The EU and the invasion of Ukraine: a collective responsibility to act?

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It is more than 50 years since EU member states began foreign policy cooperation under the auspices of European Political Cooperation (EPC).[1] In that time, while they have developed a sophisticated set of institutions and instruments as the basis of their collective foreign and security policy, they have also faced criticism for often weak and limited responses, particularly in military crisis management.[2] At first glance, therefore, the collective action taken against Russia following its second invasion of Ukraine in 2022 has been a cause of surprise for some. Has the EU indeed managed to overcome its notorious 'capabilities–expectations gap'?[3] What is different now, compared to nearly three decades ago when the breakup of Yugoslavia and the proclamation of the 'hour of Europe' was seen to be a nadir in collective foreign policy and became burned into the collective memory of European foreign policy-makers and observers? The unforeseen and indeed unexpected degree of policy coherence among member states in and after February 2022 has even been described as marking 'a turning point for the EU'.[4] However, while it certainly demonstrates that when they wish, member states have significant capacity for collective foreign policy action, we start out by seeing the EU's response less as a turning-point and more as a reality check (both for the

* We would like to extend our thanks to the anonymous reviewers who encouraged us to greatly sharpen the central argument of our piece. Our thanks also to Ben Tonra, Geoffrey Edwards and Maxine David who made perceptive comments on earlier iterations of our argument.

1 For a definitive history of the EPC (replaced by the Common Foreign and Security Policy on the entry into force of the Treaty on European Union in November 1993), see Simon Nuttall, *European political cooperation* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992); also Nicholas Wright, *The EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy in Germany and the UK* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019).

2 See e.g. Asle Toje, 'The European Union as a small power, or conceptualizing Europe's strategic actorness', *Journal of European Integration* 30: 2, 2008, pp. 199–215; Asle Toje, 'The consensus–expectations gap: explaining Europe's ineffective foreign policy', *Security Dialogue* 39: 1, 2008, pp. 121–41; also Anand Menon, 'Security policy and the logic of leaderlessness', in J. Hayward, ed., *Leaderless Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

3 Christopher Hill, 'The capability–expectations gap, or conceptualizing Europe's international role', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 31: 3, 1993, pp. 305–28.

4 Rosa Balfour, *What Russia's war in Ukraine means for Europe*, Carnegie Europe, 8 March 2022, https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategiceurope/86587 (emphasis added). For similar assessments see also Uwe Wunderlich, 'Russia's invasion of Ukraine: a turning point for European integration?', LSE blog, 5 April 2022, https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/europpblog/2022/04/05/russias-invasion-of-ukraine-a-turning-point-for-european-integration/; German Institute for International and Security Affairs, *Russian attack on Ukraine: a turning point for Euro-Atlantic security*, 3 March 2022, https://www.swp-berlin.org/en/publication/russian-attack-on-ukraine-a-turning-point-for-euro-atlantic-security. (Unless otherwise noted at point of citation, all URLs cited in this article were accessible on 28 Oct. 2022.)

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member states and for us as analysts): this extreme challenge shows how far, for all its faults and failings, European foreign policy cooperation has evolved since 1970. Furthermore, it highlights the multilevel and multi-actor system that underpins contemporary EU foreign policy action.

The EU's response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 highlights the potential of its foreign policy system to enact meaningful collective diplomacy. It has imposed an extensive range of trade, financial and individually targeted sanctions against named individuals; implemented a variety of macro-financial and other financial support measures, including assistance to refugees within and beyond Ukraine's borders;[5] and, most notably, it has provided a €2.5 billion financial support package for direct military assistance to Ukraine using the recently created European Peace Facility (EPF).[6] Alongside these measures, at an informal meeting in Versailles in March 2022, EU leaders agreed on the need to decrease Europe's dependency on Russian gas and to strengthen its defence capacity.[7] Notably, the invasion has also generated a major reconsideration of the future size of the EU, with Ukraine now embarked on the process to become a candidate for membership (alongside Georgia and Moldova).

The speed and extent of the member states' response has attracted considerable comment. Josep Borrell, the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, even characterized the EU's response as a 'geopolitical awakening'.[8] Certainly it appears to have been a cathartic moment, both for the EU collectively and for member states individually. Germany's Chancellor, Olaf Scholz, declared it to be a *Zeitenwende*[9] ('paradigm shift') in his speech to the Bundestag on 5 March 2022 in which he announced a huge boost in defence spending, including a €100 billion special fund to swiftly upgrade the Bundeswehr and a further commitment to achieve the 2 per cent NATO defence expenditure target (it remains to be seen if and when these reforms will start to bite). Meanwhile, Finland and Sweden have both significantly shifted their defence postures and, having applied to join NATO in July, are now awaiting completion of the ratification process. Over half the EU's member states have also individually committed to providing Ukraine with military equipment.[10] Russia's latest invasion seems therefore to have dramatically shifted the limits of action that member states have been willing to undertake in

[5] In March 2022, the European Commission disbursed €300 million in emergency macro-financial assistance (MFA) to Ukraine, marking a first instalment of the €1.2 billion emergency MFA programme for Ukraine adopted in January 2022. On 4 March 2022, the EU activated the temporary protection directive which provides immediate and collective protection of displaced people from Ukraine; see https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32022D0382&from=EN. Furthermore, the Commission adopted a proposal for 'Cohesion's Action for Refugees in Europe' (CARE) within the framework of REACT-EU to provide emergency financial support for displaced people.

[6] See https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/european-peace-facility/.

[7] See the Versailles Declaration of the informal EU leaders' meeting of 10–11 March 2022: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/54773/20220311-versailles-declaration-en.pdf.

[8] See Josep Borrell Fontelles, *Europe in the interregnum: our geopolitical awakening after Ukraine*, March 2022, https://geopolitique.eu/en/2022/03/24/europe-in-the-interregnum-our-geopolitical-awakening-after-ukraine/.

[9] Bernhard Blumenau, 'Breaking with convention? Zeitenwende and the traditional pillars of German foreign policy', *International Affairs* 98: 6, 2021, pp. 1895–1913.

[10] See UK Parliament, House of Commons Library, *Military assistance to Ukraine since the Russian invasion*, 9 Nov. 2022, https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9477/.

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reaction to a dramatic disruption of Europe's security architecture. We argue that the extent and scale of their response at such an extreme moment of European history is a result of the development over 50 years and more of a collective system of EU foreign, security and defence policy-making which has been essential in providing both the institutional structure and normative impetus necessary to ensure a robust response.

