6 National Foreign Policy Co-ordination

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This chapter addresses a classic concern in foreign policy analysis, namely the possibilities of and the obstacles to forging coherent national positions through some form of foreign policy co-ordination by the state. It is widely argued among contemporary commentators that policy coherence is a prerequisite for asserting influence abroad and protecting the state from unwanted foreign influences at home. The essence of traditional statecraft, to protect the state from its enemies abroad, requires the co-ordination of foreign policy. This thesis was formulated in the classic maxim of the 19th-century German strategic thinker, Leopold von Ranke: *Das Primat der Aussenpolitik*. It has been a cornerstone of the constitutional praxis of European governments for several hundred years.

The question that must be asked here is how this tradition of statecraft in pursuit of national interests has been challenged by the voluntary inclusion of European states in the evolving European Union (EU). The notion of diplomacy and its various manifestations has clearly changed within the EU context (see Hocking, Chapter 5 in this volume). Similarly, legal and political requirements for sector-defined interpenetrations among the member states, as codified in the Amsterdam and Nice Treaties, would seem to erode the Rankean tradition of foreign policy co-ordination, including the centrality of bilateral relations with other EU members and with the common institutions. The EU has certainly created an element of external policy fragmentation across many sectors and actors within each state. Nevertheless, we shall find in this chapter and in the subsequent Swedish case study (Ekengren, Chapter 13 in this volume) that national foreign policy co-ordination in support of vital interests is still very much in evidence today. But the context in which national co-ordination operates is being fundamentally transformed by the EU.

The aim of this chapter is to examine how traditional state-oriented European diplomacy is affected by the *multi-level* character of the EU and its particular demands on national co-ordination and interest representation. Jørgensen and Hocking (Chapters 2 and 5 in this volume) show how intra-EU

negotiation now extends beyond traditional state-centred intra-European diplomacy. The argument here is that the transformation of diplomacy is also the result of the increasingly marked EU *levels* of governance that have to be connected by national foreign policy co-ordination. In this chapter, we focus on different ideal types of co-ordination measures at the national level that could be used to perform this task. In Chapter 13, Ekengren examines the place of national co-ordination in the multiple level game of European foreign policy (EFP) on the basis of an empirical case study. He shows that the co-ordination of EU member state representation at the EU level is aimed not only at securing the national interest *in* the EU, but also gets its organisational dynamics from the tasks it has to perform *for* the Union in the international arena. This is national co-ordination for a multi-layered EFP and can be explained in terms of a notion of *complementary* sovereignty between the national and the EU levels, rather than a *shared* or *divided* sovereignty as often suggested elsewhere.

Interdependence and Foreign Policy

The international and domestic contexts of European foreign relations have changed considerably during the post-war era. Some of the novel conditions are related to the formation and development of the EU, but many are not. Wider international trends have also affected the working conditions in the Union. Membership of the Union merely accentuates these operating conditions.

During the 1970s and 1980s, a considerable body of academic literature was devoted to the analysis of the then emerging trend of complex interdependence. US scholars in particular noted this novel feature of international relations (IR). The archetype was US–Canadian patterns of transnational, transgovernmental and intergovernmental relations (Young, 1969; Keohane and Nye, 1974, 1975, 1977). Scholars working on Europe could point to many applications of these ideas in the already intense and multi-faceted intra-European relations (Kaiser, 1971; Morse, 1973; Mally, 1976; Sundelius, 1977, 1980). More recently, the globalisation trend has attracted the attention of leading IR scholars (Zürn, 2002). In many respects, the earlier pattern of complex interdependence is further elaborated in this more recent literature, but expanded beyond geographical pockets of relations among the so-called advanced industrial societies to span across the globe (Morse, 1976; Hanrieder, 1978; Scott, 1982). The impact of finance, media, telecommunications and various non-governmental advocacy organisations have been added to the earlier, more limited, yet still extensive complexity. Intra-EU relations form a fully developed example of this wider pattern affecting the national conduct of foreign policy. The Union, therefore, can be understood as a particular and evolving form of IR as well as being depicted as a European polity in the making (Rosamond, 2000). It is in this context that this chapter focuses on national foreign policy co-ordination as a means of forging coherence in IR and linking levels in an evolving EU constitution.

