

**NOTA DE LA COORDINADORA / COORDINATOR'S NOTE****Clara Portela**¹*Singapore Management University*

The EU published its first Strategy against the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) in December 2003, in combination with the European Security Strategy (ESS). Almost a decade on, where does the EU stand? Following the change of leadership in the US, the Obama administration attempted to provide an impetus to nuclear disarmament with “Global Zero”. What impact did this initiative have on the European arms control scene? How has Europe reacted to unfolding WMD crises? This special issue features a selection of papers around the topic of Europe and WMD that offer some key insights into how this organisation has evolved in the field of non-proliferation and locates this evolution in the current global context.

In the opening article, Megan Dee evaluates the role of the EU in NPT negotiations. The EU has a history in this forum, having co-ordinated positions at NPT Review Conferences since the 1995, when it conducted a celebrated campaign in support of indefinite extension. It also appeared promising on account of its multilateral nature and vocation, very much highlighted in the ESS. However, according to Megan Dee, EU's performance is ultimately hampered by its own lack of ambition, as well as by the other groups which fulfil the consensus-building role the EU aspires to. In other words, it has been outperformed by groups with better defined and less status-quo oriented visions. The second article by Oliver Meier analyses an issue area that has remained conspicuously absent from current accounts of the EU's action in this field, its policies in various arms control regimes, with refreshing and sometimes unexpected results. Oliver Meier concludes that, despite the EU's favourable position in the export control regimes, members' action in these informal fora remains uncoordinated. The following article by Milagros Álvarez comparing the non-proliferation strategies of the EU and the US demonstrates that, despite the hopes instilled by Obama's nuclear disarmament impetus, US action in the field remains conservative in several respects. Her findings are rather disappointing: Transatlantic collaboration prospers in the consolidation of informal non-proliferation tools. Her contribution also helps us contextualising nuclear non-proliferation in the broader field of WMD: selective progress in the non-proliferation is matched by stagnation in the biological and chemical domain. Anne Finger follows up exploring European options for the implementation of a key initiative in the field, Obama's “Global Zero”, a highlight which has so far received less resolute support from the EU than one would expect following the adoption of the EU's WMD strategy. In the face

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of “Global Zero’s” fading momentum, Anne Finger suggests ways forward for reviving and facilitating progress towards nuclear elimination in Europe.

A second set of articles examines significant issues surrounding the EU and WMD proliferation. Benjamin Kienzle looks at the EU’s policies towards Iran in an effort to explore the problems created by the multiplicity of norms promoted in EU foreign policy. He shows that in the EU’s Iran policy, non-proliferation was eventually privileged over human rights objectives. In the absence of pre-established priorities among norms, the EU faces a dilemma in its external norm promotion; namely, it might have to prioritise among competing norms, or else pursue both of them at the expense of coherence. Two subsequent contributions analyse key issues determining the non-proliferation context in which the EU operates: Belén Lara compares and assesses European reactions to the US plans to deploy a Missile Defence system, while Natividad Fernández reviews the sometimes misrepresented, or simply misunderstood, non-proliferation policies of the Russian Federation. Finally, Fernando Borredá explores the role of the EU in the field of chemical weapons by applying most the straightforward standards, i.e., by assessing the relevance of EU action to the main challenges currently faced by the chemical weapons regime.

While the picture that emerges from this compilation of articles points to a suboptimal performance, it does not necessarily augur badly for the future of the EU as a non-proliferation actor. Those articles evaluating the EU’s track record reveal a gradual improvement in EU coordination, such as in the NPT framework. Others deal with arenas where the EU has not seriously contemplated closer co-ordination, as exemplified, to all appearances, in the export control regime. And granted, some contributions discuss issue areas which European countries prefer not to address through the EU, such as Missile Defence. The benefits of the emerging literature to which the present issue draws attention is that it shows a growing interest in the policies of the EU in the field, pointing to current deficiencies and sometimes even suggesting avenues for improvement. Nonetheless, the EU is clearly “not yet there”. In order to achieve relevance in the non-proliferation domain, the EU still requires a breakthrough.

This special issue shows that a community of researchers working on this topic has emerged over the past few years, both in Spain and abroad. The team of authors of this issue comprises scholars spanning from established experts in the field of arms control to post-doctoral and even a pre-doctoral researcher awaiting defence. Atypically in the field of security policy, the selection “assembled” for this collective endeavour features a higher number of female than male scholars!

My thanks go, first and foremost, to the contributing authors for their enthusiasm, dedication and patience, and for making this special issue possible. I would like to thank Prof Antonio Marquina, UNISCI’s chief editor, as well as Prof Vicente Garrido and my friend and colleague Dr Ursula Jasper for their kind support in this project. Needless to say, I remain indebted to the anonymous reviewers for their help – too bad I need to silence their names!