Over the years, member states have often outlined significant aspirations for their collective security and defence, extensively in the 2016 Global Strategy and most recently in the 2022 Strategic Compass, which was significantly revised before publication in the light of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The gap between ambition and reality has led to frequent—and often justified—criticism that EU efforts in foreign, security and defence policy have been ineffective;[11] slow; achieving only lowest common denominator outcomes;[12] and lacking sufficient (military) weight. While scholarship of the past decade could counter these points of criticism both conceptually and empirically,[13] in recent years, in a decision-making context requiring unanimity, increased internal contestation by individual member states such as Hungary has emerged as an additional impediment.[14] Yet despite all these challenges, inconsistencies and failures, member states continue to invest considerable time, effort, resources and ambition in collective EU foreign policy-making. The key puzzle for this article, therefore, is why this system continues to endure? Furthermore, in empirical terms, we ask what the EU response to Russia's invasion in Ukraine teaches us about the way the system currently operates.

We argue here that the EU foreign policy system has continued to evolve because the half-century of EU foreign policy cooperation has facilitated the evolution of a key shared norm which we conceptualize as a *collective European responsibility to act*. This is the result of the regularized interactions of member states in an evolving collective foreign policy-making system over the past 50 years. In identifying the operation of this norm, we can go beyond some of the dominant theoretical explanations for the continuing existence of the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP). We discuss below how we build on the Europeanization and constructivist scholarship of the past decade that has showcased the different processes underpinning EU foreign policy action, and offer a unifying framework that re-examines in a more

[11] Jolyon Howorth, 'European defence policy between dependence and autonomy: a challenge of Sisyphean dimensions', *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 19: 1, 2017, pp. 13–28; Jolyon Howorth, 'EU global strategy in a changing world: Brussels' approach to the emerging powers', *Contemporary Security Policy* 37: 3, 2016, pp. 389–401.

[12] Adrian Hyde-Price, '"Normative" power Europe: a realist critique', *Journal of European Public Policy* 13: 2, 2006, pp. 217–34.

[13] Mai'a K. Davis Cross, *Security integration in Europe: how knowledge-based networks are transforming the European Union* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2011); Ireneusz Karolewski and Mai'a K. Davis Cross, 'The EU's power in the Russia–Ukraine crisis: enabled or constrained?', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 55: 1, 2017, pp. 137–52; Pernille Rieker and Marianne Riddervold, 'Not so unique after all? Urgency and norms in EU foreign and security policy', *Journal of European Integration* 44: 4, 2022, pp. 459–73; Karen E. Smith, 'Emotions and EU foreign policy', *International Affairs* 97: 2, 2021, pp. 287–304.

[14] Katja Biedenkopf, Oriol Costa and Magdalena Gora, 'Contestation and politicization of European foreign and security cooperation: new realities or same old routine?', *European Security* 30: 3, 2021, pp. 325–43.

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comprehensive manner some of the key preoccupations that have underpinned the analysis of collective European foreign policy-making and understandings of the EU's foreign policy identity. In doing so, we demonstrate both that the *collective European responsibility to act* has been a constant driver of the developing ambition and practice of European foreign policy, and that how individual member states understand and pursue their collective endeavours in this arena continues to evolve depending on their varying expectations.

The EU's response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine is therefore an important focusing event, demanding that we scrutinize the nature of European foreign policy cooperation today. Such cooperation in 2022 is substantially and procedurally different from what it was at the time of the Lisbon Treaty, and the Nice, Amsterdam and Maastricht treaties before it. Through the institutionalization of regular, intense and transgovernmental relationships developed between the member states, a feeling and a norm of collective responsibility has developed. Understanding its operation is essential if we are to grasp the nature of EU foreign policy-making today. This article does not claim that this collective responsibility is always there and always has the same effect on policy-making processes. Rather, we advocate a consideration and empirical investigation of this norm as necessary to understand European foreign policy identity today, because this norm reshapes some of the preoccupations of EU foreign policy scholarship, as we will show in the final section of this piece.

In developing this reappraisal of EU foreign policy cooperation, we proceed as follows. First, we examine the question of durability, arguing that the collective European responsibility to act is central to this. We then conceptualize this collective responsibility, discussing its dynamic nature and how it reflects the increasing scale and scope of collectively reached EU foreign policy positions across time. In the final section we discuss the implications of this new conceptual approach by applying it to some of the big preoccupations that have been present in debates around EU foreign policy over the last 50 years. In doing so, we seek to make three main contributions. First, and most importantly, we aim to advance our field's wider understanding of the EU's identity as a particular—and unique—foreign policy actor, and how this has been shaped by the collective ethos of the *political community* it embodies. This allows us to consider further the relatively underdeveloped idea of collective identity and the impact this can have on how member states approach foreign policy cooperation. Second, we look beyond the rather trite description of the EU as *sui generis* to address what this means in practice in the context of foreign policy. Finally, we consider the EU's response to Russia's 2022 offensive against Ukraine through the context of the collective responsibility to act, and particularly the role of norms in this. This provides a basis for revisiting some of the core ideas and arguments that have underpinned analysis and understanding of collective European foreign policy-making.

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Accounting for the durability of EU foreign policy cooperation: is there a blind spot in the scholarship?

EU foreign policy cooperation has faced significant challenges and criticisms over many years. Given the challenges, inconsistencies and failures in the EU's foreign policy record, a fundamental question, therefore, is why has the EU foreign policy system nonetheless enjoyed such longevity? Why do member states still cooperate on foreign and security policy and still support the EU foreign policy cooperation system?

The main proposition of this article is that EU foreign policy cooperation endures owing to a key collective norm rather than just the development of the collective institutional frameworks provided by the CFSP and CSDP.[15] The EU's foreign and security policy decision- and policy-making mechanisms are different from those operating in other areas of EU public policy, having been deliberately placed outside the legal frameworks of the Community. They are thus arguably best characterized as transgovernmental, that is, more intensive and regularized than intergovernmental decision-making.[16] This distinctiveness in decision-making has ensured that CFSP and CSDP continued to be treated differently in so far as member states are in charge, but intensively supported by the EU machinery.[17] What has been insufficiently emphasized, however, is that despite being outside the European integration framework, membership of the EU still matters in this transgovernmental system: states behave differently from how they behave in other multilateral contexts *because they are EU members*. The collective framework, the repeated interactions and the intensive ties between member states (supported but not replaced by institutions such as the European Council, European External Action Service [EEAS] and the European Commission) have created a sense of collective community despite the absence of a hierarchical legal order or means of enforcing implementation.[18] The EU foreign policy cooperation system has prevailed, moreover, despite increased contestation by member states and shortcomings in the EU's reactions to a range of international challenges.[19] Indeed, it has prevailed precisely *because* of the perpetuated norm inherent in the system: a constantly evolving collective European responsibility to act. The durability of the EU foreign policy system can thus be explained as a function of a norm that builds and maintains a responsibility to act: member states' commitment to act collectively is perpetuated by a desire to reduce their

[15] Michael E. Smith, *Europe's foreign and security policy: the institutionalization of co-operation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

[16] See Helene Sjursen, 'Not so intergovernmental after all? On democracy and integration in European foreign and security policy', *Journal of European Public Policy* 18: 8, 2011, pp. 1078–95; also Helen Wallace and Christine Reh, 'An institutional anatomy and five policy modes', in Helen Wallace, Mark Pollack and Alasdair Young, eds, *Policy-making in theEuropean Union* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

[17] Heidi Maurer and Nicholas Wright, 'Still governing in the shadows? Member states and the political and security committee in the post-Lisbon EU foreign policy architecture', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 59: 4, 2020, pp. 856–72.

