The European Union as a Security Community Against the Backdrop of Challenges Caused by the Global Pandemic

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Abstract

The European Union, the most advanced integrational arrangement of its kind today, and a model for other regional integration projects, is a relatively new actor on the international scene. It constitutes a community of values, a normative power, a cultural and political community, but, above all else, a security community. And it is to this final dimension that Europe owes the longest period of peace in its modern history. However, today, faced with a new reality forged by global changes and the emergence of new threats, the theoretical construct of the security community, developed by Karl W. Deutsch, requires new insights and adjustments, including in relation to the European Union.

The aim of this study is to establish whether, despite the current crisis, the European Union still meets the criteria of a security community. And considering the changes that have taken place over the years, the research problem amounts to the question of whether the concept of security itself, and thus of the security community, shouldn't be revised so as to better reflect the present reality. In turn, the research thesis is as follows: despite all the difficulties and more or less unprecedented events, especially those of recent times, the EU meets the criteria of a security community, wherein it presents an intermediate (halfway-house) solution between a pluralistic and an amalgamated community.

In support of the presented arguments, primary and secondary sources will be used, and research methods such as a description, interpretation, comparison, and critical assessment of the literature will be applied.

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Considerations will start with theoretical issues, followed by a discussion of the EU as a new actor on the international scene, after which security factors and their manifestations in the EU will be addressed.

Keywords: European Union, COVID-19, Security Community, Karl W. Deutsch

Introductory Remarks

Like most salient non-state entities that compete for power and authority, the European Union (EU) is an international organization (IO), albeit a special kind of organisation. The EU (previously, the European Communities) not only serves as a common ground for an exchange of views and ideas, a forum for debates and negotiations, a place where politics is made and decisions are taken, but it is also an economic, legal, cultural, and political community, a community of values, and a normative power. However, above all else it is a security community. And unlike at the outset of integration processes, when security lay at the heart of the European project and contributed to the maintenance of peace in Europe, today it is ideas, values, norms, rules, principles, common practices, a common identity, welfare, and the well-being of citizens that make up the essence of the community.

According to Karl W. Deutsch, one of the leading and most influential theoreticians of international integration, the forms of cooperation which have materialised in Western Europe are characteristic of a *pluralistic security community*. However, today, following treaty revisions and the current headway being made towards integration which has manifested itself, among other things, in new structures, procedures, principles, norms, and practices, are we still justified in calling this advanced form of cooperation a *pluralistic security community*, or should we rather label this not yet fully-fledged political entity with a single centre of power an *amalgamated security community*? The absence of a single centre of public authority does not change the fact that most matters concerning European citizens are decided by EU institutions rather than by individual states. It should be pointed out that a security community as a theoretical category, was (and still is) an innovative concept compared to other, traditional approaches to international relations and to international integration, in particular.

The EU is currently the most advanced regional integrational arrangement in the world. As a result of transferring competences to the supranational level, i.e., to EU institutions, or rather – as some would say – as a consequence of restricting the exercise of such competences at the national level, a new kind of political entity, indeed a novel type of

international actor, has been established. This institutionalised form of collaboration, depending on the perspective adopted, can be seen as an international organisation, a quasi-state structure, a polity in its own rights or, last but not least, a new kind of actor on the international scene.

The current state of the crisis facing the EU, triggered by the global pandemic and, to some extent, also by Brexit (more in ideational than in factual terms, as a challenge to the very notion of integration and thus to the entire European project), as well as by other factors, is not a new phenomenon. As is well known, the EU has to date experienced economic, financial, migration, and refugee crises as well as a crisis of legitimacy. And yet these destabilising factors have not brought about its collapse. On the contrary, in some ways they have strengthened it, and the hope is that this positive trend will continue in the future.

While it may be a truism to say that every crisis is unique, the recent SARS-CoV-2 emergency and the concomitant restrictions on economic activities have, along with national lockdowns, had an impact on virtually every sphere of people's lives. Hence, the question that needs to be asked is how has the current global health emergency affected the very existence of the EU, and does the EU still meet the criteria of a security community? Moreover, given the changes that have taken place in the international arena *in genere* and in the EU *in specie* over the years, shouldn't the concept of security itself, and thus of the security community, be revised so as to better reflect the present reality, i.e., take into account the non-military dimensions of security to a greater extent? The thesis that will be confirmed (or rejected) in this study is as follows: despite all the difficulties and obstacles encountered, and despite, too, the events (more or less unprecedented) and crises that have occurred, especially those of recent times, the EU has met the criteria of a security community. Another question that arises here is whether in the case of the EU we are dealing with a pluralistic or an amalgamated security community or instead with a *tertium genus* that better reflects the present reality?

To substantiate the arguments set out in this paper, primary and secondary sources will be used, and different research methods applied, such as a description, interpretation, comparison, and critical assessment of the literature. The focus of this analysis will be the EU as a supranational integrational arrangement and at the same time a security community. The discussion will proceed as follows; first, a number of theoretical issues will be raised, such as the constructivist turn in international relations and the concept of the security community. Then, there will be a discussion of the EU as a new actor on the international scene, after which security factors and their manifestations in the EU will be addressed.

