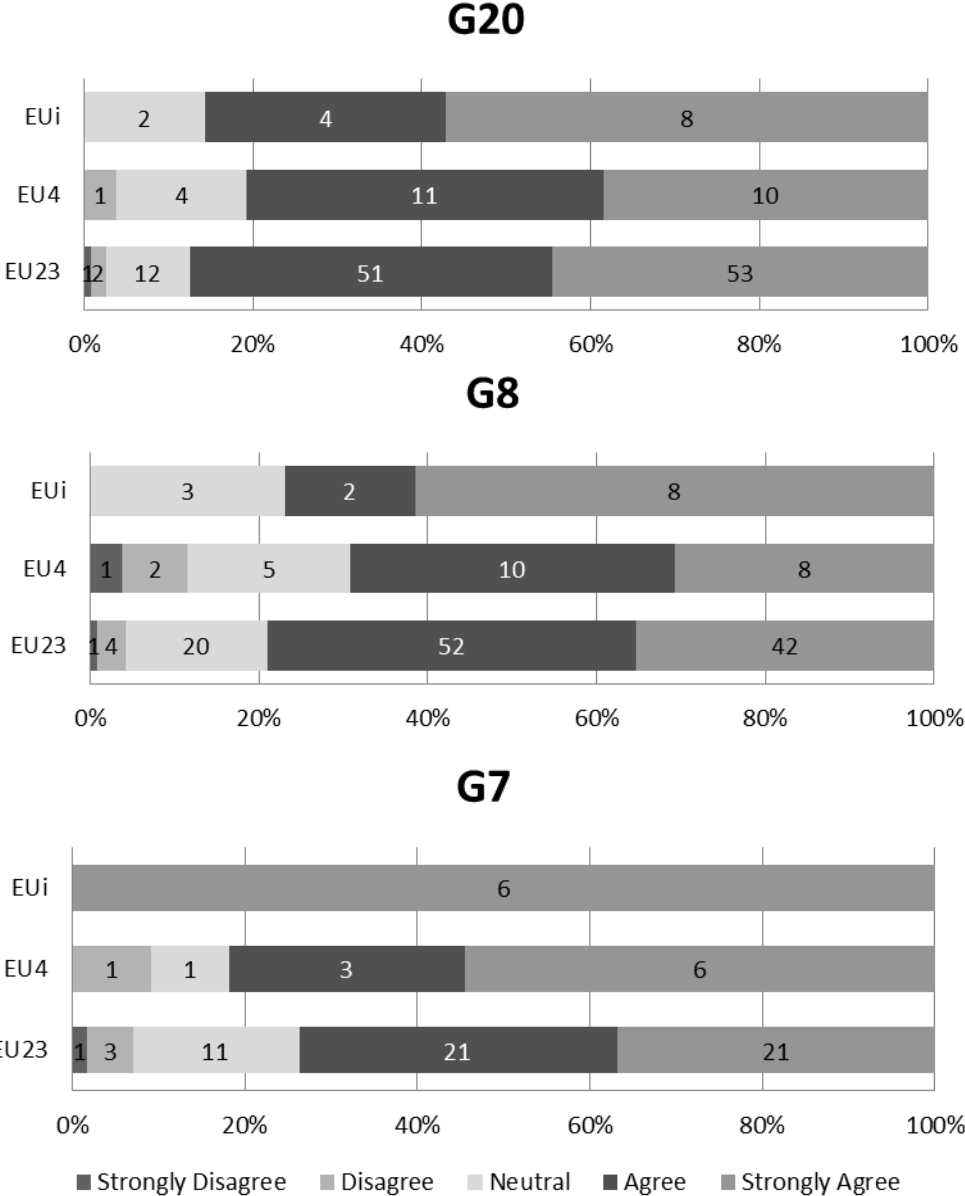
**6.6. Hypothesis 5: EU influence**

**Hypothesis 5**  
 There will be more coordination if the EU is seeking greater influence over the Gx processes and outcomes.

Empirical analysis for this fifth hypothesis is – among other sources – based on the survey. The survey respondents were asked to what extent they agree with the statement "A common EU position strengthens the EU's influence in the G7, G8 or G20". First of all, it should be noticed that presenting a common position in the Gx does not necessarily imply prior internal EU coordination among all member states. A common position may for example also follow from coordination between the EU4 countries in the margin of Gx meetings. So we cannot simply conclude that there is also a broad support for internal EU coordination. To make any meaningful conclusions, these results will be complemented and compared with interviews.

Overall, there seems to be a broad support for this statement as at least 70% of all respondents across the three forums agreed or strongly agreed (Graph 30). Still, some differences

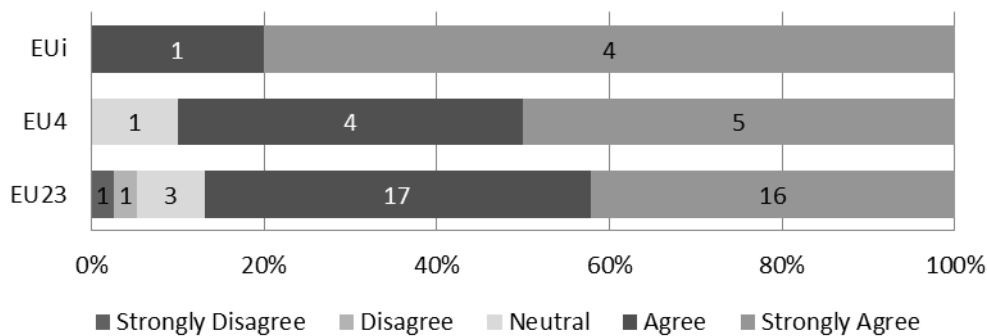
can be observed between the EU23, the EU4 and the EU institutions. According to the EU23, this statement applies most for the G20 and least for the G7. In contrast, the EU4 respondents believe that a common EU position pays off more in the G7 than in the G20. In the context of the G8, the EU4 are most reluctant to agree that a common EU position strengthens the EU's influence. As expected, officials from the EU institutions are most convinced that a common position leads to greater influence in the Gx. For the G7, every EUi respondent strongly agrees that a single EU voice yields the greatest influence. However, these survey results only show a general trend. When analysing the individual answers, interesting patterns can be discerned for the different policy areas. I will elaborate on this below.



**Graph 30. Survey question: To what extent do you agree with the statement "A common EU position strengthens the EU's influence in the G7, G8 or G20". Absolute values included. Source: survey.**

### 6.6.1. G20 – Finance

Maximizing the influence over G20 finance outcomes is definitely a motivation for the EU4 to engage in prior EU coordination for the G20. France, Germany, Italy and the UK use the EU and their EU membership as a key instrument to weigh on G20 processes in the finance track (Interview #28). EU4 finance officials confirm that an EU position amplifies their national voices in the G20 and increases the likelihood ‘to get something out of it’ (Interview #40 and Interview #41). Before attending the G20 meetings, they consider it useful to level out the different views in the EU in order not to be picked off on small internal differences by other G20 members (Interview #45). This view is also confirmed in the survey by the opinion of the finance experts on the statement "A common EU position strengthens the EU's influence in the G7, G8 or G20" (Graph 31).<sup>67</sup>



**Graph 31. Finance experts’ answers to survey question: To what extent do you agree with the statement "A common EU position strengthens the EU's influence in the G20". Absolute values included. Source: survey.**

Within the European Commission, it is also believed that the EU should work towards a consolidated position in the G20 to be more effective (Interview #54). For example on tax evasion, the Commission has stated that “[t]he EU should agree on an ambitious and coordinated position to make automatic exchange of information a global standard guiding international taxation”. By speaking with one voice in the G8, G20 and OECD, the EU might secure a firm commitment from its G20 partners to the development of new international rules that takes into account existing EU arrangements for automatic information exchange (European Commission, 2013a).

Also other international developments made the EU realize that internal coordination is necessary to influence the debate. The Copenhagen climate change conference in December for example opened the eyes of the EU as it was side-lined by the US and emerging powers in the final negotiations on a global climate accord. As a follow-up at the informal European Council meeting of 11 February 2010, the 27 heads of state and government decided to improve the European preparation for G20 meetings to strengthen the role of the EU in the G20 (Van Haver, 2010).

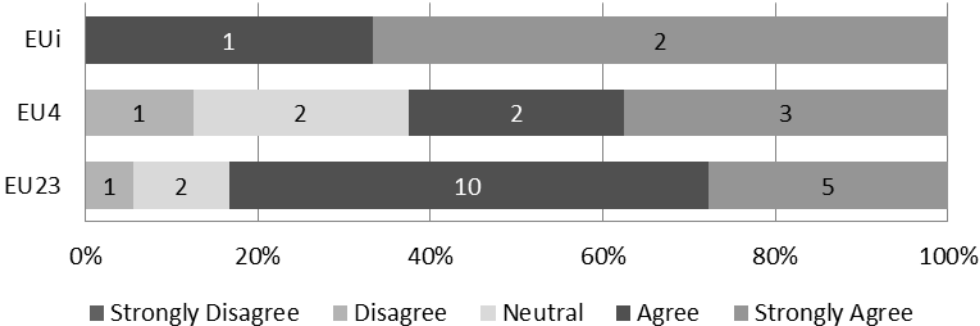
To increase their influence over G20 finance outcomes, the EU G20 participants also coordinate on the spot. In the margin of G20 finance meetings, the EU participants coordinate systematically, often facilitated by the European Commission. They regularly share information and discuss their negotiation tactics and the ‘choreography of interventions’ (Interview #32),

<sup>67</sup> One should be aware that the respondents were not asked for their opinion on this statement in the finance area, but in the Gx in general. Nevertheless, since finance experts are most familiar with the Gx work on finance, some careful conclusions can be drawn on their view about the EU’s influence due to a common position. This remark also applies to the other policy areas.

especially if strong opposition is expected. For example, G20 language on the situation in the euro area and the role of the ECB is carefully drafted by the European participants in the G20. Often, for strategic reasons, the EU4/EUi propose a common language which is used as a starting point for the G20 discussions. In this way, the EU avoids to end up with language listing the other G20 members' demands and solutions for the euro crisis (Interview #31). Beside opposition strength, also the topic, the dynamics of the discussions and the level of detail in the Terms of References determine the frequency and intensity of these additional informal coordination meetings. However, the EU and its member states in the G20 refrain from presenting themselves as one bloc. Although they may coordinate informally behind the scenes, they do not "present it as such" (Interview #40). One has to be careful "not to be too obvious" (Interview #45). Therefore, at least in finance meetings, not all EU4 countries take the floor for every topic.

**6.6.2. G20 – Development**

Unlike their finance counterparts, EU4 officials participating in and close to the G20 DWG workings do not believe that EU coordination maximizes the EU's influence in G20 development talks, on the contrary. In the G20, the EU participants want to break with the classical dividing line between the G77 and the G7. Dialogue and partnership with emerging markets seems to be the highest priority. In this context, it is believed that a strong EU position on development in the G20 would give the wrong signal to the emerging powers. By presenting itself as one bloc, the EU might alienate the BRICS and undermine efforts to engage them in a development discourse (Interview #31, Interview #37 and Interview #44). One official has argued that even if the EU would coordinate for the G20 DWG, the impact would be limited. China would for example just take note of any common EU principles, without letting them influence the end-result or its own policies (Interview #46). In addition, the EU's role as international aid donor is not the central concern of the G20 countries since the G20 does not make any commitments for official development assistance (Young, 2010). Consequently, the EU4 do deliberately not encourage to express strong EU positions to be able to build the necessary bridges with emerging markets. These EU4 concerns are nicely reflected in the survey results (Graph 32). Compared to their colleagues in other policy areas, the EU4 development experts who participated in the survey are least convinced that a common EU position strengthens the influence of the EU in the G20. Even though only eight EU4 development experts have answered this question, it clearly confirms the idea that has been raised during the above-mentioned interviews.



**Graph 32. Development experts' answers to survey question: To what extent do you agree with the statement "A common EU position strengthens the EU's influence in the G20". Absolute values included. Source: survey.**

The European Commission is expected to be supportive, but not to present a formal EU position (Interview #37). Interviews reveal that the Commission accepts this role and that the argument of not confronting the emerging powers is also the prevailing line within the Commission's development services (Interview #64). Therefore, the Commission does not explicitly pursue its Agenda for Change in the G20 DWG. The EU initiatives, for instance on green growth, are put forward by the EU4 rather than European Commission (Interview #37). Other EU initiatives and policies, such as the EU's agenda on Policy Coherence for Development, are considered by EU4 officials as internal EU matters which should not be simply translated to the rest of the G20 (Interview #31). So even though the European Commission can rely on an extensive array of existing development policies, it does not necessarily use them explicitly in the G20 context. In the words of an EU4 official, EU processes on development are not used for new G20 development processes (Interview #36).

The Commission's position is surprising given that it is traditionally a strong advocate of more EU coordination on development (Baroncelli, 2011). The low level of internal coordination for development also stands out against the intensive coordination efforts of the EU in the context of other international development conferences such as the Busan High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in 2011 or the conferences on Financing for Development in Monterrey 2002 and Doha 2008 (Council of the European Union, 2001; 2008e; 2011g). Moreover, this attitude does not fully correspond with the survey results. Although EUi respondents working on development agree slightly less with the statement than their finance colleagues, they still seem to be largely convinced that a common EU position strengthens the EU's influence in the G20.

