

Gendering normative power Europe: lessons of the Women, Peace and Security agenda

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The articles in this special issue of *International Affairs*, along with the vast body of work published in recent years on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) on Women, Peace and Security and its follow-up resolutions, highlight the opportunities and constraints attendant on global gender norms.¹ In a nutshell, the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda has provided the impetus and mechanisms for including gender as a factor in international peace and security. This article will focus on one of the most prominent actors in relation to gender and international affairs, the European Union. Specifically, it will look at this organization's role in advancing WPS as a foreign policy objective.

It is important to understand the EU's approach to UNSCR 1325 as it provides useful insights into the way gender norms travel and are shaped by different institutional settings. The interaction between European institutions and interests on the one hand, and EU member states' interests on the other, sheds light on the way WPS is understood in cross-national settings. As the majority of national action plans (NAPs) on UNSCR 1325 have been produced by European states,² it follows that EU member states play a critical role in realizing the potential of the WPS agenda and championing its core objectives at a supranational level.

Two aspects of the EU as an actor in international affairs are worth examining. The first is its role as a leader in promoting equality in transnational settings. This is based on treaty commitments and the identification of equality as a foundational norm.³ The introduction of mainstreaming as a core principle in the 1997 Treaty of Amsterdam created an obligation on European institutions to include a gender dimension in all policy areas, including external relations. Given the establishment of UNSCR 1325 as a benchmark for promoting women's role in security and defence and the prominence of the EU's role as a gender actor, we would expect the EU not only to use these provisions as a vehicle for mainstreaming gender in

¹ Paul Kirby and Laura J. Shepherd, 'Reintroducing women, peace and security', *International Affairs* 92: 2, March 2016, pp. 249–54 above; United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolutions 1325 (Oct. 2000), 1820 (June 2008), 1888 (Sept. 2009), 1889 (Oct. 2009), 1960 (Dec. 2010), 2106 (June 2013), 2122 (Oct. 2013) and 2242 (Oct. 2015).

² Karen Barnes, 'Status of implementation in the European realm: overview and consideration of the status of the plan of action', in *Roadmap to 1325: resolution for gender-sensitive peace and security policies*, Gunda Werner Institute, Heinrich Böll Foundation (Leverkusen: Barbara Budrich, 2010).

³ Heather MacRae, 'The EU as a gender equal polity: myths and realities', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 48: 1, 2010, pp. 155–74.

respect of its own external relations, but to assume a leading role in promoting the inclusion of gender in the area of security more widely.

The second is the debate about ‘normative power Europe’. In order to examine whether Europe is sensitive to gender norms as a defining feature of European identity, we adopt here a feminist institutionalist approach,⁴ and, in so doing, test the commitment of the EU to its core values. Specifically, this article outlines how the EU has pursued the obligations of a global gender norm—UNSCR 1325—in the development of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). This analysis will contribute to establishing whether UNSCR 1325 is a ‘game changer’ for gender mainstreaming in European external relations and will outline the possibilities and prospects for the future of the EU as a gender actor.

This article makes an important and timely contribution to the literature on gender regimes, WPS and ‘normative power Europe’. In implementing global norms, the EU interprets the principles enshrined within them in line with its own foundational values, thus both producing new meaning for WPS and reproducing its own gender order. The analysis presented here addresses some of the most significant gaps in current research on the diffusion of gender norms. Falling between the international and national levels, the regional dimension has received little attention as a site of contestation and mediation of global gender norms.⁵ This is a significant silence in current discussion as regional organizations, in particular the EU, play a key role in norm diffusion and provide a platform for feminist actors (institutional and non-governmental) working to promote gender mainstreaming and WPS.

Normative gender regimes and the external dimension

‘Europe has been promoting gender equality since 1957—it is part of the European Union’s DNA.’⁶ This joint statement by First Vice-President Timmermans, High Representative/Vice-President Mogherini and Commissioners Mimica, Avramopoulos, Thyssen, Stylianides and Jourová on the occasion of International Women’s Day 2015 highlights the centrality of the equality narrative to the EU’s internal and external identity. This statement supports Manners’s idea that the EU’s power as an international actor derives from its identity and its ability to project core values in outward-facing policies.⁷ Allowing core foundational norms

⁴ Fiona Mackay, Meryl Kenny and Louise Chappell, ‘New institutionalism through a gender lens: towards a feminist institutionalism?’, *International Political Science Review* 31: 5, 2011, pp. 573–88.

⁵ Theresa Wobbe, ‘From protecting to promoting: evolving EU sex equality norms in an organisational field’, *European Law Journal* 9: 1, 2003, pp. 88–108; Alison E. Woodward and Anna van der Vleuten, ‘EU and the export of gender equality norms: myth and facts’, in Anna van der Vleuten, Anouka van Eerdewijk and Conny Roggeband, eds, *Gender equality norms in regional governance: transnational dynamics in Europe, South America and Southern Africa* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

⁶ European Union External Action Service (EEAS), ‘Statement by First Vice-President Timmermans, High Representative/Vice-President Mogherini and Commissioners Mimica, Avramopoulos, Thyssen, Stylianides and Jourová on the Occasion of International Women’s Day’, 8 March 2015, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STATEMENT-15-4573_en.htm. (Unless otherwise noted at point of citation, all URLs cited in this article were accessible on 14 Jan. 2016.)

⁷ Ian Manners, ‘Normative power Europe: a contradiction in terms?’, *Journal of Common Market Studies* 40: 2, 2002, pp. 235–58; Ian Manners, ‘The normative power of the European Union in a globalised world’, in Zaki

to drive the formulation of these policies and then projecting them in foreign and security policy is key to the EU's role as a normative actor in international affairs.

The role of the EU in promoting women's employment rights is well documented.⁸ However, there is little evidence that gender is being mainstreamed in external policies. UNSCR 1325 and the WPS agenda are currently the dominant global gender norms and should easily dovetail with the core values of equality espoused by the EU; we would therefore expect both the Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) to bandwagon on the WPS agenda. The EU's delay in embracing the WPS agenda reflects the limitations of both its approach to gender mainstreaming and its identity as a normative power. Specifically, it supports MacRae's assertion that there is a disjuncture between rhetoric and reality in the way the EU sees itself as an advocate of equality and the way it seeks to mainstream gender in all policy areas.⁹

There is agreement among feminist scholars that the EU has largely failed to incorporate gender in its external policies. Woodward and van der Vleuten point out that despite the EU's claim to be a world leader in promoting equality between men and women, the evidence currently available points to a much more mixed picture that leads them to call 'for a reconsideration of the idea of the EU's normative power on gender equality norms, and a dynamic understanding of the norm diffusion processes which involve the EU'.¹⁰ Maria Stern highlights the gendered and racialized nature of current debates about the European Security Strategy.¹¹ For Kronsell, the dominance of male bodies in institutional hierarchies and structures, and the absence of women from policy documents, reflect organizational bias in favour of traditional gender models and approaches to security and defence.¹²

What emerges from these studies is a degree of dissonance between the way the EU *sees itself* as a normative actor in the international system and *how it goes about* incorporating these fundamental values in the development and implementation of external policies. Specifically, there is a tension between the EU's rhetoric about exporting gender equality and its own failure to implement a gender dimension where it sees doing so as likely to hinder progress in international negotiations.¹³ This approach comes at a price, as the EU's inability to promote core values, such

Laidi, ed., *EU foreign policy in a globalized world: normative power and social preferences* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), pp. 21–37; Ian Manners, 'Power: critical perspectives and perspectives on the critical', in Richard Whitman, ed., *Normative power Europe: empirical and theoretical perspectives* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 226–48.