A New Paradigm in International Relations

Unlike traditional approaches to international relations that emphasise an anarchic international environment and sovereign states as the main actors, the new paradigm presents the world as less ordered in some respects and more in others. On the one hand, the world is much more complex and features many more actors that are different from, and operate within and outside, sovereign states and that certain variables (social, economic, cultural, etc.) need to be taken into account alongside political factors. On the other hand, the world is more ordered with international relations moving in the direction of a more structured if not hierarchical system (in line with Hugo Grotius's concept of a world society) (Lijphart, 1981, p. 234).

The traditional theory of international relations, which focuses on state sovereignty and international anarchy, provides a platform for three interrelated theories, namely: world government, the balance of power, and collective security. The world government theory holds that international relations exist in a state of nature, and since anarchy is a source of conflict, the logical solution would be to conclude a social contract that would allow for the removal of separate sovereignties and for the establishment of one sovereign government. The balance of power theory, on the other hand, holds that anarchy, which comes to the fore in the absence of sovereign rule, does not necessarily imply disorder, and the struggle for power which states are forced into by the security dilemma, leads to equilibrium rather than conflict. In turn, the collective security theory rejects the possibility of achieving any automatic equilibrium and argues that states should agree on taking collective action against any aggressor. Hence, the theory appears to recognise the social contract theory in which international anarchy is not abolished but weakened, leaving state sovereignties intact (Ibidem, pp. 234–235).

As we can observe, the fundamental issue at stake is how to arrange relations between states in such a way as to reduce (or even eliminate) anarchy and thus diminish the possibility of conflict, in conditions where establishing a world government is extremely difficult (if not impossible), the balance of power mechanism does not guarantee lasting peace, and the institution of collective security is very weak. One such solution (compared to those presented above) may be to place international relations on a legal basis by creating a special kind of international organisation, i.e., regional integrational arrangements-*cum*-security communities, which would impede international anarchy (if not eliminate it altogether) and reduce the potential for inter-state conflict.

The traditional paradigm implies the establishment of a world government, whereas the new paradigm holds that peace can be achieved by moving towards a pluralistic world of restrained international law, expanding international cooperation and pluralistic security communities (Ibidem, pp. 238–239). From the latter perspective, the key to harmonious international relations is neither the creation of a single global authority, nor competition between states leading to a balance of power, but rather through the founding of security communities. This, in turn, implies law-based international relations, a more orderly and predictable world, and reduced international anarchy. What is equally important is that the new paradigm liberates research on international relations from the limitations of the traditional paradigm, i.e., one based on a vision of an anarchic world where sovereign states are the only actors on the international scene. And according to A. Lijphart, the rejection of the uniqueness of the sovereign state and the blurring of the lines between international and domestic politics have had two implications, namely that international relations are no longer seen as a qualitatively different sphere from political science, which, in turn, means that domestic policy analogies can be applied at the international level and that international relations can be treated as a part of the social sciences and can benefit from their knowledge and methods (Ibidem, pp. 239–240). As for the constructivist argument that the political order can be conceived as the result of processes of social interaction, Gunther Hellmann et al. point out that the security community approach originated in the desire to transcend the state-centric perspective of international relations, which, in turn, allows us to conceive of "the West" as a political space characterised by transnational processes of political association and integration (Hellmann et al., 2014, p. 370). The logic of community challenges the logic of anarchy according to which, despite occasional efforts to cooperate with one another, the anarchic nature of the international order prompts states to act in their own interest, thereby eliminating all prospects for peaceful change (Koschut, 2014, p. 524).

With regard to the theory of international relations, there are a number of possible ways to explain lasting peace. Structural realism defines peaceful change primarily in terms of the ordering function of the international system based on the balance of power, alliances and deterrence, while neoliberal institutionalism views such change through the prism of mutual gains achieved through institutionalised cooperation and norms. Constructivism, on the other hand, focuses on changing social and normative interpretations of the material world as a result of human interaction, while the English school shares some features with the security community, but underestimates the role of transnational and non-state

actors. Finally, democratic peace theory provides some insights into how security communities develop but its scope is limited to democratic states (Ibidem, p. 527). These approaches share some characteristics with the Deutschian concept of a security community (norms, identity, language), but differ in their treatment of the post-Westphalian system. According to S. Koschut, the Deutschian concept takes the middle ground between realism and liberal democratic theories in that it rejects the realist approach that regime type is irrelevant to the study of international peace and questions the liberal democratic claim that a certain regime type serves as a prerequisite for peaceful international relations; it also lies between a state-centric view of neorealism and neoliberalism on the one hand, and the social ontology of postmodern and reflectivist theories that examine social interactions and social relations between states and non-state actors, on the other (Ibidem, p. 528). Furthermore, Koschut accepts the realist assumption that international relations are organised as a system of states based on the distribution of material power and capabilities, while at the same time emphasising their social relationships based on shared understanding, belief systems and narratives (Ibidem, p. 522).