### **6.6.3. Other G20 cases**

In contexts such as the ILO where the goal is to negotiate new labour standards, EU coordination may then be helpful to maximize the influence of the EU and its member states over ILO negotiation outcomes. In contrast, EU coordination in the framework of the G20 is less appropriate. The G20 talks on labour and employment aim at exchanging experiences and learning from each other. Labour and employment policies tend to vary considerably across different countries and each state has its own instruments, institutions and policy nuances. In this setting, bringing several different perspectives to the table is more beneficial to the discussions than when the EU and its member state would present a single position. In the survey, an EU4 labour expert noted that:

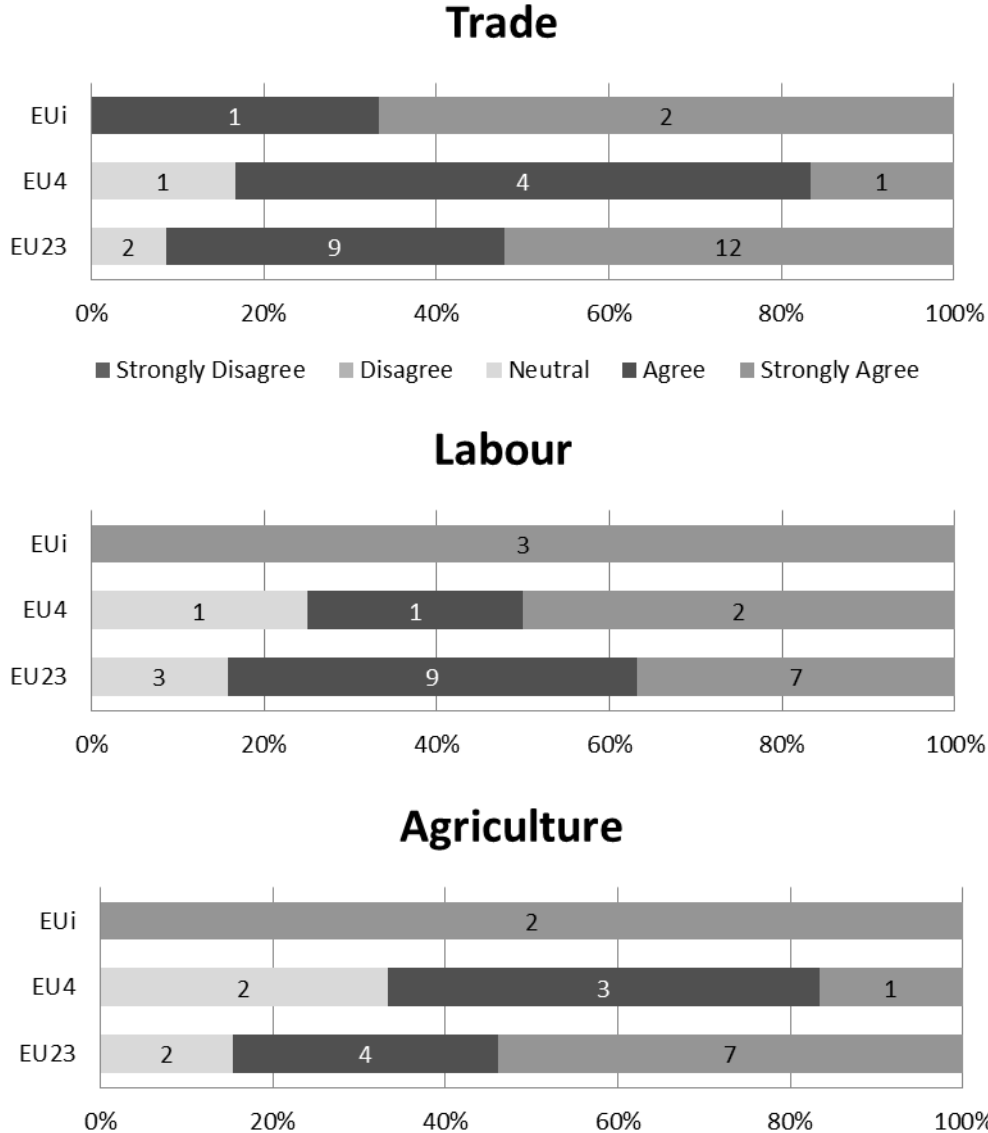
*“EU coordination should remain appropriate to what are informal organisations - complementing the 'G' processes with an outreach perspective from all EU MS, focusing on general principles and leaving individual Member States freedom to engage in G8 and G20 meetings in ways appropriate to individual country circumstances”.*

Hence, the EU4 countries speak on their own behalf, while the European Commission presents its point of view and the experiences within the EU23. It has a good grasp of what lives in the member states and what does and does not work (Interview #43). As no “obvious strongly coordinated position” (Interview #86) is presented, the other G20 members “do not really notice” (Interview #43) that the EU coordinates in advance.

Maximizing influence was not the main concern to coordinate for food and agriculture ahead of the first G20 agriculture ministerial meeting. Instead, developing the EU Guidelines were meant “to do damage control” in the EU (Interview #36). To make the first G20 ministerial meeting on agriculture a success, France, holding the G20 presidency in 2011, deemed it necessary to check its initiative with existing EU policy. France wanted to ensure that if any problem arose, it would not be with the EU. Additionally, several EU4 states wanted to avoid

that the G20 would influence the CAP reform debate. Therefore, the EU4 believed that if they went to the G20 as a unified front, they would run the risk to confront the G20 partners, which may have brought CAP reform discussions within the G20. France had already been accused by other countries of putting agriculture at the centre of the G20 agenda in order to defend the CAP. However, France wants to discuss “the right things at the right spot”, and was absolutely not in favour of dealing with CAP reform in the G20 (Interview #36).

Trade is traditionally the field in which it is commonly assumed that a single EU position defended by a single EU negotiator, the European Commission, significantly strengthens the hand of the EU. According to Cameron (2007: 207): “When the Union speaks with one voice in bilateral or multilateral trade negotiations it is a powerful voice representing in excess of 450 million citizens with a combined GDP roughly similar to that of the US. The Union could be as effective in other areas if it wanted to, simply by providing for a single representation”. But given the presence of the EU4 in the G20, the European Commission is de facto not the sole negotiator. Even though the European Commission speaks first on trade matters, it does not prevent the EU4 from intervening (Interview #87). A Commission official admits that “one



**Graph 33. Survey question: To what extent do you agree with the statement "A common EU position strengthens the EU's influence in the G20", filtered by area of expertise and affiliation. Absolute values included. Source: survey.**

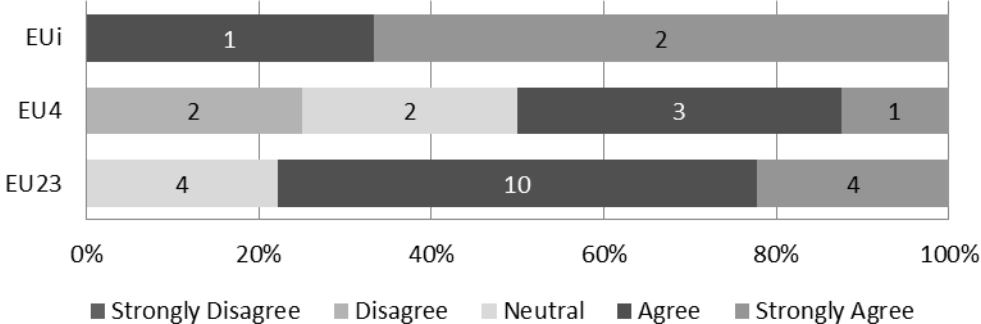


cannot prohibit the EU4 to speak” (Interview #61). Nevertheless, before sherpa meetings, the EU sherpa coordinates his intervention with the EU4 sherpas and makes clear what the EU position is. During the meeting, the EU4 complement the EU sherpa where they consider it necessary or “to add different flavours” (Interview #46 and Interview #61). These coordination efforts have already proven to be effective as the EU had a clear influence on the wording about trade in the Los Cabos communique (Interview #33).

As illustrated in this section, EU coordination is not always useful or appropriate and may not necessarily increase the influence of the EU. This does however not stem from the survey results. Graph 33 shows that, apart from some small nuances, response patterns do not vary across the three policy areas labour, agriculture and trade. It is moreover difficult to draw meaningful conclusions from these results given the limited number of respondents in each category. For example, only two officials from the European Union institutions working on agriculture have answered this question.

**6.6.4. G8 – Development**

As it has been pointed out in chapter two, the EU’s views have largely prevailed in the G8 communiqués whenever the EU could agree on an effective joint position. One could thus expect that the EU and the EU4 are pursuing EU coordination, either in advance or on the spot, to maximize their influence in the G8. However, the EU4 survey participants are not overly convinced that a common EU position still strengthens the EU's influence in the G8 with regard to development (Graph 34). On the contrary, a single European voice is deemed inappropriate. Given the G8’s role as a creative think-tank, EU4 countries have noted that diversity may even be desired within the G8 (Huigens & Niemann, 2009: 27). In addition, there is always a risk that coordination annoys the G8 partners (Interview #49). When comparing both the G8 and G20 development case, notice that in both instances the EU4 do not advocate EU coordination because it may polarize the debates. Nonetheless, one EU4 official considers EU coordination in the G8 not as problematic as in the G20 DWG. Development discussions in the G20 are more polarized than in the G8. He believes that in case the EU would coordinate in the G8 context, it would not really upset the other G8 participants (Interview #37).

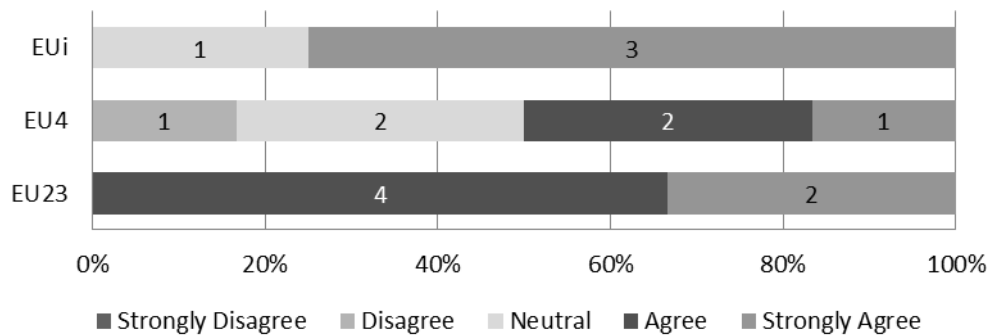


**Graph 34. Development experts’ answers to survey question: To what extent do you agree with the statement "A common EU position strengthens the EU's influence in the G8". Absolute values included. Source: survey.**

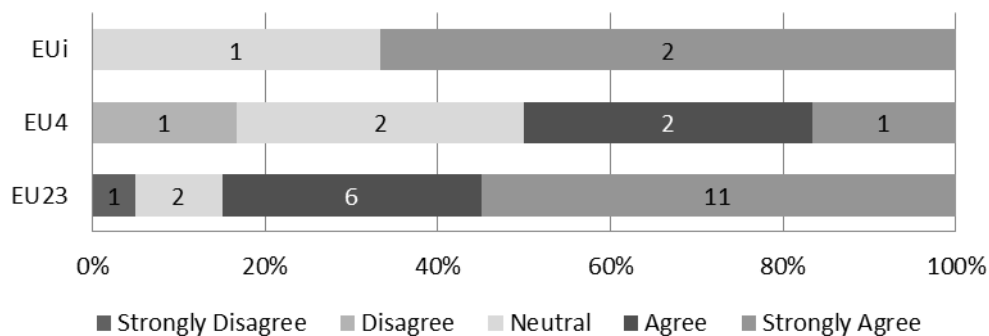
Contrary to the EU4, development officials from the Union’s institutions admit that “the more united the EU is, the more convincing it is” (Interview #65). As Graph 34 shows, they strongly believe that a common EU position strengthens the EU's influence in the G8. This can, however, be achieved by coordination among the European G8 participants and hence does not imply that the Commission advocates stronger prior coordination among all EU member states.

### 6.6.5. G8 – Energy/climate

With regard to the impact of a common EU position in the G8, energy and climate EU4/EUi survey respondents follow the trend of the G8 development case and are rather negative about the effectiveness of a common EU position in the G8 (see Graphs 35 & 36). As far as climate change is concerned, this is noteworthy since unity among the European participants in the G8 has already proven to yield results. At the 2008 G8 summit in Japan, the five European participants expressed the same targets and the same goals in such a way that it even raised annoyance in the Japanese delegation. All EU participants were aware that such close cooperation can be beneficial to them since it gives them considerable negotiating leverage. It has been reported that the progress reached at the Hokkaido Summit on climate change was largely due to this united European position (Huigens & Niemann, 2009: 25; Huigens & Niemann, 2012: 112). More recently, in 2012, the US resisted to meet a European request to include a certain passage on climate change in the final G8 communiqué. Subsequently, the EU4 and the European Commission decided to act together. Eventually, the increased pressure by the EU made the US to concede since it seems hard for any G8 member including the US to withstand a unified European front (Interview #63). However importantly, in both examples, the EU's influence over the G8 outcomes has not been the result of prior internal EU coordination among all 27 EU member states. Elaborate existing EU climate policies and additional ad hoc coordination on the spot was sufficient to shape the G8's agenda and decision-making process.



