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MASTER'S THESIS

**A QUEST FOR COLLECTIVE DECISION: THE
EUROPEAN UNION'S COMMON FOREIGN
AND SECURITY POLICY FROM CRIMEA TO
THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN**

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ABSTRACT

A QUEST FOR COLLECTIVE DECISION: THE EUROPEAN UNION'S COMMON FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY FROM CRIMEA TO THE EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN

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This thesis seeks to analyse member states' behaviour and to explain the different German, French, and British policies in the foreign policy formulation during the Crimea and the Eastern Mediterranean crises. Drawing on rationalist and constructivist frameworks, it discerns how the Big Three's foreign policy preferences affected the EU's response. The Big Three's convergence of strategies is particularly vital to pursue a collective response within the EU due to other member states keen to follow them. By applying the Most Similar System Design, this study aims to elucidate the divergence and convergence among the major European powers – namely France, Germany and the United Kingdom. The policy formation of the Big Three has analysed via three main independent variables based on European integration theories; neofunctionalism, liberal intergovernmentalism and social constructivism. The EU's ability to take a joint decision has considered a dependent variable. The initial failure of the EU to generate a collective response in the Crimea and the Eastern Mediterranean crises represented the latest division within the EU due to the member states' tendency to prioritize their self-interest. By adducing official declarations of the EU, discourses of the head of states or governments, foreign ministers, and government representatives, it concludes that collective decision is anchored in the convergence of interests and cost-benefit analysis of the Big Three.

Keywords: Common Foreign and Security Policy, the Big Three, neofunctionalism, liberal intergovernmentalism, social constructivism, Crimea, the Eastern Mediterranean.

ÖZ

ORTAK KARAR ARAYIŞI: KIRIM'DAN DOĞU AKDENİZ'E AVRUPA BİRLİĞİ'NİN ORTAK DIŞ VE GÜVENLİK POLİTİKASI

Seyyide Sena TÜRKDOĞAN

Bu tez, üye devletlerin davranışlarını analiz ederek Kırım ve Doğu Akdeniz krizleri sırasında dış politika formülasyonunda farklı Alman, Fransız ve İngiliz politikalarını açıklamayı amaçlamaktadır. Akılcı ve yapılandırmacı çerçevelere dayanarak, Üç Büyük'ün dış politika tercihlerinin Avrupa Birliği'nin tepkisini nasıl etkilediğini ayırt etmektedir. Üç Büyük'ün stratejilerinin yakınsaması, diğer üye devletlerin onları takip etmeye yatkın olması nedeniyle, Avrupa Birliği içinde ortak bir tepkiyi sürdürmek için özellikle hayati önem taşımaktadır. Bu çalışma, Olabildiğince Benzer Sistemler Tasarımı'nı uygulayarak, başlıca Avrupa güçleri – diğer bir deyişle Fransa, Almanya ve Birleşik Krallık – arasındaki ayrışma ve yakınlaşmayı aydınlatmayı amaçlamaktadır. Üç Büyük'ün politika oluşumu, Avrupa entegrasyon teorilerine dayanan üç ana bağımsız değişken aracılığıyla analiz edilmiştir; neoişlevselcilik, liberal hükümetlerarasıcılık ve sosyal yapılandırmacılık. Avrupa Birliği'nin ortak karar alma kabiliyeti bağımlı bir değişken olarak değerlendirilmiştir. Avrupa Birliği'nin Kırım ve Doğu Akdeniz krizlerinde başlangıçta toplu bir yanıt oluşturmadaki başarısızlığı, üye devletlerin kendi çıkarlarına öncelik verme eğilimleri nedeniyle Avrupa Birliği içindeki son bölünmeyi temsil etmiştir. Avrupa Birliği resmi deklarasyonlarını, devlet veya hükümet başkanlarının, dışişleri bakanlarının ve hükümet temsilcilerinin söylemlerini referans alarak, ortak karara ulaşmada Üç Büyük'ün çıkarlarının yakınlaşmasına ve maliyet-fayda analizinin etkili olduğu sonucuna varmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ortak Dış ve Güvenlik Politikası, Üç Büyük, yeni işlevselcilik, liberal hükümetlerarasıcılık, sosyal yapılandırmacılık, Kırım, Doğu Akdeniz.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CAP	: Common Agricultural Policy
CEEC	: Central and Eastern European Countries
CFSP	: Common Foreign and Security Policy
EAAS	: European External Action Service
EC	: European Communities
ECSC	: European Coal and Steel Community
EDA	: European Defence Agency
EDC	: European Defence Community
EEC	: European Economic Community
EEZ	: Exclusive Economic Zone
EMU	: Economic and Monetary Union
ENI	: Italian Energy Company
EP	: European Parliament
EPC	: European Political Cooperation
EPC	: European Political Cooperation
ESDP	: European Security and Defence Policy
EU	: European Union
EURATOM	: European Atomic Energy Community
HR/VP	: The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice President of the European Commission
IGC	: Intergovernmental Conferences
JHA	: Justice and Home Affairs
LI	: Liberal Intergovernmentalism

MSSD	: Most Similar System Design
NATO	: North Atlantic Treaty Organization
PJCCM	: Police and Judicial Cooperation in Criminal Matters
PSC	: Political and Security Committee
QMV	: Qualified Majority Voting
ROC	: Republic of Cyprus
SEA	: Single European Act
TEU	: Treaty on the European Union
TRNC	: Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus
UK	: United Kingdom
USA	: United States of America
USSR	: Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

INTRODUCTION

The concept of speaking as one voice and implementing common policies in world affairs is as old as the European integration process itself. According to Walter Hallstein¹, one of the main objectives of creating the European Community is to be able to play a prominent role in world affairs; hence, it is crucial to speak and act as one rather than dispersed agents in the international system (1962, p. 79). The European Union (EU) has made less progress in acquiring a substantial external dimension in compared with economic achievements such as the formation of the common market through the introduction of the Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) and the ratification of the single currency (Duquette, 2001, p. 170). The EU's Common Foreign and Security (CFSP), which has taken its roots from the establishment of European Political Cooperation (EPC), has been described as problematic or even absent in the literature considering its ostensibly intergovernmental nature. During the last decades, the actorness of the EU has been criticised due to lack of coherence and effectiveness in responding to the international crises. In his famous article, Christopher Hill has described the ineffectiveness and failure of the EU's CFSP with "capability–expectations gap" because "the Community is not an effective international actor, in terms both of its capacity to produce collective decisions and its impact on events" (1993, p. 306).

The European foreign policy cooperation has often been characterised as the most controversial and "perhaps the most political of all subfields within the EU" (Glarbo, 2001, p. 140). Wolfgang Wagner has underlined that "even small steps towards a common European foreign policy" has received broad public and scholarly attention, and with each international crisis, the EU's CFSP has been tested (2003, p. 20). The crises in the international system have revealed the multifaceted and complex nature of the CFSP and the role of member states in its formation. Although the decision-making process in the foreign policy sphere is essentially based on unanimity, prominent member states within the EU have become a focus due to the intergovernmental nature of the CFSP. Catherine

¹ The first President of the European Commission from 1958 to 1967.

Gegeout (2010) and Christopher Hill (2011) have described France, Germany, and the United Kingdom (UK) as Europe's "Big Three" and prominent foreign policy executives. Catherine Gegeout has explained the functioning of the CFSP both in theory and practice by applying constrained intergovernmentalism theory to three different cases². In her analysis, the selected cases possess major importance to at least one big member state, and she has based its classification of the most powerful states in the EU on economic, political, and military weight (2010, p. 4). On the other hand, Hill has interpreted the leading role of France, Germany, and the UK in foreign policy formation building the regular unofficial meetings on EPC initiatives between foreign ministers (2011, p. 79). In this context, Gegeout draws its analysis on measurable features of the member states, and Hill mainly follows a historical explanation.

The role of the Big Three in foreign policy formulation has drawn the attention of scholars in the literature. Wolfgang Wagner (2003) has focused on Germany, France, and the UK's policies towards the European foreign policy regime by adopting a rationalist approach and analysed the reason behind their diverse positions. Nicholas Wright (2011) has utilised the Europeanisation theory³ to answer the extent to which the national foreign policies of the Big Three have been 'Europeanised' as a consequence of their interaction with CFSP. Similarly, Vivien L. Exartier (2010) has argued that the Big Three influenced the agenda-setting and policy formulation through 'uploading' their domestic preferences on the EU's sanction policy towards China between 1989-2005. Claudia Zanardi's (2010) work is also complementary by applying Europeanisation theory⁴ in the Big Three's approach on China from 2003 to 2018. Carlos Corts Díaz (2012) has provided another case study that focused on the policies of the Big Three⁵ in the

² Catherine Gegeout has utilised the cases of China for presentation to the Geneva Human Rights Commission, the sanction policy against Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY), and the successive agreements between NATO and EU to explain foreign-policy formation.

³ Nicholas Wright has argued that instead of a 'bottom-up' approach based on national projections of policy preferences by Member States, 'uploading' and 'cross-loading' took place whereby the interactions among them occurred both within and without the formal structures.

⁴ Claudia Zanardi has emphasised that Big Three project their policies to the EU in its approach towards China, which is complementary to the Nicholas Wright's analysis.

⁵ Carlos Corts Díaz has utilised idealistic approach to analyse British and French positions and rational choice theory for German position.

Libya crisis, particularly underlining the expectation-capabilities gap of the EU in the post-Lisbon era.

In line with the existing works, the present study seeks to focus on contemporary crises that pose challenges to the EU's CFSP⁶. The reason behind the selection of the Crimea and Eastern Mediterranean cases is two-fold. First, these cases are has determined by the latest crises that occurred in the borders of the European continent. Therefore, they have a direct impact on the EU's security. Second, the contemporary nature of the crises has constituted the agenda of the EU, and the measures are still in effect today. By focusing on two contemporary disputes, this study aims to contribute to the literature by indicating the patterns of divergence and convergence on the German, French and British policies⁷ towards the Crimea and Eastern Mediterranean crises.

Based on Catherine Gegeout's (2010) and Christopher Hill's (2011) arguments, positions of Europe's "Big Three" – France, Germany, and the UK have analysed to reveal their convergences and divergences and their impact on CFSP. The main research question of the present study aims to answer is: "How has the divergence and convergence among the Big Three (France, Germany and the UK) affected the EU's ability to take a joint decision on Crimea and Eastern Mediterranean crises?" Additionally, it aims to answer the following sub-question: "What is the most important factor (i.e., domestic interests, the rule of law, democracy, supranational institutions) influencing the policies of leading states towards sanction regime, which is one of the tools of the CFSP?"

The theoretical objective of the study is to use the dichotomy between rationalism and constructivism to interpret the patterns of behaviours of the prominent member states regarding the EU's CFSP (Moravcsik, 2001). Furthermore, taking the classical debate between neo-functionalism and liberal

⁶ There are various crises that the EU's actorness has been tested in the current world affairs; such as Syria, Libya, Belarus crises or more intangible problems such as refugee issue, climate change and rising populism. In order to narrow the scope and provide an comprehensive work, this thesis has only focused on the Crimea and the Eastern Mediterranean crisis.

⁷ Being aware of other actors and circumstances that affect the Big Three's positions on the Crimean and Eastern Mediterranean crises, such as the USA in Crimea or refugee crisis in the Eastern Mediterranean, the present study has focused the policy outcomes of the Big Three.

intergovernmentalism⁸ one step further, this study utilises social constructivism⁹ to provide an approach that combines both rationalist and constructivist perspectives. The present study aims to contribute to the literature by utilising the defining aspects of both perspectives instead of taking a side in the existing constructivist and rationalist dichotomy. The latest tests of the EU's CFSP, the Crimea conflict between Russia and Ukraine, and the Eastern Mediterranean dispute among Greece, the Republic of Cyprus (ROC), and Turkey create the empirical part of the study, while the European integration theories¹⁰ utilise to reveal their explanatory power. The effect of the Big Three's policies on the EU's CFSP and the consequent effect of the policy outcome on the behaviours of the Big Three constitutes the puzzle of European foreign policy. The present study aims to solve the puzzle of CFSP by revealing the role of the prominent member states on the EU's foreign policy formulation during crisis moments and the ensuing effects on the EU's response to the crisis of Crimea and the Eastern Mediterranean. In this framework, the present study makes a discussion revolving around the following hypothesis;

H1: In line with the social constructivist approach, the European norms and values – such as the rule of law, human rights, democracy, and good neighbourly relations – trump the domestic interests of the Big Three to achieve a joint decision.

H2: In line with neo-functionalism, the EU institutions – such as the European Commission, European External Action Service (EEAS) – and policies play a decisive role in the process of producing a joint decision.

H3: In line with liberal intergovernmentalism, the convergence of interests and cost-benefit analysis of the Big Three lead to a collective decision.

The Most Similar System Design (MSSD) has employed as the methodological approach to illustrate the convergences and divergences among the Big Three. Przeworski and Teune have asserted that “a number of theoretically

⁸ Two predominant schools of European integration involved supranationalism-oriented neofunctionalism and state-centricism-oriented intergovernmentalism.

⁹ Since the 1980's, the main split on the explanation of European integration is between rationalism which describe the process as a result of the conscious member states' behaviour and constructivism which argues the prominent role of norms and common values.

¹⁰ There are various European integration theories such as multi-level governance or institutionalism (rational choice, historical, sociological) which provides assumptions that explain the process from different perspectives. However, this study has aimed to narrow the research area by focusing only on the three theories mentioned.

significant differences will be found among similar systems, and these differences can be used in explanation” (1970, p. 39). By applying the MSSD to Crimea and the Eastern Mediterranean crises, this study aims to provide an explanation of the Big Three’s positions and elucidate the divergences among them. The policy formation of the Big Three has analysed via three main independent variables based on European integration theories of both constructivist and rationalist perspectives, and the EU’s ability to take a joint decision has considered a dependent variable¹¹.

According to Dirk Berg-Schlosser and Gisèle De Meur, the selection of the conditions that are planning to be tested in MSSD must be guided by theoretical criteria, and ideally, the researcher should try to narrow the frame of reference to a few “core” theories (2008, p. 25). Various international relations and European integration theories have aimed to explain the process of European integration that includes multiple layers such as economic, political, cultural, etc. Following this pattern, neo-functionalism, liberal intergovernmentalism, and social constructivism theories have utilised to explain the EU’s CFSP. By doing so, the potential explanatory conditions have attempted to narrow down.