A Constructivist Turn in International Relations and European Studies

The concept of security, which today is associated more with values, ideas, identities, and practices than with material forces, fits in with the constructivist approach to international relations. This also holds true for the security community.[1] The term 'constructivism' was first applied to international relations by Nicholas Onuf, but it was not until the early 1980s that it gained in influence, especially in North America, and it was only in the 1990s that it began to permeate European studies. It should be pointed out that constructivism in international relations arose in opposition to the dominant rationalist paradigm and it draws, *inter alia*, on Deutsch's concept of common identities (Czaputowicz, 2015, p. 8).

Constructivism, which focuses on intersubjective ideas, in actual fact constitutes an empirical approach to the study of international relations (Jackson, Sørensen, 2013, p. 213). Constructivists claim that the interna-

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[1] Fotios Moustakis and Tracey German distinguish the following characteristics of security communities: collective security, joint military planning, integration, unfortified borders, free movement of people as well as common definitions of internal and external threats; hence, security means prosperity, stability and a common destiny rather than the protection of borders against military threats – see Moustakis and German (2009, p. 6).

tional system is made up of ideas rather than material forces. They maintain that structures of human association are primarily determined by shared ideas rather than by material forces, and that the identities and interests of actors are constructed by shared ideas rather than bestowed by nature. And while the former represents an idealist approach and in its emphasis on the sharing of ideas is social, the latter is a holistic or structuralist approach given its emphasis on emergent powers of social structures (Wendt, 1999, p. 1; Wendt, 1995, pp. 71–81).

Constructivism assumes that the *milieu* in which actors operate is primarily social rather than material, and this is the reference point for understanding the ways in which actors' interests and identities are conceptualised with language as a tool for shaping social reality alongside other ideational factors, such as norms, rules, and decision-making procedures (Skolimowska, 2015a, p. 111). Constructivists assume that norms, values, and principles shaped by European integration can influence (or even change) the behaviour and identity of participants, while pointing to processes such as socialisation, social learning, loyalty transfer, the redefinition of national interests and the shaping of participants' identities, norms, values, and interests (Ibidem, p. 111). And it is also the constructivists who introduced the concept of the security community into analyses of the EU's common foreign and security policy, where, by prioritising the establishment of peaceful relations, war is no longer seen as a tool for settling differences (Ibidem, p. 127).[2] To sum up, the constructivist turn entails a perception of international relations as a social and political space in which, alongside states' interests, the common good, justice, peace, good governance, etc. are equally important factors; and what is more, within this space issues of morality and ethics once again play an important role, as does the endeavour to define and interpret international norms (Skolimowska, 2015b, p. 38).

The notion of peaceful change so distinctive to the Deutschian concept, achievable through the institutionalisation of mutual identification, transnational values, intersubjective understanding, and shared identities, comes closest to the constructivist approach, which recognises the importance of knowledge in the transformation of international structures and security policy, and thus is the most serious attempt to gauge how the in-

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[2] Such a community must meet the following criteria: value system compliance, common lifestyle, expectations of strengthened ties or economic gains, a significant increase in administrative and political possibilities, social communication channels, people's mobility, and diversity of contacts. Charles Taylor adds to this list mutual responsiveness, the capabilities of core areas and a broadening of the elites, as well as the reluctance to wage fratricidal war, an outside military threat, and ethnic or linguistic assimilation, see Taylor (2020, p. 24).

ternational community can shape security policy and create conditions for lasting peace (Adler, Barnett, 1998c, p. 59). On the other hand, the concept of the security community shares two basic assumptions with constructivist theory, namely that the key structures in the state system are intersubjective rather than material and state identities and interests are largely based on social structures rather than grafted exogenously on to the system by human nature or domestic politics (Acharya, 1998, p. 201).

As for the EU, conceptualising this entity on the basis of the assumptions of constructivist theory seems justified, given both its materialistic features, e.g., a clearly defined territory where EU law is applied and prevails in national legal orders and its ideational underpinnings, such as ideas, norms, sense of community, common practices, common identity, solidarity, and trust. And as S. Koschut has observed, it is within the constructivist approach that the notion of a security community lies, since ensuring "dependable expectations of peaceful change" requires lasting norms and identities that are capable of transforming states' behaviour from self-help to trust-building (Koschut, op. cit., p. 525), a goal which has been achieved within European integration processes.