⁸ Johanna Kantola, *Gender and the European Union* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010); Woodward and van der Vleuten, 'EU and the export of gender equality norms'.

⁹ MacRae, 'The EU as a gender equal polity'.

¹⁰ Woodward and van der Vleuten, 'EU and the export of gender equality norms', p. 68.

¹¹ Maria Stern, 'Gender and race in the European Security Strategy: Europe as a "force for good"?'', *Journal of International Relations and Development* 14: 1, 2011, p. 30.

¹² Annika Kronsell, 'Sexed bodies and military masculinities: gender path dependence in EU's Common Security and Defense Policy', *Men and Masculinities*, May 2015, p. 15.

¹³ Maria Garcia and Annick Masselot, 'The value of gender equality in EU–Asian trade policy: an assessment of the EU's ability to implement its own legal obligations', in Annika Björkdahl, Natalia Chaban, John Leslie and Annick Masselot, eds, *Importing EU norms: conceptual frameworks and empirical findings* (London: Springer International, 2015), p. 191.

as equality, ultimately reflects negatively on the application of these same values in internal policies.¹⁴

Feminist triangles in EU policy-making

Equality *should* be a perfect platform for normative power Europe; and yet gender issues remain largely invisible. Given this blindness, it is important to look at the processes by which equality and gender are included in key policies at the European level. This section will draw on feminist institutionalism in order to explain how gender has been mainstreamed in some areas while being excluded from others. Woodward's work on velvet triangles is particularly useful, as it provides insights into the work of key feminist actors at the European level.¹⁵

Feminist scholars interested in institutions have produced a number of explanations of how and why women's interests are included in or excluded from policy processes. One thing many of these frameworks have in common is the focus on institutional advocacy and critical actors.¹⁶ For instance, Holli argued that feminist constellations play a crucial role in ensuring that women's interests are represented in policy-making processes.¹⁷ Feminist triangles, constellations and/or strategic partnerships open up access to policy-making circles and processes for key actors, thus increasing the effectiveness of interest representation. The idea of strategic partnership was introduced in the 1990s to explain the success of feminist actors in promoting a policy-making agenda that was women-friendly and inclusive in Norway.¹⁸ 'Velvet triangles' have since become one of the main explanatory variables for policy-making success in the areas of equality and gender mainstreaming.¹⁹

Looking specifically at the development of equal rights in the EU, Woodward postulated that a feminist triangle is necessary for women's rights advocacy to 'take root'.²⁰ The cornerstones of this triangle are (1) femocrats (individuals positioned within a bureaucratic structure who are motivated to work towards transformative change in line with feminist goals); (2) civil society organizations; and (3) epistemic communities (networks of professional experts with recognized competence in a particular area and an authoritative claim to policy-relevant knowledge²¹). Lombardo and Meier found that this sort of feminist coalition was

¹⁴ Maxine David and Roberta Guerrina, 'European external relations: dominant discourses and unintended consequences of gender mainstreaming', *Women's Studies International Forum*, vol. 39, Oct. 2013, pp. 53–62; Charlotte Bretherton, 'Gender mainstreaming and EU enlargement: swimming against the tide?', *Journal of European Public Policy* 8: 1, 2001, pp. 60–81.

¹⁵ Alison Woodward, 'Building velvet triangles: gender and informal governance', in Thomas Christiansen and Simona Piattoni, eds, *Informal governance in the European Union* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2003), pp. 76–93.

¹⁶ Claire Annesley and Francesca Gains, 'Investigating the economic determinants of the UK gender equality policy agenda', *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 15: 1, 2013, pp. 125–46.

¹⁷ Anne Maria Holli, 'Feminist triangles: a conceptual analysis', *Representation* 44: 2, 2008, pp. 169–85.

¹⁸ Holli, 'Feminist triangles', p. 171.

¹⁹ Annesley and Gains, 'Investigating the economic determinants', p. 127.

²⁰ Woodward, 'Building velvet triangles'.

²¹ Peter M. Haas, 'Introduction: epistemic communities and international policy coordination', *International Organization* 46: 1, 1992, pp. 1–35.

also important in the establishment of mainstreaming, as it empowers and enables women at the heart of policy to promote a gender-sensitive agenda.²² The importance of feminist constellations (networks of feminist actors) in policy-making should not be underestimated. These alliances help to ensure that institutions and their associated actors are held accountable and fulfil their treaty obligations.²³ The analysis presented here provides important insights into opportunities for and constraints on the establishment of a velvet triangle and therefore feminist advocacy in the area of WPS in the EU.

Historically, feminist actors have played a key role in the development of the European equality framework. Femocrats in the Commission, acting as policy entrepreneurs, kept gender and equality on the agenda and ensured that a level playing field was established. Communities of experts within the permanent representations, the FEMM Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality in the European Parliament, and the Commission provided data to support evidence-based policy developments. Finally, an active civil society element, in the shape of the European Women's Lobby (EWL), put pressure on European institutions to expand the original remit from equal pay to equality in all areas of social, political and economic life.²⁴

The nature of the EU's institutional architecture and its complex system of multilevel governance create opportunities and constraints for key actors seeking to shape the 'gender machinery'. The entrepreneurial role of key feminist actors within European institutions (the Commission, the Parliament and the EWL) has been instrumental in securing a central place for the European equality framework in the area of social and employment policy. Feminist actors have demonstrated that they can be very effective in navigating these complex relationships in areas where the EU has a clear competence, such as employment.²⁵ Unfortunately, the evidence from the area of security and defence policy is that they have had less purchase in those areas traditionally portrayed as gender-neutral.

Eerdewijk and Roggeband draw attention to the productive potential of these interactions.²⁶ Feminist actors working within institutions play an important role as they contribute to the production and diffusion of norms. However, in the case of the EU, the focus of policy action and activity on the internal market at the expense of external relations has limited the actual and potential reach of

²² Emanuela Lombardo and Petra Meier, 'Framing gender equality in the European Union political discourse', *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State and Society* 15: 1, 2008, pp. 101–29.

²³ Sylvia Walby, 'Gender mainstreaming: productive tensions in theory and practice', *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State and Society* 12: 3, 2005, pp. 321–43.