The core notions of each theory have constituted conditions to scrutinise the statements and discourses. The theoretical framework has created a base to analyse the Big Three’s positions, and the pattern of differences among their behaviours has tracked. For each condition, a clear hypothesis has formulated to reveal its connection to the outcome. Despite this study’s attempt to provide a concentric analysis, it is important to underline the theoretical implications. Although countries that are similar in many characteristics have selected for the research, it is not possible to match all relevant control variables to indicate differences among them (Anckar, 2008, p. 390). Therefore, the MSSD approach suffers from a “many variables, small number of cases” dilemma (Lijphart, 1971, p. 685). If the researcher increases the number of conditions to overcome this problem, then the problem of “tendency to individualise” the cases occurs, resulting in difficulty explaining differences (Berg-Schlosser & De Meur, 2008, p. 28). Thus, instead of

¹¹ It is important to underline that this study does not argue that the positions of the Big Three are sufficient to explain the decision-making process regarding the CFSP. Instead, the objective of the present research is to provide an analysis that particularly focus the largest member states, since the foreign policy preferences of these prominent member states constitute a crucial aspect of the EU’s CFSP.

arguing that the determined variables explain the differences precisely, the present study aims to reveal the possible effects of the main variables determined based on a theoretical level.

The first pillar in the MSSD table has indicated the role of European norms and values (such as the rule of law, democracy, human rights). From that perspective, an analyse has conducted in the discourses of the head of state or government, foreign ministers, and other government officials to highlight any presence of an emphasis on norms and values. The second pillar in the MSSD table has demonstrated the importance and central role given to the Brussels-based institutions and agents by the national governments of the Big Three. In this regard, the present research aims to determine whether the national governments of the Big Three have consigned any specific duties to the European Commission or The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HR/VP) of the EU to deal with crisis instead of their national governments. Lastly, the third pillar in the MSSD table has indicated the impact of the Big Three's convergence of interests and cost-benefit analysis in achieving a joint decision. In this perspective, the purpose of the study is to emphasise the impact of the Big Three's domestic interests and interdependency towards Russia in the Crimea crisis and Turkey in the Eastern Mediterranean dispute. According to the results, if any evidence is found, it has demonstrated as a checkmark in the table; if there is no evidence, it has indicated as a cross mark.

Max Weber has defined social science as “a science concerning itself with the interpretative understanding of social action and thereby with a causal explanation of its course and consequences” (1978, p. 4). In this regard, to understand an action, building a causality link between the outcome and preferences is necessary. In the case of CFSP, this study aims to analyse how the Big Three perceived the crises, their domestic preferences, and the obligations they adopted for themselves and the EU regarding the crisis. Furthermore, the convergences and divergences that consequently ensured collective action are under the scope. Therefore, the arguments of the prominent member states regarding crisis have utilised to reveal the basis upon which cohesion and consequent collective action are achieved—later, it has analysed by employing the European integration theories.

The primary sources of the study consist of the discourses and statements from the head of states or governments, foreign ministers, parliamentarians, and government officials. A systematic search¹² has been conducted in the governmental, parliamentary, and foreign ministries' websites of France, Germany, and the UK to collect primary data. Furthermore, the present study has utilised the official documents of the EU (such as treaties, meeting resolutions, press releases, reports, declarations, conclusions, etc.). The secondary materials have derived from newspaper articles, opinion columns, policy papers, and reports.

As an outcome of the scope of the research, this study bears a time limit within itself. Accordingly, the present study has analysed the Crimea crisis initially sparked in 2014 and the Eastern Mediterranean crisis, which escalated in 2018. The divergence and convergence among the Big Three and the EU's ability to act collectively during these crises has served the purpose of the study. Due to the intergovernmental nature of the CFSP, focusing on particular member states does not allow to provide an in-depth grasp. As the impact of France, Germany, and the UK has been emphasised frequently in the literature, this study has attempted to provide such an effort by focusing on two cases. Since the UK officially has left the EU at the beginning of 2020¹³, the UK's role gradually disappeared in the CFSP, which has resulted in relatively insufficient data in the Eastern Mediterranean case.

The various incidents have demonstrated the tendency of the EU member states to pursue their national foreign policies to preserve their self-interest, which creates a paradox within the EU's CFSP. The findings of this study also have supported this argument. In the case of Crimea, the German interdependency to the Russian gas and French contracts on Mistral helicopter carriers constrained the Big Three's initial response and paralysed the foreign policy-making process to produce an immediate and effective response. The changing security perceptions and mistrust towards the Russian government after the downing of the MH17 consequently resulted in a convergence of interests which enabled the EU to impose

¹² The crises and the name of the involving parties (for example: the Crimea Case – Ukraine, Russian Federation) have been searched in the official governmental website of the France, Germany and the UK. Each declaration and text have been analysed and only those which related to the study have been utilised.

¹³ While the Crimean crisis has been described as the last crisis in which the UK played an active role in the common foreign policy, its diminishing effect in the process of leaving the EU has been indicated with this study with the Eastern Mediterranean dispute.

a sanction regime that was initially unable to agree. Similarly, in the Eastern Mediterranean case, while the close alignment of Germany and the UK with Turkey resulted in them adopting a constructive policy rather than the implementation of sanctions, France pursued a hard-line policy due to already deteriorated relations with Turkey and contradicting foreign policy objectives with the Turkish government in the Middle East. After the tensions between the parties decreased and steps towards dialogue, the Big Three's interests converged. In conclusion, the Crimea crisis and the Eastern Mediterranean dispute, which will be detailed in the following parts of the study, have constituted the recent flashing points where the EU's global actorness and effectiveness are questioned.

Having completed the introduction, the next part of the study will provide a historical background of the European integration process, focusing on the origin of foreign policy. In chapter two, the theoretical structure of this study, where the main assumptions of rationalism and social constructivism and their relevance to the nature of the CFSP, will be laid out. Later on, the following chapter will provide the MSSD analysis through a theoretical framework by utilising the collected primary data of the Crimea and the Eastern Mediterranean cases. Finally, in the last chapter, the study will be concluded with a brief discussion on the findings by covering the above-stated research questions and hypotheses.

CHAPTER ONE

A HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

1.1. Origins of the European Common Foreign Policy

The idea of a united Europe was indicated in various studies and embraced by scholars, intellectuals, and politicians throughout history before it exists as a true political entity. The catastrophe caused by World War II revealed the necessity of defending fundamental human rights and democratic values. In 1941, Spinelli and Rossi (1941) published the Ventotene Manifesto, which calls for creating a “European Federation” to solve the post-war problems, secure lasting peace, and reconstruct the economies. Later in 1946, Winston S. Churchill (1994) delivered a speech at Zurich University, calling for action to create a united Europe referring to the Ventotene Manifesto; he calls specifically for the “United States of Europe.” The lasting peace and prosperity became the main goals for a united Europe, and to achieve this purpose, a process of political, economic, and defence cooperation has initiated in the continent.

The European Community has concentrated on establishing economic relations between member states and between member states and the third parties to achieve credibility and predominance since its initiation. However, when compared with economic achievements such as the formation of the common market and single currency, the Community has made less progress in acquiring a substantial external dimension (Duquette, 2001, p. 170). The economic progress has not been parallel with political achievement in the European integration process, and particularly the formation of the European foreign policy created a puzzle for the literature of the European integration theories and traditional theories of international relations.

Every step taken towards the formation of a European foreign policy is essential for analysing today’s CFSP. This chapter has aimed to indicate the dynamics behind the initiatives and treaties that paved the way of establishing a common foreign policy. In this context, the necessary background to understand the history of European foreign policy has been laid out. Later, the effects of the EU’s

political integration process in the field of foreign policy will be discussed by utilising constructivist and rationalist approaches.

1.1.1 The European Defence Community (EDC)

The first steps taken towards a united Europe aimed to foster economic cooperation between the countries, create stronger industries, and facilitate economic openness. Inspired by Jean Monnet's ideas, the foreign minister of France, Robert Schuman, gave a speech in Paris on 9 May 1950 and proposed "the creation of an organisation open to the participation of the countries in Europe which aimed to merge Franco-German production of coal and steel under a common High Authority" (Schuman, 1994, p. 12). During the negotiations for the Schuman Plan to establish the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), concerns related to the German rearmament emerged. Against the rising threat of communism after the Korean War¹⁴, the United States (US) aimed to participate in the German army under an integrated operational structure within the domain of the Atlantic alliance¹⁵ (Bindi, 2010, p. 13). Winston S. Churchill also called for a "creation of a unified European Army" that will include the German forces (L., 1952, p. 236)

The French government, led by General Charles de Gaulle, was against the idea of the US to play a dominant role in the European continent, and Jean Monnet also advocated that the only alternative was to take necessary initiatives within a European framework (Dedman, 2006, p. 64). Consequently, the French government offered an alternative within a European dominance known as the Pleven Plan¹⁶. The outcome of the negotiations for the French proposal was the European Defence Community (EDC) agreement which was signed on 27 May 1952. Differing from the Pleven Plan, the EDC advocated a supranational structure that was harmonious with the lines of ECSC. Since military integration required the standardisation of

¹⁴ On 25 June 1950, soviet-backed Northern Korea invasion of South Korea alarmed West Berlin and USA about the possible Soviet–East German invasion. The absence of a national German army is weakened the position of Western Europeans and after this war USA supported the rearmament of West Germany to create a stronger defence in Western Europe to intimidate the USSR.

¹⁵ Which will later become the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

¹⁶ The plan asserted the formation of a unified European army that compose of the members of the North Atlantic Alliance with the inclusion of West Germany and it would be placed under the command of a single high authority; the European ministry of defence.

domestic industrial capabilities, the EDC also alluded to a certain level of integration in the economic sphere (Bindi, 2010, pp. 13, 14). The treaty established the EDC ratified by West Germany and the Benelux countries¹⁷; however, under the French government led by Pierre Mendès-France, it was rejected at the French National Assembly (Duke, 2000, pp. 34–35). The French rejection of a French-originated proposal caused discontent and frustration in European countries and the USA.

The problem of the rearmament of Germany could not find a solution with the French initiative. Consequently, German military integration was acquired through several agreements that include North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) membership, Italian and German membership in the Brussels Pact¹⁸, and the establishment of the Western European Union (WEU)¹⁹. The European foreign and defence cooperation thus became a transatlantic problem for the future of Europe (Bindi, 2010, p. 14). The EDC is an important turning point in the history of European integration for marking the first attempt to form a common European foreign policy. Nonetheless, it also revealed the national government's ambitions on pursuing their domestic interests through an inter-state bargaining process rather than effectuating the idea of a federal Europe.

1.1.2 The European Economic Community (EEC)

The European countries expressed their determination to further associate each other with the establishment of the European Economic Community (EEC), the first recital of the preamble underlined the main objective; “to lay the foundations of an ever closer union ever peoples of Europe” (*Treaty of Rome*, 1957).

¹⁷ Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg.

¹⁸ The Brussel Pact initiated by France, United Kingdom and Benelux countries (Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg) in 1948 with the Treaty of Brussels to provide cooperation on the scope of economic, social and cultural areas and particularly collective defence and created the Western Union.

¹⁹ After the failure of the EPC, the Protocol Modifying and Completing the Treaty of Brussels signed in 1954 by Western Union members with the participation of Italy and West Germany. The WEU marked as the first European association on the areas of defence and security.

The scope of Treaties of Rome did not include foreign policy matters as a consequence of the failure of the EDC. Notwithstanding, it encompassed to some extent of foreign adequacy in external relations with the creation of the common external trade tariffs, the possibility of accession of new members, the establishment of a free trade area. Although the essence of creating common policies regarding international trade and consolidating economic and social cohesion to remove the imbalance in the region was about economic interests, it also has an external face that requires the unity of the member states. The role of the Commission enhanced, article 228 stipulated that the treaty provides for “the conclusion of agreements between the Community and one or more States or international organisations.” The assumed role of representing a nation-state in international relations was a significant step towards supranationality since building diplomatic ties is one of the significant characteristics of domestic sovereignty.

1.1.3 The Fouchet Plan

After the failure of the Pleven Plan to create an integrated European army under a higher authority, the subject of foreign policy cooperation reemerged in the 1960s with two Fouchet Plans named after Christian Fouchet, France’s ambassador to Denmark. The initiative pursued by French President Charles de Gaulle aimed to establish a ‘Union of States’ that entails coordination of foreign and defence policy among the members of the EEC (Urwin, 2010, p. 25).

On 2 November 1961, the first Fouchet Plan was proposed by France under the name of the Draft Treaty for the Establishment of a European Political Union. In institutional terms, the draft treaty discerned an inclusive Union of the states, meeting three times a year and operating based on unanimity, constructive abstention, and legal personality. The draft did not receive support from the other five partners of France because it raised concerns about supranationalism and the possibility of endangering the relations with NATO and the UK. Hence, the French government submitted the second Fouchet Plan on 18 January 1962 as a revised version. Nevertheless, the alliances of France, notably Belgium and the Netherlands, opposed the plan, and the initiative reached an impasse (C. Hill & Smith, 2000, p. 47). Eventually, the negotiations for political and external

cooperation among EEC countries dilapidated. The Fouchet Plans generated a detailed outline that will later form the foundation of European Political Cooperation, even though it was unsuccessful. The stalemate of amplifying the European integration process to foreign and political cooperation areas remained one of the main obstacles the European Community faced in the following years. The failure of De Gaulle's plan followed by the French veto of deepening and widening the EEC, the incidents relating to the UK's accession²⁰, and the "empty chair"²¹ crisis increased the uncertainty towards European integration.

1.1.4 European Political Cooperation (EPC)

After the resignation of Charles De Gaulle, Georges Pompidou was elected as the president of France on 15 June 1969. Unlike De Gaulle, Pompidou was against the radical positions taken by his predecessor, and he was in favour of ending the crisis environment that had characterised the European Communities²². Therefore, in 1969, Pompidou suggested a summit meeting to restore the stalled process and gain some momentum to European integration. The outcomes of the Hague Summit were; enlargement of the Communities by the admission of the new members, the establishment of European Political Cooperation (EPC) and introducing regular meetings for taking common actions on foreign policy issues; adopt measures for a move towards Economic and Monetary Union (EMU); reform the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) financing and extend the budgetary competence of European Parliament (Kaczorowska-Ireland, 2012, p. 12). The summit also stated that the final stage of the Common Market signified "paving the

²⁰ The membership request of the European countries after the economic success of the bloc as a trading community encountered with the French veto. In 1961, the most important candidate; the United Kingdom, followed by Denmark and Ireland applied for membership, later in 1963 and 1967, De Gaulle has vetoed the applications. Specifically, in the British case, the French President was against the membership because of its Commonwealth links and close relationship with the USA, which will cause an insufficient commitment to EEC objectives both politically and economically.

