



# Maastricht University

CONFERENCE

## “The Making of European Security Policy: Challenges for the Future”



21 March 2019

UM Brussels Campus  
Room “Belle Etage”

### Conference Report

Written by Sabina Lange

This one-day conference was planned in anticipation of a publication entitled *The making of European Security Policy: Challenges for the Future*. It was organized by a team of scholars who work at Maastricht University’s (UM) Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASoS), its Faculty of Science and Engineering (FSE) and the European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA). Maastricht Working on Europe contributed to the budget with a grant of €2,000.

The conference and subsequent book mark the academic legacy of the late Professor Simon Duke, a respected UM and EIPA colleague. The event brought together chapters authored by a group of specialists, who were close collaborators of this respected scholar, colleague and friend.

The conference hosted thirty-five academics, officials and diplomats from Member States and from the European External Action Service (EEAS).

The event was divided in three sessions, each organized around one sub-field of Simon Duke’s research interests; namely, the institutional architecture of European security, European public diplomacy and transatlantic relations.

In his introductory remarks, Prof. Thomas Christiansen (Maastricht University) reflected on Simon’s broad academic legacy, recalling his clear research focus and his ability to dive into

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numerous sub-fields related to European foreign and security policy. Prof. Christiansen highlighted Simon's ability to deliver leading, innovative and meticulously executed research over the last two decades while working as a Professor at EIPA, where his tasks were many. Indeed, at EIPA, Simon trained and organized seminars for officials and diplomats on a vast number of subjects related to security and foreign policy. Simon capitalized on his exposure to practitioners in his writing and his reflection on policy (with his ear to the ground, so to speak). However, he always remained at a safe distance, with the healthy critical stance of an academic. Simon was not only a prolific writer and an exceptionally good speaker; he was also a generous colleague and mentor to numerous young scholars.

The first session, on the institutional architecture of European security, captured the multilateral and the bilateral dimensions of the EU's entanglement in European security. Sabina Lange (Senior Lecturer, EIPA) chaired the panel on which Dr. Hanna Ojanen (Adjunct Professor, University of Helsinki) and Dr. Gergana Noutcheva (Associate Professor, Maastricht University) presented their draft chapters on the relations between the EU and other international actors. Dr. Ojanen focused on the EU's relations to international organisations, in particular NATO, while Dr. Noutcheva focused on the EU's eastern neighborhood. Dr. Ojanen argued that, though often overlooked, the EU's participation in other organisations has helped it define its own actorness. At the same time, the EU's participation also shaped the other organisations. In particular, the EU's relationship to NATO has long been debated in academia and among policy-makers. At the forefront of this debate is the concept of autonomy (the EU's autonomy concerning NATO; the EU's autonomy concerning its own member states; and how autonomy differs from independence).

Dr. Noutcheva discussed how the EU accidentally entered the geo-political game on the continent via a fundamental Russian misunderstanding of the EU's strategic intentions. Moreover, the EU's technocratic approach in the Eastern neighborhood reflects its competence and its instruments while at the same time reveals the limits of its creative 'bureaucracy'. An analyses through a norm contestation lens, reveals that geo-political tensions between Europe/the EU and Russia are more about ideas than about (material) power.

In the second session, Dr. Jan Melissen (Professor, Leiden University), was the Chair. In his opening remarks, Professor Melissen recalled Simon's originality, in particular, his contribution to investigating the EU's public diplomacy. By way of summing up Simon's contribution to the field of EU public diplomacy, Professor Melissen commented, 'I always had the feeling that Simon was bigger than the organization he was working for'. In her presentation, Dr. Mai'a Cross (Professor, Northeastern University) highlighted Simon's early contestation of the role of civil society in the EU's public diplomacy. She focused on the tension between Infopolitik vs the

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EU's long-term strategy to build image resilience. Professor Cross analysed the potential of the 2016 Joint Communication: Towards an EU strategy for international cultural relations to contribute to the EU's image resilience. Andrew Sherriff (Head of Programme, ECDPM), in his presentation, discussed the relationship between public diplomacy, development cooperation and security policy in the EU's approach to conflict prevention and peace building. His point of departure was Simon Duke's efforts to challenge and engage publics in Europe on these issues. One of the main conclusions was that despite commitments to an integrated/comprehensive approach, different EU policy communities (and institutions) in the security, development and public diplomacy spheres tend to approach conflict prevention and peacebuilding from their own perspectives.

The final panel, introduced and chaired by Dr. Roberta Haar (Professor, Maastricht University), focused on transatlantic relations. Dr. Mike Smith (Professor, University of Warwick) investigated the dichotomy of multilateralism and transactionalism through the characteristics of the EU and the U.S.' contrasting diplomacies. In fact, the two actors pursue opposite models of diplomacy, which leads to tensions. Dr. Emil Kirchner (Professor, University of Essex) introduced China as a player in transatlantic relations. He analysed the degree to which U.S. and EU positions converge or diverge with regard to China. Additionally, Professor Kirchner examined how China's actions and its interactions with either the EU or the U.S., in turn, affect transatlantic relations. Dr. Sven Biscop's contribution to the panel built upon the question of strategic autonomy, which was introduced in the first session. He discussed the meaning of the EU's strategic autonomy and in what instances this autonomy should be exercised. The audience joined in a final debate on the options including the 'responsibility to protect', as regards to the EU's neighborhood and the EU's role in territorial defense.

In her closing comments, Prof. Sophie Vanhoonacker (Maastricht University) again reflected upon Simon Duke's broad academic legacy. She discussed his personal attributes as a scholar and a friend. Finally, she indicated that the book project continues with the view to finalizing the manuscript by September 2019, a year after Simon's untimely passing.

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