[18] Elsa Hedling, 'Transforming practices of diplomacy: the European External Action Service and digital disinformation', *International Affairs* 97: 3, 2021, pp. 841–59.

[19] Maurer and Wright, 'Still governing in the shadows?'.

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differences in standpoint on particular issues and minimize uncoordinated foreign policy actions.

Given the criticisms of EU foreign policy noted above—and particularly the tendency for policy to be one of the 'lowest common denominators'—this argument might at first seem counter-intuitive. However, our assessment is not primarily focused on the system's *outputs*; rather, we seek to explain why EU member states continue to maintain the system even when (according to some critics, at least) it so often apparently produces suboptimal results. (Youngs' recent analysis of the reduced ambition of CSDP missions—both civilian and military—over the last decade is interesting in this respect.[20]) We argue that collective responsibility provides a conceptual key to understanding this apparent contradiction as well as a common thread running through the evolution of EU foreign, defence and security policy cooperation from EPC onwards. It underscores the dynamic nature of this policy field and the system through which policy is made. In short, we are focusing on the *commonality of purpose* embodied in EU foreign policy cooperation rather than the *commonality of outcomes*.

Existing explanatory accounts also seek to show why member states engage with European foreign policy cooperation despite its many proclaimed shortcomings. Liberal intergovernmentalism treats the CFSP as a static platform for game-theoretical negotiations.[21] Its approach is that big member states are most likely to win on salient issues, while for smaller states, even limited influence is better than none. The chief limitation in the liberal intergovernmentalist approach is that it does not allow for, or acknowledge, the significant inputs and policy-making activity required for the system to continue. Why do all member states—albeit to varying degrees—continue to invest in a transgovernmental system that places significant weight and responsibility on their own activism? These approaches do not explain why member states continue to 'pay into' the system, particularly if it follows that their individual interests are difficult to disaggregate from the collective and are in any case broadly long-term in nature.

In developing our concept of a collective European responsibility, we can build on the legacy of Europeanization and constructivist research. Work on Europeanization clearly speaks to the earlier point of why member states see this policy environment as having a clear longer-term value,[22] as well as to the impact of socialization processes. Europeanization as a process of internalizing EU membership has impacts on feelings of national identity, or on a sense of being connected to a wider political collective. It is a suitable starting-point for our investigation, with its longstanding concept of the 'coordination reflex' in foreign and security policy.[23] Yet, in its explanatory power Europeanization is often

[20] Richard Youngs, *The European Union and global politics* (London: Red Globe Press, 2021). See e.g. ch. 9.

[21] Frank Schimmelfennig, 'Liberal intergovernmentalism and the crises of the European Union', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 56: 7, 2018, pp. 1578–94.

[22] Patrick Müller, Karolina Pomorska and Ben Tonra, 'The domestic challenge to EU foreign policy-making: from Europeanisation to de-Europeanisation?', *Journal of European Integration* 43: 5, 2021, pp. 519–34.

[23] Simon Nuttall, *European foreign policy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Kenneth Glarbo, 'Wide-awake diplomacy: reconstructing the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union', *Journal of European Public Policy* 6: 4, 1999, pp. 634–51.

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focused on what the effect of being an EU member is for single member states, their polity, their politics and their policies.[24] Similarly, socialization research and practice theory arguably come closest to accounting for the longevity of the EU foreign policy cooperation system. Work on the concept of a 'community of practice',[25] and the socialization of diplomats and officials working in this system,[26] provides important insights, as do studies that show how norms or trust evolve between member states.[27] However, the focus on socialization processes and underlying micro-norms within the European foreign policy system does not engage directly with the question of why the system endures.[28] The coordination reflex, for example, is the outcome of socialization, but the analytical inference always stops there. We therefore build on these Europeanization processes, but conceptually widen the perspective. We ask not only what the impacts of EU membership are on a single member state, but how being a member of a collective and feeling responsible to this collective shapes EU foreign policy-making. The *collective European responsibility to act* thus is the manifestation and result of Europeanization.

Finally, in European integration studies there is the crucial concept of 'political community'.[29] This is not new; nor is the argument that the development of political community at the supranational level has had an impact on individual member states. However, and perhaps surprisingly, in the context of CFSP it has hardly been considered. With the notable exception of Mérand,[30] CFSP/CSDP scholars have focused on explaining practices and outcomes, rather than on understanding the nature of the EU's foreign policy community and what it means to member states. Yet, as we discuss below, a political community exists both within and because of EPC and CFSP, and we contend that the collective responsibility has been crucial for its evolution. To develop these ideas further, we explain in the next section what the *collective European responsibility to act* is and how it has come about.

[24] Robert Ladrech, *Europeanization and national politics*, European Union series (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

[25] Federica Bicchi, 'The EU as a community of practice: foreign policy communications in the COREU network', *Journal of European Public Policy* 18: 8, 2011, pp. 1115–1132; Rebecca Adler-Nissen, 'Towards a practice turn in EU studies: the everyday of European integration', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 54: 1, 2016, pp. 87–103.

[26] Jeffrey Lewis, 'The Janus face of Brussels: socialization and everyday decision making in the European Union', *International Organization* 59: 4, 2005, pp. 937–71; Ana Juncos and Karolina Pomorska, 'Does size matter? CFSP committees after enlargement', *Journal of European Integration* 30: 4, 2008, pp. 493–509.

[27] Helene Sjursen and Guri Rosén, 'Arguing sanctions: on the EU's response to the crisis in Ukraine', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 55: 1, 2017, pp. 20–36; Michal Natorski and Karolina Pomorska, 'Trust and decision-making in times of crisis: the EU's response to the events in Ukraine', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 55: 1, 2017, pp. 54–70.

[28] On 'micro-norms', see Ana Juncos and Karolina Pomorska, 'Contesting procedural norms: the impact of politicisation on European foreign policy cooperation', *European Security* 30: 3, 2021, pp. 367–84.