²⁴ Roberta Guerrina, *Mothering the Union: gender politics in the EU* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005); Anouka van Eerdewijk and Conny Roggeband, 'Gender equality norm diffusion and actor constellations: a first exploration', in Anna van der Vleuten, Anouka van Eerdewijk and Conny Roggeband, eds, *Gender equality norms in regional governance: transnational dynamics in Europe, South America and southern Africa* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Catherine Hoskyns, 'Gender approaches', in Antje Wiener and Thomas Diez, eds, *European integration theories* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

²⁵ Sylvia Walby, 'The European Union and gender equality: emergent varieties of gender regime', *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State and Society* 11: 1, 2004, pp. 4–29 at p. 15.

²⁶ Eerdewijk and Roggeband, 'Gender equality norm diffusion'.

mainstreaming as a strategy.²⁷ Identifying which actors are operating at which level in the EU's system of governance, and where these actors are absent, will help us to understand the pervasive silence of gender in the largely intergovernmental field of security policy.

When we look at the way European institutions have approached the implementation of the WPS agenda, the concentration of feminist actors in areas relating to employment is clear. Ultimately, the EU's gender regime is largely neo-liberal in orientation, 'with economic concerns overshadowing feminist ones'.²⁸ The absence of key actors championing this agenda in core institutions, for example the EEAS, has contributed to ensuring that the issue of gender remains peripheral in the development of the ESS. True to form, European institutions responsible for setting the external agenda formulated a set of priorities that subjugates gender/equality to higher political and economic interests.

This analysis raises important questions about the necessary preconditions for the establishment in the first place of feminist constellations and then of a feminist 'velvet' triangle. This kind of advocacy network requires cooperation between actors who represent different sets of interests but who are ultimately committed to promoting equality and gender mainstreaming in a policy setting. Gender blindness is a significantly more likely outcome when 'velvet triangles' are absent. EU enlargement provides a useful example of the limitations of feminist activism when it is not located within a powerful set of institutionally based actors. The value of 'velvet triangles' is that they work within the institutional structure but provide an opening for critical voices and counter-discourses to influence the decision-making process.²⁹

Feminist actors within the EEAS, the Commission and the European Parliament therefore have a key role to play in helping to establish a velvet triangle in policy areas traditionally portrayed as gender-neutral. The intergovernmental nature of the CSDP poses additional challenges to institutional feminist actors, who have above all to challenge traditional conceptions of security. Moreover, in this area civil society and epistemic communities have fewer opportunities to access and influence the policy process. For all these reasons, the EU's approach not only reproduces silences in external relations, it highlights the strongly commodified nature of equality in the internal dimension.³⁰ Gendering normative power Europe thus provides an important departure for the analysis of the EU's role as a gender actor. It is a process involving reflexivity, or the way that the EU understands equality in a broader sense.

²⁷ David and Guerrina, 'European external relations'; Bretherton, 'Gender mainstreaming and EU enlargement', pp. 60–81.

²⁸ Sumer Sevil, *European gender regimes and policies: comparative perspectives* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), p. 73.

²⁹ Birgit Locher and Elizabeth Prügl, 'Gender and European integration', *CONWeb Papers*, no. 2, 2008, https://www.wiso.uni-hamburg.de/fileadmin/sowi/politik/governance/ConWeb_Papers/conweb2-2008.pdf, accessed 19 January 2015.

³⁰ See e. g. Roberta Guerrina, 'Socio-economic challenges to work-life balance at times of crisis', *Journal of Social Welfare and Family Law* 32: 3, 2015, pp. 368–77.

Pathways for the inclusion of global gender norms in EU politics: where are the feminist triangles?

External relations represent something of an exception within the EU in respect of gender advocacy. Feminist civil society has been engaged with the EU's internal policies but has yet to replicate its success in respect of external affairs. Most noticeable is the absence of the EWL—the pre-eminent international NGO concerned with gender equality issues—from monitoring of the EU's implementation of UNSCR 1325. Rather, it has been the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office, a non-feminist umbrella NGO,³¹ that has taken up this role, through its working group on gender, peace and security.³² The main objective of the EWL in this area has been 'to channel civil society analysis and provide evidence-based contributions' on WPS.³³ It has done so most notably through the production of two sets of case-studies mapping the implementation of UNSCR 1325 across Europe in 2010 and 2013,³⁴ drawing upon national-level civil society expertise. The EWL has also been the most frequently represented civil society actor at meetings of the EEAS WPS task force;³⁵ it has attended three of the seven meetings, while only two other NGOs have attended any of the meetings (both at the same meeting in November 2013).

Table 1: Participation in meetings of the EEAS Informal Task Force on Women, Peace and Security (number of delegates in attendance)

Date of meeting	EU institutions			Member states	International organizations				Civil society	
	Council	Commission	EEAS		UN	NATO	OSCE	AU	EPLO ^a	Other
April 2009	2	1	0	7	0	0	0	0	0	0
Feb. 2010	2	7	0	11	2	0	0	0	0	0
Oct. 2011	0	1	5	5	1	1	0	0	0	0
April 2012	0	1	1	11	0	1	0	0	1	0
Nov. 2012	0	3	2	11	1	3	0	1	2	0
Nov. 2013	0	2	7	10	5	0	2	0	0	2
April 2014	0	0	4	10	1	3	0	0	2	0

^a European Peacebuilding Liaison Office.

³¹ Although a number of feminist NGOs fall under the umbrella of the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office, the latter is itself not primarily a feminist NGO.

³² Barnes, 'Status of implementation', p. 88.

³³ European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO), *Comparing national action plans for UNSCR 1325 in Europe*, March 2012, <https://www.peaceportal.org/documents/126549566/o/Table+comparing+WPS+NAPs+in+Europe>, accessed 19 Jan. 2016.

³⁴ EPLO, *UNSCR 1325 in Europe: 21 case studies of implementation*, June 2010, http://www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/Resources/NGO/nat_1325implementation21cases_eplo_jun2010.pdf; EPLO, *UNSCR 1325 in Europe: 20 case studies of implementation*, Nov. 2013, http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/features/features-working-women/working-with-women/docs/eplo-20-case-studies_en.pdf, accessed 19 Jan. 2016.

³⁵ EEAS, *Informal Task Force on Women, Peace and Security*, http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/features/features-working-women/working-with-women/article21_en.html, accessed 19 Jan. 2016.