The European states have penetrated their own societies deeply over the last 50 years. At the same time, they have extended their spheres of involvement more widely across the EU and beyond. Domestic issues in one region of the continent now have direct implications for other corners of Europe with respect, for example, to food safety and other standards. Many countries have experienced similar task expansion processes, leading both to demands for international co-operation and to clashes of interests. As a result, the policy setting for each government is constituted by an entangled web of domestic and external activity, which can still be most appropriately characterised as a systemic structure of complex interdependence. Earlier research has shown that European governments have undergone an internationalisation process that has involved fundamental structural changes (Egeberg, 1980; East, 1981; East and Salomonsen, 1981; Sundelius, 1984; Karvonen and Sundelius, 1987). Much of this structural transformation can be traced to the impact of the evolving EC/EU (Wallace, 1984; Wessels and Rometsch, 1996; Soetendorp and Hanf, 1998; Harmsen, 1999).

Several effects on national foreign policy processes can be associated with these structural changes. National management of external relations is now characterised by a proliferation of actors, issues, channels and procedures. The traditional foreign policy apparatus centred upon the foreign ministry is increasingly unable to control effectively the ever-broadening and intensifying external involvement of the state. To overcome a potential management crisis, several new offices for international affairs have developed in a rather sporadic and *ad hoc* basis. Subsequently, the internationalisation of government structures has been coupled with a decentralisation of foreign policy processes. This, in turn, has raised concerns about the proper co-ordination of external relations and has contributed to jurisdictional conflicts in this area (Morse, 1976; Wallace, 1978; East, 1984; Karvonen and Sundelius, 1987; Underdal, 1987).

The Panacea of Co-ordination

Co-ordination can be classified as one of the 'contested concepts', alongside terms like 'power' and 'security'. It can be viewed as a condition that exists when the parties in question share a common purpose. Alternatively, co-ordination can be regarded as a process involving increasingly shared activity; from information sharing, through task sharing, to joint planning to synchronising an activity or an external position. Some authors emphasise the role of co-ordination as a means of establishing internal political and administrative control of public policy, including foreign relations. Others view it as an instrument to enhance organisational efficiency by determining the division of tasks among the sub-units concerned with an issue or a policy sector.

In abstract terms, co-ordination implies the creation of a common order for a number of separate elements that are distinct, but also linked in some way with respect to their tasks or purposes. It also suggests that the activities of different units are interrelated in a manner conditioned by some overarching value. In the foreign policy realm, the so-called national interest would be such a superior value. From this perspective, the purpose of co-ordination is to ensure that the outputs of the various units are not in fundamental conflict. Others might view this more modestly as an exercise in organisational coexistence rather than policy co-ordination. But the minimal purpose would be to limit competition, divide roles, and share tasks and resources.

Governments undertake a number of co-ordination activities for the ostensible purpose of strengthening their national foreign and security posture in a competitive international setting. These activities also generate effects upon government units and can shift their standing abroad and at home. Thus, they should be evaluated both in terms of their policy coherence objectives and also in terms of their consequential impact on the allocation of resources, status and influence over national policy. This holds true also for attempts to improve policy co-ordination among states, such as those that are members of the constantly evolving EU.

Policy coherence is a major objective of all forms of co-ordination, including attempts at national foreign policy co-ordination. A similar objective underlies the parallel attempt to develop EU-based foreign and security co-ordination. It is an open question whether this process remains an exercise in coexistence among the EU member governments and the several common institutions, or whether a more ambitious effort is underway to forge coherent positions across the broad scope of the EFP agenda. It is also of interest to explore the relationship between the dynamics of co-ordination at the national and at the European level. Do national co-ordination mechanisms facilitate or hinder foreign policy co-ordination across the member states? Is less co-ordination in one sphere of activity necessary to achieve more co-ordination in another? Are highly co-ordinated national foreign policy systems necessary to strike the bargains required to move towards a coherent European foreign and security policy? What differences in procedure and coherence can be discerned between different policy sectors and between routine policy formulation and the making of major EU decisions? Some answers to these questions are suggested here.