The Security Community According to Karl W. Deutsch

In their main research, Karl W. Deutsch and his collaborators define a security community as one whose members do not engage in physical conflict but instead settle their differences in other ways.[3] Deutsch distinguishes between two types of security community, namely the *amalgamated* and *pluralistic*. The former emerges when two or more independent units merge formally into a larger entity with a common government established as a result of amalgamation, whereas the latter entails the continued legal independence of separate governments (*Introduction*, 1957, p. 6). In a pluralistic security community, states comply with core values derived from common institutions and are char-

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[3] "A security-community, therefore, is one in which there is real assurance that the members of that community will not fight each other physically but will settle their disputes in some other way", see *Introduction* (1957, p. 5). In their definition of the term, the constructivists Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett put the stress on ideational rather than material issues, contending that a community is characterised by shared identities, values and meanings, multifaceted and direct relations, and reciprocity as an expression of long-term interests, see Adler and Barnett (1998a, p. 31). Some authors, relying on empirical research, question some of these assumptions, especially shared values, raising instead the importance of trust and tolerance, see Tusicisny (2007, pp. 425–449).

acterised by mutual responsiveness, a sense of *we-ness* and expectations of peaceful change (Adler, Barnett, 1998b, pp. 6–7). And even if the states building a security community are still sovereign in a formal-legalistic sense, their sovereignty, authority, and legitimacy depend on the security community (Adler, Barnett, 1998c, p. 36). Another issue is that both solutions require some level – albeit to varying degrees – of integration within the community (Moustakis, German, 2009, p. 5) and thus some kind of organisation at the international level (*Introduction*, op. cit., p. 6).

Deutsch's pluralistic approach is based on the assumption that communication is the cement of social groups *in genere* and political communities *in specie*, making it possible for a group to think, see, and act together. Communication and transaction flows are not only a way of attracting attention, but also a source of shared identity. Thanks to transactions such as trade, migration, tourism, cultural and educational exchanges, and the use of communication facilities, a social fabric is built not only out of elites but also the masses, thereby instilling a sense of community based on demonstrations of mutual sympathy and loyalty, we-feeling, trust and mutual attention, identity in terms of self-image and interests and mutually successful predictions of behaviour – in short, a dynamic process of mutual attention, communication, and the perception of needs and responsiveness in the decision-making process (Adler, Barnett, 1998b, p. 7).[4]

As has already been pointed out, security communities can emerge either through amalgamation or pluralism. An amalgamated community may be federal or unitary, but either way it will have one central, supreme decision-making centre. In turn, a pluralistic community preserves the sovereignty of states, while promoting the integration of people. In other words, it involves a common sense of identity with institutions and practices strong and widespread enough to assure expectations of peaceful change. And while the creation of such communities makes war between states highly unlikely, it is not impossible (Taylor, 2020, pp. 23–24).

If we accept that the primary goal of integration is not only to preserve peace[5] but to acquire greater power for general or specific purposes, or a common identity, then an amalgamated security community with a com-

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[4] See also Deutsch et al. (1957, p. 36), Peltonen (2014, pp. 475–494) and Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff Jr (1971, pp. 284–287).

[5] Karl Deutsch distinguished four main goals of integration, namely: maintaining peace, attaining greater multi-purpose capabilities, accomplishing specific tasks, and gaining a new self-image and role identity, see Deutsch (1978, p. 271).

mon government would be the preferred solution; on the other hand, if the main goal is peace, then the desired approach would be an easier-to-achieve pluralistic security community (Deutsch, 1978, p. 272).[6] In other words, a pluralistic security community would suffice when the keeping of peace between separate entities is the main political goal, and if the goal is more ambitious, i.e., not only to maintain peace but also to act as one unit (a political community), then the striving for an amalgamated security community would be advisable as a superior solution (*Main findings*, 1957, p. 31). And even if an amalgamated security community is more risky for whatever reason, it would still be more attractive and desirable than any other alternative. For if it is successful, it will not only maintain peace, but also provide a source of greater strength as well as a stronger sense of identity and reassurance for both the elites and masses; and although this is a much more desirable goal, it will be, like most better solutions, more difficult to achieve and sustain (Deutsch, op. cit., p. 273).

By defining a security community as "a group of people which has become integrated", Deutsch did not limit himself to an analysis of inter-state relations but instead took an individual-societal and a bottom-up approach. What is more, he never thought of international relations as being limited to interactions between states, but he rather adopted a cybernetic approach that focused on transactions between individuals, groups, and societies.

Unlike Deutsch, who claims that states can be embedded in a set of social relations understood as a community whose fabric can generate expectations of a peaceful change, other theories of international relations employ the language of force or refer to institutions whose purpose is to pursue and maintain peace (Adler, Barnett, 1998b, p. 6). And while most international relations theories refer to material forces and utilise the language of power and a rather superficial concept of society, Deutsch relies on shared knowledge, ideational forces, and a dense normative environment (Ibidem, p. 8). What is more, contrary to other integration theories, especially neofunctionalism, Deutsch's theory makes it possible to define the end product of unification processes (Puchala, 1981, p. 156).