The limited engagement of the EWL with the WPS agenda and with the EU's implementation of UNSCR 1325 reflects the disjuncture between internal and external policies in respect of gender. The EWL has been at the forefront of gender advocacy within the EU since its establishment in 1990 and has participated in debates on the future of the EU, advocating, for example, for the inclusion of gender equality in treaties.³⁶ It is an umbrella organization that was established with EU funding, and its main *raison d'être* is to provide an institutional vehicle for the representation of women's interests at the European level.³⁷ It is an important actor on the international stage in its own right, with advisory status at both the Council of Europe and the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Interestingly, over the years the EWL has sought to ground itself in its intra-EU mandate,³⁸ focusing its work on issues falling under the single market and the open method of coordination, including employment discrimination and violence against women.³⁹ It therefore reflects the specific form of feminism prevalent within the EU,⁴⁰ and it pursues feminist ends 'less as a radical anti-system discourse than a more liberal inclusionary one'.⁴¹

A search of the EWL website supports the contention that the organization is disproportionately concerned with intra-EU issues at the expense of external relations. It is striking that there are only two references to UNSCR 1325, both linked to the EWL's 2014 manifesto.⁴² Here, UNSCR 1325 is identified as a 'priority of the EU' and the EU is criticized for not being 'more vocal about women's rights outside of its borders'; it is also noted that 'the EU external policies in terms of gender equality are not consistent with the EU internal policies on this matter'.⁴³ Search results for 'EEAS' include criticism of the dominance of men in EU foreign policy and of the then High Representative Baroness Ashton's stance against implementing quotas for the EEAS. However, these comments are not linked to the WPS agenda and the associated call for the increased representation of women in decision-making roles.

Despite the obvious overlap between its remit and the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and gender mainstreaming in external relations, the EWL has not sought to share lessons or cooperate more broadly with the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office on this issue. This recalls Lombardo and Verloo's observation that the EWL has previously proved reluctant to forge alliances to further its own agenda.⁴⁴ The absence of feminist civil society scrutiny of the EU's imple-

³⁶ Roberta Guerrina, 'Gender, mainstreaming and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights', *Policy and Society* 22: 1, 2003, pp. 97–115.

³⁷ Walby, 'The European Union and gender equality'.

³⁸ Tetyana Pudrovska and Myra Marx Ferree, 'Global activism in "virtual space": the European women's lobby in the network of transnational women's NGOs on the web', *Social Politics: International Studies in Gender, State and Society* 11: 1, 2004, pp. 117–44.

³⁹ Pudrovska and Ferree, 'Global activism'.

⁴⁰ Sylvia Walby, 'Feminism in a global era', *Economy and Society* 31: 4, Nov. 2002, pp. 533–57.

⁴¹ Pudrovska and Ferree, 'Global activism', p. 135.

⁴² European Women's Lobby (EWL), *Manifesto for the European Parliament elections 2014*, 2014, <http://womenlobby.org/spip.php?article6466&lang=en>.

⁴³ EWL, *Manifesto for the European Parliament elections 2014*.

⁴⁴ Emanuela Lombardo and Mieke Verloo, 'Institutionalizing intersectionality in the European Union?', *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 11: 4, Dec. 2009, pp. 478–95.

mentation of UNSCR 1325 also represents a departure from dominant narratives about the resolution, which has been championed as a ‘feminist achievement’⁴⁵ grounded in the mobilization of transnational feminist advocacy groups.⁴⁶ Moreover, civil society has had a crucial role to play in holding governments to account by promoting this agenda at the national level and monitoring its implementation by signatory governments.⁴⁷ The under-representation of civil society in negotiations about external policies reflects the diversity present within the institutional architecture of the EU. Civil society’s absence from policy areas that have traditionally been portrayed as gender-neutral, such as development, ultimately limits the transformative potential of key policy strategies, including gender mainstreaming.⁴⁸

Institutional politics and tensions: or, who has ownership of WPS in the EU?

This article uses feminist institutionalist models to assess the depth and scope of gender mainstreaming in EU external relations. Our analysis is based on computer-aided content analysis (using NVivo⁴⁹) of key policy documents (specifically, the European Council’s *Comprehensive approach to the EU implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 on Women, Peace and Security*, and its *Implementation of UNSCR 1325 as reinforced by UNSCR 1820 in the context of ESDP [European Security and Defence Policy]*),⁵⁰ speeches and minutes of the EEAS Informal Task Force on Women, Peace and Security.

The EU’s implementation of the WPS agenda, set out in UNSCR 1325 and related resolutions, has to be understood with reference to the organization’s complex institutional structure, as defined by treaty obligations. In addition to member states, three institutions are particularly important in this context: the

⁴⁵ Cynthia Cockburn, ‘Snagged on the contradiction: NATO, UNSC Resolution 1325, and feminist responses’, *No to NATO*, 24 Nov. 2011, <http://www.no-to-nato.org/2011/11/24/snagged-on-the-contradiction-nato-uns-resolution-1325-and-feminist-responses/>, accessed 12 June 2012.

⁴⁶ Felicity Hill, Mikele Aboitiz and Sara Poehlman-Doumbouya, ‘Nongovernmental organizations’ role in the buildup and implementation of Security Council Resolution 1325’, *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 28: 4, 2009, pp. 1255–69; Nicola Pratt and Sophie Richter-Devroe, ‘Critically examining UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security’, *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 13: 4, 2011, pp. 489–503.

⁴⁷ Vanessa Farr, ‘UNSCR 1325 and women’s peace activism in the Occupied Palestinian Territory’, *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 13: 4, Dec. 2011, pp. 539–56; Katrina Lee-Koo, ‘Implementing Australia’s national action plan on United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325’, *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 68: 3, April 2014, pp. 300–13; Laura McLeod, ‘Experiences, reflections, and learning: feminist organizations, security discourse and SCR 1325’, in Annica Kronsell, ed., *Making gender, making war: violence, military and peacekeeping practices* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012), pp. 135–49; Melanie Hoewer, ‘UN Resolution 1325 in Ireland: limitations and opportunities of the international framework on Women, Peace and Security’, *Irish Political Studies* 28: 3, Sept. 2013, pp. 450–68.

⁴⁸ Petra Debusscher, ‘Mainstreaming gender in European Union development policy in the European neighborhood’, *Journal of Women, Politics and Policy* 33: 4, 2012, pp. 322–44.

⁴⁹ NVivo is a software used for data analysis.

⁵⁰ Council of the European Union, *Comprehensive approach to the EU implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 on Women, Peace and Security*, Dec. 2008, http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/features/features-working-women/working-with-women/docs/01-eu-comprehensive-approach-1325_en.pdf; Council of the European Union, *Implementation of UNSCR 1325 as reinforced by UNSCR 1820 in the context of ESDP*, Dec. 2008, http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/features/features-working-women/working-with-women/docs/03-implementation-esdp_en.pdf.

EEAS, the Council of the EU and the European Parliament. It is worth noting that the European Commission, a key driver in the historical development of the European equality framework, is largely absent from the discussions about UNSCR 1325. This is important in relation to the discussion about feminist triangles, because the Commission has been the main site for feminist advocacy in the EU.