²¹ In 1965 the French President Charles De Gaulle withdraw all French participation in the Council of Ministers and boycotted the European institutions. The issue known as the "empty chair" crisis refers to the French veto of the proposal of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), and Commission proposal for the extension of European Parliament (EP) powers in the budgetary procedure.

²² On 8 April 1965, The Merger Treaty is signed by the EEC that combined the three separate communities to form the European Communities (EC). Hence the name of the organisation is entitled as European Communities until the creation of European Council in 1974.

way for a united Europe capable of assuming its responsibilities in the world” (*Final Communiqué of the Hague Summit*, 1969). Thus, the market association is perceived as the first step towards a further integrated Europe.

In response to the calls of the Hague Summit for taking steps on the path of a united Europe, Etienne Davignon, then political director of the Belgian Foreign Ministry, prepared a report drafting possible ways of political integration, explaining the and presented it at the Luxembourg Summit. The Davignon report, adopted by the foreign ministers on October 27, 1970, was a crucial initiative in European integration regarding forging a common European foreign policy (Bindi, 2010, p. 18). The main objective was to generate harmonisation and cooperation on the member states’ foreign policies. For this purpose, the report suggested the methodical meetings of the foreign ministers and political directors, followed by an ultimate convocation of the heads of state and government regarding consultations on external policy among member states. Substantially, it recommended intergovernmental cooperation in political matters without any binding force or supporting structures. European Political Cooperation (EPC) has emerged due to the report, which institutionalised the customary practice of dialogue among member states regarding cooperation on political and external relations.

The steps towards building a European foreign policy that officially started with the establishment of EPC, further consolidated and strengthened with the adoption of the Copenhagen Report on 23 July 1973. The report initiated the ministers of foreign affairs of the Nine²³ would meet four times a year and on necessary occasions. However, as endorsed in the report, “the Governments of Nine have established a system of political cooperation with a view to determining common attitudes and, where possible and desirable, common action” (*The Copenhagen Summit Conference*, 1973, p. 119). Albeit the establishment of EPC during the 1970s marked a remarkable step towards political integration of the Community and a crucial milestone in forming a political union, its

²³ After the Hague Summit called for the enlargement of the Communities, the negotiations with the United Kingdom, Denmark, Ireland, and Norway started at 1970 and completed by signing the treaty with the UK, Denmark and Ireland at 1972. In Norway, regardless the positive sequence of the negotiations, the referendum which took place on 25 September 1972, the accession to the EEC rejected. Thus, the United Kingdom, Denmark and Ireland officially joined to the EEC at 1973, and the Community known as the “Europe of the Nine” until the second wave of enlargement.

intergovernmental essence was vigorous. This characteristic reflected the foreign policy efficiency of the EC in international relations in the following years.

1.2. Crisis Environment During the 1970s

The international system was suffering from acute international crises during the 1970s, such as the Arab-Israeli conflicts (1973) in the Middle East, the Vietnam War (1954-1975), the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (1979), the Iranian revolution, and hostage crises (1980), and Israeli invasion of Lebanon (1982) that emphasised the exigency of a common European manoeuvre. Turbulent relations in the transatlantic alliance also marked the decade.²⁴

The failures to form a common foreign policy began to arise first in 1973 when members of the Community failed to constitute a consensus on the Arab-Israeli conflict, and as a consequence, some members decided to act individually to solve the problems caused by the oil crisis. While the UK and France signed bilateral agreements with Iran and Saudi Arabia, the Netherlands was subjected to an Arab oil embargo because it is considered a pro-Israeli²⁵ country. The Netherlands has occupied a significant position in the international oil sector by being Shell's homeport as one of the biggest oil multinationals. Furthermore, Rotterdam was a crucial switch-point for the distribution of oil in West Europe. As a result, the oil embargo against the Netherlands affected half of North-West Europe (Hellema et al., 2004, pp. 9, 10). The lack of a common strategy during the oil crisis revealed the significance of EC acting as a community. The negative effect of the embargo could have been reduced if there is a collective action or a common European policy towards the Arab-Israeli dispute since the birth of the conflict. The oil embargo started the domino effect that continued with the economic recession, unemployment, high inflation rates, and worldwide crisis environment.

²⁴ Due to EEC perceived as an economic competitor and the reason for the deficit on the balance of payments that the USA experienced.

²⁵ After the Yom Kippur War, the governmental statement released by the Dutch government led by Joop Den Uyl held Syria and Egypt responsible for hostile actions and violating ceasefire and the Hague took a pro-Israeli stand in compared with other partners in EC.

The EC's foreign policy capabilities tested again in Iran when the hostage crisis occurred in 1979. The immediate response of the US was the boycott of Iranian oil and freezing domestic assets of Iran. The Community took a relatively moderate position by calling for the release of the hostages rather than supporting sanctions. Despite the intense boycott pressure, only on 22 April 1980, the EC agreed to impose sanctions only if implemented domestically rather than the entire community (Hill & Smith, 2000, p. 317). EPC also failed to formulate a collective response to the incident related to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics' (USSR) invasion of Afghanistan. A similar fracture experienced during the Arab-Israeli conflict occurred in the USA boycott of the 1980 Moscow Olympics. The UK supported the American foreign policy, Germany and France opposed it due to the possibility of harming deterrence (Hill & Smith, 2000, p. 259). The capacity of European foreign policy cooperation during the 1970s has marked an unsuccessful stage and affected the prestige of the EC in world affairs.

1.2.1 The London Report and The Solemn Declaration

The growing perception in the late 1970s regarding the lack of competency of EPC arose out of the necessity to take action. For this purpose, The London Report adopted by Ten²⁶, which was the third of the reports that codified EPC, after Luxembourg (1970) and Copenhagen (1973). The Ten renewed their commitments and emphasised the importance of consultation among the Community in the first part of the report. It also established procedures regarding EEC ambassadors in third countries and convene emergency meetings of the ministers of foreign affairs for crisis consultation mechanism (C. Hill & Smith, 2000, p. 114). Whereas the London Report foresaw the discussion of the political aspects of security, the subsequent Stuttgart Solemn Declaration expanded the EPC's scope to "the political and economic aspects of security" (point 1.4.2) and "progressive development and definition of common principles and objectives [and] the possibility of joint actions in the field of foreign policy" (point 3.2).

²⁶ After the Greek accession, the European Communities known as the "Ten", until the membership of Spain and Portugal in 1986. Later, it will named as "Europe of Twelve" or "Twelve".

Regardless of its intergovernmental characteristic, the strengthened tone of the Solemn Declaration could be traced down to the emphasises such as ‘greater coherence,’ ‘close coordination,’ and ‘intensified consultations.’ The declaration takes an important place in transforming relations among members of the Community towards the progressive construction of the EU.

1.2.2 The Single European Act (SEA)

Despite the intergovernmental and elitist features of the EPC, the broader political forces also participated in the foreign policy developments. European Parliament was one of the important actors who raised a voice for the necessity of more coordinated and efficient responses in international matters. The EP under Altiero Spinelli’s leadership adopted the Draft Treaty establishing European Union, which proposed to give the EU a legal personality and encouraged further cooperation on the external policy. The draft treaty also enhanced the role of the European Council by giving the authority to extend coordination to include defence and arms trade matters. Although it was not endorsed by the member states, it sparked a reform process that officially started with the Single European Act.

On 17 February 1986, the heads of states or governments of the Community signed the SEA. The substantial reform that the SEA brought regarding foreign policy matters was the legal recognition of EPC and the European Council (Phinnemore, 2010, p. 34). It created a legal ‘umbrella’ that brought the EPC and Communities together for the first time (C. Hill & Smith, 2000, p. 138). Title III emphasised its vigorous intergovernmental feature in foreign policy cooperation by referring member states as High Contracting Parties.²⁷ It indicated the main objective was to create a European foreign policy rather than forming a ‘common’ foreign policy within the Community. The SEA endorsed the existing methods of external policy operation, which included mutual consultation.²⁸ Another legal reform that SEA brought was the codification of the role of the Presidency and of

²⁷ Article 30/1 of the SEA stated that “The High Contracting Parties, being members of the European Communities, shall endeavour jointly to formulate and implement a European foreign policy.”

²⁸ “To ensure that their combined influence is exercised as effectively as possible through coordination, the convergence of their positions and the implementations of joint action” (art. 30.2.a).

the troika of officials²⁹ in the EPC, new secretariat that be based in Brussels and gave European Parliament ‘acquiescence power’ over new accessions and association agreements.

The political concern of seeking coherence between EPC and Community’s policies first time converted to legal conditions in the SEA (Abellán, 2002, p. 5). In its preamble, the concept of coherence indicated clearly and explicitly; “Member States stress the need to ‘speak ever increasingly with one voice and to act with consistency and solidarity’” (Gauttier, 2004, p. 25). According to Hill and Smith, the innovations brought by SEA may refer to the struggle between relatively intensified coordination between domestic foreign policies and to create treaty-based integrated external relations within the Community (2000, p. 138). Consequently, the alignment of EPC to the Community’s process did not endorse any significant power shift over the foreign policy matters from nation-states to supranational institutions.

1.3. The Establishment and Development of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP)

During the second half of the 1980s, the SEA and the launch of the ventures to complete the internal market led to a period of renewed dynamism for EC. The structural changes in the international system during the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, such as the end of the Cold War, the collapse of communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe, and the unification of Germany, also affected the process of integration (Phinnemore, 2010, p. 34).

On April 18, 1990, a Franco-German initiative proposed complementing the monetary union with the political union. Enunciated by French President Mitterrand and German Chancellor Kohl, it aimed to ensure the EEC’s unity and institutional efficiency by creating harmony in the economic, monetary, and political spheres and eventually in the common foreign and security policy (Bindi, 2010, p. 26). The reaction was positive in the Dublin conference of the European Council despite the

²⁹ The troika of officials refers to the group composed by the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, the foreign minister of the country that holds the EU Presidency, and the representative from the European Commission.

objection of the UK and Poland. The outcome was the convention of two intergovernmental conferences (IGCs), one concerning monetary union and the other to discuss the political union, encompassing the common foreign policy. The IGCs lasted at the end of 1991, and during this period, two crucial incidents occurred; the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the Yugoslavian conflict.

1.3.1 Post-Cold War: A Quest For Common Foreign Policy

The new security challenges arose after the end of the Cold War, and the European Community attempted to tackle it with the launch of the IGC regarding the political union to form a coherent and effective foreign and security policy. The necessity of EC to further cooperate in foreign policy matters and the importance of acting immediately and effectively in the international system as an actor tested with the two incidents at the beginning of the 1990s; the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait that resulted in the Gulf War. In his famous article, Christopher Hill indicated that the Gulf War and Yugoslavian crisis highlighted the EC's lack of capacity to produce collective policies and implement them and the failure to possess an effective posture in the international system (1993, p. 306). However, the events above also occurred under the institutional structures within the EC that did not ensure a common foreign policy and consequently highlighted the limitations of EPC. As a result, the necessity of a consistent and coherent common foreign and security policy in the post-cold war era was included in the Community's agenda.

1.3.2 Treaty on European Union (The Maastricht Treaty)

On 7 February 1992, the Maastricht Treaty – Treaty on the European Union (TEU) with its official name– established the European Union was signed and the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) launched. The CFSP referred to the policy-making process of external relations and aimed to assemble the member states to effectively and collectively address the security challenges that the Union faced in world affairs. The TEU constructed three pillars structure within the Union; the first of which includes the European Communities; EEC, ECSC, and European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM). Title III of the SEA was replaced by

Title V of the TEU and named the Second Pillar, which implicates adjudications on the CFSP. Title VI of the TEU, known as the Third Pillar, encompassed police and judicial cooperation provisions in criminal matters with its official name, Judicial and Home Affairs. Thus, the TEU contained three separate pillars; one supranational EC pillar and two intergovernmental CFSP and JHA pillars under a single institutional framework that ensured consistency and continuity within the EU.

The process of European integration could not be perceived only in economically sphere as it was observed in the past, whether with Pleven, Fouchet, or Solemn. A vision of a united Europe always intended to progress towards a common foreign policy, although this process is interrupted by the domestic interest of the member states. The introduction of CFSP marked a remarkable improvement to political cooperation, which was extremely limited in the area of external relations in EPC. Article J.1.2 of the TEU indicated several extensive agenda-setting objectives of the CFSP.³⁰ The Union ought to pursue the objectives above by establishing systematic cooperation and “joint actions” according to Articles J.1.3 and J.3. Qualified majority voting (QMV) was introduced with Article J.3.2 to implement measures for joint actions in the narrowest sense; however, the issues caused by the common action had already been determined by unanimity (C. Hill & Smith, 2000, p. 132). Unlike EPC, which essentially points out consultations and exchange of views on foreign policy matters, the new concepts of common positions and joint actions introduced to produce formal foreign policy outputs. The Preamble, Article B, Article C, and Article J.4.1 also asserted one of the aims of the Union to affirm its identity in the international system, which requires more cooperation in foreign policy and the eventual framing of a common defence policy. It also stipulated that the WEU should be closely incorporated with the CFSP, presumed a bridge role between EU and NATO.

Consequently, the taboo of defence in the external matters addressed with the possibility of progressively moving towards a common defence, even though the provision invoked opposition from Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands,

³⁰ To safeguard the common values, fundamental interests and independence of the Union; to strengthen the security of the Union and its Member States; to preserve peace and strengthen international security; to promote international cooperation; to develop and consolidate democracy and the rule of law, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Portugal, and the UK (Smith, 2003, p. 182). The unwilling approval of the provision indicated the difficult external circumstances that affected the negotiation of the TEU.³¹

Title V of the TEU did not set a separate budget for the CFSP. It was left to the decision of the Council; in this way, the Community budget became the source for the CFSP's administrative expenditure, and Council had the right to charge members for operational expenditures related to joint actions. Article J.8.1 stipulated that European Council shall define the principles and guidelines of foreign policy matters, and Commission got a (joint) right of initiative. In case of an emergency, an extraordinary meeting could be convened within 48 hours, and the EPC Secretariat in Brussels planned to enlarge. The TEU also included the common commercial policy to elucidate the relationship between trade policy and the CFSP. The new Article 228a indicated that in the event of CFSP constituting the necessity of sanctions, 'the Council shall act on a qualified majority on a proposal from the Commission.' Thus sanctions can be used as a tool for external policy.