Co-ordination processes can be distinguished along several dimensions:

- The *procedural style* can vary from reliance upon sector or issue specialisation to comprehensive control through centralised representation.
- The *decision-making dynamics* can be based upon building consensus among equal parties or upon overt leadership by a political or organisational hegemon.
- *Motivations for unit adherence* to common positions can be based upon respect for the professional expertise of others, or on a gradual socialisation into a culture of shared principles and standards.

Assuming two end positions along each of the three dimensions, we have identified six ideal types of national foreign policy co-ordination.

Co-ordination through specialisation

With this approach, no single ministry or agency has overall responsibility for the co-ordination of foreign policy. Instead, different units perform this function in separate policy sectors. Several specialised co-ordination units coexist within the foreign policy establishment. The foreign ministry has a distinctive authority only in a limited sector, while other ministries or units take lead roles elsewhere. The functionalist theory of integration explains why this form of national co-ordination can serve political objectives beyond the national interest. At the European level, indeed, specialised responsibility for co-ordinating the broad scope of foreign relations may be the most cost-effective way of dealing with the many units and issues involved. By avoiding a tight grip on overall co-ordination, each sector unit may stay closer to the substance of foreign affairs and develop considerable expertise within its area of jurisdiction. Also, one might expect that sector-based co-ordination would facilitate policy coherence at the European level where attempts are made to forge national postures into a common European position.

Co-ordination through representation

This approach recognises that states do not strive for national co-ordination for its own sake, but to face more effectively an adversary, a rival or other foreign stakeholders. They seek a posture which is co-ordinated with respect to the international setting and to various international negotiating fora. From this perspective, it would seem logical to place the responsibility for national co-ordination at the contact point with the identified target. It can be argued that the foreign mission to another state or international organisation has the most comprehensive and informed perspective on the total relationship with this target. This is where all the ties between various functional areas are brought together, allowing for an assessment of their relative importance to the overall relationship. At the European level, the Permanent Representatives can pull together the many diverse links between member states and the policy-making processes of the EU. The Representatives are not merely a 'branch office' of the foreign ministries, but rather an outpost of the entire home government of the member states.

Co-ordination through consensus

With this approach to co-ordination, no single unit is responsible. Instead, this shared objective is achieved by broadly-based committees that include all actors with legitimate stakes in the relevant foreign policy field. If time does not allow for face-to-face meetings, then information sharing, consultation and joint drafting of positions are appropriate procedures. The objective here is to create a consensus on issues before they are placed on the agenda of working committees. Each ministry or unit is then expected to follow the agreed principles or guidelines and to support the implementation of policy based upon them. In principle, this should obviate the need for executive directives and direct overseeing of the post-decisional activities of the various units involved. At the European level, however, national consensus building might be too slow to serve as a foundation for policy-making in rapidly moving EU negotiations. If an intergovernmental EU consensus is to be achieved, this might require more flexibility and speed in forging national positions.

Co-ordination through political leadership

This approach emphasises the central position of the head of government as the co-ordinator of all public policy, including foreign policy. The prime minister or president, together with their cabinet colleagues and executive agencies, can provide a broader perspective on policy than any single ministry or unit. Over the last 25 years or so, centralised mechanisms, such as cabinet offices, in many European governments have expanded their co-ordinating roles, often at the expense of foreign offices.

Co-ordination through professional expertise

A traditional strategy for achieving coherence is to utilise the expertise of foreign ministry staff. Only these professionals, it might be argued, possess the special training and experience necessary to formulate and implement foreign policy. Several areas of competence can be highlighted here. Diplomats are familiar with the protocol of intergovernmental relations and can ensure that negotiations are effectively handled. They have the negotiating skills together with specialist knowledge of the tactics and interests of both adversaries and partners. Through their unique understanding of the dynamics of the international political game, diplomats can protect the national interest across a wide range of policy sectors. The foreign ministry itself has considerable expertise in the details of international law and understands the obligations and the international commitments of the state. In addition, through its control of classified archives, the foreign ministry is the keeper of the 'national memory' with respect to foreign policy.