Following the creation of the EEAS, responsibility for mainstreaming gender in external affairs was transferred from the Commission to this new institution.⁵¹ The WPS agenda calls for the increased participation of women in international peace and security and for their 'representation at all decision-making levels in national, regional and international institutions and mechanisms for the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict'.⁵² Yet women have been noticeable in their absence from the EEAS, with the exception of the High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy, a position that has been occupied by two women since its inception—Catherine Ashton and Federica Mogherini. In the EEAS headquarters women hold just 3 of the 28 executive positions (11 per cent), and at the level of special envoy and representative they hold just one of the ten (10 per cent), although one of the two EEAS mediators in 2014 was a woman.⁵³ The predominance of male bodies within EU external relations is clearly visible, yet is rarely raised as an issue because security and defence remains an area where the influence of member states prevails.⁵⁴

The High Representatives have not assumed an active role in supporting the implementation of UNSCR 1325, nor have they shown leadership on the issue. During her time in the post, Ashton released annual statements to mark International Women's Day, but did not take the opportunity they offered to reflect on the EU's work in promoting gender equality and including WPS in the emerging ESS. None of Ashton's brief annual statements mentioned UNSCR 1325 or the EU's efforts to implement it; they focused instead on the position of women in society globally, though the 2013 statement did commit EU funding to targeting violence against women and girls in development projects. In a departure from the precedent set by Ashton, Mogherini did not release her own statement to mark International Women's Day, but rather was named in a joint statement released by Vice-President Timmermans and Commissioners Mimica, Avramopoulos, Thyssen, Stylianides and Jourová.⁵⁵ Moreover, Mogherini's first address to the UN Security Council focused on the issue of UN–EU cooperation, offering only a fleeting mention of UNSCR 1325 to acknowledge the 15th anniversary of the resolution's adoption.⁵⁶

⁵¹ Gill Allwood, 'Horizontal policy coordination and gender mainstreaming: the case of the European Union's global approach to migration and mobility', *Women's Studies International Forum*, vol. 48, Jan.–Feb. 2015, p. 13.

⁵² S/Res/1325.

⁵³ Radhika Coomaraswamy, *Preventing conflict, transforming justice, securing the peace: a global study on the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325* (New York: UN Women, 2015), p. 258, http://wps.unwomen.org/~media/files/un_women/wps/highlights/unw-global-study-1325-2015.pdf.

⁵⁴ Kronsell, 'Sexed bodies and military masculinities'.

⁵⁵ EEAS, 'Statement by First Vice-President Timmermans' et al.

⁵⁶ Federica Mogherini, 'Speech by High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini at the UN Security Council: cooperation between the UN and regional and sub-regional organisations', 9 March 2015, http://eeas.europa.eu/statements-eeas/2015/150309_or_en.htm.

The establishment of the EEAS as a new institution represented an opportunity to put greater emphasis on the gender dimension of security and foreign policy. The lack of leadership in this policy area crystallizes the internal–external dichotomy in the EU’s role as a gender actor, and indicates that the focus of EEAS activity has been on the development of its core identity, purpose and fit within the European institutional architecture. It also reflects the reality that, as Barnes notes, ‘too often the progress [of the EU on WPS] has been driven by a small group of committed individuals, rather than being backed by high-level political or institutional commitments’.⁵⁷

The European Parliament, rather than the EEAS, has emerged as the main advocate for WPS at the European level. The Parliament was quick to adopt a resolution following the UN Security Council’s initial adoption of Resolution 1325 in 2000.⁵⁸ Since then it has consistently stressed the importance of UNSCR 1325, most recently in a resolution adopted in November 2014.⁵⁹ Within the Parliament, responsibility for overseeing the EU’s implementation of UNSCR 1325 falls to two committees, the FEMM committee and the Foreign Affairs Committee—specifically, the subcommittees on security and defence (SEDE) and human rights (DROI). The two committees have worked together on the issue, for instance in a joint FEMM/SEDE hearing on UNSCR 1325 held in September 2015.⁶⁰ In addition, the DROI subcommittee commissioned a study on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in EU policies in 2010; this study identified a number of weaknesses in the EU’s implementation of the resolution, in particular the focus of the High Representative on gender sensitivity rather than on the establishment of a gender machinery to support the mainstreaming of UNSCR 1325.⁶¹ Unfortunately, the European Parliament still has only advisory capacity in the fields of security and defence. It therefore has only limited purchase over member states and limited capacity for ensuring that gender is mainstreamed in this area.

The Informal Task Force on UNSCR 1325 established by the European Council in its *Comprehensive approach* document meets regularly; minutes of the meetings, including a list of the individuals who participated, are freely available on the EEAS website. This makes it possible to map out the key actors who have supported the EU’s implementation of UNSCR 1325 (as discussed above in respect of the EWL and illustrated in table 1). The task force meets regularly with the EU Special Representative on Human Rights, the Crisis Management and

⁵⁷ Karen Barnes, ‘Reform or more of the same? Gender mainstreaming and the changing nature of UN peace operations’, YCISS working paper no. 41, Oct. 2006, p. 78.

⁵⁸ European Parliament, ‘Resolution on participation of women in peaceful conflict resolution’, 2025(INI), Nov. 2000.

⁵⁹ European Parliament, ‘Resolution of 25 November 2014 on the EU and the global development framework after 2015’, 2143(INI), Nov. 2014.

⁶⁰ European Parliament, ‘Subcommittee on human rights minutes’, April 2015, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+COMPARL+PE-554.707+01+DOC+PDF+Vo//EN>, accessed 7 July 2015.

⁶¹ European Parliament, ‘Implementation of EU policies following the UN Security Council Resolution 1325’, EXPO/B/DROI/2009/26, Nov. 2010, p. 46, [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2010/410205/EXPO-DROI_ET\(2010\)410205_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2010/410205/EXPO-DROI_ET(2010)410205_EN.pdf), accessed 10 July 2015.

Planning Directorate and the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability of the EEAS. Its participants are drawn from the EEAS, the Council secretariat and the Commission, and it is also open to member state participation. One particularly important feature of the task force is that it consults with international organizations, including the UN and NATO—notwithstanding NATO’s omission from the *Comprehensive approach* as a regional organization with which the EU should cooperate over UNSCR 1325, and reflecting the pivotal role it has played in supporting the implementation of UNSCR 1325 in Europe.⁶² The inclusion of civil society actors is an important entry point for feminist advocacy, opening the way for the establishment of a feminist triangle.

As signatories of the UN Charter, it is the member states that are ultimately responsible for the implementation of UNSCR 1325. Security and defence have also traditionally resided within the intergovernmental domain.⁶³ The role of member states is therefore critical to realizing the potential of UNSCR 1325, particularly as 17 of them have adopted NAPs. A number of member states have actively sought to promote the inclusion of the WPS agenda at the European level, but these efforts are fairly limited when compared to the work taking place within NATO.⁶⁴ Sweden has been particularly active on UNSCR 1325 and has sought to position itself as an expert on the integration of gender into the military.⁶⁵ Austria also championed the adoption of the *Comprehensive approach*, supporting Slovenia during its presidency of the Council.⁶⁶ And Belgium, during its presidency of the EU, organized three conferences on WPS in Brussels, Geneva and New York.⁶⁷ The participation of member states in the task force reflects their varying levels of commitment to mainstreaming WPS (see table 2).