[29] Ernst Haas, *Uniting of Europe: political, social, and economic forces, 1950–1957* (South Bend, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1958); Fritz Scharpf, *Governing in Europe: efficient and democratic?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). See also Angelika Scheuer and Hermann Schmitt, 'Dynamics in European political identity', *European Integration* 31: 5, 1999, pp. 551–68.

[30] Frédéric Mérand, *European defence policy: beyond the nation state* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

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A dynamic system forging a 'collective European responsibility to act'

We propose to conceptualize European foreign policy cooperation as a dynamic, constantly evolving system. It is within this context that the principle of collective responsibility emerged and continues to develop. We understand the '*collective European responsibility to act*' as a norm that underpins member-state interaction and builds a responsibility among them to act collectively. It implies the pursuit of *joint* action for the implementation of foreign policy decisions through national and collective (EU) means, along with a minimal commitment not to act in contradiction or hindrance to collectively reached foreign policy positions. Within this policy space (as in many others), member states will occupy different positions in terms of their support for or opposition to particular decisions.[31] What does not change, however, is the recognition and commitment by all members that they must be somewhere on this continuum. The norm of collective European responsibility takes these mutual commitments and obligations further: through their continuous interactions, member states are constantly reminded that foreign policy is a collective endeavour, that is, that it is pursued through the EU, and so they are encouraged to interact and engage with one another in a way that is determined by their EU membership. The 'coordination reflex', i.e. the reflex to coordinate with one another before taking a position, is the most often cited aspect of this EU-induced activism but is only one element of the identity-changing effect of being part of the EU collective. More importantly, the collective responsibility represents a willingness and determination to develop positions on areas of collective interest that go beyond any limited national focus.

What distinguishes the collective responsibility from commitments within other international organizations such as NATO is that this responsibility to act collectively is not *a priori* agreed upon or enshrined in a treaty (as is, for example, article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty). Rather, it has emerged as a norm among member states because of their interaction on foreign policy issues across several decades. The preamble of the Treaty on European Union declares that member states are 'resolved to implement a common foreign and security policy', and articles 21(2) and 24(2) aim for the pursuit of common policies and cooperation. Although these provisions set out a framework to guide member states in this direction, they do not provide any specific guidance on how this is to be done. Thus, it is only through constant and intensive interactions that the collective responsibility has emerged between member states, providing a tangible articulation of these treaty provisions. The collective responsibility *to act*, furthermore, does not imply that we should expect increased foreign policy activism by the EU as a collective; rather, it refers to the increased actions that single member states consider owing to their interactions with one another within the foreign policy system. The results might therefore be both a greater quantity of EU foreign policy outputs and/or a higher quality of EU foreign policy commitments.

[31] Reuben Wong and Christopher Hill, *National and European foreign policies: towards Europeanization* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2012); Amelia Hadfield, Ian Manners and Richard G. Whitman, *Foreign policies of EU member states: continuity and Europeanisation* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017).

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Our definition of the collective European responsibility to act builds on three distinctive features of the European foreign policy system, which we emphasize here to provide a nuanced understanding of this core concept. The first is *collective action*. The CFSP is a special form of transnational multilateralism: no other international or regional organization offers such a degree of foreign policy coordination or espouses a comparable ambition to do so. As it sits outside traditional areas of communitarized EU policy, the collective European responsibility thus represents the greatest degree of integration possible within the CFSP. It is unique in terms of the quantity and quality of foreign policy coordination it entails, and in how it has changed the way in which member states interact over time, as Europeanization research has confirmed time and again. Yet while Europeanization research emphasizes the impact being an EU member has on the individual member state, we propose to take these processes further in our thinking: the collective responsibility fosters an increased identification of member states as a collective, shaping how they think about the world and define their foreign policy considerations and approaches to European foreign policy initiatives even *before* they are discussed in Brussels. This collective identification is also reinforced externally, in that each member state needs to explain and represent the CFSP in its bilateral interactions with third countries. In this sense, the collective responsibility provides the 'standard of appropriate behaviour for actors with a given identity'[32]—in this case the identity of participants in the CFSP.

Developing this further, we can argue that the collective responsibility is also a constitutive norm. While procedural norms indicate how member states interact on a regular basis within the CFSP,[33] constitutive norms 'refer to the founding values and principles underlying an international organization's mission',[34] which Michalski and Danielson identify with peace, democracy, the rule of law, international law and human rights. We argue that the collective responsibility not only embodies a commitment to these wider objectives but adds to this the salience of collective action in their pursuit and attainment, beyond what single member states would normally consider within their national settings. The responsibility is thus felt towards the EU collective, not in the sense of some abstract idea but to the collective of EU member states.[35]

The second feature is the *dynamism* of the EU's foreign policy system within which the collective responsibility norm is constantly evolving. Systems are generally considered a means to overcome the tension at the centre of the longstanding structure–agency debate. Systemic approaches have been developed in foreign policy analysis since the 1970s as means of moving beyond the simple mapping of

[32] Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink, 'International norm dynamics and political change', *International Organization* 52: 4, 1998, p. 891.

[33] Juncos and Pomorska, 'Contesting procedural norms'.

[34] Anna Michalski and August Danielson, 'Overcoming dissent: socialization in the EU's Political and Security Committee in a context of crises', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 58: 2, 2020, pp. 328–44.

[35] The resemblance to the 'Responsibility to Protect' (R2P) as an established International Relations concept is thus purposefully drawn: R2P identifies who is responsible to whom for what; in parallel, the collective responsibility to act establishes a felt responsibility by a member state towards the collective, i.e. the other member states.

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self-contained actors involved in foreign policy-making by highlighting the importance of their relationships in explaining foreign policy outcomes.[36] Building on these approaches, our conceptualization of the collective responsibility emphasizes the relational, interactive nature of the EU's foreign policy system, thereby moving beyond approaches that have focused on formal procedure and process but largely ignored the underlying norms that have emerged within the CFSP. With collective responsibility as its underlying norm, the CFSP system has thus evolved organically from its largely intergovernmental and more transactional origins.