Europe and the Issue of Security

Security has always played a central role in European history. Lasting peace and security were the pivotal ideas that guided the founders of the Communities in the 1950s. According to O. Wæver, Europe can be thought of as a security community, a community defied in terms of

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[6] Although less demanding, pluralism is the most promising means of eliminating warfare by fostering consultation, communication, and cooperation.

the absence of war, or, to use the language of Karl Deutsch, as a non-war community, which has been achieved not by setting up common security structures, but rather through the processes of securitisation, desecuritisation, and resecuritisation (Wæver, 1998, p. 69).

In the post-war period, such issues as the Soviet military threat, the political menace of communism, the economy, the rebuilding of post-war Europe, the German question, the need to "anchor" Germany in Europe, as well as the prioritising of integration over war, were already the subject of securitisation in Europe (Ibidem, pp. 81–83). Later, in 1960–1985, when thinking on European security was dominated by neo-functionalism and Gaullism, and when the sense of an immediate threat was already beginning to fade, security issues tended to be absorbed within the doctrine of deterrence as Europe entered a period of desecuritisation. Furthermore, unlike during the early post-war period, when peace-keeping arguments predominated, efforts focused on making concrete advances in various areas. Although the neofunctionalists realised the importance of security issues, this time strategy underwent a process of desecuritisation (Ibidem, pp. 84–87). From the mid-1980s to the early 1990s, European integration entered a new phase and security arguments once again began to take centre stage, partly fuelled by the dangers posed by East-West confrontation resulting from uncontrolled détente as well as by Europe's declining share of the global economic market, but also by new issues that emerged in the post-1989 security debate, such as environmental protection, ethnic conflict, organised crime, and terrorism (Ibidem, pp. 87–88). In turn, the dominant themes in European security identity after 1992 were integration and fragmentation, which manifested themselves in the anti-EU discourse promoted by anti-establishment movements which called for the defence of (national) identity. Integration defends itself because the alternative is fragmentation, a process which risks destroying the European project and ruling out any possibility of a united Europe for a long time; hence, integration has become a reference point in European security rhetoric, one which, to an ever-greater degree, relies on the security argument to avoid fragmentation (Ibidem, pp. 89–91). And today, given the recent spate of crises affecting the continent (economic, financial, migration and refugee crises, the global pandemic and Brexit) together with the threat of terrorism and war, we are still in the resecuritisation phase, which manifests itself in the form of restrictions, however justified, imposed on the population with the aim of combating terrorism, illegal border crossings, and public health emergencies. And as one may notice, the non-military dimensions of security (economic, financial, health, medical, environmental, cyber, etc.) have come to the fore, which, however,

does not mean that the traditional security threats have ceased to exist. Indeed, nothing could be further from the truth, as military security is still an issue and even more so than in the past.[7]

Hence, it is evident that the very existence of the EU (earlier, the Communities) is bound up with issues of security. From the very beginning, efforts were made to make European countries so interdependent that war would become unthinkable, thereby laying the foundations for lasting peace. Because it is not a military alliance, the EU has focused on soft security issues, promoting national economies and democratic societies rather than aiming to build military power (hence, the commonly used phrase "the EU as a civilian power"). This does not mean, however, that Europe has abandoned the goal of developing its own military capabilities and defence identity, as evidenced by attempts, albeit unsuccessful, to establish a European Defence Community and European Political Community. The importance attached to security was reflected, *inter alia*, in the so-called pillar structure of the treaties. Justice and home affairs [the area of freedom, security, and justice under the Treaty of Lisbon (title 5 TFUE)] focused on internal security (human rights, police and judicial cooperation in the fight against crime, drug and people trafficking, and terrorism) while the EU's common foreign and security policy [the common foreign and security policy, and the common security and defence policy under the Lisbon Treaty (title V TUE)], an institutionalised form of intergovernmental cooperation, focused on external security. In particular, the EU's security and defence policy transformed it from a civilian to – as some wish to call it – a military organisation (Moustakis, German, op. cit., pp. 17–18).[8]

As has already been mentioned, the EU is a pluralistic security community that has developed through non-military security channels, i.e., through economic and political cooperation. From the 1950s onwards, firstly the then European Communities and later the EU have engaged in – to use the words of F. Moustakis and T. German – a non-security response to specific security issues, projecting a specific security culture and identity that differs from territorial or collective defence needs and objectives, and encouraging soft, civilian security measures such as: reconciliation, reforms, constructive dialogue, economic incentives, soft governance, common security, and non-military responses (Ibidem, pp. 18–19). In turn, in the post-cold war period, in the face of new challenges and threats, the EU securitised such issues as: migration, ethnic conflict and

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[7] It is worth emphasising the changing nature of military-type threats related to new strategies and techniques of combating them and determined by such phenomena as hybrid wars or new means of the battlefield using drones or other unmanned vehicles.

[8] See also Gambles (1995).

terrorism, and somewhat later other security concerns were identified, including poverty, open borders, interconnected infrastructure, competition for natural resources, energy dependency, organised crime and maritime piracy (Ibidem, pp. 18–19).[9] Moreover, according to Moustakis and German, the EU promotes a broad understanding of security that ranges from the security of the individual, society, and nation towards the security of Member States. It is distinguished by its normative and moral approach in that it promotes peace, human rights and democratic ideals, and forms part of a broader European security framework along with the NATO and the OSCE, in which the EU represents economic and political security, while the NATO is responsible for collective defence and military security (Ibidem, pp. 19–20).