Graph 36. Energy experts' answers to survey question: To what extent do you agree with the statement "A common EU position strengthens the EU's influence in the G8". Absolute values included. Source: survey.

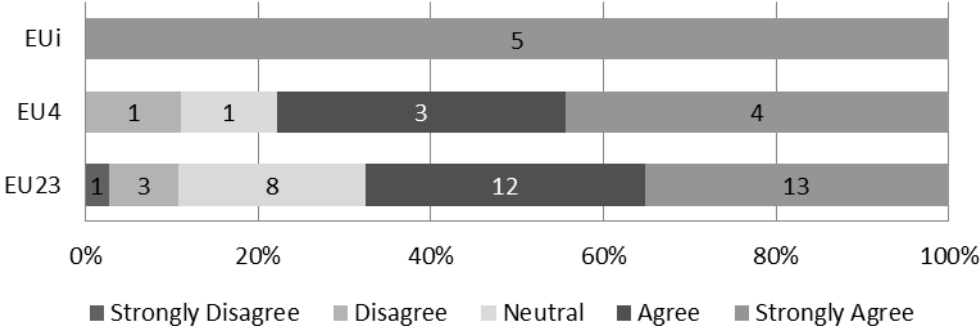


Graph 35. Climate experts' answers to survey question: To what extent do you agree with the statement "A common EU position strengthens the EU's influence in the G8". Absolute values included. Source: survey.

Finally and in contrast, energy and climate officials from the EU institutions largely agree that a common EU position strengthens the EU's influence in the G8. Whereas one single EUi development official (out of three) agreed with the statement, one EUi climate expert felt rather neutral. Given the limited number of EUi respondents per policy area, it cannot be concluded that a common EU position strengthens the EU's influence more in development matters than in climate dossiers. Also the vast majority of EU23 energy and climate experts share the view that a common EU position strengthens the hand of the EU in the G8. Compared to development and energy respondents, a larger share of climate experts indicates that they strongly agree with this statement, while remarkably also one EU23 climate expert strongly disagrees.

**6.6.6. G7 – Finance**

The G7 is primarily a forum for deliberation and to exchange views, rather than it would take clear decisions. According to an EU4 official (Interview #32), it is a club in which frank discussion among policy makers should be possible. In contrast to the G8 and G20, the G7 process does not result in commitments and deliverables. In this context, a common EU position is deemed undesirable. Exchanging analyses on macro-economic developments would not be as fruitful if more than half of the G7 members would strictly adhere to a common position. However, even in settings that focus on deliberation, EU coordination (on the spot) may be useful to shape the wording of the final communique or statement. But since the G7 does only release very brief statements, if any, the need for EU coordination is limited. To a certain extent, this idea also stems from the survey results. The survey participants working on finance issues consider a common EU position in the G7 less useful than in the G20 (see Graphs 31 and 37). Two out of nine EU4 officials cannot agree with the assumption that a unified EU front strengthens the influence of the EU in the G7. The EU23 are even less convinced. However, none of the three categories fully rejects this idea.



Graph 37. <sup>68</sup> Finance experts' answers to survey question: To what extent do you agree with the statement "A common EU position strengthens the EU's influence in the G7". Absolute values included. Source: survey.

Despite the limited value of a common EU position in the G7, the 27 EU member states do prepare an EU position ahead of certain G7 meetings. This might imply that prior coordination mainly serves to provide speaking notes to the representatives of the Eurogroup, rather than to establish (non-binding) agreed language for all European G7 participants.

<sup>68</sup> This graph slightly differs from Graph 30 at the beginning of this section. This is because Graph 30 includes the views of foreign affairs officials, while Graph 37 focuses on finance experts only. The main difference between finance and foreign affairs officials appears to be that finance experts are more sceptical about whether a single EU position strengthens the EU's influence in the G7.

### 6.6.7. Concluding remarks

Considering the findings in this section, it can be concluded that the degree to which the EU is seeking greater influence over the Gx outcomes provides substantial explanatory value for understanding both low and high levels of internal EU coordination. However, the extent to which EU coordination is useful in the Gx context is in the first place a motivation for the EU4/EUi to either engage in or abstain from coordination. The interviews did not provide any indications that also the EU23 ideas regarding internal EU coordination are informed by this strategic logic. It is illustrative that the EU23 survey participants' opinions on the statement that a common EU position strengthens the EU's influence in the G7, G8 or G20 do not fundamentally differ across the three Gx forums and across the individual policy domains.

In the G20 finance case the EU4 consider prior EU coordination as a test case or a kind of preparatory exercise before entering G20 discussions. The aim is to level out small internal differences in order to better withstand opposition from other G20 countries and influence G20 decision-making. Hence in this case, EU coordination may yield strategic benefits for the EU participants in the G20. Nevertheless, the same results can also be achieved by coordination on the spot among the EU4 and the EU institutions. Examples include the EU's influence on G20 language on the euro zone situation and on trade. This suggests that the EU influence variable in itself is not sufficient to explain EU-wide group decision-making processes for the G20. However in combination with another variable – the interests variable seems to be the most valid candidate –, the aim to influence Gx processes is a promising avenue for explaining high levels of EU coordination in the Gx context.

As set out in chapter three, the analytical framework also provides the possibility that EU coordination and a single EU position does not enhance and even hinders the EU's effectiveness in the Gx. Several scholars have argued that the EU and its member states should refrain from coordinating (too explicitly) in order to maximize its performance in certain international settings. Studies have shown that coordination could come at the expense of EU outreach and lobbying efforts. Or it might polarize the debate and consequently spark opposition of the EU's negotiation partners. In the Gx context, it appears that especially the latter aspect is a motivation for the low level of internal EU coordination. This is perfectly illustrated by the G20 development case in which the EU4 and the European Commission explicitly oppose interactive coordination with the other EU member states. It is believed that if the EU engages in group decision-making and negotiates a (non-binding) EU position, it would polarize the debate and undermine dialogue in the G20 DWG. Also during G20 DWG meetings, the EU4 and the Commission only consult each other informally without the intention to forge a common standpoint.

Finally, based on the information presented in this section, it seems that the degree to which EU coordination is perceived to strengthen the EU's influence in the Gx provides the reason why the level of coordination correlates with the functions of the Gx. Huigens and Niemann (2009: 27) have already suggested that there is a link between the low level of coordination (on the spot) in the G8 and the G8's function as a creative think-tank. Our findings on the relevance variable also hinted at a similar relationship between Gx functions and coordination. It appears now that the EU influence variable represents the missing causal link between functions and coordination.

If the Gx mainly acts as a forum for trust-building and a platform for exchanging experiences (see e.g. the G8 cases and the G20 employment and development cases), EU coordination is less useful since exerting as much influence as possible is not the main focus. Those settings are typically characterized by deliberation and arguing, which implies that actors aim at convincing each other of the value of a certain policy option based on claims of validity (Risse, 2000). In an arguing context, the purpose is the genuine transformation of preferences, which may bring the

parties closer to a common position (Naurin, 2009). In this context, a coordinated EU position could be too fixed and would constrain attempts to alter preferences. EU coordination would hence be inconsistent with an open attitude required in a setting where arguing is the dominant mode of interaction. Conversely, more than other Gx talks, the G20 discussions on financial and economic affairs imply hard decision-making and bargaining. Bargaining is the typical approach to negotiation in highly politicized arenas where the protection of national interests is a major goal (Elgstrom & Jönsson 2000: 701). In a bargaining context such as the G20 finance case, EU G20 members, as any other member, want to maximize their own preferences. Therefore it is crucial to extend their influence as much as possible and EU coordination (both in advance and on the spot) is considered helpful to achieve this end.<sup>69</sup>

## **6.7. Hypothesis 6: Gx organisation**

### **Hypothesis 6**

EU coordination is more likely to occur if Gx processes match with processes in the EU.

#### **6.7.1. G20 – Finance**

There is a relatively good match between EU processes and the organisation of the G20 finance track. For most working groups in the finance track such as on economic policy coordination, climate finance or IMF reform, a corresponding EU (sub-)committee exists. However, there is still room for improvement. Although the frequency of EFC meetings is relatively high, they are not always optimally planned in function of the G20 (Interview #32). Since the EFC normally meets once a month (Grosche & Puetter, 2008: 533), it may happen that the most recent EFC meeting has taken place three weeks before the G20 deadline. In this case, the Terms of References may have become outdated in the light of new G20 presidency papers or reports. Consequently, additional coordination meetings among the EU4 are required on the spot to see whether the Terms of References still fit (Interview #45). Moreover, coordination is often hampered by the fact that G20 documents are only made available at the very last moment. This could be due to strategic reasons, but is most probably the result of time constraints (Interview #56).

Generally, despite the informal nature of the G20, information from within the G20 finance track is relatively well circulated among all EU member states. This is partly because the EFC is able to guarantee the confidential treatment of internal G20 documents as some G20 members demand (Interview #64). The EFC has a comparable secretive nature and is strictly shielded from the outside world or even other EU bodies and member states' ministries (Grosche & Puetter, 2008). It is the European Commission, more specifically the secretariat of the EFC and EPC, that distributes G20 information among the member states in the framework of the EFC. However, the EU23 never know whether they are always fully informed. While the Commission seems to pass through all the information it possesses, the EU4 may not always reveal everything they know (Interview #12). A feeling exists that the EU23 are more easily informed about less controversial subjects than about pressing topics. Moreover, it has been questioned whether the European Commission is sufficiently involved in the strategic behind-the-scenes talks, especially in country-focused dossiers such as IMF reform (Interview #7).

#### **6.7.2. G20 – Development**

Compared to finance, development is differently embedded in the G20 structure. The way how development is dealt with in the G20 seems to have an influence on EU coordination. First,

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<sup>69</sup> This argument is elaborated in Debaere (2014 forthcoming)

with the exception of a joint finance and development ministerial meeting in September 2011, there has not yet been a meeting of G20 development ministers. The absence of a ministerial meeting has been cited as a reason for the low level of coordination in the area of development. A European Commission official (Interview #61) admits that, for pragmatic reasons, the Commission does not propose Guidelines for G20 working group meetings<sup>70</sup>. However, even for the sole G20 development ministers' meeting in September 2011, no additional EU coordination efforts have been made. For that meeting, a representative of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs has been invited in the capacity of rotating EU Council president. But since Poland was only invited very last-minute, there was insufficient time to forge an agreed EU position. Consequently, Poland could only act as an observer at that meeting (Interview #22).

Second, while the ministers of finance and the central bank governors deal with financial matters, development falls under the responsibility of the sherpas, the personal representatives of the heads of state and government. As shown in the previous chapter, coordination for the sherpa meetings and the underlying working groups is – at best – limited to information sharing. There is only one issue area of the development agenda which is coordinated through group decision-making, namely the work on financial inclusion. The financial inclusion pillar is the responsibility of the finance ministers and is coordinated through EFC and ECOFIN (e.g. TOR, 2010d). Hence, fictively, in the case that the entire development agenda would have been discussed by the G20 finance ministers and their deputies, it is more likely that the EU would coordinate more intensively for development. Remarkably, two interviewees have also independently remarked that some EU member states would like to keep the G20 and the EU's preparation under the responsibility of the finance ministers and are thus reluctant to discuss the G20 outside the ECOFIN-filière (Interview #10 and Interview #19).

Furthermore, the multidimensional character of the G20 development agenda may also impede EU coordination. Many topics can be approached from several angles and are the responsibility of different ministries and departments. It is illustrative that for the DWG meetings under the food security pillar, some countries send their development officials, while others send agriculture or even finance experts (Interview #37). Within the EU too, it is not always clear who would be responsible for coordinating an EU position for those issues. For example, migrant remittances are a matter of the G20 DWG and discussed under the resilient growth pillar. Within the EU, remittances is a migration issue and consequently dealt with by the EU High Level Working Group on Migration and Asylum. CODEV, the primary working group to discuss G20 development issues, is only involved as far as it concerns how the money of remittances can be used for development (Interview #17).

Another point is that the G20's work on development does not entail many clear deliverables. The G20 works on the discursive and political level and deals with new and abstract concepts instead of mobilizing funding. It is said that this kind of work is difficult to match with existing EU instruments, budgets and deliverables (Interview #36).

The European Commission also refers to the G20 organisation as an obstacle for increased EU coordination. The Commission is reluctant to share G20 documents because it claims that this information belongs to the G20 presidency (Interview #22). Moreover, the Commission considers a formal negotiation mandate as inappropriate in the informal context of the G20. This argument has also been raised by other EU4 and EU23 officials. At the end of the day, there is no formal agreement or legally binding text that has to be signed. Therefore, there is no need to adopt a formal negotiation mandate (Interview #17 and Interview #37). However, the fact that discussions do not lead to legally binding agreements of course applies to all policy areas on the G20 agenda, but only with regard to development it has been explicitly mentioned as a reason for limited EU coordination.