Co-ordination through socialisation

With this norm-building approach, foreign policy co-ordination is sought through shared notions of what constitutes the national interest. This approach is particularly relevant when the state has a widely supported and well-established foreign policy doctrine. A shared doctrine can be used to evaluate all foreign policy activities for conformity with established norms. The US 'war on terrorism' since 9/11 and its homeland security concept are good examples of recent doctrinal initiatives to enhance national security co-ordination through the socialisation of relevant government agencies at federal, state and local levels.

In this section, we have sketched the general features of six ways of solving the organisational problem of how best to achieve national foreign policy co-ordination. Most, if not all, of the ideal types are used in some form by member states of the EU. The case study developed in Chapter 13 looks at how these types of co-ordination were deployed to forge a coherent Swedish posture during the Swedish presidency of the EU in the first half of 2001. The next section of this chapter looks in more detail at how established national processes of co-ordination have been adapted to operate at the EU level.

National Co-ordination at the EU Level

A heightened concern with co-ordination at the centre of national administrations is perhaps the most obvious illustration of common patterns of Europeanisation in EU member states (Soetendorp and Hanf, 1998; Luif, 1998: 125; Harmsen, 1999: 97; Hocking, 1999; Manners and Whitman, 2000: 260). EU concerns and EU deadlines percolate down deeply into national as well as European bureaucracies. But this has both centralising and decentralising effects. On the one hand, there is pressure on all national policy-makers concerned with EU affairs to follow centrally determined norms, rules and deadlines. On the other hand, EU time constraints means that there is less time for individual departments, groups and officials to be instructed by higher level authorities which may, in turn, lead to more decentralised decision-making. In order to ease the tensions between these two trends, shifts of institutional powers are taking place within the central governmental structures of member states.

Centralisation

The simultaneous demands for action at the EU level create a demand for a top-down approach to the management of national administrations. There are increasing pressures on national administrations to implement EU decisions within narrow time constraints. As a result, states like the Netherlands, France and Norway have developed increasingly co-ordinated mechanisms at the centre to strengthen and speed up implementation procedures 'downstream' (Harmsen, 1999: 101; Soetendorp and Hanf, 1998: 43–5). Not only modes of co-ordination, but also the extent of co-ordination has changed (Sverdrup, 1998: 160). In many member states, there has been a need for more co-ordinating personnel and their workload has increased (George, 1992; Ekengren and Sundelius, 1998: 139; Sverdrup, 1998: 157). In The Netherlands, for example, 'since both the Co-Co (Co-ordinating Committee for European Integration) and the Cabinet act under the pressure of the deadlines of the coming ministerial Councils in Brussels, another high-level co-ordination committee has been created in the Hague alongside the Co-Co' (Soetendorp and Hanf, 1998: 41).

Centralising trends often include the co-ordination of EU policy within the Prime Minister's own office, leading to what might be called a 'prime ministerialisation' of EU policy-making. In the Netherlands, the prime minister convenes the ministers principally concerned with European policy in the Council for European and International Affairs and there has been a clear concentration of powers in the office of the Prime Minister (Harmsen, 1999: 94–7). The prime minister is ultimately responsible for the co-ordination of European policy and is also responsible to the Dutch parliament for problems of co-ordination. Also the Danish prime minister has been playing an increasing role in shaping EU policy. One of the main reasons for reorganising the prime minister's office has been to create a capacity to control the ministries (von Dosenrode, 1998: 58–9). In Norway, according to Sverdrup, the prime minister's office plays the role of 'a competent commentator providing deadlines and co-ordination of the "national interest"' (1998: 159–60).

Behind this institutional activity lie concerns that the co-ordination of national actions in various EU institutions has been inadequate. Ministries have not been able to formulate clear and timely directives to national representatives in Brussels. Indeed, ministries themselves are considered to be too small to prepare national positions on a daily basis and to act as future-orientated strategic units. The expansion of co-ordinating mechanisms has been justified by governments both in terms of enabling national ministries to work more strategically and to improve the administrative capacity overall to pursue a more proactive and influential posture in particular policy areas (Ladrech, 1994; Soetendorp and Hanf, 1998).