The overall engagement of member states with the EU task force to date has been limited. The highest number of member states attending a meeting has been just ten, in 2010 and 2012. Germany is the only member state to have attended all meetings, with the Netherlands having missed just one meeting and Belgium, Finland and Ireland two each. In contrast, nine member states—Bulgaria, the Republic of Cyprus, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Luxembourg, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia—have never attended a meeting or adopted a NAP on UNSCR 1325. Italy has never attended a meeting but did adopt its own NAP in 2010, which ‘is in keeping with the Comprehensive Approach’.⁶⁸ The role of member states is important, as they set the agenda and provide policy leadership in intergovern-

⁶² Katharine A. M. Wright, ‘Silences and silos: NATO’s adoption of UNSCR 1325’, paper presented at the International Studies Association Annual Convention, New Orleans, February 2015.

⁶³ Michael E. Smith, ‘The European External Action Service and the security–development nexus: organizing for effectiveness of incoherence’, *Journal of European Public Policy* 20: 9, Jan. 2013, pp. 1299–315.

⁶⁴ Wright, ‘NATO’s adoption of UNSCR 1325’.

⁶⁵ Robert Egnell, Petter Hojem and Hannes Berts, *Gender, military effectiveness, and organizational change: the Swedish model* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014).

⁶⁶ Brigitte Holzner, “‘It’s just a text—who cares?’ Construction of texts in the context of EU policies’, in Rosalind Eyben and Laura Turquet, eds, *Feminists in development organizations: change from the margins* (Rugby: Practical Action Publishing, 2013).

⁶⁷ EPLO, *Comparing national action plans for UNSCR 1325 in Europe*.

⁶⁸ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, *National action plan of Italy on ‘Women, Peace and Security’ 2010–2013*, 2010, p. 2, http://www.peacewomen.org/assets/file/NationalActionPlans/italy_nationaactionplan_2010.pdf, accessed 10 July 2015.

Table 2: Participation in meetings of the EEAS Informal Task Force on Women, Peace and Security (number of delegates in attendance)

Date of meeting	Austria	Belgium	Croatia	Czech Rep.	Denmark	Estonia	Finland	France	Germany	Ireland	Lithuania	Malta	Netherlands	Portugal	Romania	Spain	Sweden	UK
April 2009	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	0
Feb. 2010	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	2	0	0
Oct. 2011	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
April 2012	1	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	1	0
Nov. 2012	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	2
Nov. 2013	1	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	2	0
April 2014	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3	1

Note: The following states have attended none of the task force meetings noted above: Bulgaria, Republic of Cyprus, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia.

mental settings. That the WPS agenda has not been championed more effectively by member states is reflected in its position on the margins of EU external affairs.

The lack of member state engagement with this issue at the European level highlights the marginal nature of gender in foreign affairs and the failure of gender mainstreaming to produce culture change in policy areas not traditionally associated with gender and equality. It is worth recalling that in the development of the European Equality Agenda, it was not member states that were drivers for change: gender equality appeared on the Council’s agenda only for functional reasons relating to the pursuit of national interest. Rather, it is supranational institutions—such as the European Parliament, the Commission and the European Court of Justice—that have consistently championed the EU’s role as a gender actor. Member states, however, retain a high level of control over security and defence, thus curtailing opportunities for other institutions to act as policy entrepreneurs. The EEAS’s failure to establish itself as a champion for WPS, the absence of femocrats within the EEAS, and the inability of civil society and epistemic communities to find a way to lobby the institution and promote an alternative narrative about security have all contributed to perpetuating the silence on gender in external affairs.

The EU framework for implementing UNSCR 1325

The EU’s implementation of UNSCR 1325 to date has taken place within an inadequate framework and falls short of the EU’s own ambitions as a gender actor. The EU’s strategy for implementing UNSCR 1325, as defined by the *Comprehensive approach* and the *Implementation of UNSCR 1325*, predates six out of the eight UN Security Council resolutions on WPS. This indicates that current

policies do not reflect the full scope of the WPS agenda embodied in UNSCRs 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106, 2122 and 2242. In order to make good this shortcoming, the EU would need to revise and strengthen its current provisions. Moreover, these key policy documents predate the coming into force of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009 and the creation of the EEAS, and as such are in need of revision to retain their relevance.

The *Comprehensive approach* articulates the EU's approach to implementing UNSCR 1325 and UNSCR 1820, and 'draws on previous experiences and lessons identified within the international community in general and the EU in particular'.⁶⁹ It identifies a three-pronged approach to the implementation of the WPS agenda: (1) integration of WPS issues in dialogue with partner governments, particularly those affected by conflict; (2) mainstreaming of gender, especially in relation to crisis management and development; and (3) support for specific strategic actions intended to protect, support and empower women.

The objectives of the *Comprehensive approach* are summarized in the following statement:

The EU will strive towards greater number of women as mediators and chief negotiators. Recognising that women's peace efforts at the local and national levels are also a valuable resource for conflict resolution and peace building, the EU will support these organisations to engage in peace processes in addition to involving women at all formal decision-making levels.⁷⁰

This focus on women's representation in decision-making is in keeping with key objectives set out in the Gender Roadmap and the European Strategy for Equality between Men and Women, the latter stating that:

The EU policy on the promotion of gender equality within the EU is closely linked to the work undertaken by the Union in third countries. And it is through all relevant policies under its external action, that the EU can exercise significant influence in fostering gender equality and women's empowerment worldwide.⁷¹

The EU's work in the area of external relations therefore reflects the overarching priorities of the equality agenda as set out by these action programmes. Moreover, the aims of the European Strategy for Equality reflect the EU's preference for dealing with gender issues by enhancing women's agency and participation in the public sphere.⁷² The *Comprehensive approach* claims to promote a 'holistic approach' to the WPS agenda, including 'women's economic security and opportunities and their access to health services and education'.⁷³ This grounds the policy in equality

⁶⁹ Council of the European Union, *Comprehensive approach*, para. no. 6.

⁷⁰ Council of the European Union, *Comprehensive approach*, para. no. 25.

⁷¹ European Commission, *Roadmap for equality between women and men (2006–2010)*, 2006, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=URISERV:c10404>; European Commission, *European strategy for equality between men and women 2010–15*, Sept. 2010, http://ec.europa.eu/justice/gender-equality/files/documents/strategy_equality_women_men_en.pdf, accessed 26 Oct. 2015.

⁷² Birte Siim, 'Gender and diversity in European public spheres', EUROSHERE working paper series no. 17, 2009, p.2 http://eurospheres.org/files/2010/08/Eurosphere_Working_Paper_17_Siim.pdf, accessed 19 January 2016.

⁷³ Council of the European Union, *Comprehensive approach*, para. no. 15.

rather than focusing on women as a 'valuable resource', that is, a source of 'added value' in the EU's role as a security actor.