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<sup>70</sup> Nevertheless, for some working groups under the finance track, EU coordination has taken place.

### 6.7.3. Other G20 cases

The three additional G20 cases confirm the Commission's argument of the development case that, for pragmatic reasons, the Commission does not propose Guidelines for G20 working group meetings. It seems that the organisation of a meeting at the level of ministers triggers a coordination process that produces EU Guidelines. This could be due to the fact the rotating EU Council presidency is usually invited to these ministerial meetings, but is absent from the working groups. Both for employment and agriculture, the EU Guidelines have been adopted with a view on a G20 ministerial meeting on these matters. The Guidelines provide the rotating presidency of a position to present in the G20. For example in 2011, the Hungarian Council Presidency would have asked to develop such Guidelines (Interview #61). Remarkably, trade is not discussed in a dedicated working group or ministerial meeting<sup>71</sup>, but by the sherpas. Though, EU23 member states are involved in the G20's work through the Trade Policy Committee.

Nonetheless, labour officials have argued that EU coordination is not self-evident, even in case of a G20 ministerial meeting. For example, the labour agenda is still not permanently anchored in the G20 and the mandate of the Task Force on Employment needs to be renewed each year. The ad-hoc nature of the labour agenda may hinder efforts to establish a coordination mechanism (Interview #43 and Interview #62). In addition, scheduling coordination for labour and employment meetings on the EU's agenda is not straightforward since ministerial G20 meetings tend to be planned at different times of the year (Interview #43). Consequently, a labour ministerial may be coincidentally held when EU officials are very busy with internal EU matters. Nevertheless, the member states have negotiated EU Guidelines for G20 labour ministerial meetings in 2011, 2012 and 2013.

### 6.7.4. G8 – Development

The way in which development is organised within the G8 structure potentially matches EU processes, but there are still a couple of elements that obstruct EU coordination. When the G8 ministers of development meet, internal EU coordination may take place in the Foreign Affairs Council in the configuration of development ministers. This has been the case under the Italian G8 Presidency in 2009. The Italian delegation informed the Council of the preparation for the meeting of the G8 development ministers of 11 and 12 June. However, briefings by EU4 G8 presidencies tend to be purely informative and aim at gathering support for its agenda. In this sense, Italy has also lobbied for its G8 agenda in other forums (Interview #3). It also appears that whenever the G8 presidency is held by a non-EU country, it is unlikely that the EU23 are being involved. For the G8 development ministers' meetings in 2008 and 2010 under the chairmanship of respectively Japan and Canada, I have no evidence of internal EU coordination.

In case there is no G8 development ministerial meeting, development issues are prepared in the sherpa network. The corresponding EU body is COREPER, the meeting of the member states' ambassadors to the EU who also prepare the European Council meetings. Indeed, the EU G8 sherpa delivers a general briefing to COREPER in the margin of the G8 summit. However, EU coordination is significantly obstructed by the informal character of the G8 and the sherpa network in particular. Especially the US wants to keep the G8 highly confidential (Interview #64). There is a prevailing code of conduct among G8 members that information circulating among them is handled carefully and kept within a closed circle of people (Nasra et al., 2009: 5). For EU23 countries, it is hence very difficult – if not impossible – to obtain reliable information from within the G8 (Interview #1).

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<sup>71</sup> Except in 2012 when the G20 trade ministers met once under the Mexican G20 Presidency.

Finally, it has also been noted that in the drafting stage the G8 deadlines are tight and follow in rapid succession. This is an additional obstacle to coordination since it might leave insufficient time to feed back to the member states (Interview #64).

#### **6.7.5. G8 – Energy/climate**

With regard to the organisation of the G8, EU coordination for the energy and climate agenda faces similar challenges as in the G8 development case. When a meeting of the G8 ministers of energy or environment is held, coordination may take place in the respective Council of ministers in the EU. However, it appears that the EU23 only have a chance to be informed about the G8 work in those specific policy domains when an EU4 country chairs the G8. Nevertheless, the European Commission also had its own reasons to reach out to the EU member states as it needed their backing to become formally involved in IPEEC (Interview #63). The Commission wanted to sign IPEEC's founding charter on behalf of the EU. Since 2010, no G8 energy or climate ministerial meeting has been organised. Any G8 language and decisions on these matters have thus been prepared by the informal and confidential sherpa network, which does, as said, not facilitate interactive EU coordination.

#### **6.7.6. G7 – Finance**

As it has been illustrated more than once, the G7 process is highly informal, perhaps even more informal than the G8 or G20 sherpa network. Hence, one may assume that the informal character of the G7 significantly impedes EU coordination efforts for the G7. However, despite the G7's high degree of informality, internal EU coordination for the G7 still takes the form of a group decision-making process, albeit not as frequent and intense as coordination for the G20 finance track. Findings on the other variables in this chapter seem to suggest that interests and G7 relevance might explain the decreasing, but still considerable level of EU coordination for the G7. In addition, coordination is also facilitated by the fact that G7 meetings often deal with a single issue and that those issues fall entirely under the responsibility of finance ministers. Unlike several multidimensional G20 or G8 cases, there is no doubt that coordination for the G7 should take place in the ECOFIN-filière.

#### **6.7.7. Concluding remarks**

In this section, we have focused on several aspects related to the organisation of the Gx. It has been hypothesised that internal EU coordination could not only be hindered by a mismatch between Gx processes and EU processes, but also because of the multidimensional character of certain Gx agenda items or the informal nature of the Gx. The above analysis seems to suggest that the Gx organisation plays a role in every case under examination. However overall, we may not overrate the explanatory value of the organisation of the Gx for the level of internal EU coordination. Taking the findings on the other variables into account, the way in which the Gx is organised and functions does not appear to have decisive influence on the level of EU coordination. At most, the organisation of the Gx complicates EU coordination, but it will generally not stop or prohibit the EU member states from coordinating.

The informal character of the Gx has at regular times been raised as an obstacle to EU coordination<sup>72</sup>. For example, since the Gx discussion do not produce a formal agreement or legally binding text, interviewees have argued that a formal negotiation mandate is inappropriate. This argument however ignores other non-formal coordination options such as consultation or

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<sup>72</sup> Including by myself. In Debaere and Orbie (2013), it is argued that the extent to which the EU coordinates in Gx contexts is mainly determined by the flexibility and informal character of the Gx system. Based on this dissertation, this claim apparently needs more nuance.



group decision-making which may result in non-binding texts outlining the EU's approach. Moreover, the fact that Gx discussions do not lead to formal agreements of course applies to all Gx cases comprising a very diverse range of degrees of coordination. It may nevertheless explain the differences between coordination for the Gx and EU coordination for other, more formal international settings such as international climate negotiations. In addition, it is also often said that due to its informality and confidentiality information from within the Gx network does not easily reach non-Gx countries, including the EU23, thereby hindering EU coordination efforts. Except for sherpa meetings (see *infra*), this aspect does not seem to play a crucial role. In most G20 cases, information is relatively well circulated among all EU member states. In those cases where coordination is limited to briefings (G8 cases and G20 development), the European Commission or EU4 do provide (general) information from within the Gx process. Finally, the most convincing case to qualify the informality hypothesis is the G7, which is highly informal but still prepared in the EU by a group decision-making process.

Furthermore, the multidimensional character of some issues on the Gx agenda also complicate EU coordination, but can insufficiently explain why internal EU coordination reaches a certain level on our coordination scale. The risk is however that an issue that comprises multiple different dimensions could be overlooked and not discussed with the EU23 because it could be unclear which Council committee or working group is in charge.

Hence, in most cases, the other hypotheses provide more plausible explanations for the level of EU coordination than the Gx organisation. Nevertheless, in two specific instances, the organisation and functioning of the Gx plays a more important role with regard to EU coordination processes. First, as illustrated by the G20 employment and agriculture case, the organisation of a G20 meeting at the level of ministers triggers an interactive coordination process. Most probably, this is due to the fact the rotating EU Council presidency is usually invited to these ministerial meetings. In both cases, prior EU coordination has produced EU Guidelines that provide the rotating presidency of a position to present in the G20. This contrasts to G20 working groups in which the rotating presidency is not represented and for which the European Commission is not inclined to involve the EU23.

A second area in which the Gx organisation and functioning has an effect on internal EU coordination is the sherpa network. The sherpas discuss a diverse range of topics ranging from the global economy over global marine protection to development cooperation. The only EU body that is capable to deal with all these issues is COREPER<sup>73</sup>. The problem is, however, that the COREPER agenda is heavily overloaded. This significantly constrains the opportunity to engage in a thorough discussion about the G8 or G20 process (Interview #61). In addition, the sherpa process is much less accessible than other areas of the Gx system such as ministerial meetings. As shown in chapter five, attempts by Sweden to coordinate more intensively for the G20 sherpa meetings have explicitly been blocked.

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<sup>73</sup> And the European Council

## Chapter 7

# **Conclusions**

*“Pragmatists recognize that all research is cumulative and yet incomplete and that only preliminary judgments can be made with the evidence at hand.”*  
(Mills, Durepos, & Wiebe, 2010: 724)

This final chapter summarizes the main findings and combines insights into a tentative explanatory framework for internal EU coordination for the G7, G8 and G20. Next, some general reflections are made on the role of the EU23, the EU4 and the EU institutions and the influence of the external context. Finally, six areas for further research are suggested.

## **7.1. Does the EU coordinate for the Gx?**

In order to examine the assumption that the EU’s participation in the G7, G8 and G20 implies the involvement of the EU23 in the EU’s preparation for these forums, this dissertation has analysed to what extent EU member states and institutions coordinate internally for the G7, G8 and G20. Since the existing literature on the EU in IOs has approached coordination from many different angles, no adequate starting point was found to define EU coordination in IOs and the Gx in particular. Consequently, we relied on the work of Malone & Crowston (1994) to define EU coordination as the management of interdependencies between EU member states and institutions resulting from the international representation of the EU and/or (some of) its member states. Subsequently, this study was limited to coordination as a process, rather than an outcome. More precisely, we concentrated on interactive processes of coordination involving all EU member states. This conceptualization resulted in a coordination scale to measure EU coordination for the G7, G8 and G20. The scale entails four levels of coordination ranging from (i) no interaction, over (ii) information sharing and (iii) consultation to (iv) group decision-making.

In chapter five, the level of internal EU coordination has been assessed for nearly all aspects of the Gx process. It has been shown that the EU does not prepare the G7, G8 and G20 meetings in an uniform way. Financial and economic affairs on the G20 and G7 agenda reach the highest level of coordination and are subject to group decision-making. However, while coordination for G20 finance matters entails all agenda items of the G20 finance ministers meeting including climate finance or energy subsidies, coordination for the G7 tends to focus on EU-related matters that involve all EU member states. Internal EU coordination for the G20 areas labour and employment as well as food and agriculture is most closely related to group decision-making. All EU member states are actively involved in the adoption of EU Guidelines and have a genuine opportunity to modify and shape the Guidelines. However, the content of those Guidelines reveals that coordination does not involve much decision-making. The Guidelines are a compilation of previously agreed policies and reflect a rather uncontroversial consultation process among the member states. Contrary to group decision-making for the finance track, the member states do not work towards a new substantive EU position. This illustrates the close relationship between process and outcome. As I have argued in chapter three, the distinction between coordination process and outcome is useful for analytical purposes, but the two aspects cannot be viewed completely separately.

Coordination for trade issues in the G20 is situated between information sharing and consultation. Coordination for the G20 (and occasionally G8) summits in general at the European Council reaches a similar level. EU representatives inform their colleagues from the 27 EU member states and gather feedback. It is, however, unclear to what extent these comments actually feed into the EU’s position in the G20.

For all other aspects of the Gx process, internal EU coordination does not exceed the level of information sharing. First, coordination for the G20’s work on development is explicitly limited to information sharing. There is no intention to involve the EU23 in the formulation of the

Commission's position on development in the G20. Furthermore, a low level of internal EU coordination is also observed for sherpa meetings, although these meetings deal with many diverse issues ranging from development over employment to even economic affairs. Both for the G8 and G20, the EU sherpa informs the member states about the state of preparation for the summits. These briefings cover sherpa meetings as well as the G8/G20 process in general. Since the sherpa briefings are rather general, it is likely that certain less important issues are not at all coordinated, even if coordination merely implies information exchange. Finally, the member states may also be informed about G8 activities in specific policy domains. For example in 2009, the member states were briefed on G8 ministerial meetings on energy, environment and development in the respective Council configurations. However, for many other G8 ministerial meetings, no briefings were organised. This practice is very much ad hoc and most likely to take place if an EU4 country chairs the G8, although this is not a guarantee. In the event that no briefing is organised for an individual G8 ministerial meeting, the agenda of that meeting could still be covered by the general sherpa briefings in COREPER.