It is often the foreign ministries themselves that have become strong advocates of central co-ordination in order to enhance national influence in the EU. Such a centralising process is necessary if member goverments wish to avoid a disaggregation of the state into sector-defined European networks. The role of EU national co-ordinators in member states sheds further light on the need for active centralised co-ordination in the face of externally imposed timetables for decision making. The co-ordinator is often both the creator and the upholder of coherent national positions which are essential to present an image at least of national homogeneity. In order to manage European policy effectively, the traditonal sequence of govermental activity is now broken up and this includes limiting the autonomy of foreign ministries in the name of co-ordination. There is now little time 'to wait until every different view has been settled' before unified national action. Indeed, there is no purely 'national interval' for forging national action.

This task of managing European policy is reflected in the role of the lead EU departments. Whatever their specific institutional form – whether the department of foreign affairs, the department of the European Union, the EU co-ordination secretariat, or the ministry of finance – they are often the link between the national permanent representation in Brussels and the various 'domestic' ministries. They have the responsibility for ensuring that positions are prepared for all items on the agendas prepared by the EU presidency, and for finalising and transmitting official instructions to the representatives in COREPER and in Council meetings. Moreover, these departments often have the additional responsibility for co-ordinating

relations between the ministries and the national parliaments (Luif, 1998; Sverdrup, 1998).

Significantly, new catchphrases are emerging to provide a focus for centralised co-ordination and to counteract any resistance to effective adaptation in an EU context. In Austria, for example, there has been a call for the elaboration of a 'comprehensive strategy' to frame all Austrian action in the EU (Luif, 1998). In Sweden, the aim of central co-ordination should be to form 'common outlooks' that can guide national representatives in complex European policy-making processes (Ekengren and Sundelius, 2002). Such unifying concepts are important because formalised and regularised central co-ordination is very difficult in the complex multi-level EU context. One institutional result is that new government agencies, or 'planning services', responsible for shaping common outlooks across a range of policy sectors are being set up in, for example, Greece (Christakis, 1998: 92), Ireland – the Institute of European Affairs (Laffan and Tannam, 1998: 82), Austria (Luif, 1998) and Sweden – the Swedish Institute of European Policy Studies (Ekengren and Sundelius, 1998: 143). Their purpose is to bring together diverse societal and corporate interests and prepare national directives for long-term strategic priorities.

Decentralisation

A contrasting consequence of high-speed European processes is that national political actors are forced to act more independently of the centre and on mandates defined in advance. Pressures to respond quickly thus create decentralisation and informalisation of administration. As Laffan and Tannam comment in the Irish context, 'An emphasis on the immediate to the neglect of the medium to long term is a feature of this administrative culture. Policy-making in Dublin tends to be reactive rather than active in nature. Position papers and negotiating tactics are worked out at each stage of the policy process. This policy style is reinforced by the Community's decision-making process which is dominated by negotiations and highly segmented' (1998: 79).

The short time spans between EU meetings challenge the logic of appropriate procedures in national administration. In particular, the pace of EU decision making creates problems for the tradition of securing wide support for every decision, both within and outside the administration. There is simply less time for officials to anchor national actions in the EU securely at home, which leads to more autonomy for individuals and a more important role for flexible and informal contacts (Wallace, 1971, 1973; Ekengren and Sundelius, 1998; Luif, 1998: 122). As noted in the previous section, new co-ordinating institutions, such as the Secretariat of State for the EC in the Spanish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, have been created to counteract the decentralising effects of European governance (Morata, 1998: 103). But, at the same time, the permanent delegations in Brussels representing all parts of the government are growing. We may well see in the future co-ordination problems between Brussels-based and home-based national officials.

Member states face a serious strategic management dilemma. To be able effectively to engage in the multiple policy-shaping networks and informal decision fora, experienced and specialised national officials must be free to participate without being unnecessarily hampered by central co-ordination or control mechanisms. But co-ordination at the national centre may actually restrict the ability to maximise national influence at all stages – pre-decision, decision and post-decisional – of vital policy processes. This dilemma raises fundamental questions about the precise purposes of national co-ordination.