The coordination of European foreign policy within the three-pillars structure was carried out by giving a formal role to Commission to associate and inform the Parliament while giving an executive role to Council. Although the TEU was a significant turning point for improving the coherence and efficiency of the common European foreign and defence policy, there was a need for further development. The treaty set up a review procedure for CFSP, article N stated that "a conference of representatives of the governments of the Member States shall be convened in 1996 to examine those provisions of this treaty for which revision is provided" (C. Hill & Smith, 2000, p. 168). The process started with establishing a reflection group in 1996 and came to a climax in an IGC, followed by the Amsterdam European Council in 1997.

³¹ The EU member states are given the right not to be a part of a particular domain of EU policy to avoid an impasse. Denmark used its opt-out right for several policy fields such as economic and monetary union, defence cooperation, and area of freedom, security and justice.

1.3.3 The Amsterdam Treaty

The IGC in 1996 aimed to revise TEU to proceed with its objectives, especially to achieve the goal of ‘ever closer union.’ The Reflection Group’s report recommended three key points; bringing Europe closer to its citizens, enabling the Union to function better and prepare for further enlargement, and providing a greater capability for external action. The enlargement was on the agenda of the Community, especially after the disappearance of the Iron Curtain³² and the accession request of the Central and Eastern European countries (CEEC). While the Treaty of Amsterdam failed to introduce the institutional reforms necessary for enlargement, it increased the size of the EP to 700, and the co-decision procedure extended, thus intensified the legislative role of the EP. The concept of enhanced cooperation introduced between the member states and the desire for further integration asserted through the commitment to a common defence policy. The CFSP’s capacity for action also has been strengthened and consolidated with the Treaty of Amsterdam. The primary changes included the introduction of the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy which will support the new initiative of the Planning and Early Warning Unit. Javier Solana elected as the first Secretary-General of the Council, and the extension of the role of the European Council in the decision-making process with defining “common strategies,” a new foreign policy tool to the existing Joint Action and Common Position and allowing member states to exercise “constructive abstention” that will prevent the blocking the adoption of the CFSP initiatives (Phinnemore, 2010, p. 39).

On security and defence issues, the Treaty of Amsterdam reflected further developments³³ introduced by TEU (Maganza, 1999, pp. 178, 179). The newly introduced structures and provisions improved the coherence and efficiency of the CFSP. In terms of substantive reforms, it added the objective of “an area of freedom, security, and justice” to the EU; and shifted matters covered by the third pillar,

³² The term Iron Curtain refers to the political, ideological and military boundary in European continent from the Second World War to the end of the Cold War, which Soviet Union isolates itself and its satellite Central and Eastern European countries from West and Western countries’ influence.

³³ Especially, the incorporation of “Petersberg tasks” to the Union’s security policy, which included ‘humanitarian and rescue tasks, peace-keeping tasks, and tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peacemaking’ that all members will contribute to implementing.

Justice and Home Affairs (JHA), to the first pillar. In this way, the name of the third pillar changed into Police and Judicial Cooperation in Criminal Matters (PJCCM).

1.3.4 The Saint-Malo Declaration

One of the objectives set by the TEU was to ensure further cooperation on the matters of defence. The process started in Saint-Malo in France opened a new chapter in European foreign policy with the inclusion of defence issues. The Anglo-French cooperation on European defence represented two distinct national interests' combinations. Regarding the UK's point, it marked a historical point on the 50-year veto of defence cooperation. The initiative pursued by the new government led by Tony Blair aimed to prevent French, Italian, and Spanish plans to put military and security policy into the EU agenda that would create a disadvantage for British interests. The British government also took a different way on further integration due to the negative domestic aspect of developing the single European currency. The French government already was the least eager EU member towards the transatlantic cooperation rather than a European initiative since the inception of the EC. Thus the British proposal of an EU-based security approach was welcomed (Dover, 2010, p. 247). The outcome was the Saint-Malo Declaration – Joint Declaration on European Defence with its official name – which highlighted the necessity of “the capacity for autonomous action, backed by credible military forces (...) to respond to international crises” and the EU “to be in a position to play its full role on the international stage” (*Saint-Malo Declaration*, 1998).

The proposals regarding the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) continued to be the subject of the several European Council meetings in Cologne (1999), Helsinki (1999), and Sintra (2000). The ESDP composed of military and civilian crisis management and conflict prevention. In the Cologne European Council, the ESDP launched, and the decision-making structures established to effectively realise the Petersberg tasks and ensure control over the EU-led Petersberg missions. The military part of the ESDP introduced at Helsinki Summit with the ‘Headline Goal’ for the EU to deploy up to 50,000-60,000 troops within 60 days for Petersberg tasks (C. Hill & Smith, 2000, p. 452). Furthermore, the

proposals developed for supporting the new initiatives and necessary institutional structures provided at the Treaty of Nice.

1.3.5 Treaty of Nice

The Cologne, Helsinki, and Sintra Councils provided opportunity to negotiate much of the detail of ESDP before it codified at Nice. Treaty of Nice signed on 26 February 2001 and came into effect on 1 February 2003 introduced the institutional reforms for the enlargement of the EU and ‘enhanced cooperation’ which revised the mechanisms for further cooperation between member states. The conditions to achieve enhanced cooperation in the CFSP ensured by reducing the minimum participation of members to eight and facilitating the procedure for authorisation. The empowerment of the Commission also ensured the consistency of the EU’s actions. Article 24 of the Nice Treaty marked a vigorous step towards supranationalism by extending the use of QMV on the spheres such as giving authority to Council to appoint a special representative for particular foreign policy matters and adoption of Joint Actions by concluding an agreement with a third party or international organisations. Furthermore, with Article 25, the Treaty replaced the Political Committee with the Political and Security Committee (PSC) and enhanced its role in crisis management operations.

The Nice Treaty contributed to the ‘Brusselisation³⁴’ process by introducing several procedures such as chairing of PSC by High Representative instead of a representative from the Presidency and nominal ‘ambassadors’ of the CFSP to be based in Brussels in a semi-permanent sitting rather than switching from capital to capital (Dover, 2010, p. 250). Following the Treaty of Nice, the European Council summit held on Laeken on 14-15 December 2001, and the outcome was the Laeken Declaration on the Future of the European Union. The declaration addressed the critical points concerning the further development of the EU; ensuring the better division of competencies, redefining and improving Union’s instruments for action, increasing the democratic legitimacy and transparency of the institutions, improving the efficiency of the decision-making process and implementation, and

³⁴ David Allen described Brusselisation as “a gradual transfer, in the name of consistency, of foreign policy-making authority away from the national capitals to Brussels” (1998, p. 54).

the drafting of a constitution for Europe's citizens (European Council, 2001). The stillborn Constitutional Treaty (2005) aimed to intensify the Brusselisation process by bringing ESDP and CFSP closer to Brussels with the name under Common Security and Defence Policy. Article I-41.3 of the Treaty requested Member states to "make civilian and military capabilities available to the Union for the implementation of the common security and defence policy." However, the decisions relating to CSDP will be adopted unanimously (Council of the European Union, 2004).

Thus, the Constitutional Treaty created a double-edged sword; one is the reaffirmation of creating a common European defence policy, the other is granting a veto right to national governments and preserving domestic defence policies. The Dutch and French referendums reject the Constitutional Treaty, and the European Council summit held in June 2007 decided that the Constitution was effectively dead because it was only endorsed by eighteen of the member states without reaching unanimous ratification.

1.3.6 Treaty of Lisbon

The CFSP was one of the most controversial spheres of the constitutional process within the EU during the 2000s. The Treaty of Lisbon mainly encompassed the security and defence provision of the Constitutional Treaty. Following the legacy of its predecessor, one of the most substantial reforms that the Treaty of Lisbon brought was the recognition of the EU's legal personality³⁵ (Verola, 2010, p. 41). The distinction between EC and EU was removed, and the EU emerged as the sole international actor representing its member states. The three-pillar structure adopted in the Maastricht Treaty was abolished, and the Union took the Community's place by inheriting its powers and institutions. The critical outcome of this incidence was the incorporation of the CFSP pillar into the community pillar. In terms of decision-making, the co-decision procedure became the primary legislative process and extended to new areas. In Council, the QMV extended and

³⁵ Each Community's legal personality declared its founding Treaty and also article 281 indicated that "the Community shall have legal personality" while the TEU contains no provision regarding Union's legal personality.

based on the double majority method (%55) and the population that they represent (%65) (Church & Phinnemore, 2010, p. 58). Although the extension of the QMV aimed to increase the efficiency of the Union, Member states also retained unanimity in critical policy areas such as tax harmonisation, defence, the CFSP and procedures provided for secession (Kaczorowska-Ireland, 2012, p. 30). Hence this indicated a setback towards achieving a genuine Union and coherence in foreign policy matters.

Article 19 of the Treaty of Lisbon created a High Representative of the Union's CFSP, which will also be in the position of the Vice-President of the Union and thus representing the significance of the external matters within the Union. Article 22.2 granted the right to submit joint proposals to the Commission and High Representative on external relations that bring economic and military sectors together. The Brusselisation process is also further consolidated by the establishment of the EEAS (Dover, 2010, p. 251). These changes positively affected and formally strengthened the role of the EU regarding foreign issues. Furthermore, it constituted an important step towards centralising foreign policy activity within the supranational structures.

Article 17 stated the scope of the CFSP with 'all questions related to the security of the Union', which the decisions will be taken by the EU unanimously. Hence, the European Council allocated to determine the common defence and security policy and adopt necessary judgments. It highlighted the authority of the head of states or governments on foreign policy and defence matters, whereas the role of enacting these decisions is given to the member state's high representatives. The EP takes up a small place with the consultative role, which conducted twice a year. The treaty also clearly demanded that member states make 'civilian and military capabilities available' for implementation for the EU's security and defence policy, and the European Defence Agency (EDA) established to improve the military capabilities.

The abolishment of the three-pillar structure with the Treaty of Lisbon marked a turning point towards supranational objectives of the EU. However, the direct role of the European Council in the decision-making process regarding external actions demonstrated that the intergovernmental feature of the CFSP

remained still. As Howorth described, standing at the highest level of the hierarchy, the European Council possessed “ultimate decision-making and political responsibility for all matters connected with foreign and security policy” (2007, p. 63). The importance given to the Treaty of Lisbon depends on which perspective it is evaluated. The provisions and reforms that the treaty introduced can be criticised by those in favour of further integration and those against it. While the extension of QMV to new instances could be assessed as a loss of national sovereignty, the extended policy areas being not vital for Union and the granting veto rights to the Member States regarding important policy areas could be evaluated as a recession towards a vision of a united Europe.

The European integration process, which has initiated during the 1950s, marked various attempts to create a supranational foreign policy. The ambition of the European community to emerge as an effective actor in the international system and to create a common foreign policy to eliminate the divisions within the member states resulted in the establishment of the CFSP in 1992. The complex nature of the European integration process received broad public and scholarly attention, which has led to the emergence of many European integration theories. After providing a historical background to shed light on the origins of the CFSP and the changes it has gone through until its current structure, the following chapter will be the theoretical framework of the study. The rationalist and constructivist approaches to European integration with a particular focus on its relevance to the CFSP will be briefly presented and later applied to the Crimea and the Eastern Mediterranean cases.

CHAPTER TWO

THEORIES

The core of the European integration debate occurred between neofunctionalism and intergovernmentalism during the first decades of the European integration process. Lately, the central dichotomy emerged between the rationalist school, which considers the integration process as a result of given domestic preferences and constructivist approaches that highlighted the common norms and values and European identity. In European integration studies, foreign policy cooperation, namely CFSP, is frequently characterised as the most controversial and “perhaps the most political of all subfields within the EU” (Glarbo, 2001, p. 140). The rationalist framework has traditionally dominated the realms of political, foreign, and security policies. Therefore, it is not feasible to say the constructivism offers an alternative approach to the rational actor model; instead, it emphasises the role of socially constructed European identity and shared values while explaining the CFSP.

This study aims to provide a dual approach to the formation of CFSP rather than adopting one of the sides of the dichotomy. In this context, the following chapter will indicate the core arguments of the rationalist and constructivist paradigms and their relevance to the CFSP. In the light of the historical background provided in the previous chapter, the European integration theories will be utilised to make a discussion revolving around the formation of European foreign policy. Since the hypotheses of this thesis has based on the theoretical framework, the following chapter has constituted an essential part to reveal the convergences and divergences among the Big Three.

2.1 Rationalism

The rationalist paradigm is one of the influential meta-theories in international relations that position states in the centre of the analysis as rational actors who act on realising their interests. It advocates that inter-play between the

nation-states, whose main objective is to pursue their domestic external policy objectives, carve out international relations. The rule of law is seen as equally substantial to reduce international conflict; hence, international organisations also appointed an arbitral role in world affairs.

Hans. J. Morgenthau argues that the reciprocal recognition of domestic interests and the expectation of gains in exchange for the loss of authority are the main motivations to the willingness of the nation-states' transferring their sovereignty to the supranational organisations (1952, pp. 972, 973). According to Haas (1958), national agents are inherently rational, and rational motives drive their interests. Finally, Stanley Hoffmann (1966) emphasises the importance of nation-states in the international system and defines their primary objective to promote their domestic interests.

In this study, Ernst B. Haas's neofunctionalism and Andrew Moravcsik's liberal intergovernmentalism will be utilised to analyse the EU's CFSP within the rationalist framework. The reason behind the selection of these theories is that both integration theories took economic interdependence as a starting point for explaining nation-state preferences. Ultimately, LI predicts that member states retain their power and authority, while neo-functionalism expects an increased role of supranational institutions (Risse, 2005, p. 300). The Crimea crisis and the eastern Mediterranean dispute will constitute an empirical base to discuss the rationalist perspective's explanatory power to the CFSP.

2.1.1 Neofunctionalism

The integration theories aim to describe and elucidate the unification process of discrete nation-states (Pistone, 1994, p. 69). They seek to explain the process of the authority shift from the state level to the supranational level, under what circumstances the policies are included in the scope of regulation power of the organisation. During the 1950s, the term integration theory referred to "political science theorising the European Community" (Schimmelfennig, 2010, p. 37). Neofunctionalism was the first grand theory to provide a scientific and objective explanation of the European integration process and represented the supranational approach with liberal variants (E. B. Haas, 1958; Hix, 1999; Lindberg, 1963). It

began in 1958 when Ernst B. Haas (1958) published “The Uniting of Europe: Political, Social, and Economic Forces 1950-1957.” The main objective of Haas was to formulate a theoretical explanation for regional cooperation by analysing ESCS within three aspects; spill-over, elite socialisation, and the formation of supranational interest groups. Neofunctionalism has predominantly been characterised as an elitist approach to the European integration process. Under specific circumstances, the economic pressure groups and supranational officials ensure that regional cooperation dilates to an ever closer union (Moravcsik, 2005, p. 351).

