



Forum on the Problems of Peace and War & GARNET Jointly Executed Research Project 5.2.1

THE EXTERNAL IMAGE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

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The survey *The External Image of the European Union* has been conducted in the framework of the Jointly Executed Research Project 5.2.1. (*Normative Issues*) of the GARNET Network of Excellence *Global Governance, Regionalisation and Regulation: the Role of the EU* - (EU 6th Framework Programme 2005-2010; Call Identifier: FP6-2002-Citizens-3). The survey also received financial support from the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 26 researchers, based in 16 countries, were involved.

Aims of research

The research had four main aims:

- to evaluate the degree of academic information already available on how the EU is perceived outside its borders;
- analyse open sources (newspapers, websites, official documents, available opinion polls) so as to produce new research on the topic;
- to evaluate if these perceptions vary across geographic areas of the world, countries, and target groups within countries;
- to assess the gap between the EU's self-representation and external views.

Methodology and deliverables:

1) **Country reports:** we selected a sample of countries from each continent: Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Egypt, Japan, India, Iran, Israel, Lebanon, Mexico, Russia, Palestine, South Africa, United States and Venezuela.

Target groups: we selected four target groups within each country on which to focus attention: political elites, public opinion, the press and organised civic society.

Sources: we gathered information on the image of the EU within each target group by: (i) reviewing the very limited academic literature available and (ii) analysing the open sources available, with particular attention to press analysis. Each researcher chose a research strategy targeted at the needs of the country s/he was analysing.

2) **Transversal reports on** international and transnational actors: the UN General Assembly, the World Bank, Al Jazeera, the African Union, Heads of EU Commission delegations abroad; NGOs taking part in world gatherings. We also evaluated the image of the EU among senior servants in the Commission Delegations.

Sources: direct interviews; questionnaires; open sources

Main Results

- Low / to very low visibility in the media (e.g. Australia, Canada, China, India, South Africa).
- Limited knowledge of the EU (particularly among certain target groups, such as civil society and citizens at large).
- Degree of knowledge and appreciation correlated to degree of education and younger age
- Good degree of confidence in the EU but frequently lower with respect to other organizations/states.

- EU largely seen as an economic giant, but not widely perceived as a “world power”, nor as a future one.
- Frequent calls for “more EU” - frequently as a counterbalance to the US (e.g. civil society and press Egypt; Brazil; public opinion Canada; Iran).
- General perception of “Europe” (more than the EU), influenced by historical relationships with individual European countries (e.g. former colonial empires).
- Images of the EU are split:
 - *positive images*: the EU as “strategic opportunity” for the partner countries; a trade giant; a supporter of multilateralism (or at least multipolarism); a model of regional integration; and a possible counterbalance to US hegemony, a protector of the environment;
 - *negative images*: an actor whose policy is severely influenced by its own security or economic concerns; a neo-liberal actor in its external relations; and a protectionist power (CAP). → EU’s self-representation as a solidaristic actor is called into question. Moreover:
 - ✓ Little evidence of the EU being widely seen as a “normative power” exporting universal values of democracy and human rights.
 - ✓ No evidence of the EU being widely regarded as a social model to be imitated.
 - ✓ No public reward for EU’s development cooperation policy

On the basis of this research a number of **conclusions** can be drawn:

- There is a strong need for new, methodologically strong, research projects, and a direct role by the Commission in collecting information (e.g. through the Commission’s delegations; negotiating the inclusions of questions on the EU in Regional Barometers)
- There is a need to develop research strategies to also evaluate if and how external images influence the internal process of identity formation among the Europeans. What do the Europeans know of how others see them and their institutions? How do the European media assess the reputation of the EU? Those are neglected questions in the “EU identity” literature.
- This academic work, however, cannot substitute a more direct role by the EU institutions in reducing the rhetoric/expectations/performance gap (e.g. by working on (i) communication & public diplomacy; (ii) by improving EU’s coherence & credibility; (iii) by capitalizing on the existing cultural message of Europe).

Outputs

Publications

- Sonisa Lucarelli (editor) *Beyond Self Perception: The Others’ View of the European Union*, Special issue of *European Foreign Affairs Review*, 3/2007
- Sonia Lucarelli (editor) *The External Image of the European Union*, Garnet Series e-book, 2007, http://www.garnet-eu.org/fileadmin/documents/working_papers/1707.pdf
- Lorenzo Fioramonti and Sonia Lucarelli, “Have you heard of the EU?”, *International Herald Tribune*, October 24, 2007
- Sonia Lucarelli, “European Political Identity and the Others’ Image of the EU: Reflections on an Under-explored Relationship”, *CFSP Forum*, 5(6), 2007, pp. 11-15.
- Sonia Lucarelli, “L’Unione europea vista dagli altri”, *Imago Europae*, 1(0), 2007, pp. 12-16.
- Lorenzo Fioramonti and Sonia Lucarelli, “What do *they* think of the EU? External perceptions of the European Union as a global actor”, *Eyes on Europe*, 9, 2008.
- Loreonzo Fioramonti and Arlo Poletti, “Facing the Giant: Southern Perspectives on the European Union”, *Third World Quarterly*, Vol.28 (1) 2008.
- Lorenzo Fioramonti and Sonia Lucarelli, “How do the Others see us? European political identity and the external image of the EU”, in Cerutti, F., Lucarelli, S. (eds), Routledge, 2008.