As for the recent crisis, namely that triggered by the global pandemic, the question arises of what the future holds for European economic, monetary and political union; can the EU ensure economic, financial, energy, environmental, social, medical, cyber, information, military and political security? And what are the prospects for European solidarity, identity, we-feeling, and a sense of belonging to a community? And is it still legitimate to claim that the EU meets the criteria of a security community when states are retreating towards national positions and invoking national interests?

The European Union's Response to the Pandemic

Both the financial, economic, migrant and refugee crises of the past, as well as the more recent emergencies brought on by the global pandemic and Brexit, have had an impact on the functioning of the EU and thus on the way we perceive integration processes and the entire European project.

The SARS-CoV-2 virus, which originated in Wuhan, China, and spread to other countries and continents has become a pandemic with far-reaching consequences. To combat the disease, states resorted to various measures such as isolation, social distancing, the closure of borders and the suspension of international flights, restrictions on the transport of goods and economic activity, and shutting down of entire economies and proclaiming national lockdowns – measures aimed at protecting people's health and countries from excessive economic costs and even an economic catastro-

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[9] See also General Secretariat of the Council (2003) and (2010) where a number of threats to security were identified, such as terrorism, cybercrime, cross-border crime, violence, natural disasters and those caused by human activity; European External Action Service (2016) where threats such as terrorism, hybrid threats, economic volatility, climate change and energy insecurity were further identified as well as *EU Security Union Strategy: connecting the dots in a new security ecosystem* (Communication, 2020d).

phe, given the low capacity of national health systems, weak social security schemes, and already heavily indebted economies. These measures, however justified, resulted in restrictions on the freedom to conduct economic activities, and even more so in the curtailment of personal liberties. And since national economies are closely interlinked, the question arose of who would be responsible for dealing with such issues? Should it be the individual states themselves, given that health policy falls within their orbit, while the EU can only support, coordinate and supplement states' actions, or, given the impact of the pandemic on the functioning of the common market, should the EU take a more active role, not only because the EU had the means (both legal and financial) to do so, however circumscribed, especially in the field of public health, but also because this was what was expected of the EU by states and societies.

The EU already had at its disposal the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control – an independent agency, which provides scientific advice, assistance, and expertise (Regulation, 2004), as well as an early warning and response system for the prevention and control of diseases (Decision, 1998). The European Commission got involved in joint procurement procedures to ensure advance purchases of medical countermeasures against serious cross-border threats to health in order to eliminate harmful competition over vaccines and medical equipment. It also worked out an exit strategy – the Joint European Roadmap towards lifting COVID-19 containment measures (Joint European Roadmap, 2020), adopted and implemented a regulation establishing export authorisation for personal protective equipment outside the EU (Commission implementing regulation, 2020), granted relief from import duties and VAT exemption on the import of goods needed to combat the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak (Ibidem), set common criteria for legitimate border restrictions (Guidelines, 2020), green lines for protecting health and ensuring the availability of goods and essential services (Communication, 2020a), as well as measures focusing on exit strategies, mainly with regard to social distancing. The Commission also proposed specific measures to mobilise investments in the health care systems of Member States as well as in other sectors by mobilising cash reserves in the European Structural and Investments Funds (Regulation, 2020). It also increased the amount of *de minimis* aid granted by states to enterprises (Communication, 2020b), allowed for the use of domestic funds to ensure access to liquidity and finance, facilitated COVID-19 research and development, supported the construction and upgrading of COVID-19 testing facilities and creating additional manufacturing capacity for products needed to combat the epidemic (Communication, 2020c).

The Commission, along with the Member States, is also working on a common approach to ensuring safe COVID-19 vaccines, coordinating testing strategies and facilitating the supply of protective and medical equipment. As for other measures, states can make use of the Integrated Political Crisis Response mechanism (Council Implementing Decision, 2018), which enables timely coordination and response to crises at the EU level, regardless of whether they originate inside or outside the Union.[10] Equally important are the financial resources the EU has at its disposal and the additional funds it has for the post-crisis reconstruction of Europe, such as the recently agreed-upon instrument – Next Generation EU (Regulation, 2021).

The current crisis has clearly shown that the non-military dimensions of security are more important than ever. In terms of military security, the Lisbon Treaty provides for a common foreign and security policy and common security and defence policy, with appropriate procedures, structures, and institutions,[11] as well as capabilities, although limited, in which the presence of EU institutions is marginal, and cooperation takes place mainly on an intergovernmental basis. On the other hand, when it comes to the non-military dimensions of security, the EU, and the European Commission in particular, has engaged in joint efforts in the areas of health, medicine, the economy, finances, and the law so as to cope effectively with the consequences of the pandemic.