The importance of the collective responsibility norm to the dynamism inherent in CFSP fits well with Finnemore and Sikkink's 'norm lifecycles',[37] although we suggest that the collective responsibility goes through this life-cycle not once but repeatedly. Finnemore and Sikkink identify three key stages in this life-cycle: first, norms emerge through *norm entrepreneurs*; second, they *cascade*; and third, they are *internalized*. In the case of the collective responsibility, there was no external norm entrepreneur (although the High Representative/Vice-President [HR/VP] and EEAS may play this role to some degree today). Instead, the concept emerged from the leadership of and between the member states: individual foreign ministers or heads of state/government repeatedly took on the role of active norm entrepreneurs—for example, through the pre-Lisbon rotating presidency of the Council, using painfully learned lessons from the past, such as the Yugoslav civil wars of the early 1990s, to demand more proactive and meaningful EU foreign policy cooperation. Following entrepreneurship, norm cascade happens because of socialization and collective experience. For the collective responsibility norm, socialization is not only about the content of a particular EU foreign policy, but about the level of ambition the EU as a collective has set itself. Over time, member states have looked beyond the confines of their national contexts, learning instead to see issues through their 'EU eyes'. Finnemore and Sikkink contend that socialization can lead to the third phase, internalization. Here, the status of a norm starts to be taken for granted because it is so widespread—and consequently may not even be noticed or considered important:

> Internalized norms can be both extremely powerful (because behavior according to the norm is not questioned) and hard to discern (because actors do not seriously consider or discuss whether to conform). Precisely because they are not controversial, however, these norms are often not the centerpiece of political debate and for that reason tend to be ignored by political scientists.[38]

We argue that collective responsibility as a norm is central to our understanding of the CFSP, but has often been taken for granted or ignored in the political as well as the scholarly discourse.

The third feature which the collective responsibility highlights is the nature of the CFSP as a *collective system*. It builds upon Haas's definition of a political

[36] Michael Clarke and Brian White, *Understanding foreign policy: the foreign policy systems approach* (Aldershot: Edward Elgar, 1989).
[37] Finnemore and Sikkink, 'International norm dynamics and political change'.
[38] Finnemore and Sikkink, 'International norm dynamics and political change', p. 903.

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community as 'a condition in which specific groups and individuals show more loyalty to their central political institutions than to any other political authority'.[39] This functionalist account suggests a shift of loyalty from one level to another. However, we contend that the emergence of the collective responsibility has not necessitated a shift of loyalty from one political centre to another; rather, it underpins an intricate network binding member states more closely to one other, and in doing so leads to subtle changes in identity whereby national loyalty and CFSP loyalty become opposite sides of the same coin. We therefore conceptualize the CFSP as a collective system rather than a community, as this better accounts for the transnational nature of foreign policy cooperation. In this sense, the CFSP is not dissimilar to Nicolaidis' definition of the EU as a *demoicracy*—i.e. a 'union of peoples … who govern together but not as one'.[40]

A key point here is once more that the CFSP as a foreign policy system does not just aggregate elements but enables the emergence of something beyond any of those elements. The interdependencies and interactions between member states enable the collective to produce outcomes that go beyond the sum of individual contributions. The collective responsibility norm captures the changes in the ways member states think about the types of action needed in international affairs because of their membership of CFSP and CSDP. The EU foreign policy collective is thus not just an opportunity for member states to 'upload' their interests—it reflects a responsibility that each member state now bears as a member of this collective. If the majority continued to think only of what they could do on their own, it is unlikely that as a collective they would be able to think 'bigger'. Here the role of EU-level institutions and actors in encouraging member states to embrace and immerse themselves in the collective responsibility is important. They do not—and cannot—force member states in a particular direction; but they can foster the emergence of a collective feeling in which member states develop their own intrinsic motivation. This reminds us that the member states are an essential component of the EU's international identity. They are not negotiating towards or with the EU as an international actor: they are central nodes/actors in this collective system.

In sum, our argument is that the collective European responsibility to act is a substantive norm that has emerged over the past 50 years from the European foreign policy cooperation system. This system involves a unique commitment to joint foreign policy action on the part of member states. Not only do they come together to agree common positions; the intensity of their interactions results in a change in their identities from nation-states to member states, to use Bickerton's formulation.[41] In the next section, we explore the implications of the collective responsibility for how we think about and analyse CFSP, with the aim of refocusing on three key preoccupations of the analysis of EU foreign, security and defence policy.

[39] Haas, *The Uniting of Europe: political, social and economic forces 1950–1957*.
[40] Kalypso Nicolaïdis, 'European demoicracy and its crisis', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 51: 2, 2013, pp. 351–69.
[41] Christopher Bickerton, *European integration: from nation-states to member states* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

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The relevance of the collective European responsibility to act: key EU foreign policy preoccupations reconsidered

In the previous section, we outlined how the collective responsibility underpins the EU's foreign policy-making system. Here we show the added value of putting the notion of a collective responsibility centre-stage by reconsidering three key preoccupations in (the scholarship on) European foreign policy cooperation. Taking the collective responsibility as a starting point helps us to reinterpret these preoccupations and the EU's response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Reconsidering the 'same outcome' preoccupation: member states can seek different outcomes and still aim for the same purpose

In the EU, member states agree on collective action in the CFSP/CSDP framework, but it is then up to those member states to decide how (and how forcefully) they implement and put into effect these decisions through their national tools. This structural set-up is the starting point of a major preoccupation for analysts and practitioners of EU foreign policy, who keep looking for the same outcomes across member states to assess EU foreign policy actorness and often find many variations.

The collective responsibility to act, by contrast, in its emphasis on commonality of *purpose* instead of commonality of *outcomes*, suggests that member states can seek different outcomes on the national level and still aim for the same collective purpose. We follow here in the footsteps of work by Macaj and Nicolaïdis, who criticized the focus on unity within European foreign policy scholarship.[42] This nuance in perspective does more justice to what the CFSP is designed to be, and is more honest about what it is not. It was never intended to replace national foreign policies, but rather to enable member states to do more together than they can do on their own. Such a relational perspective allows us to consider how being part of a collective makes a member care about that collective, while allowing for difference (e.g. in policy starting-points, in network position, in characteristics as actors etc.). Member states are not required to prioritize one or the other, the national or the collective—but being part of a collective has an impact on one's view of the world, and one's disposition influences how one interacts within the collective. Procedural micro-norms such as justifying your positions matter for the foreign policy collective because they are the glue that connects member states.[43] The collective European responsibility matters here, in so far as being part of the foreign policy collective makes member states think not only in national terms but also in terms of the greater collective. It encourages them not to ignore issues that may not be directly relevant to them on the basis that any one issue could become a problem for the whole community.

In 2022 there emerged a clear commonality of collective purpose, with all member states contributing to helping Ukraine defend itself, even if the outcomes

[42] Gjovalin Macaj and Kalypso Nicolaïdis, 'Beyond "one voice"? Global Europe's engagement with its own diversity', *Journal of European Public Policy* 21: 7, 2014, pp. 1067–83.
[43] Juncos and Pomorska, 'Contesting procedural norms'.