Hence it appears that the EU23 are to varying degrees involved in the EU's preparation of the Gx meetings. In general, however, the level of coordination and hence active interaction with EU23 states is relatively low. In this context, the major focus on extensive coordination for the G20 finance track in this thesis is misleading. Group decision-making for the Gx is rather the exception, while information sharing seems to be the rule. In addition, the EU23 is not at all involved in the formulation of the Gx agenda, which is the prerogative of the chair. Nevertheless, usually, other Gx members do not have a significant impact on the thematic focus of the summit either. More problematic is the fact that there is typically no internal EU coordination for Gx working groups. In this way, the EU23 are deprived of having an indirect voice at early phases of Gx decision-making.

Interestingly, the observed coordination processes are experienced differently by the EU23 on the one hand, and the EU4 and EU institutions on the other. EU23 officials perceive the same processes as less interactive than their EU4/EUi colleagues. This suggests, for example, that in certain instances the EU23 believe that they do not have the chance to provide feedback while EU4/EUi officials do deem consultation possible. In such cases, better communication between the two parties might converge expectations about the goal of the process and whether there is room for consultation or if it is merely a briefing.

More importantly, the question is whether the EU23 are fine with the current level of EU coordination. After all, a low level of coordination and interaction would not be problematic if it were in line with the preferences of the EU23. However, the survey results have illustrated that the EU23 are only to a very limited extent satisfied with coordination for the Gx. Especially those countries who are considerably exposed to Gx decisions (e.g. Belgium, Sweden) see room for improvement. Nonetheless, this does not imply that the EU23 are actively advocating upgrading coordination from, for instance, consultation to group decision-making. An upgrade of the level of coordination would require the EU23 countries to follow issues more closely and to prepare substantive policy positions, thus requiring additional resources. Rather, general EU23 discontent comes down to a lack of trust in the EU representatives and the EU4. For an outsider to the Gx process, it is impossible to check whether the EU4 did or did not contradict agreed EU positions. Similarly, it remains unclear for EU23 countries if and to what extent the European Commission has protected EU23 interests, aligned with the EU4 or followed its own agenda. In addition, briefings by EU4 countries that hold the Gx presidency are usually too general for the EU23 to really know what is going on. And even if the briefings are more detailed, the EU23 never know whether they are fully informed. These problems are closely related to internal coordination. However, they may occur regardless of the level of coordination, be it group decision-making or consultation.

Instead of fundamentally reforming current coordination processes, a more open attitude of the EU4 and EU institutions could restore trust and eliminate some EU23 frustrations. For example, the European Gx participants and the European Commission in particular could be more transparent about how Gx negotiations have evolved. To appease EU23 concerns, it would be good if the EU4 or Commission could provide examples of where they have stuck to decisions that were agreed upon in advance within the EU, even if that decision was not wholeheartedly supported by the EU4, or if this prevented the Gx from reaching an agreement. Similarly, and to put it starkly, an open fight between an EU4 country and the European Commission because that country has ignored the EU Terms of Reference would be very detrimental to the EU's performance in the G20, but it might convince the EU23 that the Commission is keeping an eye on their interests. Moreover, it has been illustrated that in most Gx cases, the EU23 interests are barely at stake or sufficiently covered by existing EU policies. Raising awareness of the uncontroversial nature of many Gx activities could therefore also enhance the trust of the EU23 in the EU's involvement in the Gx.

However, no matter how open the EU4 and the EU institutions are about their performance in the Gx, EU23 countries will always have certain reservations, as these are inherently linked to the Gx format and the special membership arrangement of the EU and its member states. In addition, many EU23 states follow the work of the G7, G8 and G20 only from a distance and have a rather limited interest in the Gx activities. Thus even if the EU4 and EU institutions are willing to provide enough input to have a proper debate on Gx affairs, EU23 disinterest may hinder better interactive coordination processes. Also, interest in Gx affairs tends to differ between individual ministries. While EU23 finance ministries are more likely to demand more transparency from the EU4, improving the quality of coordination seems to be less urgent for employment officials.

## **7.2. Explaining EU coordination for the Gx**

The variation in internal EU coordination across the Gx system is the focus of the second research question, notably how to explain why coordination is more interactive in one area than another. By combining empirical insights and scholarly knowledge, six potential causal factors were identified: existing policies, interests, competences, relevance, EU influence and Gx organisation. Chapter six illustrated that not all variables play an equally important role in explaining EU coordination.


		Policies	Interests	Competences	Relevance	Influence	Organisation	Coordination
G20 - Finance	Global economy	● ○	● ●	○ ○	● ●	● ●	● ●	Group decision-making 
	Financial regulation	○ ○	● ●	● ○	● ●	● ●	● ●	
	Tax evasion	● ○	● ●	● ○	● ●	● ●	● ●	
	IMF reform	○ ○	● ●	○ ○	● ●	● ●	● ●	
G7 - Finance	Global economy	● ○	● ●	○ ○	● ○	○ ○	○ ○	No interaction
	Monetary affairs	○ ○	● ●	● ●	● ○	○ ○	○ ○	
G20 - Food & Agriculture	AMIS	● ○	● ○	● ○	● ●	● ○	● ○	
	Agricultural production	● ●	● ●	● ○	● ○	○ ○	● ○	
	Biofuel policies	● ●	● ●	● ○	○ ○	● ○	○ ○	
G20 - Labour & Employment	Quality employment	● ●	● ○	○ ○	○ ○	○ ○	● ○	
	Youth employment	● ●	● ○	○ ○	○ ○	○ ○	● ○	
G20 - Trade	Protectionism	● ●	● ●	● ●	● ●	● ●	○ ○	
	DDA	● ●	● ○	● ●	● ○	● ●	○ ○	
G20 - Development	MYAP	● ●	● ○	● ○	● ○	○ ○	○ ○	
G8 - Energy/climate	Climate targets	● ●	● ○	● ○	● ○	● ○	● ○	
	IPEEC	● ●	○ ○	● ○	● ○	○ ○	● ○	
	CCS	● ●	● ○	● ○	○ ○	○ ○	● ○	
G8 - Development	Health-MDGs	● ●	○ ○	● ○	● ○	○ ○	● ○	
	Food security	● ●	● ○	● ○	● ○	○ ○	● ○	

Table 12. Overview of the empirical findings in each dossier. The more filled circles, the more that variable is present in a policy dossier.

Before we discuss the explanatory value of each variable, Table 12 visually summarizes the empirical findings for each dossier and each variable. The table provides a general overview by using two circles either filled or empty. The more filled circles, the more that variable is present in a policy dossier. For example, two filled circles for existing policies imply a wide array of existing EU policies. One filled circle for competences implies shared competences. Two empty circles for Gx organisation refers to a difficult match between Gx and EU processes because for example the Gx is very informal or no ministerial meetings are organised. This table is very useful to compare the findings and to draw overall conclusions. However, it has one major weakness in that it lacks nuance. It is impossible to grasp the complexity of each dossier and variable in two circles. The table does for example not take differences between the EU23 and the EU4 into account, nor does it reflect the three different indicators of the Gx relevance variable. These nuances can be found in chapter six.

The extent to which the EU can rely on existing EU policies and positions seems to explain why EU coordination is limited to information-sharing or consultation. However, no evidence is found to support the reverse statement that a lack of previously agreed policies is a decisive factor for organising group decision-making. With regard to interests, a causal relationship has been observed between significant interests and a high degree of EU coordination. EU23 countries will primarily press for EU coordination when they run the risk of experiencing a negative impact from the Gx. Conversely where the Gx do not put the EU23 interests directly at risk, EU coordination seems to be much less urgent. This might be the case if the Gx discuss issues at a rather general level or if discussions serve the interests of the EU23 in a positive way. Furthermore, no convincing elements have been found in support for a direct link between the distribution of competences and internal EU coordination for the Gx.

With regard to the variables dealing with the external context, Gx relevance correlates with the level of internal EU coordination. However, importantly, especially the EU23's perception of the relevance and impact of the Gx is key in determining EU coordination, rather than the perception of the EU4/EUi. Another important factor is the degree to which EU coordination is considered useful in the Gx context. This is in the first place a motivation for the EU4/EUi to either engage in or abstain from coordination. Gx contexts that are characterized by bargaining are more likely to induce higher levels of coordination than contexts where arguing is the dominant mode of interaction. Finally, internal EU coordination could be complicated by the way the Gx is organised and functions. Nevertheless, it will generally not prohibit the EU member states from coordinating. In addition, the hypothesis that the informality of the Gx impedes EU coordination is not as strong as expected since only coordination for the Sherpa meetings seems to be affected by the informal nature of the Gx. However, it appears that the organisation of a Gx meeting at the level of ministers may boost coordination processes.

### **7.3. Towards an explanatory framework**

Based on these findings, the variables can be sequenced, hierarchized and adjusted in order to construct a tentative explanatory framework. Before we proceed, it is however imperative to restate that multiple conjunctural causation is assumed which implies that different causal paths may lead to the same outcome. Moreover, causality is not assumed to be symmetrical meaning that the presence and the absence of the outcome may require different explanations (Rihoux & Ragin, 2009: 9). In other words, group decision-making may be explained by different combinations of causal factors and the inversion of a certain explanation does not necessarily lead to the opposite level of coordination. Finally, by developing an explanatory framework, I do not claim to present universal laws based on which we can predict future coordination processes or coordination in other IOs. The framework is a synthesis of the available information and an attempt to identify which factors are most useful to understand a certain level of internal EU

coordination for the G7, G8 and G20. It tries to distil those factors that matter most out of the eight cases, each with their own particularities.

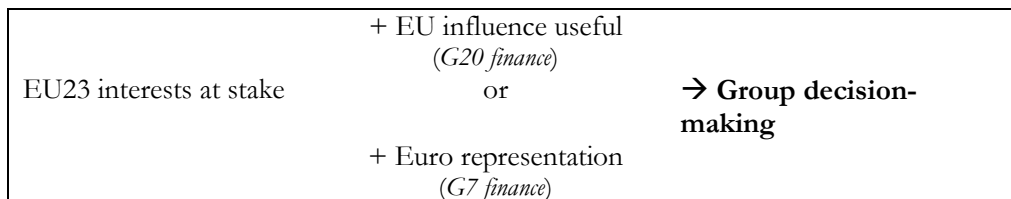
A first causal path leads to group decision-making by combining the extent to which EU23 interests are at stake with the recognition by the EU4/EU<sub>i</sub> that coordination yields strategic benefits in the G<sub>x</sub>. This causal configuration is illustrated by the G20 finance case. The first component, EU23 interests, is specified by three criteria. First, it only concerns the interests of EU23 countries, not those of the EU4. EU4 countries still have the opportunity to defend their own national interests in the G<sub>x</sub>. Second, no distinction is made between actual and potential G<sub>x</sub> impact. EU23 countries will not only ask for group decision-making if the G<sub>x</sub> actually affects their interests but also if their national interests are potentially at risk. In this way, the interest variable is merged with the impact indicator of the relevance variable. Third, the (potential) impact of the G<sub>x</sub> should be negative, EU23 states have to experience a harmful effect. G<sub>x</sub> decisions on issues in which the EU23 have vital interests at stake may also serve these interest and support the policy preferences of the EU23. In this case, EU23 countries are less inclined to ask for group decision-making.

The second component is the extent to which EU coordination is useful for the EU4 and EU institutions to maximize their preferences in the G<sub>x</sub>. As explained earlier, this typically refers to settings in which bargaining is the dominant mode of interaction. But since EU4 preferences can also be maximized by coordination on the spot, the combination with vital EU23 interests at risk is necessary to result in internal EU coordination and group decision-making in particular. In essence, group decision-making thus occurs when it is in the interests of both the EU23 and EU4.

As seen in Table 12, other factors are also eligible for inclusion in the causal configuration for group decision-making. For example in the G20 finance case, the EU can only rely on existing policy to a limited extent. Or group decision-making may be due to a relatively good match between the G20 process and EU processes. Yet, these factors are not taken on board because interviews have not or insufficiently demonstrated their causal value for group decision-making. While these factors may contribute to a 'perfect causal cocktail' for group decision-making in this case, I do not consider them decisive.

