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"The future yet to come: for a global politics of hope"

The EU's actorness in face of regional and global crises and security imbroglios

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Recent dramatic and turbulent developments on the global stage have called into question the foundations of liberal internationalism and the world order. The European Union as an international organisation directly affected by these developments has struggled to develop its profile as an effective, capable, and coherent international security actor. Its actorness, shaped by the aspiration towards sharing in the responsibility for global security, has been put to "reality checks".

This workshop examines critically the EU's global actorness and aims to assess its performance, achievements and shortcomings across various issue areas. It seeks to address global ramifications of security — such as development cooperation, security governance, climate change, or energy security — yet it is interested in zooming in on regional security imbroglios, such as wars, conflicts and protracted instability zones in Ukraine, the Middle East, South Asia, Indo-Pacific and some areas of the Global South.

The objective of this workshop is to decode the complexities, map the intricacies, and engage in critical debate regarding the EU's global actorness. It is also intended to reinvigorate a scholarly debate on the EU as an international actor aspiring to contribute substantially to global and regional security and bear "collective responsibility to act". The EU's "normative power" will be discussed in light of its "goodness to fit" (or lack of it) the complex processes of conflict prevention, peace building and post-conflict stabilisation. The "geopolitical awakening" proclaimed by VP/HR Josep Borrell will be another thread of critical reflection on the EU's capabilities to engage with the challenges posed by predatory powers (such as China and Russia) and their revisionist worldviews. Moreover, the workshop will address the relevance of collective actors, such as the EU, for mastering security imbroglios and offering a realistic and hopeful solution to protracted conflicts and antagonisms.

Assuming that the global security system is at an inflection point, the problem of the EU's actorness entails several specific questions worth exploring:

- Is the concept of actorness, as established in theoretical reflection and empirical insights on European integration, still appropriate for analysing, explaining and interpreting the Union's strategy and policy?
- Given the EU's responses to the current security imbroglios, has the EU demonstrated that it is now a formidable security actor?
- Have these imbroglios further contributed to exposing the weakness of the CFSP, CSDP, and other relevant EU frameworks?
- Does the 2016 Global Strategy still resonate with the new challenges and tasks?
- Is the EU ready to adapt to the shifting global disorder marked by continuous geopolitical/military crises and the emergence of fragmented multilateralism?
- Has the EU been prompt or rather belated in adjusting its global actorness to the dynamic shifts in the international arena?