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appeared different for each member state. This commonality of purpose was also striking because of the different consequences each would face as a result, something particularly evident in terms of the sanctions packages agreed. The member states' commonality of purpose has been even more marked in their use of the EPF. This is a financial instrument allowing for the EU funding of equipment and infrastructure for the militaries of third countries, with budget contributions provided by member states calculated on the basis of the size of their economies. Little used prior to the February 2022 Russian invasion, the EPF has now been employed on five occasions to provide cash and equipment to the value of €2.5 billion to support Ukraine's defence needs. To set this figure in context, it is larger than the individual defence budgets of 15 member states, including Hungary, Portugal and the Baltic states.[44] The collective action through the use of the EPF is also marked in its contrast to the separate direct national military equipment contributions of EU member states to Ukraine, which have been characterized by significant differences in the levels of support.[45]

The collective responsibility to act recognizes the added value of European foreign policy cooperation, even if member states apply different tools and adopt distinct actions, as long as they aim for a collectively agreed goal in line with their national peculiarities. We would expect a commonality of purpose anyway if member states feel the same level of threat or urgency of action. But what the collective European responsibility to act does, through the intensive interaction within the European foreign policy system, is twofold. First, it instils a feeling of urgency across all EU member states to think in collective terms, and a sense of the salience of that collective, even if within their national context they might not feel this level of urgency or salience. Natorski and Pomorska reported 'mutual respect for member states' vulnerabilities' as a key mechanism during the 2014 discussions on how to react to the Russian annexation of Crimea.[46] The sense of urgency and salience emerges between member states thus not (only) because of national considerations, but because they develop a feeling of responsibility towards each other and thus towards the collective. There is a need to act as the EU collective, not (only) because it is in line with all national preferences, but because in a collective spirit it is what the EU should do. Second, the collective responsibility to act instils across all member states a sense of responsibility to act. Smaller member states within their national contexts would not consider following through with a harsh reaction against such a powerful actor as Russia, but the collective umbrella of EU membership makes them consider their collective agency in a different light. Again, the national implementation might then depend on national possibilities; but the commonality of purpose is shaped in reference to the collective responsibility.

Considering the effect of the collective responsibility to act norm does not suggest that this norm always has an effect or always has the same impact; indeed,

[44] See Eurostat, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Government_expenditure_on_defence#Expenditure_on_.27defence.27.

[45] See Kiel Institute for the World Economy, *Ukraine support tracker*, n.d., https://www.ifw-kiel.de/topics/war-against-ukraine/ukraine-support-tracker/.

[46] Natorski and Pomorska, 'Trust and decision-making in times of crisis'.

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this would contradict our assertion of a *dynamic* foreign policy system. The collective responsibility to act might foster a commonality of purpose, and our task should be to better understand the scope conditions when this is the case and when this commonality of purpose might decrease again.

The 'linkage' preoccupation: foreign policy and defence policy follow different logics, processes and speeds

There has long been a strong linkage between foreign and defence policy in assessments of the EU as an international actor, and particularly of its capacities, its willingness to act and what kind of impact it seeks to achieve internationally.[47] This is perhaps unsurprising, given the broader linkage at national level between foreign and defence policies in terms of evaluating individual states' influence in the international system, and what this tells us about their ability to function as independent, sovereign actors. In the context of the EU, meanwhile, it is unsurprising given the member states' desire—and failure—in the early years of integration to establish foreign and defence policy cooperation in parallel to their economic cooperation—e.g. in the case of the 1952 European Defence Community. When member states were finally able to establish foreign policy cooperation under the auspices of EPC in 1970, however, defence was notably absent from its remit.

Even though EPC did not fail, defying expectations at the time,[48] and instead evolved over the years to become what we recognize today as CFSP, the absence of a meaningful defence component has often been considered a major weakness. Without a significant military capacity, the argument goes, the EU will never exercise the level of international influence (or ambition) commensurate with its economic weight, or open to actors such as the United States and China.[49] Indeed, Kagan went further, suggesting that integration was in fact inimical to the whole notion of military power (an essential component of international actorness, in his view), and therefore of any kind of truly global role for the EU.[50] Scholars arguing against these positions contend that even if the EU had greater military capacity, it is unclear in what circumstances it could realistically use it, and in any case that this goes against its civilian power and normative power ethos, which are more significant to its international actorness.[51]

Departing from the lens of a collective responsibility to act enables developments in foreign policy cooperation on the one hand, and in defence integration on the other hand, to be treated separately. The advantage of this approach is that

[47] Brian Crowe, 'A common European foreign policy after Iraq?', *International Affairs* 79: 3, 2003, pp. 533–46; Paul Cornish and Geoffrey Edwards, 'Beyond the EU/NATO dichotomy: the beginnings of a European strategic culture', *International Affairs* 77: 3, 2001, pp. 587–603; Anand Menon, 'Empowering paradise? The ESDP at ten', *International Affairs* 85: 2, 2009, pp. 227–46.

[48] Smith, *Europe's foreign and security policy*.

[49] Hedley Bull, 'Civilian power Europe: a contradiction in terms?', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 21: 1–2, 1982, pp. 149–170.

[50] Robert Kagan, *Paradise and power: America and Europe in the new world order* (London: Atlantic, 2004).

[51] Thomas Diez, 'Normative power as hegemony', *Cooperation and Conflict* 48: 2, 2013, pp. 194–210.

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it does not see the assessment of EU foreign policy purely in terms of what it has largely *not* had (a meaningful defence policy), and make value judgements as to its relevance, significance and effectiveness on that basis, while on the other hand it allows us to consider separately the influence EU membership has on the defence thinking of member states. Thus, instead of focusing on what the EU is *not* in terms of defence, the analysis can focus on how EU member states have nonetheless developed what is arguably a new and innovative approach to defence and security through not only the CSDP, but also the European Defence Agency, European Defence Fund and, most recently, the EPF. Again, it is important here to reiterate a core aspect of this article—that we are not focused here on outputs: the majority of CSDP missions have been civilian in character, and military missions can be, and often have been, legitimately criticized for their limited scale and ambition, as well as their impact and results. Rather, we are again interested in what these innovations tell us about the commonality of purpose that lies at the heart of the system, and how this reflects and is manifested in the core norm of the responsibility to act.

The EU's response to the 2022 Ukraine crisis exemplifies this commonality of purpose. There was no disagreement on the need for a swift and robust response—even if the specifics and efficacy of that response have at times been hotly debated. Nor is there any suggestion that the EU would become militarily involved, as NATO was recognized as the appropriate forum for discussion of any specific military response. Instead, we see the platform provided by the EU for member-state cooperation functioning very much as intended—as a space for discussion and coordination of collective responses, and a means to develop innovative policy approaches. Thus, alongside extensive and broad sanctions packages,[52] we have seen, for example, the use of the EPF which, as noted above, has involved many millions of euros in providing support to Ukraine's armed forces. What is particularly noteworthy about this is that the EU's member states have agreed to treat the collective supply of defence equipment and military support to Ukraine as a *foreign policy* decision, pursued using foreign policy instruments, rather than a question of defence policy. What we have seen, moreover, is that, given the limitations of civilian power instruments and the constraints on direct military intervention, member states and the EU institutions have been able to chart a third way in responding to the crisis.