At this point, mention should be made of two recent initiatives, namely the already-mentioned recovery plan for Europe, which allows for the post-pandemic recovery of national economies, and the Conference on the Future of Europe (CoFoE). In the former case, to finance Next Generation EU, the Commission is borrowing on the capital markets, which, in turn, will contribute to capital and banking integration in the EU; and in the latter case, health policy has become an issue of the Conference and voices are being raised to make it a shared competence. The CoFoE will, in all likelihood, have its follow up in the form of an Intergovernmental Conference (preceded or not by the Convention) and will introduce changes into the treaties assigning more tools and hence more competences to EU institutions. Nor should we underestimate Brexit, with all its consequences for the common market *in specie* and the European project *in genere*. Hence the efforts to review and reform the founding treaties so that the EU has the tools it needs and can use in crisis situations.

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[10] The said mechanism was activated on the 28th of February 2020 by Croatia.

[11] E.g., the European Defence Agency (EDA), the EU Military Staff (EUMS), the EU Military Committee (EUMC), Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), the European External Action Service (EEAS).

The European Union as a Security Community

Karl Deutsch defined a security community as a group of people who have achieved such a degree of integration that they do not need to resort to physical violence but can settle disputes in other ways. When applying Deutsch's definition to our analysis of the EU as a security community, given all the changes the EU has experienced so far and against the background of the current situation in the region and internationally, a number of issues arise that require closer attention.

The notion that the EU is a security community is a widely held belief. Assuming that this is the case, what kind of community is it? The concept of a pluralistic security community was coined in the 1950s, when we were still dealing with European Communities, regional economic organisations, and with decision-making procedures that allowed Member States to control legislative outcomes.[12] Hence, it was states, and not the Community itself (the European Economic Community), which decided on legal acts, and even if they were Community acts and states only acted as agents of the Community (via the institutions), the claim that there was a single decision-making centre is difficult to sustain. This is all the more so as the then Community had narrow competences, largely shared with the Member States, and lacked the principles that made Community law (nowadays EU law) what it is today. And now, after all the changes that the Communities have undergone (legal, political, economic), and with the EU now enjoying legal personality (article 47 TUE) and exercising authority over such areas of high politics as justice and home affairs and foreign, security and defence policy, all this leads to the conclusion that the EU has evolved beyond a pluralistic community towards something bordering on an amalgamated community.[13] The EU is not a state, but an international organisation of a special kind, based on treaties of public in-

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[12] The situation was different in the case of the European Coal and Steel Community, as it was the European Commission (the High Authority) that was responsible for enacting legal acts.

[13] Similarly, Ole Wæver claims that given the way security is provided in Europe, the EU presents itself as an emerging regional polity rather than a set of universal norms assigning a place to individual states, and for these reasons alone such a security community does not represent a pluralistic security community, but rather an in-between form bordering on amalgamation, see Wæver (1998, p. 71). This arrangement, which is referred to as an intermediate/in-between solution, is the closest to a pluralistic security community tightly coupled (a post-sovereign system, equipped with common, supranational, and transnational institutions, and some kind of a collective security system), according to Wæver's division into loosely and tightly coupled pluralistic security communities. See Adler and Barnett (1996, p. 73).

ternational law, whose masters are states – high contracting parties. This, however, does not change the fact that now, after all the treaty changes, there is hardly any area that, to a greater or lesser extent, does not fall within the ambit of EU competence.[14]

Another issue is the current understanding of security itself. Should the concept of security refer to security in the literal meaning of the word, or should it rather relate to others, i.e., non-military dimensions of security, such as: economic, social, medical, health, cyber, environmental, etc.?[15] In post-war Europe, security, especially from a military, territorial, and political perspective, played a key role. Today, however, welfare and prosperity, well-being, civil rights and liberties, social security, among many others, have come to the fore. Thus, as our perception and understanding of power evolves, so the locus of security has also changed. In other words, we can observe a shift from the state to the individual, and from the sovereignty and independence of the state to the security, integrity and identity of the individual. And once we adopt such a broadly understood notion of security, the question arises of who is to provide this security? Should it be the state, because, traditionally, the obligation to ensure security lay with a state, or should it be the EU, as contemporary threats are not confined to national borders, but are transnational, if not indeed global, such as the recent communicable diseases causing worldwide pandemics.

As for the security community, it is not simply about people not resorting to physical violence, or more specifically resorting to military means to settle disputes, but also, and perhaps most of all, that peoples, societies, and individuals are integrated so that there is mutual trust and solidarity, a sense of "we-ness" and responsibility for a common future. Hence, it is about a community in which security broadly understood is ensured.[16]

With regard to the current crisis, it has shown that public health is highly securitised, and what is more, this is not just a national issue. And

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[14] It was in the 1990s when Koen Lenaerts wrote: "there simply is no nucleus of sovereignty that the Member States can invoke, as such, against the Community", Lenaerts (1990, p. 220).