This study aims to analyse the neofunctionalism for conceptualising the Big Three’s foreign policy cooperation cultivated within the CFSP. As Jakob C. Øhrgaard stated, traditionally, neo-functionalism has not been considered a useful framework for conceptualising the CFSP within the literature (2018, p. 36). The main reason behind this general approach lies under the principal characteristic of the CFSP since its initiation; intergovernmental cooperation. However, Haas’ theory seeks to explain the dynamics of the European integration process rather than the end goal or portraying an integrated Europe. Haas argued that “political integration conceived not as a condition but as a process, the conceptualisation relies on the perception of interests and values by the actors participating in the process” and “integration takes place when these perceptions fall into a certain pattern and fails to take place when they do not” (1958, p. 11). Hence, the building blocks that constituted this pattern is essential. For this purpose, the formation of the CFSP will be scrutinised through the three core notions of neofunctionalism.

2.1.1.1 Spill-over

The core concept of neofunctionalism is spill-over. The spill-over notion is based on the assumption that cooperation in one policy will affect the neighbouring policy area, just like a domino effect, eventually leading to further integration. According to Haas, the European integration process, which starts with economic cooperation, may lead to political integration. The loyalties may shift “from the nation-state to a new centre, whose institutions possess or demand jurisdiction over the pre-existing national states. The end result of political integration is a new

political community, superimposed over the pre-existing ones” (1958, p. 16). Because the spill-over thesis indicated a power transfer from national institutions to supranational institutions, it creates an obstruct of the conceptualisation of CFSP within the neofunctionalist theory. As Jakob C. Øhrgaard emphasised, it is challenging to comprehend CFSP as a process of integration since the lack of central institutions that surpassed the authority of the nation-states’ over foreign policy matters (2018, p. 36).

The concept of spill-over refers to the gradual increase in the political integration process, without necessarily a clear intention, instead, extension over time (Jensen, 2010, p. 75; Lindberg, 1963, p. 10). Hence, the spill-over would only occur if the national governments’ national interests require it or are achieved progressively. The fact that CFSP is currently proceeding in an intergovernmental institutional framework reflected the lack of desire towards an institutionalised supranational sphere on foreign policy in today’s political realities.

2.1.1.2 Elite socialisation

The second aspect of neofunctionalism concerns developing European loyalties and preferences by the actors involved in the supranational policy process (Jensen, 2010, p. 77). According to Haas, the process of political integration involves several political actors such as interest groups, policy-makers in government, higher civil servants (1958, p. 17). Neofunctionalism dedicates a crucial role to the central institutions in facilitating common policy outcomes and creating elite groups loyal to supranational institutions that grasp pan-European norms. As Øhrgaard stated, neofunctionalists foresaw the growing elite socialisation that influences decision-making would gradually lead to changes that replace simple bargaining (2018, p. 38). In this way, the inter-state negotiations would become more technocratic, and the elites would create pressure for more consolidated supranational cooperation. The institutionalisation of interactions between nation-states conducted by the high civil servants would undermine the pattern of the bargaining process shaped by domestic interests. Consequently, the vital interests and norms lose their aura as they are debated by the elites (Øhrgaard, 2018, p. 291).

The potential relevance of neofunctionalism emerges in two phenomena. First, the Brusselisation of the CFSP; in terms of the actors involved in the decision-making process and their interactions, it constitutes a collective-problem solving and policy-making practice in the foreign policy sphere. The second is the ‘multiple loyalties’ and identification of socialisation mechanisms leading to a common European identity, as Thomas Risse emphasised (2005, p. 304). As the high representatives of nation-states work side by side in foreign policy formation processes, the resulting socialisation environment causes them to develop supranational loyalties along with their loyalties to their own national identity.

2.1.1.3 The formation of supranational interest groups

The neofunctionalist approach mainly focuses on the factors that drive the European integration process. Hence, the role of interest groups is also emphasised for developing supranational orientation along with the higher civil servants. The interest groups were expected to be Europeanised since their interest formulation will be affected by supranational institutions. As the integration process in several spheres such as economic, social, educational, and political developed, interest groups will be reorganised to comply with the developments (Jensen, 2010, p. 78). Thus, “in the process of reformulating expectations and demands, the interest groups in question approach one another supranationally while their erstwhile ties with national friends undergo deterioration” (E. B. Haas, 1958, p. 313). Furthermore, interest groups are also seen as catalysers for the integration process by creating pressure on domestic governments for their supranational interests.

In sum, neofunctionalism focused on the supranational aspects of the international organisations, and inter-state cooperation explained through the spill-over and loyalty transfer concepts. The nation-states expected to cooperate in the economic sphere to increase power which would lead to political cooperation. Over time, the supranational institutions would gain power and authority, allowing them to form their agendas, and the role of the nation-state would decrease. By the mid-1970s³⁶, neofunctionalism lost its credibility to explain the European integration

³⁶ The international crises during the 1970s, such as the Arab-Israeli conflicts (1973) in the Middle East, the Vietnam War (1954-1975), the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (1979), the Iranian revolution, and hostage crises (1980), and Israeli invasion of Lebanon (1982) resulted in disparities within the European community.

process with the states remained key actors in the international system. However, the creation of the multiple loyalties and socialisation process could be utilised as illustrative variants to some aspects of the CFSP (Risse, 2005).

2.1.2 Liberal Intergovernmentalism

In the mid-1960s, intergovernmentalism emerged as a critique towards neofunctionalist orthodoxy, privileging the nation-state's role in the European integration process. The key proponent of the theory, Stanley Hoffmann, distinguished 'high' and 'low' politics to explain integration. High politics referred to the areas related to sovereignty and core national interest, low politics referred to the less controversial and technocratic areas (Cini, 2010, pp. 91–92). Furthermore, Hoffman argued that integration is possible in low policy or functional issue areas, but the scope of integration will remain slight in high policy areas, which are fundamental and vital for nation-states (O'Neill, 2002, p. 61). Following the developments since the 1970s, Hoffmann's intergovernmentalism has received several criticisms. The state-centric realist paradigm fails to reflect the conditions of the regional process in Europe and the environment of increasing interdependence between states (O'Neill, 2002, pp. 64–65). The rigid distinction of intergovernmentalism regarding high and low policy areas was criticised. Hoffman himself admitted that the traditional demarcation limits between high and low politics (Cini, 2010, p. 92).

In the early 1990s, Andrew Moravcsik developed liberal intergovernmentalism built on earlier intergovernmental institutionalism, offering a theoretical approach consisting of both realist and neo-liberal components, often described as contrary notions in the literature. The central argument of liberal intergovernmentalism was that "European integration can best be explained as a series of rational choices made by national leaders" (Moravcsik, 1999, p. 18). According to Moravcsik, these choices "responded to constraints and opportunities stemming from the economic interests of powerful domestic constituents, the relative power of each state in the international system, and the role of international institutions in bolstering the credibility of inter-state commitments" (Moravcsik, 1999, p. 18).

Robert Putnam's two-level game model constitutes a starting point for understanding liberal intergovernmentalism; one level is the national preference formation element of the liberal theory, and another level is the intergovernmental sense of strategic bargaining between nation-states (Rosamond, 2000, p. 136). The two-level modelling of international cooperation and conflict occurs first with the definition of interests by nation-states, and the second is inter-state bargaining to actualise national interests. According to Moravcsik, the assumption that states act rationally or instrumentally desirous of domestic interest alluded to a division of supranational negotiations into three stages: "national preference formation, inter-state bargaining, and the choice of international institutions" (1999, p. 18). The rationalist framework proposed that states formulate a consistent set of national preferences concerning potential "states of the world" independent of international determinants in the first stage of inter-state bargaining. In the second stage, nation-states bargain with one another to realise those national interests by reaching substantive agreements that are more efficient than unilateral actions in the international system. In the final stage, after this two-level game is played, nation-states decide whether to delegate and transfer their sovereignty in international institutions to secure the substantive agreements they concluded (Moravcsik, 1999, p. 20).

Since this study aims to analyse the formation of CFSP within the supranational institutions, the national preference formation process of the member states does not fall within its scope. Hence, the second and third stages of the international negotiation will be discussed in the following.

2.1.2.1 Inter-state bargaining

The national preferences of the nation-states seldom converge precisely due to conflicting interests within international relations. Hence, LI pursues the rationalist institutionalist variant of bargaining to explain the substantive policy outcome of the inter-state negotiations with diverse domestic preferences. (Moravcsik & Schimmelfennig, 2009, p. 70). Collective and individual interests frequently conflict, and as a result of the hard-bargaining among actors over distributional benefits, the willingness and capability of cooperation weaken.

Within this framework, bargaining theory asserts that the outcome of international negotiations is determined by the relative bargaining power of the actors (Moravcsik & Schimmelfennig, 2009, p. 71). As Moravcsik stated, “those governments that most strongly favoured the core of each agreement tended to make concessions to recalcitrant governments on the margin in order to achieve it” (1999, p. 479). LI claims that “in the EU context, asymmetrical interdependence, the uneven distribution of the gains of a specific agreement and information about preferences and agreements play a crucial role” on the bargaining power of the nation-states (Moravcsik & Schimmelfennig, 2009, p. 71).

Moravcsik’s theory emphasises the strategic inter-state bargaining process and the importance of governmental elites in forming inter-state relations. In other words, states are appraised as unitary actors, and supranational mechanisms had a very limited impact on negotiation outcomes (Cini, 2010, p. 98). Regarding CFSP, Moravcsik and Schimmelfennig stress the reason behind the lack of coherence on foreign policy matters within the EU, the “interests of member states are too closely intertwined to render the use of military force or punitive sanctions cost-effective” (2009, p. 485). Hence, the fundamental factor influencing international relations can be explained throughout the “asymmetrical patterns of interdependence” (Moravcsik and Schimmelfennig, 2019, p.485).

2.1.2.2 The choice of international institutions

LI’s state-centric approach to international relations advocates the role of the nation-state on negotiation outcomes. However, although nation-states aim to realise their domestic interests, which cause the clash of national preferences, member states transfer their sovereignty in some incidents and are subject to the decision of supranational institutions. In the third analytical stage in the rationalist framework of international cooperation, LI try to solve this dilemma by asking the following question: “When and why do EU governments delegate or pool decision-making power in authoritative international institutions rather than retaining the prerogative to make future unilateral decisions?” (Moravcsik, 1999, p. 67). Moravcsik follows “neoliberal institutionalism” (Keohane, 1989; Keohane & Nye, 1977), which gave international institutions the role of regulating necessary

conditions for lasting international cooperation. Within this framework, international institutions serve as an instrument to tackle uncertain and often unwanted outcomes.

LI coheres with the neofunctionalist approach in this perspective; nation-states intentionally delegate power to supranational organisations that hold the capacity to act against the national preferences of its members, and institutions assure the compliance of unwanted or unintended consequences under unclear conditions (Moravcsik & Schimmelfennig, 2009, p. 72). The main split occurs on the role of the nation-state in the European integration process. According to LI, supranational organisations are not about replacing the nation-state but about “rescuing” it in the area of globalisation (Milward, 1999). Thus, the Europeanisation process is not a challenge to the LI theory; on the contrary, it constitutes an essential part (Milward, 1999, p. 73). The ‘pool and delegate’ strategy serves as a solution to “incomplete contracting” that emerges when broadly-shared goals are costly or challenging to specify future contingencies in enforcing them (Moravcsik, 1999, p. 73). However, the asymmetries and relative bargaining power within the supranational structure allow stronger states to use supranational tools in controlling states which have relatively less bargaining power or in pre-committing them to decisions before giving the chance to create opposition against costs and gains (Moravcsik, 1999, p. 74). In the case of CFSP, the lack of central institutions that exceed nation-states’ authority regarding foreign policy issues creates an obstacle. However, nation-states still bargain to implement the common foreign policy, which sometimes contradicts their domestic interests; the relative bargaining power of the members affects the policy outcomes of these negotiations.

In conclusion, liberal intergovernmentalism argues that the member states control the supranational policy-making mechanisms, and the issues characterised with the supranational essence are nothing more than the representation of nation-states’ -especially the stronger ones’- domestic interests.

2.2 Social Constructivism

Social constructivism emerged in the European Union studies during the 1990s and brought a new perspective against the rationalist debate between neofunctionalism and liberal intergovernmentalism regarding European integration (Risse, 2009, p. 144). According to Senem Aydın-Düzgit, social constructivist approaches to the European foreign policy advanced due to the changes in the security perceptions after the end of the Cold War and the steps taken for further foreign policy cooperation within the EU (2015, p. 137). The core argument of social constructivism is that social reality is not *a priori*³⁷ but rather *a posteriori*³⁸, which human agents create and reproduce throughout their lives. Hence, it can be defined as “based on a social ontology which insists that human agents do not exist independently from their social environment and its collectively shared systems of meanings”; and contradicts with the “methodological individualism of rational choice” that perceive the individual human action as a principle element of its analysis (Risse, 2009, p. 145).

Similar to humans, states also do not exist as autonomous agents from their social environment. The assumption of nation-states being absolutely rational and self-interested actors that aim to realise and maximise their domestic interest is rejected by social constructivists (Düzgit-Aydın, 2015, p. 137). The constructivist approach advocates the reciprocal constitutive of social structures and agents; by doing so, it deviates from rationalism which overlooks the dual structure of the reality (Adler, 1997, p. 325; Wendt, 1999, Chapter 4; as cited in Risse, 2009, p. 145). However, it will be incorrect to assume that constructivism completely dismisses the rationalist approach. As Thomas Risse (2009) points out, constructivists may join an intergovernmental thesis of inter-state negotiations as the primary tool to analyse the EU. They may also concur with the neofunctionalist notion of spill-over and the role of supranational institutions.

The conceptualisation of two specific logics of action to ‘consequential’ and ‘appropriate’ by March and Olsen (1998) is enlightening for understanding this

³⁷ *A priori* knowledge is congenital and achieved without any experience. For further information see Immanuel Kant’s works.

³⁸ *A posteriori* knowledge is acquired through experience or observation. For further information see Stephen Palmquist’s works.

situation because it is advocated by rationalist and constructivist approaches. The logic of consequences, favoured by rationalism, argues that agents decide and pursue actions by evaluating their presumable consequences for self-interests while being aware that other agents are acting ditto. By doing so, the bargains among rational actors that aim to maximise their domestic preferences carve out the international order. In this point of view, political history is explained through the consequence expectations of the actors and the preferences. Hence, foreign policy is elucidated by analysing the results expected from it (March and Olsen, 1998, p. 950).