Institutionalising a European time line

In an important sense, national co-ordination faces a qualitatively new situation in the EU. Senior officials complain that 'we do not control the timetable any more'. The challenges to existing national procedures not only relate to harmonising the substance of policy, but also to harmonising 'when' questions. Timetables are seen as more important and more constraining because they are now beyond national control. Different ministries and government agencies follow separate timetables for preparing and making EU policy. Consequently, they all need to formulate and schedule positions in relation to these 'external' deadlines. But the Europeanisation of time inside member governments is uneven and this fosters fragmentation of processes and of policy substance. Even within the confines of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), the splitting up of national diplomats into working groups means that they work permanently on different timetables or simply different working-group meeting schedules.

The complexity of various timetables, each of which is monitored mainly by the official participating in the particular working group, erodes what might be called a common national foreign policy calendar. Running on different and parallel timetables makes it more difficult to ensure the logical sequence of agreeing a national position internally and then presenting that agreed position to the outside world. In the EU, this national sequence, if not actually disappearing, is seriously squeezed by narrow time slots generated by external demands for speedy action (Ekengren, 2002: Ch. 3).

Due to the number of working groups and the extent of simultaneous meetings, national positions are in a constant formation and re-formation process. For smaller EU member states at least, this process can be described in terms that suggest the national present is, to an increasing extent, being 'crowded out' by a European present. The fact that the common EU present is imposed and enforced by the necessity to participate in the given moment of decision alters the character of traditional ministerial work. EU deadlines are spread deeply into national bureaucracy forming novel time-based norms and rules. The pace of decision making is gaining ground in determining the final policy result, possibly at the cost of factors relating to policy substance. Returning to the argument developed at the beginning of this chapter, this European phenomenon is a manifestation of a wider trend

observed by scholars of complex interdependence: space is being replaced by pace as a major determinant of outcomes in international relations (Scott, 1982; Virilio, 1986).

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7 Collective Identity[1]

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There are numerous indications that a focus on identity should yield important insights into the study of European Foreign Policy (EFP). Several studies suggest that the European Union (EU) is a particularly prominent case of collective identity formation. Examples include contributions to the theoretical literature in EU studies (see, for example, Christiansen et al., 2001; Jørgensen, 1997), as well as constructivist analyses in the field of International Relations (IR) theory (Katzenstein, 1996: 518; Risse-Kappen, 1995b: 287; Risse, 2000: 15; Wendt, 1994: 392). Likewise, the discourse of EU practitioners on the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) is replete with references to 'identity'. For example, Article 2 (ex B) of the Treaty on European Union declares as the goal of CFSP to 'assert its identity on the international scene' and the preamble asserts that the implementation of CFSP will 'reinforce the European identity'. However, the apparent promise of a focus on identity is in stark contrast to the elusiveness of its meaning and the limited progress in our conceptual understanding of its implications for EFP. Despite the growth of research on collective identity formation in the IR literature, scholars have barely started to apply these insights to EFP (see also White, 2001: 175).

Most rationalist, and in particular materialist, approaches would question the usefulness of such an enterprise. By contrast, this chapter argues that the study of EFP can indeed benefit from a more sociological approach to the role of identity, as it allows us to address analytical blind spots and gaps in the existing literature. However, in order to reap those benefits, two important questions need analytical clarification. First, we need to clarify the nature of EU identity, or rather, what particular characteristics of EU identity matter for EFP. Second, we need a better understanding of how such an identity and the norms that constitute it have an impact on EFP.

The next section sketches the main assumptions underpinning a more sociological perspective on the role of identity for EFP. The third section suggests that while many studies of CFSP refer to the EU's 'international identity', they do not share such sociological understanding of identity, but are instead set within a rationalist and materialist framework that exogenises actors' identities and interests.

The fourth section reviews the literature in search for clues as to how a thus understood EU identity can be characterised. It identifies the articulation