- Sonia Lucarelli and Lorenzo Fioramonti, *Have you heard of the EU? An Analysis of global images of the European Union*, Garnet Policy Brief, n. 7, September 2008.
- Sonia Lucarelli and Lorenzo Fioramonti (eds) *Research Report: The External Image of the European Union (Phase Two)*, Garnet Series e-book, online (www.garnet-eu.org) December 2008.
- Sonia Lucarelli and Lorenzo Fioramonti, 'Das globale Image der Europäischen Union', in *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, 23-24/2009.
- Sonia Lucarelli and Lorenzo Fioramonti (eds), *External Perceptions of the European Union as a Global Actor* London, Routledge, September 2009.
- Caterina Carta and Armin Mayer (2008), 'Postcards from Brussels, Privileged views on the EU from within,' *Shift Magazine*, 7/09/08.
- Lorenzo Fioramonti, *African Perceptions of the European Union: Assessing the Work of the EU in the Field of Democracy Promotion and Peacekeeping*, IDEA Working Paper, October 2009.

Presentations of the research project and its results

Sonia Lucarelli, *The External Image of the European Union*, European Commission, DG Research, in the presence of Janez Potočnik (Commissioner for Science and Research), several Commission Director Generals and members of the European Parliament, 19-20 April 2007.

Sonia Lucarelli, *European political identity and the others' image of the EU: reflections on an under-explored relationship*, 25-26 May 2007, Conference *The Europeans. The European Union in Search of Political Identity and Legitimacy*, University of Florence

Sonia Lucarelli, *Beyond Self Perception: The Others' View of the European Union*, 29-30 June 2007, Conference *The study of contemporary world history and politics in international studies*, Università di Trento.

Sonia Lucarelli organized 5 thematic panels on *The international image of the EU: How is the EU perceived outside its borders?* ECPR General Conference 2007, Pisa 6-8 September 2007. http://www.ecpr.visionmd.co.uk/section_panels.asp?sectionNumber=S30

Sonia Lucarelli, *Pathways to Legitimacy? The Future of Global and Regional Governance*, University of Warwick, 17-19 September 2007. Programma al web-site: <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/csgr/activitiesnews/conferences/conference2007/dp1709.pdf>

Sonia Lucarelli, *The "EU distinctiveness" thesis in the analysis of EU Foreign policy*, Master of Arts in Human Rights and Conflict Management, Sant'Anna – Pisa, 23 January 2008.

Sonia Lucarelli, *At Home and Abroad? Exploring the External Image of the EU and its Impact on the EU's 'Domestic' Debate*, Young Faces Conference Europe in a New World Order: Global Leadership for Peace and Security?, Lund University, Sweden, 10-12 January, 2008.

Sonia Lucarelli, *At Home and Abroad? Exploring the External Image of the EU and its Impact on the EU's 'Domestic' Debate*, Annual Conference of the Società Italiana di Scienza Politica, 20-22 September 2007

Sonia Lucarelli, *At Home and Abroad? Exploring the External Image of the EU*, Conference *Obstinate or Obsolete? The Fate of the EU*, Johns Hopkins Bologna Center, 4 April 2008

Lorenzo Fioramonti, *Facing the Giant: Perceptions of the EU in India, Brazil and South Africa*, Institute for Global Dialogue, Midrand (Johannesburg), 11 April 2008.

Sonia Lucarelli, *European Political Identity and the Others' Image of the EU: Reflections on an Under-explored Relationship*, Lecture at Georgetown University - Villa Le Balze Firenze 15 October 2008.

Sonia Lucarelli, *Have you Heard of the EU?, Images of the EU in India and Beyond*, 20-23 November 2008, Euro-Indian Workshop *Cultures Of Governance And Conflict Resolution* New Delhi and Shimla.

Lorenzo Fioramonti, *Have You Heard of the EU? A Global Survey of What the World Thinks of the European Union*, 27 November 2008, University of Cape Town (South Africa).

Lorenzo Fioramonti, *Have You Heard of the EU? A Global Survey of What the World Thinks of the European Union*, 1 December 2008, South African Institute of International Affairs, Pretoria (South Africa).

Sonia Lucarelli, Presentation of research at the Department of Politics, Institutions and History, University of Bologna 12 March 2008.

Sonia Lucarelli, Presentation of the research results at the European Parliament, in the presence of Graham Watson, Josep Borrell, Furio Cerutti, 17 March 2009.

Sonia Lucarelli, *Identity, legitimacy and the external image of the EU*, Harvard University, Center for European Studies, 31 March 2009.

Sonia Lucarelli, *Identity, legitimacy and the external image of the EU*, Harvard University, Harvard Law School, 2 April 2009.

Sonia Lucarelli, *The external image of the EU: a soft security provider?*, 21 April 2009, European University Institute, Florence.

Lorenzo Fioramonti, *The EU in the Eyes of Africa*, presentation at the conference "50 Years of Euro – Israeli Relations" – Perceptions, Dialogue and Future Cooperation, 4-5 May 2009 - Konrad Adenauer Conference Center, Mishkenot Sha'ananim, Jerusalem.

Sonia Lucarelli, *Why Bother? Identity, Legitimacy and the External Image of the EU*, presentation at the conference "50 Years of Euro – Israeli Relations" – Perceptions, Dialogue and Future Cooperation, 4-5 May 2009 - Konrad Adenauer Conference Center, Mishkenot Sha'ananim, Jerusalem.