Indeed, there now arises the additional question as to whether Russia's war on Ukraine has generated a paradigm shift in European military security, given the current limits on the EU's ambitions for defence policy. The coordination of collective European military responses to Russia through NATO, the swift move by Finland and Sweden to secure the collective defence guarantee provided by NATO membership, and the extent of US political and military material support to NATO states bordering Russia and to Ukraine, have amounted to a dramatic recapitulation of the primacy of the transatlantic alliance in European defence and security. It was noteworthy that despite the emphasis placed by the

[52] See European Council, *EU restrictive measures against Russia over Ukraine (since 2014)*, n.d., https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/sanctions/restrictive-measures-against-russia-over-ukraine/.

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Commission led by Ursula von der Leyen, when it took office in 2019, on developing EU defence policy, the topic did not feature in von der Leyen's 2022 State of the Union Address.[53]

The 'size/leadership' preoccupation: member-state leadership is not determined by size alone

Debates around leadership in CFSP/CSDP, and particularly the role played by size in terms of potential leadership capacity at EU level, have long been a feature both of the academic literature on EU foreign policy and in wider conversations about the EU's capacities (or lack thereof) as an international actor.[54] One frequent assumption has been that larger and more affluent states with greater political, diplomatic, economic and military resources at their disposal will enjoy greater policy-making influence. Thus, there has been a longstanding tendency to focus particularly on Germany and France (and, before 2016, Britain) as the 'dominant' states in EU foreign policy (a view with which French and British elites have been comfortable, even if their German counterparts take a more nuanced view).[55] While bigger states certainly do exercise significant influence, this is only part of the picture. Indeed, for a number of years this restrictive perspective has been strongly challenged by research exploring the influence that so-called 'small states' have had over EU policy-making in general,[56] and over foreign policy in particular.[57] Echoing earlier work by scholars such as Lewis,[58] this more recent work demonstrates that in the context of EU foreign policy, leadership depends not just on size, but also on negotiating strategy,[59] the power of good arguments, recognition of expertise, and a willingness to invest time and resources in pursuit of particular policy outcomes. We contend here that the collective responsibility to act links up with and expands on such arguments, providing a normative framework within which to explore member states' approach to collective foreign policy decision-making. To be clear, this is not to say that larger member states do not exercise influence and leadership; rather, that they do not—and cannot—seek

[53] European Commission, '2022 State of the Union address by President von der Leyen', Strasbourg, 14 Sept. 2022, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/ov/speech_22_5493.

[54] Josef Janning, 'Leadership coalitions and change: the role of states in the European Union', *International Affairs* 81: 4, 2005, pp. 821–33; Simon Bulmer and William Paterson, 'Germany and the European Union: from "tamed power" to normalized power?', *International Affairs* 86: 5, 2010, pp. 1051–73.

[55] Wright, *The EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy in Germany and the UK*, pp. 165–86.

[56] See e.g. Diana Panke, 'Small states in EU negotiations: political dwarfs or power-brokers?', *Cooperation and Conflict* 46: 2, 2011, pp. 123–43.

[57] See e.g. Annika Björkdahl, 'Norm advocacy: a small state strategy to influence the EU', *Journal of European Public Policy* 15: 1, 2008, pp. 135–54; Peter Viggo Jakobsen, 'Small states, big influence: the overlooked Nordic influence on the civilian ESDP', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 47: 1, 2009, pp. 81–102; Skander Nasra, 'Governance in EU foreign policy: exploring small state influence', *Journal of European Public Policy* 18: 2, 2011, pp. 164–80.

[58] Jeffrey Lewis, 'Is the "hard bargaining" image of the Council misleading? The Committee of Permanent Representatives and the local elections directive', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 36: 4, 1998, pp. 479–504; Lewis, 'The Janus face of Brussels'.

[59] Daniel Naurin and Helen Wallace, *Unveiling the Council of the European Union: games governments play in Brussels* (Brussels: Springer, 2008); Ana Juncos and Karolina Pomorska, 'Playing the Brussels game: strategic socialisation in the CFSP Council working groups', *European integration online papers* 10: 11, 2006, pp. 1–17.

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to predominate, as the consensual nature of EU foreign policy-making demands a more nuanced approach.

The lens of a collective responsibility to act encourages us to look beyond 'size' as the key measure of leadership capacity and influence, and instead to focus on the 'willingness' of member states to develop and promote meaningful European foreign policy action. From this perspective, for example, the replacement of the rotating presidency in foreign affairs with the permanent role of the HR/VP matters less than we might assume. Although the rotating presidency was long considered a great 'equalizer' in terms of the balance between larger and smaller states,[60] the other factors mentioned above ensure that smaller states retain significant capacity to 'punch above their weight'. Rather than seeing the EU foreign policy system as acting to 'equalize' large and small states, therefore, we can usefully judge it by how far it enables 'equality of opportunity' in terms of influence and leadership. Different member states engage with and promote particular policy positions on different issues at different times, depending on the importance and immediacy of the issue to them; meanwhile, their peers take their arguments and, as appropriate, their leadership into account, understanding these as contributing to the broader effectiveness and focus of the collective system. Certainly, states such as France and Germany, which have a larger capacity and bandwidth, will be able to intervene on a much broader range of questions. Equally, however, those with particular thematic or geographic expertise, knowledge and interests will expect to be heard and taken into account in any final decision.

We have seen this in a number of contexts, for example Polish–Swedish leadership in developing the 'eastern partnership' component of the European Neighbourhood Policy.[61] It is most recently exemplified, though, in how the EU has responded to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Those member states bordering Russia have made the most significant on-the-ground response in terms of the share of refugees offered sanctuary or the degree of military support provided, whether in kind or as a proportion of national defence budgets. These states—the majority of which would be considered smaller—have also played a leading role in shaping the EU's collective response. Especially prominent have been the Baltic states and Poland. Having historically sought a more robust Russia policy, particularly after 2014, they have since February 2022 taken the lead in supplying military equipment to Ukraine and in pushing for the EU to end its reliance on Russian energy. They have also been in the vanguard of diplomacy 'on the ground'. Remarkably, Poland—for several years subject to growing political pressure as well as legal action from the EU institutions for rule-of-law infringements—has been a policy entrepreneur and leader in developing the EU's range of responses, including on refugees, alongside its Baltic near-neighbours.[62] Indeed, the robustness of these states' efforts has stood in contrast to France and Germany's

[60] Maurer and Wright, 'Still governing in the shadows?'.
[61] Toby Vogel, 'Plans for "eastern partnership" unveiled', *Politico*, 26 May 2008, https://www.politico.eu/article/plans-for-eastern-partnership-unveiled/.
[62] Jan Cienski, 'Poland goes from zero to hero in EU thanks to Ukraine effort', *Politico*, 3 March 2022, https://www.politico.eu/article/poland-goes-from-zero-to-hero-in-eu-thanks-to-ukraine-effort/.