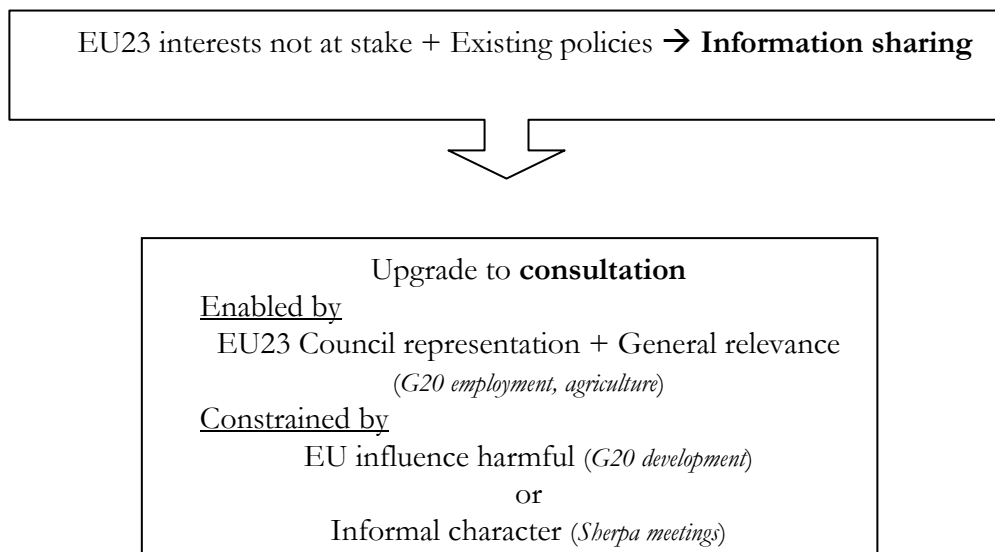
Internal EU coordination for the G7 does not follow the exact same causal path as for the G20 finance case, although both are considered as group decision-making. Similar to the G20 finance case, coordination for the G7 can also partially be explained by vital EU23 interests that are at stake. But EU4 countries consider a common EU position in the G7 to be less useful than in the G20, even deeming it inappropriate. The explanation for group decision-making for the G7 has to be sought in another area, one that was not extensively discussed in chapter six. Probably, the group decision-making process is the result of the representation of the Eurogroup president in the G7. As said, coordination for the G7 prepares the position of the Eurogroup president and is mostly focused on issues that are related to all euro area members. Hence the main aim is to provide the euro representative with speaking notes, rather than to level out internal differences to be a stronger negotiating partner. The argument for this causal path is strengthened by the fact that the European Council decided in 1999, at the request of the non-G7 EU member states that there should be an informal preparation on EMU issues in the Eurogroup (see chapter five). The causal paths to group decision-making are visualized in Figure 9.





**Figure 9. Causal path to group decision-making.**

To explain both information sharing and consultation, we can depart from a shared causal configuration, that is the combination of EU23 interests not being at stake with existing EU policies. The first component is exactly the opposite of the EU23 interests factor in the causal path to group decision-making. It implies that either EU23 countries do not have a vital interest in an issue, or that issue is only discussed at a very general level or Gx discussions serve the interests of the EU23 in a positive way. The second component is the extent to which EU representatives can rely on existing EU policies and positions for their performance in the Gx. This has been extensively referred to by interviewees as a reason for the low level of internal EU coordination. The combination of untouched EU23 interests and existing policies is in itself sufficient to explain information sharing and applies to the G8 cases, the G20 development case and the G20 trade as far as the Doha Round is concerned (see Figure 10). Based on the cases under examination, we can only conclude that both factors should be in place to result in information sharing. There are no examples where only one factor leads to information sharing. Also notice that interests and existing policies are closely related. It is more likely to develop common EU policy in areas where the stakes are lower. Conversely, in those areas that touch upon vital interests, it is more difficult to reach agreement on a common EU position.



**Figure 10. Causal paths to information sharing & consultation.**

In combination with two additional factors, this causal path also leads to consultation. First, the G20 cases on employment and agriculture illustrate that the representation of an EU23 country as rotating EU Council presidency in a G20 ministerial meeting is conducive to more interactive coordination, in this case consultation. Both for employment and agriculture, consultation (with group decision-making characteristics) has led to EU Guidelines which provided the rotating presidency with a position to present in the G20. This factor thus entails three aspects. The meeting should be held at ministerial level, the rotating Council presidency should be invited and the Council presidency should be assumed by an EU23 country. However, the rotating Council presidency has also occasionally been represented at G8 ministerial meetings

in 2008 and 2009. Yet, coordination for these meetings was limited to informative briefings and took place only for a couple of ministerial meetings. This is probably due to a difference in general relevance between the G8 and G20. Although the survey results on general relevance only differ marginally, it can be argued that the G20 is considered more relevant than the G8, even in uncontroversial areas such as employment. The G20 at leaders' level is new, it is more inclusive than the G8 and receives a lot of media attention. Moreover, given the G20's general relevance, it could have been assumed that G20 measures on employment or agriculture could have a certain impact beyond the G20's membership. Hence, general relevance is introduced as a second factor in the causal path to consultation.

While council representation and general relevance may enable an upgrade from information sharing to consultation, other factors may constrain such an upgrade. More precisely, the idea that EU coordination is harmful for the EU4/EU's performance in the Gx as well as the informal character of the Gx may discourage the member states, and particularly the EU4 and EU<sub>i</sub>, from engaging in more interactive coordination processes. The former refers to the G20 development case in which the European participants in the G20 argue that internal EU coordination would undermine dialogue with the emerging markets on development. This argument explicitly limits coordination for the G20 DWG to information sharing. The latter factor, the Gx informality, seems to apply to G8 and G20 sherpa meetings. Although the sherpa process has not been examined as a case in chapter six, it appears that the limited access to the sherpa network and its very informal functioning refrains the EU and EU4 from actively involving the EU23.

#### **7.4. General reflections**

Based on the causal paths outlined above, some general reflections can be made on the role of the EU23, the EU4 and the EU institutions and the influence of the external context. First, EU23 countries play a much more important role than one would initially expect. Given the EU4's Gx membership and their power within the EU, it could be assumed that coordination depends foremost on the goodwill of the EU4. However, the extent to which EU23 ask for coordination seems to play a decisive role for the level of coordination. There are a couple of examples where EU23 countries have triggered a certain coordination process. For example, following the tax havens debacle in April 2009 and the G20's leadership in IMF reform, Luxembourg and the G4 countries, respectively, made a strong plea for more involvement in the EU's preparation for the G20. These calls cannot be ignored in explaining group decision-making for the G20 finance track. For the G20 development agenda too, the European Commission briefed the member states only at the request of some EU23 countries. It is possible that without this demand, the EU23 would not have been involved at all. In the same vein, coordination is often rather limited because there is no such demand from the EU23 because their interests are not at stake or are sufficiently covered by existing EU policies. The G8 cases illustrate that the claim that coordination is limited to information sharing just because the EU4 do not want to coordinate cannot be supported since it ignores the lack of EU23 demand. This also suggests that the main if not sole, purpose of internal EU coordination is to accommodate the concerns of the EU23. It is however unclear, and difficult to determine, how many EU23 countries, whose interests are at stake, are required to result in group decision-making (when combined with EU influence or euro representation). Moreover, the fact that the EU23 play a significant role in determining the level of internal EU coordination does not necessarily imply that they are also able to influence the outcome and to translate their preferences into the EU's position for the Gx. This aspect has not been studied in this dissertation, but is the subject of an article by Nasra and Debaere (2012).

Second, the role of the EU4 should however not be underestimated. Although EU4-related factors are not prominently represented in the causal paths to internal EU coordination, the EU4 seem to play a crucial role in coordinating for the Gx. More precisely, coordination depends largely on the EU4's assessment of the usefulness of a united EU front in the Gx context. If coordination is considered harmful for their performance in the Gx such as in the G20 development case, it is explicitly limited to information sharing, although EU23 countries might be willing to provide substantive input. And when the EU4 countries take the initiative to brief or involve the member states, the aim is rather to do "damage control" or to sell their own agenda (e.g. G8 cases). At the other extreme of the coordination scale, the EU4 allow coordination to take the form of group decision-making if it is in line with their interests, that is because internal EU coordination strengthens the position of the EU4. Anyhow, internal EU coordination is not likely to limit the EU4's room of manoeuvre in the Gx. First, during more interactive coordination moments such as consultation or group decision-making, the EU4 are at least equally active as the EU23. They give comments and suggest amendments just like any other member state (Interview #62). In this way, they are able to shape the EU's position in an early stage. Second and more importantly, EU coordination is not binding and often quite vague, leaving sufficient margin for interpretation. The agreed TOR or Guidelines are considered useful, but not mandatory. It is one document among the others that complement the EU4's national position.

Third, the European Commission appears to behave like a member or participant of the Gx process, rather than as a representative of the 27 EU member states<sup>74</sup>. Although it may defend the Union's interest in the Gx, it does not actively involve the EU23 at its own initiative. It is true that the Commission plays a central role in internal EU coordination by drafting texts and overseeing the process. However, no indications have been found that it acted as a driving force behind any upgrade in the level of coordination. The Commission invokes the same arguments as the EU4 for keeping the level of internal EU coordination low. Moreover, any involvement of the EU23 seems to be a result of political courtesy. Commission officials (Interview #60 and Interview #61) contend that the Commission is not asking to coordinate, but it does so to be forthcoming and to allow the EU23 to formulate comments. That transparency is meant to prevent incidents. It is argued that it is better to involve the EU23 proactively than to be criticized afterwards. Hence, the Commission seems to be more concerned about its own performance and that of the Union in the Gx, rather than about the EU23. Based on this study, it can however not be concluded whether the Commission is reluctant to involve the EU23 because of its delicate position as a regional organisation next to the EU4 in a club of nation states (see e.g. Nasra et al., 2009) or because it genuinely believes that this is the most appropriate option. After all, the Commission is also able to assess whether a common EU position adversely affects its performance in the Gx. Similarly, the Commission also experiences the informal character of sherpa meetings.

Fourth, the role of the rotating EU Council presidency for internal EU coordination appears to be more important than expected. Since the rotating Council presidency does only play a marginal, and even declining, role within the Gx process (see chapter two), our analytical framework did not explicitly refer to the rotating presidency. However, we may tentatively conclude that under certain circumstances, the representation of the Council or the euro group in the G7 or G20 is a causal factor for interactive prior EU coordination. Also for G20 sherpa meetings, the Swedish Council presidency attempted to actively involve the EU23. The causal mechanism is simple. The country that is holding the Council presidency seeks a position to defend in the Gx and therefore consults the other member states. Probably, the intensive

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<sup>74</sup> Nevertheless, whenever an EU position is agreed upon, the Commission tries to ensure that the EU4 respect the outcome of internal coordination. However, it will not openly discipline the EU4.

coordination efforts for the G20 finance track served as an example. But since EU23 interests were much less at stake and plenty of EU policies existed, consultation for the employment and agriculture ministerial meetings sufficed, and it was not necessary to engage in group decision-making.

Fifth, the Treaty of Lisbon has not been subject of this thesis because it does not have a direct impact on internal EU coordination for the Gx. First, the Treaty only entered into force after the third G20 summit when informal EU coordination practices were already being developed. Second, the Lisbon Treaty did not provide any new rules to prepare for international conferences. Internal EU coordination was rather driven by other more political factors. However, on the long term, the Lisbon Treaty may have an indirect negative effect on internal coordination for the Gx. As seen in chapter two, the European Commission argues that according to article 17§1 (TEU) it holds the sole responsibility for the Union's external representation in matters of monetary and financial affairs and advocated minimising the role of the rotating presidency in the G20. But since the Commission is not inclined to coordinate intensively for the Gx, while only the rotating presidency actively promotes EU23 involvement, the Treaty of Lisbon could herald a trend towards less interactive coordination for the Gx process. And although the European Commission may argue that it will involve the EU23 for controversial issues or issues for which no agreed policy exists, it remains the judgement of the Commission whether a topic is controversial or whether EU policy exists.

Sixth, a final remark concerns the influence of the external context on internal EU coordination. The previous sections have illustrated that IO-specific features are omnipresent in the causal paths. EU23 interests cannot be seen as separate from the (perceived) impact of the Gx. The extent to which EU coordination strengthens the position of the EU appears to be related to the function and mode of interaction of the Gx in a certain domain. Furthermore, the informal character and the general relevance of the Gx are also incorporated in our final analysis. Even the representation of the Council or euro zone in the Gx is not only a matter of internal EU competences, but is also, and perhaps more so, influenced by the chair of the Gx. What is more, both the internal and external context are heavily intertwined. Consequently, a comprehensive understanding of internal EU coordination can only be acquired by fully taking the external context into account. This confirms the emerging trend in the study on the EU in international institutions of taking the external context into account (Kissack, 2010: 5; Costa & Jørgensen, 2012; Jørgensen & Laatikainen, 2013; Drieskens & Van Schaik, 2014 forthcoming).

## **7.5. Areas for further research**

The findings of this study as well as its inherent shortcomings offer a number of starting points for future research. At least six promising scholarly avenues can be identified. First, this dissertation has not touched upon peace and security issues. Since foreign affairs constitute a major part of the G8 agenda, analysing if, how and especially why the EU coordinates for political G8 issues would be a first important step after this dissertation. Internal EU coordination would probably not exceed the level of information sharing, but it could be examined whether that level of coordination could be explained by the same causal paths that have been identified in the other Gx cases. In this way, it would also shed a light on the potential role of the European External Action Service in the G8 process. Furthermore, additional research on this topic could also focus on coordination for G8 ministerial meetings, including the meetings of foreign affairs ministers. Coordination seems to be very ad hoc and only took place for ministerial meetings under the 2009 Italian G8 Presidency as far as the time frame of this study is concerned. Since no Italian officials have been interviewed, I had to rely on third-party information and make educated guesses on the motivations for the observed coordination attempts.