On the contrary, constructivism favours the logic of appropriateness which argues that actions are rule-based. In this framework, agent behaviours are carved out by the prominent role of identities, rules, and institutions. The nation-states considered following the rules for the greater good rather than maximizing their given interests because of their commitment to domestic identities and institutions. In the case of the EU, the rule-guided actions committed to the member-states throughout the supranational institutions. Foreign policy is explained as the application of the rules and appropriate actions associated with “particular identities to particular situations” (March and Olsen, 1998, p. 951). The identity approach entails that the agents affected by the various embedded determinants in the social environment exist; hence, the institutions such as the EU cannot be perceived as external (Risse, 2009, p. 148).

In conclusion, social constructivism argues that nation-states’ domestic preferences and interests are affected by the EU institutions such as supranational norms, rules, identity when they became a member rather than only putting rational decisions in the centre. Europeanisation theory will be used in this study to provide a more detailed explanation of social interaction and identity reconstruction and create a battleground for the clash of constructivism and rationalism.

2.2.1 Europeanisation Theory

While there is no consensus on the definition of Europeanisation, the term generally refers to the interplay between the EU as a supranational organisation and nation-states which form it or between the EU and third parties (Börzel & Panke,

2010, p. 406). Ladrech defines Europeanisation as “a notion to conceptualise institutional and political change in member states” with moving away from the dichotomy between intergovernmentalism and institutionalism (1994, p. 70). According to Reuben Wong, Europeanisation can be defined as the “political and policy changes caused by the membership in the EU on the member states” (2017, p. 144). The majority of constructivist approaches utilises Europeanisation theory to elucidate the influence of the EU on member states’ preference formation (C. Hill & Wallace, 1996; Ladrech, 1994; Risse, 2009; Wong, 2017; Wong & Hill, 2011). The social constructivist perspective argues that EU member states forge a collective identity committed to common liberal norms and values such as the rule of law, human rights, democracy, social pluralism, the social market economy vice versa (Schimmelfennig, 2001, p. 59; as cited in Risse, 2009, p. 157). As Risse points out, it is feasible to say that the supranational norms and values constrain the range of choices available for member states; and define their preferences and interests (2009, p. 148). The social constructivist approach to Europeanisation can be utilised to elucidate the foreign policy formation of the EU member states. In order to generate a reciprocal position to the rational choice model, the social constructivist lens will be used in this study.

The dichotomy that emerged between the rationalist school, which considers the integration process as a result of given domestic preferences, and the constructivist approach that highlighted the importance of common norms and values has constituted the source of the hypotheses of this thesis. The core notions of neofunctionalism – spill over, elite socialisation, and the formation of supranational interest groups – have been utilised to analyze supranational institutions’ role in the foreign policy formation process. The liberal intergovernmental notions – inter-state bargaining and the choice of international institutions – have been employed to indicate the pattern of convergence and divergence among the Big Three. Lastly, social constructivism has been utilised to make a discussion revolving around the effect of the European norms and values in the decision-making process. In this context, the present chapter has provided the theoretical framework of the thesis. In the following chapter, the Crimea and the Eastern Mediterranean crises will be briefly explained. Later, by employing the theoretical framework, the collected data will be analysed.

CHAPTER THREE

CASES

Each initiative to achieve an external dimension in the European integration process has received broad attention in the literature. The crises in the international system have constituted a test for the EU's CFSP. The present chapter has aimed to discuss the complex and multifaceted nature of the CFSP and the role of the Big Three in its formation. In the current state of affairs, there are various crises in which the reaction of the EU is the center of attention. Civil war and human rights violations in Iraq, Libya, and Syria, the refugee crisis in the Eastern Mediterranean, the rule of law crisis in Hungary and Poland, rising far-right parties in the EU member states, the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, and global warming... The list of cases where the EU's actorness and effectiveness in the international system have been tested goes on and on.

The present study utilised the Crimea and the Eastern Mediterranean cases to grasp the affect of the Big Three's preference formation on the EU's CFSP. These cases have been selected due to three important features: proximity, security dimension, and their contemporary nature. The Crimea and the Eastern Mediterranean cases have been marked as the latest crises that occurred in the borders of the European continent and they have a direct impact on the EU's security. Furthermore, the contemporary nature of the crises has constituted the agenda of the EU, and the measures are still in effect today.

In the following part, which forms the heartland of the study, the Crimean and the Eastern Mediterranean crises has examined in the light of historical background and European integration theories. The EU's initial response and the Big Three's positions has constituted the empirical part of the study. By utilising the discourses, official statements and documents, the MSSD analysis based on the hypotheses has conducted. Later, the obtained results will be discussed in the conclusion part.

3.1. The Crimea Case

Ukraine's geographical position between the Russian Federation and the EU constituted a disadvantageous situation which resembles a double-edged sword; high dependency on Russia nourished by the various negative economic ingredients such as high level of corruption, insufficient reforms, and oligarchic industrial structure, which could be gradually eased with the *acquis communautaire* (Dreger et al., 2016, p. 297). In 2008, the EU offered a Stabilisation and Association Agreement to Ukraine; the ratification process was interrupted due to the weak democratic situation in the country. The bifurcation between Russia and the EU resulted in the rejection of the association agreement by the former president Viktor Yanukovich, and, instead, he agreed to establish closer cooperation with Russia³⁹. This incident sparked the Ukrainians' mass protests, known as the *Euromaidan*⁴⁰ movement, which reached a climax that resulted in removing Yanukovich from the Office and establishing a pro-Western interim government. Russian reaction to the loss of influence in Ukraine was the annexation of the Crimean peninsula and the federal city of Sevastopol by a municipal law act dated 18 March 2014. Ukraine and other international actors condemned Russia and considered the act of annexation as a violation of international law. However, Russian Federation refused to call the incident an annexation and asserted the referendum – which took place on 16 March 2014 – as an act of self-determination.

Cross and Karolewski described the Crimea crisis as “the most serious conflict in Europe” ever since the Yugoslavian civil war⁴¹ and “the most significant confrontation between the West and Russia” after the Cold War (2017, p. 4). Since the conflict's origin was about the civil unrest regarding the association agreement and threatened the European continent's security directly, the EU's involvement and position regarding the crisis was crucial. The EU took different measures to respond to the crisis, such as restrictions on specific individuals, diplomatic and

³⁹ The former Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich declined the Association Agreement in exchange for loans and lower gas costs with Russia, which resulted with a civil unrest scaled up into mass protests.

⁴⁰ The word *Euromaidan* comprised two parts: *Euro* represented Europe and *maidan* referred main square of Kyiv, Maidan Nezalezhnosti where the mass protests took place.

⁴¹ Yugoslavian civil war referred to a serious of political upheavals, insurgencies and conflicts occurred in early 1990s which resulted with the break up of Yugoslavia.

economic sanctions. The next part will be the general overview of the main highlights of the EU's reaction.

3.1.1. The EU's Response to the Crimea Crisis

In the extraordinary Foreign Affairs Council meeting on 3 March, the member states condemned the violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and the Russian Federation Council's approval of military action on the territory of Ukraine. They called for dialogue between Russia and Ukraine (Council of the European Union, 2014a). Later, the European Council organised an extraordinary meeting on 6 March to discuss the situation in Ukraine and agreed that urgent action must be taken. In the joint statement, the EU leaders condemned Russia for annexing Crimea and the violation of Ukrainian territorial integrity. The EU called for peaceful negotiation to resolve the crisis and expressed its willingness to engage with both countries bilaterally and multilaterally for the solution. The heads of EU member states confirmed the decisions agreed in the Foreign Affairs Council, and the G8 meeting in Sochi was suspended along with the bilateral talks on visa matters and upcoming agreements (European Council, 2014). However, the EU's calls to destabilise the situation in Ukraine resulted in the absence of escalation steps by the Russian authorities.

Consequently, On 17 March, the EU imposed the first set of sanctions, including travel bans and asset freezes, against Ukrainian and Russian officials and strongly condemned the Russian violation of the Ukrainian constitution with the illegal referendum in Crimea (Council of the European Union, 2014c). Although the EU repeatedly condemned the Russian aggression and forewarned that the destabilisation in the region would have far-reaching consequences and economic sanctions, it disagreed on imposing a robust sanction regime. The economic sanctions adopted only after following the downing of Malaysian Airlines flight 17, known as MH17, in July 2014 resulted in the casualty of hundreds of European citizens – mostly Dutch –, and the EU position consolidated after the war on

Donbas⁴² kept getting intensified. On 29 July, restrictive measures including limited access to EU capital markets for Russian state-owned financial institutions, an embargo on trade in arms, an export ban for dual-use goods for military use, and curtail exports of specific energy-related equipment and technology for oil production and exploration adopted (Council of the European Union, 2014a). Russian counter-sanctions⁴³ followed against the countries which recognised Russian actions as annexation, including EU member states on agricultural products (President of Russia, 2014). Due to different levels of alignment with Russia, a sanction decision targeting the entire economy of Russia could not be achieved among member states. Instead, the Normandy negotiations over the Russian-Ukrainian crisis and ending the war on Donbas were conducted as a diplomatic tool. However, the Normandy format only consisted of France, Germany, Russia, and Ukraine, rather than the inclusion of the EU as a supranational authority. Since the beginning of the crisis, the EU's desire to play a role in a bilateral and multilateral solution with the parties has not been realised, and the member states – France and Germany conducted diplomatic talks without a supranational representation.

There was a general perception that the EU practically fails when encountering such severe crises (Cross & Karolewski, 2017; Orenstein & Kelemen, 2017; Sijursen & Rosén, 2017). The EU compromised 28 nation-states⁴⁴, with each of them has its unilateral historical, economic, and social ties with Russia, creating diverse interests and priorities. Hence, the cost of the sanctions was higher for some members than for others. A high rate of economic interdependency was mainly crucial; for instance, Germany had exclusive relations with Russia in the energy field (Natorski & Pomorska, 2017, p. 58). Furthermore, at the beginning of the crisis, France was about to sell two military ships to Russia, and Italy was enhancing the energy cooperation via the Italian Energy Company (ENI), planning to launch the South Stream pipeline with Gazprom⁴⁵. The close ties with Russian financial

⁴² Donbas region which constituted Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts of Ukraine, became the center of the protests by anti-Ukrainian separatist groups backed by Russian government. The shot-down of the MH17 occurred in the Donbas which controlled by the rebels.

⁴³ The Russian government followed a policy of counter-sanctions after the sanction decisions from various countries of the world such as the USA, EU, Canada and Japan.

⁴⁴ Since the initiation of the Crimean crisis dated back before the UK's leave from the EU, it had 28 member states during the dispute.

⁴⁵ The South Stream pipeline project was planned to transfer Russian natural gas through the Black Sea to Bulgaria and further EU. However, the project cancelled after the Crimea crisis.

elites in many EU member states, Eastern European states' dependency on gas imports, and the Russian market's importance for agricultural exports⁴⁶ were the other determinants that affect the member states' positions (Sjursen & Rosén, 2017, p. 21).

The EU adopted a dual approach to the Crimea crisis; on the one hand, the diplomatic dialogue channel was utilised to mediate the conflict. On the other hand, the act of annexation was strongly condemned, and some restrictive measures took (Naturski, 2017, pp. 188–189). While some analysed the EU's policies against the Crimea crisis as 'unexpectedly' effective and fast (Cross & Karolewski, 2017; Orenstein & Kelemen, 2017; Sjursen & Rosén, 2017), some argued that it was weaker and slow when compared to the other crises (Howorth, 2017; Kuzio, 2017). Traditionally, the ultimate response to the crises has forged via the lowest common denominator of member states' preferences due to the intergovernmental essence of the CFSP.

As Catherine Gegeout (2010) and Christopher Hill (2011) indicated, *Great Power Directoire* that composed of Europe's "Big Three" – France, Germany, and the UK, had been the prominent foreign policy executives since the initiation of EPC and the British accession. Furthermore, Franco-German cooperation regarding foreign policy is dated back to the Elysée Treaty of 1963 (C. Hill, 2011, p. 80). Based on Gegeout's and Hill's arguments that consider the decisive role of the Big Three in the foreign policy formation process, the positions of the Big Three are crucial in establishing a common position against the Crimean crisis.

In applying Most Similar Systems Design (MSSD) to the Crimea case, this study aims to elucidate the convergence and divergence of the three European member states, France, Germany, and the UK, which is similar in terms of being the prominent foreign policy executives. By doing so, three possible variables that may be characterised as the cause of the divergence among Big Three before the downing of the MH17 plane will be scrutinised. The policy formation of the Big

⁴⁶ Russian Federation was the second most important destination for the EU's agricultural products after the USA. The Russian counter-sanctions affected 5.1 billion € volume, which was 11.3 billion € in 2013. For further information see: *The Russian Embargo: Impact on the Economic and Employment Situation in the EU* [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2014/536291/IPOL_BRI\(2014\)536291_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/BRIE/2014/536291/IPOL_BRI(2014)536291_EN.pdf)

Three in the Crimea Crisis will be analysed via three main independent variables based on European integration theories of both constructivist and realist perspectives; social constructivism, neofunctionalism, and liberal intergovernmentalism; and EU's ability to take a joint decision will be considered as a dependent variable. To elucidate the divergence and convergence between Germany, France, and the UK following three hypotheses will be analysed:

H1: In line with the social constructivist approach, the European norms and values – such as the rule of law, human rights, democracy, and good neighbourly relations – trump domestic interests of the Big Three to achieve joint decision in the Crimea crisis.

H2: In line with neo-functionalism, the EU institutions – such as the European Commission, European External Action Service – and policies play a decisive role in the process of producing joint decision in the Crimea crisis.

H3: In line with liberal intergovernmentalism, the Big Three's convergence of interests and cost-benefit analysis leads to a collective decision in the Crimea crisis.

3.1.2. Formulation of a CFSP During Crimea Crisis: *Great Power Directoire*

As Orenstein and Kelemen (2017) stated, there was an initial breakdown among member states at the beginning of the conflict. Crimea crisis divided the EU into three branches; the first group, which was distrustful of Moscow, endorsed a hard stance with sanction policy; Baltic republics, Poland, the UK, Nordic states, and Romania. On the opposite side, Italy, Greece, ROC, Portugal, Spain, Bulgaria, along with Austria, and Hungary. France and Germany adopted a moderate position between the dissident groups (Dobbs, 2017; Portela et al., 2020; Sijrsen & Rosén, 2017).