In respect of the EU's relationship with third countries, the *Comprehensive approach* states that the EU will integrate WPS into its dialogue with partner countries affected by conflict. Given Manners's focus on the ideational dimension in the construction of normative power Europe,⁷⁴ this is a crucial step in the process of norm diffusion, the expectation being that foundational values will permeate external relations, and that in turn this process would reinforce the EU's own identity and sense of self. The internal and the external therefore become mutually constitutive.

The *Comprehensive approach* stresses that a gender perspective needs to incorporate both men's and women's concerns. However, the focus of this document is largely on women. A detailed analysis reveals that gender is used as synonymous with women. The result is the production of 'gender' as meaning 'women and girls'. This is not an unusual approach for European policies, wherein gender-neutral language is adopted but the real targets of the policies are women.

The *Implementation of UNSCR 1325* reflects the remit of the resolution in terms of women's participation and of UNSCR 1820 in the focus on zero tolerance of sexual violence as a weapon of war. However, the framing of the issue within UNSCR 1820, the first WPS resolution to explicitly address sexual violence in conflict, was problematic, and these difficulties have to some extent been addressed through the subsequent adoption of UNSCRs 1888, 1960, 2106 and 2122, which post-dated the EU's *Implementation* document. The EU is therefore approaching the issue with an outdated and outmoded understanding of sexual violence in conflict. Nor is it clear from the *Implementation* document what measures are in place to address the issue.

At the strategic level, the *Implementation* document includes measures aimed at improving the gender balance in CSDP missions in order to enhance their effectiveness in dealing with local populations. In this respect, the *Implementation* document marks a significant departure from the *Comprehensive approach*, which focuses on rights. In this respect it is consistent with the EU's conceptualization of foundational values and equality. The inclusion of women for instrumental gains is fundamentally at odds with a rights-based approach, which sees gender equality as the end in itself. The former assumes women will embody the difference expected of them (to increase operational effectiveness) and in practice serves to accentuate difference. In doing so, as Kronsell argues,⁷⁵ the existing majority (men) are normalized and constructed 'as homogenous and naturally associated with the organization'.

One criticism of the WPS agenda is that women are framed both as agents, with capacity to effect change, and as victims. This duality of role ultimately produces a tension within this framework.⁷⁶ Using NVivo, we performed two

⁷⁴ Ian Manners, 'Normative power Europe'.

⁷⁵ Annica Kronsell, *Gender, sex and the postnational defense: militarism and peacekeeping* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

⁷⁶ Laura J. Shepherd, 'Sex, security and superhero(in)es: from 1325 to 1820 and beyond', *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 13: 4, Dec. 2011, p. 510.

text searches in order to assess the way ‘women’ are framed as a category in the two key EU policy documents on WPS. The two chosen frames were ‘women as victims’ and ‘women as decision-makers’. In the case of the ‘victims’ frame, our analysis focused on ‘victims’ and ‘protection’, and stemmed words. Then we ran a compound query to identify when either of these words occurred within five words of the word ‘women’ in order to establish the frequency with which women were associated with victimhood or the need of protection. The second frame, ‘women as decision-makers’, sought to link women’s contribution to decision-making by focusing on a range of key words, namely ‘agents’, ‘politicians’, ‘actors’, ‘policy-making’, ‘peace-making’ and ‘participation’ (and stemmed words). Then we ran a compound query to identify when these words occurred within five words of the word ‘women’ in order to establish the frequency with which women were identified as decision-makers.

Table 3: Framings of women as victims and as decision-makers/agents in key EU policy documents

<i>Document</i>	<i>References to women as victims</i>	<i>References to women as decision-makers/agents</i>
<i>Comprehensive approach</i> (43pp) ^a	30	39
<i>Implementation</i> (15pp) ^b	1	2
Total	31	41

^a Council of the EU, *Comprehensive approach to the EU implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 on Women, Peace and Security*, Dec. 2008, http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/features/features-working-women/working-with-women/docs/01-eu-comprehensive-approach-1325_en.pdf.

^b Council of the European Union, *Implementation of UNSCR 1325 as reinforced by UNSCR 1820 in the context of ESDP*, Dec. 2008, http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/features/features-working-women/working-with-women/docs/03-implementation-esdp_en.pdf.

We found that, taken together, the *Comprehensive approach* and *Implementation* frame women as agents and decision-makers more frequently (41 times) than as victims (31 times) (see table 3). The *Comprehensive approach* specifically calls for an increase in the representation of women as mediators and chief negotiators. This represents a ‘value added’ approach to representation, with the EU viewing women as a ‘valuable resource for conflict resolution and peace building’.⁷⁷ Once again this is in keeping with the EU’s approach to promoting equality, i.e. stressing the cost of non-equality in all spheres of the economy, including women’s representation on boards.

The *Comprehensive approach* and *Implementation* documents frame gender issues as about women, with 193 references to women or girls, compared to just 26 to men or boys (see table 4). This is not so much a departure from UNSCR 1325, which

⁷⁷ Council of the European Union, *Comprehensive approach*.

also uses ‘gender’ and ‘women’ interchangeably, as a reflection of a weakness within the WPS agenda. The association of gender with women has contributed to a tendency in EU action on the ground ‘to associate gender issues with women’s “problems”’ and perpetuates an assumption that women are (solely) victims.⁷⁸ The result is that gender has been transformed into a ‘safe idea’ for use in EU external relations, leaving behind its radical potential to produce change.

Table 4: References to ‘women’/‘girls’ and to ‘men’/‘boys’ in key EU policy documents

<i>Document</i>	<i>References to ‘women’/‘girls’</i>	<i>References to ‘men’/‘boys’</i>
<i>Comprehensive approach</i> (43pp) ^a	191 (10.01%)	26 (1.23%)
<i>Implementation</i> (15pp) ^b	2 (0.57%)	0 (0%)

^a Council of the EU, *Comprehensive approach to the EU implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 on Women, Peace and Security*, Dec. 2008, http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/features/features-working-women/working-with-women/docs/01-eu-comprehensive-approach-1325_en.pdf.

^b Council of the European Union, *Implementation of UNSCR 1325 as reinforced by UNSCR 1820 in the context of ESDP*, Dec. 2008, http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/features/features-working-women/working-with-women/docs/03-implementation-esdp_en.pdf.

The finding that the EU policy documents frame women in peace and security more readily as agents than as victims is in keeping with the wider trend in European equality legislation and aligns security and defence with the neo-liberal model that underpins the single market and the communitarized areas of EU policy (i.e. those traditionally falling under ‘pillar one’). This makes the EU an interesting case-study for the analysis of UNSCR 1325. However, the lack of a clear EU external identity, coupled with the fact that the EEAS is still in its infancy, helps to explain why UNSCR 1325 remains a marginal and underdeveloped area of the CSDP. This is important because it speaks to the debate about normative power Europe, which requires an active engagement with core values in order for norm diffusion to take place and the EU to be able to exercise its power in international settings. Indeed, we find that core values, largely relating to the neo-liberal drive of the integration process, frame the European women, peace and security discourse. Focus on individual agency and the value of the WPS agenda in the pursuit of higher goals mirrors the way gender was mainstreamed in the international dimension. This, however, is less a demonstration of the influence of the European equality agenda in the external field, and more an acknowledgement of the functionalist logic that drives the process of European integration in all its core areas.