[15] Emanuel Adler and Michael Barnett point out that as the meaning and purpose of power begins to encompass the ability of a community to defend its values and expectations of proper behaviour against an external threat and to attract new states with ideas that convey a sense of national security and material progress, so too the meaning and purpose of security also begins to change, see Adler and Barnett (1998a, p. 4).

[16] We can distinguish between two parallel processes, namely the deepening and the widening of security. The latter refers to the broadening of our understanding of the security concept to include non-military security aspects, i.e., it is about securing objects (space, domain, etc.), while he former relates to entities that provide security, i.e., it is about security subjects (actors). See also Moustakis (2009, pp. 12–13).

although health matters can be categorised as complementary EU competences, and as a consequence states are primarily responsible for them, the EU has stepped in. It needs to be said that a similar scenario played out during earlier economic, financial, migration, and refugee crises, but in the latter case, in particular, the effects were much less severe. Each crisis has shown that hardly any matter can be classified as national, for either they are transnational by nature, or given spill-over effects, countermeasures need to be taken at the EU level, if not even at the global level, to be effective. The EU has proved that despite difficulties and tensions, it can deal with the pandemic and its consequences to guarantee the safety of European citizens. Moreover, despite Brexit and the challenges the latter posed for the European project, it still remains a community.[17] The current crisis does not, strictly speaking, threaten the EU as a security community, as it does not herald an intra-European war, but rather undermines EU cohesion, both in terms of territory and image, as in the case of Brexit, and identity, when it comes to extreme-right movements questioning liberal democracy and its values, primarily the welfare and well-being of citizens.

Conclusions

Security was a matter of special concern for both the European Communities in the past, and the EU today, and it remains a fundamental value underpinning the European project. Thanks to the progress achieved in integration, the EU, originally designed as a non-war community, has evolved into a fully-fledged security community. Karl Deutsch coined the very concept of security community, which was essentially understood to mean a non-war (non-aggressive) community, in which states did not resort to war as an instrument of dispute settlement. And Europe, as it evolved from a non-war community into a non-military (and military) security community, achieved a much more solid basis by eliminating the most dangerous of mechanisms, i.e., deep-seated fears and actions motivated by security threats (Wæver, op. cit., p. 104).[18]

Although it has been criticised for its Eurocentrism, Deutsch's concept of security community does not easily apply to today's Europe. But

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[17] Regardless of the economic and social consequences of Brexit, its destructive impact on the EU and UK should be assessed in the context of the security community. Although Brexit does not invalidate NATO's commitments, it does complicate them, which, in turn, will necessitate redefining the framework for defence cooperation in Europe. One thing is certain, Brexit will not help strengthen the security community.

[18] See also Konopacki (1998, p. 37) where after Karl Deutsch he writes about war as a social institution.

despite criticism and objections, from which no theory is free, the security community has proved to be an inspiring concept, for it has contributed to a rethinking of European politics and given rise to many reflections on the complex issue of European integration, where the rejection of war as a means of settling disputes corresponds to the transformation of security itself. This transformation also entails an eclipse of the central position of the state in favour of non-state entities.

The European project has gone through a number of complex processes, beginning with post-war securitisation, and, later, state-based desecuritisation to reach its current state of post-sovereign non-military re-securitisation. And as Ole Wæver observes, without a central concept of war, security becomes much more complex, and identities built on this type of security pose a real obstacle not only to security analysis, but also to international relations theory, which is poorly equipped to deal with structured thinking about post-sovereign politics (Ibidem, pp. 105–106). However, from the very beginning the Communities (and later the EU) also posed a cognitive challenge to both the theory of international relations and political theory. And the very concept of security community, still relevant and even gaining in importance, needs to be reconsidered in light of the new, rapidly changing situation in Europe and the world.

The concept of the security community offers a new perspective on the problems of international security and attempts to establish rules and regulations as well as institutional solutions that would ensure peace between nations. Compared to the principles of balance of power and collective security, the concept of security community, derived from the Deutschian communication theory, is multifaceted and goes beyond military strategy and international law to propose a new approach to conflict and its peaceful resolution.

Today, the international environment contrasts significantly with the one shaped by the Cold War, which conditioned thinking in terms of security communities. However, today's EU also differs from the first Communities, which, according to Deutsch, already constituted a *pluralistic security community*. And now, with all the changes that have taken place both in the Communities (and later in the EU) and in the international *milieu*, and the new challenges and crises that followed, along with the transformation of the very concept of security, it is still legitimate to claim that the EU is a security community, wherein it presents an intermediate (halfway-house) solution between a pluralistic and amalgamated community, since it goes beyond a classical international organisation, but at the same time is not yet a supranational state, and perhaps never will be. And regarding actions to counteract the effects of the pandemic, there is always a con-

cern that something more or better could be done; however, in the case of the EU, we have to bear in mind that it is not a state and operates within enumerated competences, hence the actions it took under circumscribed competences allow the conclusion that it has stood the test of the time.

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