A second area that should be explored in more detail is the role of individuals with regard to internal EU coordination for the Gx and the role of the EU in the Gx in general. Occasionally, interviewees referred to the attitude, interests or profile of individuals to explain internal coordination or the behaviour of the EU in the Gx. It is indeed possible that the genuine interest in Gx affairs of a single individual could upgrade coordination from information sharing to consultation. However, it could be questioned why that individual has developed an interest in Gx matters. Perhaps, he or she comes from a country that is particularly exposed to important Gx decisions. Similarly within the Gx, the attitude, interests or profile of a single Commission official may determine whether or not coordination on the spot is organised or whether an intervention is made.

Third, this study may provide the basis for comparative research on internal EU coordination across different IOs. Such a study would not only tackle the gap in the literature on internal EU coordination, but it would also address the pressing need for studies on the EU in international settings with a comparative design, comparing decisions, actors and settings (Bouchard & Drieskens, 2013: 122). So far, a couple of edited volumes have tried to address this concern by comparatively approaching the EU in different IOs. However, they only place several single case studies next to each other (Jørgensen 2009; Blavoukos & Bourantonis 2010; Jørgensen & Laatikainen, 2012).

While our conceptual and analytical framework could be useful to study internal EU coordination in other IOs, it cannot simply be translated to other settings. Our causal paths strongly rely on the distinction between EU23 and EU4 countries. It has been illustrated that being included in or excluded from the Gx leads to different perceptions of the purpose and value of internal coordination, which determine the eventual level of coordination. Consequently, the analytical framework and ensuing causal configurations would require some tweaks in order to be useful in IOs where all member states are represented such as the UN General Assembly, the ILO or the FAO. However, several other international settings do not involve all EU member states. It would be very valuable to compare our findings with EU coordination for, for example, the informal Major Economies Forum, the OECD or the UN Security Council. Moreover, although this research has started from the assumption that the EU's participation in the Gx implies the involvement of the EU23, EU representation is not required to study internal coordination among all EU member states. To refer to our definition of coordination, there are many other interdependencies among the member states that could or should be managed by coordination.

When studying internal EU coordination in other IOs, it is also recommended to take intra-organisational diversity into account. This dissertation has clearly shown that EU coordination may vary within a single IO and the characteristics of an IO, such as its relevance, may also differ across different policy areas.

Fourth, and building upon the previous point, other international settings could serve as a testing ground for hypotheses that could be formulated based on our causal paths. Given the relatively limited number of cases in this study, not all possible causal configurations correspond with empirically observed cases. By extending the scope of IOs, the 'what if'-question could be addressed. For example, what would happen to coordination if G20 decisions in the area of employment touched upon the interests of the EU23? Would coordination for the G20's development agenda be upgraded to consultation if the G20 development ministers started meeting? By looking for cases with these causal configurations, deeper understanding could be acquired about internal coordination, while fine-tuning (or rejecting) the observed causal paths. In this context, one promising area for future research seems to be the relationship between the dominant mode of interaction in an international setting and the desirability and usefulness of a common EU position and by extension internal EU coordination. Also the link between Council representation and consultation could be further examined. This aspect appears to be relatively

important but has not extensively been addressed in this thesis. Moreover, other factors that did not seem to play an important role in the Gx context could be key in other settings. For example, additional research on the finding that the distribution of competences has little or no effect on internal EU coordination could be of great value, keeping in mind that competences could have an indirect influence, for example through existing policies.

Fifth, this study provides the necessary case knowledge to perform a qualitative comparative analysis (QCA). QCA is a formal technique that allows to identify necessary or sufficient variables and causal paths to a certain phenomenon. By using specialized QCA software, unobserved and thus fictitious empirical cases could be taken into account to develop such causal configurations (Rihoux & Ragin, 2009). Actually, QCA has de facto been used in this conclusion. However, causal paths have been formulated based upon logical reasoning instead of specialized QCA software. Hence, applying a formal QCA is definitely the way forward for this particular research design on internal EU coordination for the Gx.

Finally, the literature on the EU in IOs would also benefit greatly from research on the relationship between internal EU coordination and the performance of the EU in international settings. So far, scholars have mostly examined the link between the performance and impact of the EU on the one hand and the extent to which the EU and its member states adhere to a common position on the other. Limited, if any, attention has been paid to the process of internal EU coordination that usually precedes a common EU position. Yet, by explaining why the level of coordination is for example limited to information sharing, one could gain more insight in why a common EU position is absent, which may influence the EU's impact at the international scene. This could lead to a better understanding of the factors that contribute or impede the performance, impact or actorness of the EU in international institutions. Moreover, future research on the added value of internal EU coordination compared to coordination on the spot for the EU to maximize its influence also seems to be very fruitful. This might strengthen our impression that internal EU coordination mostly serves to inform and passively involve the excluded EU member states, rather than to effectively strengthen the position of the EU in international institutions.

## Appendix A

### List of interviews

Reference	Affiliation	Date
Interview #1	EU23	23 February 2008
Interview #2	EU23	13 February 2009
Interview #3	EU23	17 February 2009
Interview #4	EU23	18 November 2009
Interview #5	EU23	30 March 2010
Interview #6	EU23	30 March 2010
Interview #7	EU23	2 April 2010
Interview #8	EU23	9 February 2011
Interview #9	EU23	12 January 2012
Interview #10	EU23	26 January 2012
Interview #11	EU23	27 September 2012
Interview #12	EU23	7 June 2013
Interview #13	EU23	10 June 2013
Interview #14	EU23	18 June 2013
Interview #15	EU23	21 June 2013
Interview #16	EU23	5 November 2012
Interview #17	EU23	14 June 2013
Interview #18	EU23	4 May 2010
Interview #19	EU23	10 February 2012
Interview #20	EU23	23 April 2010
Interview #21	EU23	29 April 2010
Interview #22	EU23	1 February 2012
Interview #23	EU23	22 April 2010
Interview #24	EU23	6 May 2010
Interview #25	EU23	6 May 2010
Interview #26	EU23	7 May 2010
Interview #27	EU23	7 May 2010
Interview #28	EU23	7 May 2010
Interview #29	EU23	7 May 2010
Interview #30	EU23	3 May 2010
Interview #31	EU4	1 February 2012
Interview #32	EU4	25 June 2013
Interview #33	EU4	25 June 2013
Interview #34	EU4	25 June 2013
Interview #35	EU4	25 June 2013
Interview #36	EU4	26 June 2013
Interview #37	EU4	26 June 2013
Interview #38	EU4	26 June 2013
Interview #39	EU4	27 June 2013

Interview #40	EU4	27 June 2013
Interview #41	EU4	28 October 2011
Interview #42	EU4	4 December 2012
Interview #43	EU4	4 December 2012
Interview #44	EU4	5 December 2012
Interview #45	EU4	5 December 2012
Interview #46	EU4	6 December 2012
Interview #47	European Commission	16 March 2008
Interview #48	European Commission	6 February 2009
Interview #49	European Commission	20 February 2009
Interview #50	European Commission	23 February 2009
Interview #51	European Commission	2 March 2009
Interview #52	EU23	17 March 2009
Interview #53	European Commission	17 March 2009
Interview #54	European Commission	18 March 2009
Interview #55	European Commission	19 March 2009
Interview #56	European Commission	6 December 2010
Interview #57	European Commission	20 December 2010
Interview #58	European Commission	7 February 2011
Interview #59	European Commission	14 October 2011
Interview #60	European Commission	19 September 2012
Interview #61	European Commission	1 October 2012
Interview #62	European Commission	5 October 2012
Interview #63	European Commission	5 October 2012
Interview #64	European Commission	5 October 2012
Interview #65	European Council	1 October 2012
Interview #66	IMF	10 March 2009
Interview #67	IMF	9 March 2011
Interview #68	IMF	9 March 2011
Interview #69	IMF	9 March 2011
Interview #70	IMF	10 March 2011
Interview #71	IMF	10 March 2011
Interview #72	IMF	10 March 2011
Interview #73	IMF	10 March 2011
Interview #74	IMF	10 March 2011
Interview #75	IMF	10 March 2011
Interview #76	IMF	10 March 2011
Interview #77	IMF	11 March 2011
Interview #78	IMF	11 March 2011
Interview #79	IMF	12 March 2011
Interview #80	IMF	14 March 2011
Interview #81	IMF	14 March 2011
Interview #82	IMF	11 October 2011
Interview #83	IMF	11 October 2011
Interview #84	IMF	11 October 2011



Interview #85	IMF	12 October 2011
Interview #86	OECD	26 June 2013
Interview #87	OECD	27 June 2013
Interview #88	WTO	7 April 2009

# Appendix B

## Survey design

All replies are strictly anonymous and only serve academic purposes. If you have any questions or remarks about this survey, please contact peter.debaere@ugent.be. At the end of the survey, you will also be able to give additional remarks.

**What is your national or institutional affiliation?**

- G8 member country (France, Germany, Italy or the UK)
- non-G8 member country (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden)
- European institutions, including seconded national experts (European Commission, European Council, European Central Bank)

**What policy area(s) are you working on? (multiple policy areas possible)**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Financial/economic or monetary affairs | <input type="checkbox"/> Climate Change       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Trade                                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Food and Agriculture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Labour and Employment                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Development          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Foreign affairs      |

**Question 1/6 -- In general, how would you assess the G7, G8 and G20?**

	as an irrelevant ‘talking shop’ or ‘photo opportunity’ for world leaders	relevant as a meeting of individuals, but with limited impact	as a forum giving relevant impulses to global governance	as a steering body in global governance
G7	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
G8	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
G20	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Question 2/6 -- Which functions do the following forums perform in the respective policy domains? It is possible to select multiple functions. In case you don't know, please use the last column.**

	Enhancing the prestige of the leaders/ministers back home	Trust-building & fostering personal relationships	Setting the global agenda	Taking relevant decisions	Delivering on its commitments	Steering global governance	Don't know
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Financial & economic affairs - G7	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Financial & economic affairs - G8	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Financial & economic affairs - G20	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trade - G8	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trade - G20	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Labour & employment - G8	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Labour & employment - G20	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Energy - G8	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Energy - G20	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Climate change - G8	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Climate change - G20	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Food & agriculture - G8	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Food & agriculture - G20	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Development - G8	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Development - G20	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**Question 3/6 -- How would you rate the impact of the following forums on your country/institution in the respective policy domains? In case you don't know, please use the last column.**

	No impact	Low impact	Medium impact	High impact	Very high impact	Don't know
Financial & economic affairs - G7	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Financial & economic affairs - G8	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Financial & economic affairs - G20	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trade - G8	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trade - G20	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Labour & employment - G8	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Labour & employment - G20	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Energy - G8	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Energy - G20	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Climate change - G8	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Climate change - G20	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Food & agriculture - G8	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Food & agriculture - G20	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Development - G8	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Development - G20	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
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**Question 4/6 -- To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "A common EU position strengthens the EU's influence in ..."**

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	No opinion
... the G7	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... the G8	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
... the G20	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Question 5/6 -- How would you describe the internal EU coordination efforts among the 27 EU member states for the following forums in the respective policy domains? In case you don't know, please use the last column.**

	No coordination	Information exchange	Consultation	Formulating general EU principles	Negotiating a detailed EU position	Don't know
Financial & economic affairs - G7	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Financial & economic affairs - G8	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Financial & economic affairs - G20	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trade - G8	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trade - G20	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Labour & employment - G8	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Labour & employment - G20	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Energy - G8	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Energy - G20	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Climate change - G8	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Climate change - G20	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Food & agriculture - G8	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Food & agriculture - G20	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Development - G8	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Development - G20	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Question 6/6 -- In general, how satisfied are you with the current level of internal EU coordination for the following forums? If you are dissatisfied, please specify why.**

Forums	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Insufficient	Too restrictive	Too time-consuming	Not taken seriously at G-level
G7	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G8	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
G20	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**If you have any additional remarks on the G7, G8 or G20 or the EU's coordination processes for these forums, or if you want to clarify one of your answers in this survey, please use the following text box:**

## Appendix C

### Survey results

Question 1/6 -- In general, how would you assess the G7, G8 and G20?

EU23	as an irrelevant 'talking shop' or 'photo opportunity' for world leaders	relevant as a meeting of individuals, but with limited impact	as a forum giving relevant impulses to global governance	as a steering body in global governance	Total Responses
G7	5	61	55	10	131
G8	10	46	69	7	132
G20	5	30	72	26	133

EU4/EUi	as an irrelevant 'talking shop' or 'photo opportunity' for world leaders	relevant as a meeting of individuals, but with limited impact	as a forum giving relevant impulses to global governance	as a steering body in global governance	Total Responses
G7	2	6	25	8	41
G8	2	10	26	4	42
G20	1	4	28	9	42

Question 2/6 -- Which functions do the following forums perform in the respective policy domains? In absolute numbers (A) and as shares of responses, without the don't know option (R-DK).