The Big Three converged in their strategies only after the crisis reached its climax with the downing of the MH17, and some other member states developed different priorities because of their bilateral ties with Russia and their fragilities regarding sanctions. It is feasible to say that the discrete relations between Germany, France, the UK, and Russia caused them to take different positions

against the Crimea conflict. In the early stages of the crisis, France and Germany were hesitant to take a hard line against Russia due to domestic interests such as French contracts on Mistral helicopter carriers⁴⁷ and German dependency on Russian energy⁴⁸. On the contrary, the UK played an important role in pushing the issue onto the EU's agenda. How is the divergence and convergence among the prominent member states affected the EU's ability to take a joint decision on the cases of Crimea? Is it feasible to say diverse positions of the Big Three that stem from different levels of alignment and intertwined relations with Russia constrained the EU's response? By focusing on Big Three's preference formation, this study focused on three variables that potentially affected EU's CFSP; the impact of European norms and values, the role of Brussels-based institutions, and the inter-state bargaining process, which interdependency has a decisive effect.

3.1.2.1. The Initial response: Did norms trump interests?

The Crimea crisis was perceived as a fundamental challenge to European security and the clear breach of European norms and values by violating Ukraine's territorial integrity and the Ukrainian's right to self-determination. Council decisions and declarations repeatedly underlined the violation of international law, which European norms and values adhered to since the initiation of the dispute. The first response coming from British Prime Minister David Cameron emphasised that the UK "must stand up to aggression, uphold international law and support the Ukrainian Government and the Ukrainian people" and underlined the relevance of the conflict with the UK's future by saying, "Britain's own future depends on a world where countries obey the rules" (United Kingdom House of Commons, 2014a). The British stance against the Russian actions reflected two crucial aspects: security and the rule of law. While the dispute is described as a clear violation of international law, the security dimension is emphasised simultaneously. However, there is no proximate threat to the UK's security due to its geographical distance to the disputed area, the crisis perceived in a security problem for the future of the UK.

⁴⁷ France and Russian Federation contracted two Mistralclass amphibious assault ships in 2011. However, the Russian-Ukrainian conflict occurred in 2014 affected the sale of the French carriers to Russians.

⁴⁸ Exporting 41 billion cubic meters of natural gas from the Russian Federation in 2013, Germany was the country that imported the most Russian gas among the European Union member states.

Similar statements were made in an inquiry on the EU and Russia; Neil Crompton⁴⁹ asserted that the UK regarded the “annexation of Crimea as illegal” and would “maintain a position of principled support for Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity” (United Kingdom, House of Lords, 2015, p. 74).

The UK’s position concerning the Crimea crisis is remarked as a hard-line. Rather than perceiving the Russian-Ukrainian dispute as regional and pursuing a moderate approach, the consequent effect was the main focus. In the emergency European Council on Ukraine, Prime Minister Cameron underlined the domino effect of the crisis with following words: “Britain’s own security and prosperity would be at risk if we allow a situation where countries can just flout international rules without incurring consequences.”(United Kingdom House of Commons, 2014a). Furthermore, David Cameron emphasised British initiatives to pursuit a sanction regime:

“Britain has played an important part bringing countries together, setting out new measures that need to be taken and insisting on clear values: standing up to aggression and backing the rule of law” (Government of the United Kingdom, 2014).

Since the beginning of the conflict, the UK was a strong advocate of sanctions against Russia and stressed that the dispute originated security threat within the European continent. Germany and France meticulously avoided a sanction policy against Russia at the beginning of the crisis; however, this did not prevent them from declaring out loud that international law has been violated. The divergence within the Big Three was about responding to the situation rather than whether it was a violation of international law and norms. While the German and French sides were procrastinated the sanction decision, the British side put pressure since the initiation. German Ambassador Dr Christoph Heusgen⁵⁰ underlined that:

“The EU had a moral obligation to support countries under pressure from Russia. This included helping the citizens of Ukraine, who should have a sovereign right to choose the future path of their country” (United Kingdom House of Lords, 2015, p. 119).

In his speech at the House of Lords, Ambassador Heusgen made similar statements to the British partners. Chancellor Merkel also indicated that “it is clear

⁴⁹ During the 2014 and 2015, British ambassador Neil Crompton was the Deputy Political Director for the Eastern Europe and Central Asia Directorate.

⁵⁰ Dr. Christoph Heusgen served for 12 years as the Foreign Policy and Security Adviser to Chancellor Merkel until 2017.

that Ukraine's territorial integrity and thus its unity are being blatantly called into question and violated" and stressed that the EU is committed to international law:

"This is about the territorial integrity of a European neighbour, about respect for the principles of the United Nations, about principles and methods of accommodating conflicting interests in the 21st century" (German Bundestag, 2014).

Nevertheless, Germany's hard-line towards violating international law and norms differentiated in its sanction policy. German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier has initially adopted a more cooperative approach towards Russia, and stood against the implementation of sanctions and warned that "it cannot be in our interests that this (situation) runs out of control" and added that "we need to keep this in mind in our sanctions policy" (Deutsche Welle, 2014). German *Ostpolitik*⁵¹, which stands for the rapprochement policy towards Russia, both in the political and economic dimension, was the German government's primary stance against Russia. Thus, defending the European norms and values in the Crimea crisis and prevalent Russian policy of the government collided. In other words, upholding the European norms and values clashed with German interests.

France's economic relations with Russia were less substantial when compared to Germany. Bruno Tertrais (2014) argued that France's position was "somewhere between Germany and Poland," and the relationship with Russia was more functional. However, France was keen to engage Russia on security issues in the Middle East, which composed an essential part of French foreign policy. Additionally, being on the brink of selling two military carriers, the French government initially favoured diplomatic dialogue rather than a sanction policy. French President Hollande adopted a similar approach with his German and British counterparts and condemned the acts of Russia. President Hollande underlined that Russian actions are not in accordance with "both Ukrainian and international law" and added that the French government recognised "neither the results of the referendum held in Crimea nor the attachment of this region of Ukraine to Russia" (Présidence de la République française, 2014c). While the French government did

⁵¹ *Ostpolitik* is a term which was originated by Chancellor Willy Brandt in the late 1960s, which refer to West Germany's cooperative approach to the Soviet Union and other Warsaw Pact countries.

not hesitate to react to Crimea's annexation, French President Hollande questioned the necessity of the sanctions:

“(…) there is, of course, the possible recourse to sanctions, but why? What are we looking for? Not to raise tensions once again, but on the contrary to open the way for dialogue⁵²” (Présidence de la République française, 2014a).

Additionally, the contract of Mistral helicopter carriers did not cancel until mid-2015⁵³, which demonstrated the priority of French interests.

According to social constructivism, EU member states forge a collective identity committed to common liberal norms and values. The Big Three's statements emphasised the rule of law, democracy, human rights, right to self-determination, and territorial integrity. However, the emphasis on European norms and values did not produce a sanction policy. Thus, Germany and France's position requires further analysis because of their reluctant position to take a hard line even though both German and French authorities condemned Russian actions and advocated international law since the conflict's initiation. On the other hand, the UK favoured sanctions against Russia despite the possible damages of sanctions to the British economy and its relationship with Russia. Nevertheless, it is feasible to say that Germany and France had closer relations with Russia than the UK⁵⁴.

The policy shift of the German and French governments, which consequently generated the convergence of interests between the Big Three, took place as events in Ukraine unfolded, particularly the downing of MH17. As Orenstein & Kelemen (2017) underlined, this incident that took almost 300 European citizens' lives caused EU leaders' trust towards Russia to crumble completely. The MH17 incident eventually constituted a breaking point that created a moment of convergence. The constructivist approach argues that member states have developed similar understandings, a sense of community and belonging (Sjursen & Rosén, 2017, p. 22). After this breaking point, the Big Three converged their strategies, and a

⁵² The statement is translated by the author from French to English. The authentic statement is as follows: *(...) il y a bien sûr le recours éventuel à des sanctions mais des pressions pourquoi faire? Que recherchons-nous? Pas pour faire monter, une fois encore, les tensions, mais au contraire ouvrir la voie du dialogue.*

⁵³ The French mistral contracts which worthed 1.2 billion € cancelled on August 2015, which illustrated the limitations of the EU sanctions regarding the Russian-Ukrainian dispute.

⁵⁴ The relationship between the UK and Russia was relatively problematic due to the assassination of former Russian intelligence officer, Alexander Litvinenko, in London in 2006. However, the Russian financial elites were hold important position in British financial capital.

common perception of a security threat formed. Hence, even though there was a similar understanding of violation of international law since the beginning of the crisis, an unfortunate incident paved the way for a collective European response by constituting a security dimension that was overlooked initially.

3.1.2.2. A quest for supranationalism? : The role of Brussels during the crisis

The role of Brussels-based institutions' regarding the initial response to the Crimea crisis composed an essential part of the EU's response, although the heads of member states ultimately decided to sanction. As Sjørnsen and Rosén's (2017) interviews revealed, supranational institutions took functional roles in the Crimea crisis. European Commission and the EAAS involved facilitating agreement among member states by undertaking roles such as preparing a report regarding the cost of economic sanctions for each member state and specification of the individual sanctions. Similar to the constructivist school, neofunctionalists argue that international relations are the interplay of societal actors rather than a sole interest-driven game among nation-states (Hooghe & Marks, 2019, p. 1114). Thus, in this part of the study, the role of supranational institutions will be elaborated throughout the foreign policy formulation in the Crimea crisis.

In CFSP, even though there is no formal institutionalisation, the emphasis on 'one voice' and 'ever closer union' remains noteworthy. Polish Foreign Minister Sikorski underlined the importance of raising a sole tone against Russia, "we are much more influential when we speak as representatives of the whole Union rather than as representatives of one country" (Odone, 2014). Poland's prominent role in the Crimea crisis can be unfolded with its impact on EU leadership decisions in 2014⁵⁵. European Council's President Donald Tusk stressed the security dimension of the conflict in a remark; "This is not just about the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine. The whole geopolitical order in Europe after 1989 is at stake" and underlined the solidarity of the EU in the following words; "we stand united, we will stay the course" (European Council, 2015). Similar to its

⁵⁵ The appointment of the back-then Prime Minister of Poland, Donald Tusk, as President of the European Council, enabled Poland to pressure the formation of sanctions against Russia.

Polish counterpart, French President Hollande underlined the necessity of acting collectively; “We must all be together. To be effective, all Europeans must speak in the same way, with the same determination, and with the same objectives⁵⁶” (Présidence de la République française, 2014a). However, since the initiation of the conflict, the French side was against the implementation of a sanction regime.

The Polish and French governments’ statements complement each other on raising one voice and illuminates the diverse positions of the member states. A collective response is needed on the conflict, but what will be the response? While Poland pressured a more assertive policy due to security concerns arising from Russian troops’ proximity to its borders, France resisted adopting a stiff sanction policy because of its economic and political ties with Russia. The British government was in solidarity with Poland and the Baltic states despite no direct security threat against its territory. After the downing of MH17, in a meeting on House of Commons, Prime Minister David Cameron shared sympathy towards Baltic states:

“We must recognise the scale of the threat that Russia’s actions in Ukraine represent. When one sits in the European Council and listens to the testimony of the Baltic states or countries such as Romania, with their concerns about what is happening in Transnistria, one can see that if we do not act on this occasion firmly, clearly and consistently, while totally changing the approach we have taken, there will be other such problems to come” (United Kingdom House of Commons, 2014b).

In the case of the UK, the government’s discrete position is particularly salient with the lack of emphasis on the “union” and a “supranational common foreign policy.” Rather than underlining the EU member states’ solidarity, statements usually refer British government and the EU separately or emphasise the UK as a separate actor. David Cameron stated that the “UK will stand up for Ukraine,” and similarly, British Parliamentarian Rachel Reeves interpreted ensuring compromise to end the conflict as “a role for Britain and the EU” (BBC News, 2014). Furthermore, apart from pressuring the European member states to persuade a strong response, the UK had been unilaterally suspended bilateral military cooperation with Russia before the EU sanctions were enacted (United Kingdom House of Commons, 2014c). As indicated in the historical background of this thesis, British accession to the EC was problematic, and the UK did not favour

⁵⁶ The statement is translated by the author from French to English. The authentic statement is as follows: *Il faut être tous ensemble. Pour être efficaces, tous les Européens doivent parler de la même façon, avec la même détermination et avec les mêmes objectifs.*

European political integration. The UK used its opt-out right in various European projects to create an ever closer union, such as the Schengen zone and monetary union. British influence slowly decreased after the Vote Leave⁵⁷ campaign was initiated in 2015, which resulted in the Brexit referendum in 2016. The Crimea crisis was on the agenda of both remain and leave campaigners. The remain campaigner, by then, Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond, underlined that “the only country, if the truth is told, that would like us to leave the EU is Russia. That should probably tell us all we need to know.” (Watt et al., 2016). On the contrary, leave campaigners to hold the EU responsible for the Ukraine crisis.

Germany took a different tack on Russia after the downing of MH17. The German government, which was reluctant to take a hard line against Russia due to exclusive ties, dramatically changed, and Germany took the lead in organising EU-wide sanctions against Russia. Ironically, while German legitimacy on foreign policy matters doubted for having a close relationship with Russia; as many scholars underlined, the Ukraine crisis enabled Germany to take the lead in European foreign policy (Aggestam & Hyde-Price, 2020; Iso-Markku & Müller-Brandeck-Bocquet, 2020; Koeth, 2016; Krotz & Maher, 2016; Maull, 2018; Schoeller, 2020; Siddi, 2020). The conflict-originated security threat and increasing insecurity towards the Russian government drove some reluctant member states to collective action. As Dobbs underlined, growing political scepticism towards Russia from German counterparts had been a salient topic, and “Russia has lost Germany” has been a widespread headline on the press when the Russian aggression gradually increased (2017, p. 35).

In a Visegrád meeting, the German Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier expressed that the stances of Germany and the Visegrád Four⁵⁸ were “identical or very similar” and underlined that concerns of the V4 “are not Hungarian, or Czech, or Slovak or Polish worries but European worries, and therefore our concerns, too” (Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2014). The sense of solidarity was remarkable in the German government's statements. In the German-Russian Forum, Steinmeier emphasised the importance of raising one

⁵⁷ Vote Leave was a campaign that supported the leave vote in the EU membership referendum. For further information see: <http://www.voteleavetakecontrol.org/campaign.html>

⁵⁸ The Visegrád Group (also known as V4) is a cultural and political alliance of Czechia, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia aimed to work together in a number of fields of common interest.

voice in the future of EU's CFSP; however, there was no mention regarding the supranational institutions:

“Europe must stand as one and issue a common reply. Russia knows that, if splits were to arise within Europe on such a key issue, this would put an end to Europe's common foreign policy before it ever began” (German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2014).