⁷⁸ Marta Martinelli, *UNSC Resolution 1325 fifteen years on*, European Union Institute for Security Studies, Sept. 2015, http://www.iss.europa.eu/uploads/media/Brief_29_Gender.pdf, accessed 26 October 2015.

It is worth examining whether a more nuanced understanding of the WPS agenda exists within the EU by looking beyond the formal policy framework. To do this we can examine the work of the Informal Task Force on Women, Peace and Security established by the *Comprehensive approach* in 2009 with the aim of ‘increasing inter-institutional coordination and promoting a coherent approach to gender-related issues’. A detailed analysis of the minutes of the task force from 2009 to 2014, which are freely available on the EEAS website,⁷⁹ finds no association between gender and women. Rather, the minutes demonstrate a nuanced understanding of the power of gender norms in defining the impact of armed conflict on different social groups. This is an important departure from the *Comprehensive approach* and *Implementation* documents, which articulate a fairly simplistic understanding of women’s position in the context of armed conflict. It reflects the composition and the nature of the work of the task force, which provides an opening for critical voices seeking to increase the reach of gender mainstreaming.

Opportunities

A recent development has been the creation of the position of Gender Adviser within the EEAS structure.⁸⁰ This is a welcome step but falls short of the creation of a Special Representative on WPS, which the EEAS has resisted, deeming it not necessary for the advancement of WPS.⁸¹ This position runs counter to an expert report commissioned by the UN on the 15th anniversary of UNSCR 1325, which identified the positions of Special Representative and Special Envoy on WPS at NATO and the African Union respectively as examples of best practice that should be replicated by other regional organizations.⁸² Within the EU, the European Parliament’s FEMM committee has also called for the creation of a European Envoy for Women’s Rights in order to ‘strengthen the EU’s commitment to the empowerment of women in foreign and development policy’.⁸³ The opportunities for a Gender Adviser, as opposed to a Special Representative or Envoy, to provide a focal point and leadership on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 at the EU are limited, given the former’s low seniority level and the fact that the reporting structure does not facilitate a direct line of communication between the Gender Adviser and the High Representative. This is significant, as it undermines the ability of the EU to assume a role as a gender actor in internal affairs and undermines normative power Europe.

⁷⁹ EEAS, ‘Informal Task Force on Women, Peace and Security’, http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/features/features-working-women/working-with-women/article21_en.html.

⁸⁰ EEAS, ‘European External Action Service HQ organisation chart’, 2015, http://www.eeas.europa.eu/background/docs/organisation_en.pdf, accessed 8 Oct. 2015.

⁸¹ European Parliament, Directorate-General for External Policies, *Implementation of EU policies following the UN Security Council Resolution 1325*, 2010, p. 48, [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2010/410205/EXPO-DROI_ET\(2010\)410205_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2010/410205/EXPO-DROI_ET(2010)410205_EN.pdf), accessed 30 June 2015.

⁸² Coomaraswamy, *Preventing conflict, transforming justice, securing the peace*.

⁸³ European Parliament, *Report on gender mainstreaming in EU external relations and peace-building/nation-building*, 2008/2193(INI), 2009, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=REPORT&reference=A6-2009-0225&language=EN#title2>, accessed 9 July 2015.

In September 2015, the EU adopted a new framework entitled ‘Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations 2016–2020’.⁸⁴ The document is applicable to both the Commission and the EEAS’s work in partner countries and is intended to provide internal policy coherence. Significantly, the document makes only two mentions of UNSCR 1325 and no mention of the EU policy framework on WPS. Rather, it focuses on the economic empowerment of women, even going as far as to stress the importance of an inclusive peace because women’s participation is likely to ‘lessen corruption’.⁸⁵ This essentialist grounding of gender equality within a neo-liberal framework limits the overall role of the EU as a gender normative actor.

Conclusion

The application of a feminist lens to the analysis of European external relations reveals an overarching lack of engagement with gender mainstreaming as a core principle and policy strategy. Given the centrality of the equality narrative to the EU’s internal and external identity, we would have expected the issue of equality to be more visible within the emerging security discourse. The EU’s positioning as a normative actor is challenged by its institutional failure to align its emerging security strategy with global gender norms, namely the Women, Peace and Security agenda.

Our analysis supports the contention that the EU is not (yet) a normative gender power in external relations. Although gender would appear to be a perfect platform for the extension of its normative power, the EEAS has yet to champion equality as one of its core values. This is not to say that it will not do so in the future—the EEAS remains a young institution; however, it is in their early years that institutional actors establish their key norms and core values.

Two conclusions can be drawn from the analysis presented here. First, normative power Europe’s failure to include a gender dimension reflects an institutional lack of vision. This is demonstrated by the EU’s resistance to follow best practice in appointing a Special Representative/Envoy for WPS. The experience of other regional organizations highlights the importance of having a focal point for institutional advocacy that is directly accountable to the top level of the organization. The evidence presented here points to the continued marginalization of the gender machinery in external affairs. Second, the leadership vacuum in the area of gender within the EEAS has proved to be a significant hurdle to the establishment of a ‘velvet triangle’ in the area of external relations. The EEAS is the obvious place where such triangles could emerge, but this requires first and foremost institutional advocates, that is, femocrats. The position of the newly appointed

⁸⁴ European Commission, ‘New framework for gender equality and women’s empowerment: transforming the lives of girls and women through EU external relations 2016–2020’, Sept. 2015, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-5690_en.htm.

⁸⁵ European Commission, ‘New framework for gender equality and women’s empowerment’, p. 10.

Gender Adviser remains too marginal to be effective at this stage. Women's civil society organizations and epistemic communities also need to become active in this policy sphere, bringing evidence to bear about the long-term impact of failing to mainstream gender in external relations.

The evidence presented here indicates that feminist strategic partnerships have yet to find a space within this new institutional structure. That the EU's gender regime has not extended to include external relations can be attributed to the lack of a feminist 'velvet' triangle. The absence of an institutional champion limits the opportunities for civil society and epistemic communities to engage with a policy area. Women's rights advocacy in the EEAS is in its infancy and needs to be supported by civil society engagement. Unfortunately, the shift in leadership from a feminist organization to one with a more general remit reduces the opportunities for advocacy groups to focus on WPS.

The role of member states should not be overlooked in this context. While a number of member states have voiced an interest in and commitment to WPS, they have concentrated their efforts to this end in NATO. It is quite striking that the ESS lacks the same kind of momentum to mainstream gender that has been generated in NATO through member states' involvement. This raises important questions about the role of the EU not only as a gender actor but also, and equally, as a security organization.