EU23	Enhancing the prestige		Trust-building		Setting the agenda		Taking relevant decisions		Delivering on commitments		Steering global governance		Don't know	
	A	R-DK	A	R-DK	A	R-DK	A	R-DK	A	R-DK	A	R-DK	A	R
Financial & economic affairs - G7	18	16,2	31	27,9	29	26,1	14	12,6	3	2,7	16	14,4	7	5,9
Financial & economic affairs - G8	21	21,2	30	30,3	27	27,3	9	9,1	5	5,1	7	7,1	5	4,8
Financial & economic affairs - G20	22	15,1	26	17,8	43	29,5	19	13,0	9	6,2	27	18,5	2	1,4
Trade - G8	9	15,8	19	33,3	15	26,3	7	12,3	3	5,3	4	7,0	5	8,1
Trade - G20	10	15,9	17	27,0	20	31,7	6	9,5	4	6,3	6	9,5	2	3,1
Labour & employment - G8	11	20,0	15	27,3	12	21,8	8	14,5	4	7,3	5	9,1	14	20,3
Labour & employment - G20	11	19,3	16	28,1	14	24,6	9	15,8	2	3,5	5	8,8	14	19,7
Energy - G8	4	11,4	12	34,3	9	25,7	6	17,1	2	5,7	2	5,7	12	25,5
Energy - G20	5	13,9	14	38,9	9	25,0	4	11,1	1	2,8	3	8,3	12	25,0
Climate change - G8	7	13,2	20	37,7	17	32,1	5	9,4	2	3,8	2	3,8	9	14,5
Climate change - G20	7	12,3	21	36,8	18	31,6	3	5,3	3	5,3	5	8,8	8	12,3
Food & agriculture - G8	4	10,3	12	30,8	12	30,8	6	15,4	1	2,6	4	10,3	13	25,0
Food & agriculture - G20	5	12,5	12	30,0	14	35,0	2	5,0	2	5,0	5	12,5	11	21,6
Development - G8	9	17,6	16	31,4	12	23,5	5	9,8	4	7,8	5	9,8	9	15,0
Development - G20	11	20,0	17	30,9	16	29,1	5	9,1	2	3,6	4	7,3	7	11,3

EU4/EUi	Enhancing the prestige		Trust-building		Setting the agenda		Taking relevant decisions		Delivering on commitments		Steering global governance		Don't know	
	<i>A</i>	<i>R-DK</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>R-DK</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>R-DK</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>R-DK</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>R-DK</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>R-DK</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>R</i>
Financial & economic affairs - G7	5	10,0	15	30,0	9	18,0	9	18,0	6	12,0	6	12,0	0	0,0
Financial & economic affairs - G8	9	19,1	15	31,9	6	12,8	5	10,6	5	10,6	7	14,9	0	0,0
Financial & economic affairs - G20	10	15,9	12	19,0	12	19,0	12	19,0	6	9,5	11	17,5	0	0,0
Trade - G8	4	25,0	6	37,5	4	25,0	1	6,3	1	6,3	0	0,0	1	5,9
Trade - G20	2	9,5	6	28,6	7	33,3	3	14,3	2	9,5	1	4,8	0	0,0
Labour & employment - G8	2	28,6	2	28,6	1	14,3	1	14,3	1	14,3	0	0,0	1	12,5
Labour & employment - G20	2	15,4	4	30,8	2	15,4	2	15,4	2	15,4	1	7,7	0	0,0
Energy - G8	3	17,6	3	17,6	4	23,5	2	11,8	4	23,5	1	5,9	0	0,0
Energy - G20	2	15,4	4	30,8	3	23,1	0	0,0	3	23,1	1	7,7	0	0,0
Climate change - G8	1	8,3	2	16,7	4	33,3	1	8,3	1	8,3	3	25,0	0	0,0
Climate change - G20	1	8,3	2	16,7	5	41,7	0	0,0	1	8,3	3	25,0	0	0,0
Food & agriculture - G8	2	9,1	4	18,2	3	13,6	5	22,7	6	27,3	2	9,1	1	4,3
Food & agriculture - G20	2	9,1	4	18,2	5	22,7	5	22,7	4	18,2	2	9,1	0	0,0
Development - G8	1	2,9	5	14,7	6	17,6	8	23,5	11	32,4	3	8,8	0	0,0
Development - G20	2	6,9	8	27,6	6	20,7	5	17,2	5	17,2	3	10,3	0	0,0



Question 3/6 -- How would you rate the impact of the following forums on your country/institution in the respective policy domains? In absolute numbers (A) and as shares of responses, without the don't know option (R-DK).

EU23	No impact		Low impact		Medium impact		High impact		Very high impact		Don't know	
	A	R-DK	A	R-DK	A	R-DK	A	R-DK	A	R-DK	A	R
Financial & economic affairs - G7	2	4,1	21	42,9	15	30,6	10	20,4	1	2,0	9	15,5
Financial & economic affairs - G8	4	7,8	20	39,2	19	37,3	7	13,7	1	2,0	7	12,1
Financial & economic affairs - G20	2	3,7	9	16,7	20	37,0	18	33,3	5	9,3	4	6,9
Trade - G8	3	8,6	12	34,3	14	40,0	5	14,3	1	2,9	3	7,9
Trade - G20	2	5,7	13	37,1	14	40,0	6	17,1	0	0,0	3	7,9
Labour & employment - G8	4	14,3	15	53,6	7	25,0	2	7,1	0	0,0	17	37,8
Labour & employment - G20	3	10,0	16	53,3	10	33,3	1	3,3	0	0,0	15	33,3
Energy - G8	2	9,5	11	52,4	2	9,5	4	19,0	2	9,5	13	38,2
Energy - G20	2	9,5	10	47,6	6	28,6	3	14,3	0	0,0	13	38,2
Climate change - G8	5	14,3	17	48,6	9	25,7	3	8,6	1	2,9	11	23,9
Climate change - G20	4	11,4	19	54,3	8	22,9	3	8,6	1	2,9	11	23,9
Food & agriculture - G8	4	14,3	11	39,3	12	42,9	0	0,0	1	3,6	12	30,0
Food & agriculture - G20	2	7,4	13	48,1	11	40,7	1	3,7	0	0,0	13	32,5
Development - G8	1	4,0	15	60,0	8	32,0	1	4,0	0	0,0	12	32,4
Development - G20	0	0,0	15	55,6	11	40,7	1	3,7	0	0,0	10	27,0

EU4/EUi	No impact		Low impact		Medium impact		High impact		Very high impact		Don't know	
	<i>A</i>	<i>R-DK</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>R-DK</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>R-DK</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>R-DK</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>R-DK</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>R</i>
Financial & economic affairs - G7	0	0,0	2	11,8	6	35,3	5	29,4	4	23,5	0	0
Financial & economic affairs - G8	4	22,2	4	22,2	1	5,6	7	38,9	2	11,1	0	0
Financial & economic affairs - G20	0	0,0	1	5,6	4	22,2	8	44,4	5	27,8	0	0
Trade - G8	2	18,2	4	36,4	4	36,4	0	0,0	1	9,1	0	0
Trade - G20	1	9,1	4	36,4	4	36,4	0	0,0	2	18,2	0	0
Labour & employment - G8	4	50,0	1	12,5	2	25,0	0	0,0	1	12,5	0	0
Labour & employment - G20	3	33,3	2	22,2	2	22,2	1	11,1	1	11,1	0	0
Energy - G8	0	0,0	7	58,3	4	33,3	0	0,0	1	8,3	0	0
Energy - G20	1	8,3	6	50,0	4	33,3	0	0,0	1	8,3	0	0
Climate change - G8	1	10,0	2	20,0	4	40,0	2	20,0	1	10,0	0	0
Climate change - G20	1	10,0	2	20,0	5	50,0	1	10,0	1	10,0	0	0
Food & agriculture - G8	1	9,1	1	9,1	6	54,5	2	18,2	1	9,1	0	0
Food & agriculture - G20	1	9,1	2	18,2	4	36,4	3	27,3	1	9,1	0	0
Development - G8	0	0,0	0	0,0	7	53,8	5	38,5	1	7,7	0	0
Development - G20	1	7,7	3	23,1	7	53,8	1	7,7	1	7,7	0	0

Question 4/6 -- To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "A common EU position strengthens the EU's influence in ..." In absolute numbers.

EU23	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	No opinion
G7	1	3	11	21	21	1
G8	1	4	20	52	42	4
G20	1	2	12	51	53	3

EU4	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	No opinion
G7	0	1	1	3	6	1
G8	1	2	5	10	8	0
G20	0	1	4	11	10	0

EUi	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	No opinion
G7	0	0	0	0	6	0
G8	0	0	3	2	8	0
G20	0	0	2	4	8	0

Question 5/6 -- How would you describe the internal EU coordination efforts among the 27 EU member states for the following forums in the respective policy domains? In absolute numbers (A) and as shares of responses, without the don't know option (R-DK).

EU23	No coordination		Information exchange		Consultation		Formulating general EU principles		Negotiating a detailed EU position		Don't know
	A	R-DK	A	R-DK	A	R-DK	A	R-DK	A	R-DK	
Financial & economic affairs - G7	8	19,0	10	23,8	8	19,0	12	28,6	4	9,5	25,0
Financial & economic affairs - G8	8	17,0	15	31,9	8	17,0	13	27,7	3	6,4	16,1
Financial & economic affairs - G20	0	0,0	5	9,6	8	15,4	22	42,3	17	32,7	7,1
Trade - G8	4	15,4	7	26,9	3	11,5	6	23,1	6	23,1	23,5
Trade - G20	1	3,8	7	26,9	2	7,7	12	46,2	4	15,4	23,5
Labour & employment - G8	0	0,0	12	46,2	5	19,2	8	30,8	1	3,8	36,6
Labour & employment - G20	0	0,0	9	30,0	8	26,7	11	36,7	2	6,7	26,8
Energy - G8	3	17,6	7	41,2	1	5,9	6	35,3	0	0,0	45,2
Energy - G20	3	17,6	7	41,2	2	11,8	4	23,5	1	5,9	45,2
Climate change - G8	2	8,0	7	28,0	5	20,0	10	40,0	1	4,0	43,2
Climate change - G20	1	3,8	9	34,6	2	7,7	12	46,2	2	7,7	40,9
Food & agriculture - G8	1	5,3	9	47,4	1	5,3	7	36,8	1	5,3	48,6
Food & agriculture - G20	0	0,0	6	31,6	4	21,1	9	47,4	0	0,0	47,2
Development - G8	1	5,3	8	42,1	3	15,8	6	31,6	1	5,3	44,1
Development - G20	0	0,0	8	40,0	4	20,0	5	25,0	3	15,0	41,2

EU4/EUi	No coordination		Information exchange		Consultation		Formulating general EU principles		Negotiating a detailed EU position		Don't know
	A	R-DK	A	R-DK	A	R-DK	A	R-DK	A	R-DK	
Financial & economic affairs - G7	0	0,0	4	23,5	5	29,4	5	29,4	3	17,6	0,0
Financial & economic affairs - G8	1	6,3	3	18,8	5	31,3	5	31,3	2	12,5	11,1
Financial & economic affairs - G20	0	0,0	0	0,0	2	11,1	11	61,1	5	27,8	0,0
Trade - G8	0	0,0	1	8,3	1	8,3	3	25,0	7	58,3	0,0
Trade - G20	0	0,0	0	0,0	2	16,7	2	16,7	8	66,7	0,0
Labour & employment - G8	1	12,5	1	12,5	3	37,5	2	25,0	1	12,5	11,1
Labour & employment - G20	0	0,0	1	10,0	1	10,0	7	70,0	1	10,0	0,0
Energy - G8	0	0,0	1	9,1	6	54,5	3	27,3	1	9,1	8,3
Energy - G20	1	9,1	0	0,0	5	45,5	4	36,4	1	9,1	8,3
Climate change - G8	0	0,0	1	10,0	3	30,0	2	20,0	4	40,0	9,1
Climate change - G20	0	0,0	1	10,0	2	20,0	3	30,0	4	40,0	9,1
Food & agriculture - G8	1	10,0	0	0,0	4	40,0	2	20,0	3	30,0	16,7
Food & agriculture - G20	0	0,0	1	9,1	3	27,3	4	36,4	3	27,3	8,3
Development - G8	0	0,0	3	21,4	6	42,9	3	21,4	2	14,3	0,0
Development - G20	0	0,0	3	23,1	5	38,5	3	23,1	2	15,4	0,0

Question 6/6 -- In general, how satisfied are you with the current level of internal EU coordination for the following forums? In absolute numbers (A) and as shares of responses on this question (R%)

		Very satisfied		Satisfied		Neutral		Dissatisfied		Very dissatisfied	
		A	R (%)	A	R (%)	A	R (%)	A	R (%)	A	R (%)
<b>G7</b>	EU23	0	0	7	14,6	20	41,7	17	35,4	4	8,3
	EU4/EUi	2	13,3	3	20	5	33,3	4	26,7	1	6,7
<b>G8</b>	EU23	3	3	11	11,1	46	46,5	29	29,3	10	10,1
	EU4/EUi	2	5,7	6	17,1	18	51,4	7	20	2	5,7
<b>G20</b>	EU23	5	4,7	24	22,6	44	41,5	26	24,5	7	6,6
	EU4/EUi	7	20	10	28,6	10	28,6	7	20	1	2,9

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