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perceived weakness and pusillanimity, and they have not been shy in criticizing Paris and Berlin for their respective efforts to preserve a diplomatic connection via leader-to-leader dialogue with President Putin, as well as their slowness in delivering military support to Kyiv. The agency of smaller member states was also on display in a joint letter of 28 February 2022 from the presidents of the Baltic states, Slovenia, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Bulgaria and Poland, calling for Ukraine immediately to be granted EU candidate status and for the opening of accession talks.[63] Such dramatic and public advocacy of a major foreign policy initiative by the EU led to a significant policy shift which even the EU's traditionally most enlargement-phobic states—notably France—were unable to resist as they recognized the importance of presenting a strong, united front in support of Ukraine.

Conclusion

The EU response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine serves as a timely focusing event that demands a rethink of the premises that have underpinned our understanding of collective European foreign policy-making over decades. In this article, we have used this policy response as the starting-point for thinking about the EU's foreign policy system from a new perspective. Building on constructivist and Europeanization scholarship, we propose that a crucial norm has evolved in the 50-plus years of foreign policy cooperation which underpins all member-state action: the collective European responsibility to act. Through the lens this norm offers, we have revisited some of the key preoccupations in EU foreign policy analysis, which the conceptual lens of a collective responsibility helps us to reinterpret, particularly in the context of the current Ukraine crisis.

The article began by thinking about the frequent and ongoing criticism of the European foreign policy system and its apparent inadequacies. Given its supposed shortcomings, we ask why EU member states still choose to cooperate on foreign policy issues and still support the EU foreign policy system. In short, why does this system remain so durable? We argue that the system endures because of the increased identification of member states as a collective. This collective norm has not been enshrined in the treaties or put forward as a political goal in the realm of foreign policy. Rather, it has emerged through the repeated and institutionalized interactions between member-state capitals and their representatives in Brussels in the realm of foreign policy and beyond. Little attention has been paid to this collective ethos in the scholarship on policy practice and foreign policy. Scholarship on EU foreign policy-making has provided considerable insight but has also demonstrated an excessive preoccupation with institutions and with outputs. Our aim here, therefore, is a rebalancing corrective to demonstrate the relevance of collective norms, and how a consideration of these norms can enrich our understanding of what the CFSP and CSDP actually *are*.

[63] Presidency of the Republic of Lithuania, 'Open letter by presidents in support of Ukraine's swift candidacy to the European Union', 28 Feb. 2022, https://www.lrp.lt/en/media-center/news/open-letter-by-presidents-in-support-of-ukraines-swift-candidacy-to-the-european-union/37859.

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Our aim in focusing on the collective responsibility to act is to open up and encourage new pathways for future research that focus on the complexity of the European foreign policy cooperation system, with this collective responsibility as its foundational norm. Several important questions remain to be answered. For example, within the context of the collective responsibility and its emergence, how have individual member states sought to pursue it in their own terms? Do we see national versions of the collective European responsibility to act, and does this speak to a Europeanization of this norm? To what extent does ambiguity in response to a crisis matter in the context of the collective responsibility—for example, where there is disagreement between member states over the nature of the response to a particular crisis? As we start to explore these questions further, we will develop a greater and more nuanced understanding of how this complex system of foreign policy cooperation continues to evolve, and the crucial role of norms within that evolution.

This article also opens up an issue for consideration in debates on reform of the EU foreign policy-making architecture. A perennial preoccupation for the member states has been institutional reform, allowing for new actors and processes. This reached its apogee with the Lisbon Treaty reforms, creating the role of the HR/VP supported by the EEAS, and introducing a more circumscribed role for member states in the policy-making processes. Proposals have recently been launched to introduce more majority voting into EU foreign policy-making processes. It is important to reflect on whether such arrangements would strengthen or weaken the norm of the *collective responsibility to act*—for example if there is a move to a system encouraging the development of voting coalitions overriding collective norms.

The contrast between the EU's reaction to Russia's February 2022 offensive against Ukraine with its response to the earlier invasion and annexation of Crimea is stark.[64] In the period since Russia's invasion in February there has been a greater level of collective EU response. The scale and scope of Russia's actions, not least as the culmination of an extended pattern of hostile actions against other European states since the invasion of Georgia in 2008, has undoubtedly facilitated a shifting EU member-state perspective on its largest neighbour. There has been further demonstration of the added value of a collective ability to act and of standing together in the cases of Brexit and the COVID-19 pandemic.[65] These experiences have further strengthened the commonality of purpose embodied by EU foreign policy cooperation, even if not necessarily the commonality (or effectiveness) of outcomes.

Unlike previous major challenges to collective EU foreign policy, such as the wars in the former Yugoslavia, Iraq or Syria, the drive for a collective responsibility to act on Ukraine since February 2022 has been inescapable. Russia's war on Ukraine has acted as an EU foreign policy epiphany in two important senses.

[64] Richard Sakwa, 'The death of Europe? Continental fates after Ukraine', *International Affairs* 91: 3, 2015, pp. 553–79; Smith, 'Emotions and EU foreign policy'.

[65] See also Brigid Laffan, 'Europe voices collective will and flexes muscle', *Irish Times*, 5 March 2022, https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/brigid-laffan-europe-voices-collective-will-and-flexes-muscle-1.4818453.

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First, the nature of Russia's violation of the European security order has made the absence of a collective EU policy response unthinkable. The EU, of necessity, has had to create a timely foreign policy response, and the absence of a collective position is not an option. Second, as Russia is deeply intertwined with the EU member states' economies, societies and security order, its action has required, to an unprecedented degree, an EU response across a broad range of policy areas encompassing trade, energy, asylum and immigration, enlargement and neighbourhood policies. Further, the egregious effects of Russia's actions on the Ukrainian state and society have impinged directly on the EU's operation as a political community by eliciting a high degree of reaction from within and across member states to counter the actions of the Putin regime. This has further heightened the sense of the need for a collective response. The EU member states' collective foreign policy response to Russia's war on Ukraine is rendered comprehensible by the actions of the Putin regime, but is not fully explicable without understanding that it is underpinned by a norm that has been over 50 years in the making.

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