There is no evidence in the member states' statements and official declarations that the Crimea crisis was perceived as a security crisis by the EU. Instead, predominantly Baltic states had been share a security concern stem from historical disputes with Russia. However, after the crisis reached its climax with the downing of the MH17, the security perception altered. In harmony with neofunctionalism, which argues the formation of multiple identities through social interaction between member states, emphasising one voice and collective action manifests European identity. However, no reference or significance to supranational agents or institutions was detected in the statements of the Big Three. Additionally, an increasing influence of supranational institutions in the decision-making processes has not been observed.

It is crucial to distinguish between the exercise of power, vis a vis the EU and its member states, to analyse CFSP precisely. As Jolyon Howorth emphasised, the Big Three's impact cannot be deemed the EU itself, even if their actions refer to the European framework (2017, p. 1). During the Crimea crisis, the most influential actors were the head of the government or foreign ministers of Germany and France. The supranational agents – European Commission, EP, EASS, HR/VP – remained relatively ancillary. Thus, the role of Brussels was complementary rather than decisive.

3.1.2.3. Inter-State Bargaining: The impact of interdependency

Since the end of the Cold War, the EU member states have developed close economic and political ties with Russia, and EU-Russia relations gradually became interdependent (Sjursen & Rosén, 2017, p. 21). The economic sanctions imposed by the EU had a far-reaching impact on relations with Russia after the counter-sanctions introduced by the Russian government. As Thomas Risse underlined, liberal intergovernmentalism refers to economic interdependence as a starting point

for explaining nation-state preferences (2005, p. 299). The member states' diverging economic interests and cost-benefit calculations were the main driving force behind the division on the sanctions. Due to the intergovernmental nature of CFSP, in principle, there is a narrow manoeuvre sphere for supranational institutions in the formation of policy and no competency in enforcement. Thus, the preferences of the member states are the prominent indicator of the foreign policy outcomes.

Since the beginning of the crisis, the UK has played a crucial role in pushing the sanctions onto the EU's agenda. The British government were aimed a multifaceted approach to the crisis. European Committee Report, which prepared to elucidate the EU-Russia relations before and beyond the Crime crisis, underlined the economic dimension; the "EU Member States and Russia are heavily economically interdependent" (United Kingdom House of Lords, 2015, p. 12). Nevertheless, the interdependency between the UK and Russia was relatively weak. In 2013, the UK accounted for 4 per cent of Russian exports and 3 per cent of imports, a value of roughly USD 24.5 million (United Kingdom House of Lords, 2015, pp. 12, 13). Compared with the other member states, the UK's critical position towards Russia could be explained by having less to lose due to trade exchanges, with Russia being the lowest among EU member states (Nitoiu, 2018, p. 95).

Regarding the burden of the sanction regime, Lord Andrew Lansley⁵⁹ stated that in the case of further economic and trade sanctions on Russia, "there will also be a degree of sacrifice and pain to be taken on our part, and European countries must understand and accept that" (United Kingdom House of Commons, 2014c). In the clash of norms and interests, former British Foreign Minister Sir Malcolm Rifkin underlined that Europeans "must decide whether it attaches more importance to its international credibility than its commercial interest" (United Kingdom House of Commons, 2014c). As can be seen from the statements, the British government asserted law over domestic interests. However, the government was aware of the political and economic costs associated with sanctions. British Prime Minister stressed that "the situation in Ukraine remains highly precarious – the slightest

⁵⁹ British conservative parliamentarian.

miscalculation could see it spiral out of control” (Government of the United Kingdom, 2014).

In a similar manner, French President Hollande underlined that while the economic sanctions targeting Russia also has an adverse effect on Ukraine along with all of the countries in the international system and notably on Europe:

“This situation weighs on Europe because it suffers from an economic situation through the sanctions and therefore from uncertainty⁶⁰” (Présidence de la République française, 2014b).

On the French side, the initial resistance to taking a stronger position on Russia was the close economic ties with Russia and political relations in the Middle East, especially on military cooperation. In 2013, trade exchanges between parties were roughly equal to USD 25 million (World Bank, 2013a). The pending sale of two French Mistral amphibious assault ships to Russia, which was contracted in 2011 – long before the conflict's initiation – was the most crucial determinative of the government's policy and the reason behind most criticism France received. The Elysée was a strong advocate of diplomatic solutions; however, ships were sold to Egypt instead due to the further destabilizing actions on the Russian side (Dobbs, 2017, p. 35). François Hollande explained the situation in the following words;

“The conditions must be met for the vessel to be delivered. What are the conditions? A ceasefire and a political settlement. Today, these conditions are not met. How could I authorise the delivery of a ship which may, tomorrow, be a warship even though there is a crisis in Ukraine? However, as soon as – it is quite possible in October or November the conditions are met, the ships could be delivered⁶¹” (Présidence de la République française, 2014c).

Considering Russia as a threat represented a major policy shift for Germany and France, which consistently regarded Russia as a strategic partner than a rival (Carta & Braghiroli, 2011, p. 269). As Tuomas Forsberg emphasised, “a stable and constructive relationship with Russia remains very much in Germany's national interests,” which to a large extent explained Germany's moderate stance at the

⁶⁰ The statement is translated from French to English. The authentic statement is as follows: *Cette situation pèse sur l'Europe, parce qu'elle souffre à travers les sanctions aussi d'une situation économique, et donc d'une incertitude.*

⁶¹ The statement is translated from French to English. The authentic statement is as follows: *Les conditions doivent être réunies pour que le navire soit livré. Quelles sont les conditions? Un cessez-le-feu et un règlement politique. Aujourd'hui, ces conditions ne sont pas réunies. Comment pourrais-je autoriser la livraison d'un bateau qui peut, demain, être un bateau de guerre alors même qu'il y a la crise en Ukraine? Mais dès lors que et c'est tout à fait possible aux mois d'octobre ou de novembre les conditions seraient réunies, les bateaux pourraient être livrés.*

beginning of the crisis (2016, p. 22). German Foreign Minister Steinmeier advocated the diplomatic efforts, rather than taking the side of imposing sanctions;

“We chose to persistently seek political solutions, rather than to issue loudmouthed, albeit ineffective statements. We accepted that our diplomatic efforts may miss the mark, taking the risk that we may be seen to fail in public. This was a difficult choice to make, and it does expose us to criticism. Nevertheless, it is the only way that we can live up to our responsibility. I for one could never forgive myself if we did not seek out and use every diplomatic tool at our disposal, for as long as possible, with a view to finding a solution” (German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2014).

Germany was one of Russia’s most important bilateral trading partners; in 2013, trade exchanges between parties were roughly equal to USD 88 million (World Bank, 2013b). During his speech in Bundestag, Russian President Vladimir Putin has emphasised the depth of relations:

“Today’s Germany is Russia’s leading economic partner, our most important creditor, one of the principal investors and a key interlocutor in discussing international politics” (President of Russia, 2001).

Even though Germany delicately avoided supporting sanction policy in the beginning, due to the intransigent actions of President Putin, German Chancellor Merkel warned other EU leaders that “Putin could not be trusted” considering that during the Crimea crisis, “he had lied to her several times and made promises that he then proceeded to break” (Der Spiegel, 2014). Despite pressure from many EU member states and the USA, Chancellor Angela Merkel managed to prevent a more assertive sanction policy. The downing of MH17 and the Russian response to it caused distrust towards Russia and resulted in a policy shift in Germany. Notwithstanding the negative stance of the German Business community, after the breaking point, Berlin took the lead in organising EU-wide sanctions against Russia.

The dramatic change in the positions of both Germany and France concerning Russia was crucial for the formation of a collective response. As the crisis unfolded, the Russian government’s destabilizing actions caused a convergence of perceptions and interests about the Russian threat among the Big Three in the foreign policy, resulting in the reluctant states being convinced (Orenstein & Kelemen, 2017, p. 89). In line with liberal intergovernmentalism, inter-state bargaining occurred at the head of the state or government level concerning the exhaustive calculation of the member states’ facilitated agreement.

Mistrust towards Russia utilised the formation of a common response of the Member States, and the involvement of supranational institutions such as the European Commission and the EEAS remained mainly a contribution (Natorski & Pomorska, 2017, p. 66). Due to the intergovernmental characteristic of the CFSP and lack of central institutions that surpassed the authority of the member states, EU unity was undermined by Putin's "Trojan horses" – as Orenstein and Kelemen (2017) defined, that pursued pro-Putin foreign policies. During the Crimea crisis, the EU eventually forged a sanction policy but could not hinder member states from pursuing pro-Russia policies⁶² since the CFSP does not prohibit member states from maintaining their domestic incongruous foreign policies.

3.1.3. An Analysis: Application of the MSSD to the Crimea Crisis

The highly interdependent nature of German-Russian relations and French contracts on Mistral helicopter carriers was expected to constrain Big Three's positions and paralysed the EU foreign policy-making process to the lowest common denominator policy for collective response. In reaction to the Crimea crisis, the Big Three's initial breakdown later resulted in the convergence of strategies due to growing distrust against Russia and changing security perception. Some scholars argued that the Crimea crisis enabled the EU to demonstrate an unexpectedly more potent form of power (Natorski & Pomorska, 2017; Orenstein & Kelemen, 2017); others argued that EU power became more constrained (Howorth, 2017; Kuzio, 2017). As Sijursen & Rosén emphasised (2017), although there is no evidence of Big Three's concerted effort to pressure a sanction regime, the convergence of their policy stances enabled the EU to impose stricter sanction regime was initially unable to agree. The adoption of the third round of economic sanctions in the energy, defence, and financial sectors came only after the shooting down of MH17 in July 2014, which constituted a breaking point. According to F.

⁶² In 2015, Cyprus signed a deal with Russian naval forces on use of Mediterranean ports, Hungary made a nuclear fuel supply deal with Russia and Greece signed a preliminary gas pipeline deal to bring Russian gas to Europe. These agreements were held during the EU's sanction policy regarding Crimea crisis.

Stephen Larrabee and others, “the EU probably would not have agreed to impose such biting sanctions” if this incident did not occur (2015, p. 17).

According to Berg-Schlosser & De Meur (2008), in the good practice of an MSSD research design, the hypothesis is formulated regarding its connection to the outcome. For this purpose, to reveal the multifaceted dynamics among the Big Three and its effect on achieving a joint decision, the predetermined hypotheses will be analysed in the following section.

In line with the social constructivist approach, the first hypothesis has utilised to test if the European norms and values – such as the rule of law, human rights, democracy, and good neighbourly relations – predominated domestic interests of the Big Three to achieve joint decision in the Crimea crisis. According to the results derived from the study, while the Big Three’s stances converged regarding the violation of law, it did not ensure a collective response. Thus, the first hypothesis is falsified. British, German, and French governments described Russian actions as a clear breach of international law which European norms and values also stand for. Regardless of the strong censure coming from each of them, only the UK predominantly stood for a robust sanction regime initially. However, the reason behind the British stance was the interpretation of the conflict as a security threat. Both Germany and France decided to defer implementing strong sanctions due to perceiving Russia as a strategic partner than a rival. Under these circumstances, a collective response against the Crimea crisis was delayed, and consequently, the EU’s power was undermined. The collective response only came after the further escalation of the conflict that constitutes a distrust towards Russia among Germany and France.

Neofunctionalist school, which shares similarities regarding European identity formation of constructivism, further advocated Brussels-based organisations’ role in the foreign policy decision-making process and spill-over of the authority from the domestic level to the supranational level. The second hypothesis was tested to validate if the EU institutions – such as the European Commission, EAAS, HR/VP – and policies given the central role within the Big Three in producing a joint decision in the Crimea crisis.

According to the results obtained, the role of supranational institutions and agents in the formation of common foreign policy was minor. Hence, the second hypothesis is falsified and has no signified effect on achieving a joint decision. The European Commission and the EASS played a facilitator role in achieving consensus via exclusive efforts to preserving member states' vulnerabilities against the EU's sanction regime. While advocating a common foreign policy particularly striking in German discourses, the British government, on the other hand, followed an individual attitude. Despite the EU's willingness to become a mediator, the talks with Russia concluded via Normandy format, including French and German governments. During the diplomatic attempts to tackle the crisis, Germany and France assumed a delegate role to assert EU policies; rather than the representation of the EU via supranational institutions or agents.

Additionally, in the discourses of the Big Three, there was no reference to supranational figures or institutions having a decisive influence on foreign policy formation in the Crimean crisis. Thus, there is no evidence found regarding the supranational determinative power on the CFSP. Similarly, the degree of alleging supranational common foreign security policy differentiated among the Big Three; while only Germany took the leading role, France's position was relatively supportive, and the UK was absent.

The intergovernmental nature of the CFSP was salient in the formation of crisis response with the Normandy format; furthermore, the sanction decision predominantly concluded at the head of government or state level. The third hypothesis was formulated to test if the Big Three's convergence of interests and cost-benefit analysis led to a collective decision in the Crimea crisis. The main aim was to analyse if the crisis response forged on the lowest common denominator and its relevance to the Big Three's interdependence with Russia. The reason behind the German and French government's hesitant stance at the beginning of the crisis was predominantly explained in their interdependency with Russia. Berlin was criticised for holding crucial business, trade, and energy interests with Kyiv. At the beginning of the crisis, perceiving Russia as a strategic partner rather than a rival stemming from the intertwined economic relations resulted in the prevalence of German domestic interests.

Similarly, the French government criticised for the sale of Mistral carriers. Although French-Russian economic interdependency was relatively weak compared to Germany, confronting Russia would negatively affect French interests in the Middle East. Consequently, the reason behind the French and German governments delaying the implementation of the sanctions policy initially could be explained by their economic interests and vulnerabilities. On the other hand, the British-Russian relations did not contain high interdependency. The trade exchange rate was one of the lowest among the EU member states.

Additionally, the political relations have deteriorated from the assassination of a former Russian intelligence officer, Alexander Litvinenko, in the British capital. The main difference among the Big Three in the formation of foreign policy emerged in this regard. Despite the UK's attempts to emphasise the security threat stemming from Russian actions initially, the collective response was only forged after the Big Three converged their strategies. In July, the downing of the MH17 constituted a breaking point; the German and French governments' initial stance, which stemmed from perceiving Russia as a partner rather than a rival, alter into a perception of a security threat in the European continent.

The divergence among the Big Three was about the different cost-benefit calculations enduring the sanction outcome and security perception of the crisis. German and French counterparts favoured diplomatic solutions due to the cost-benefit calculations of economic sanctions. It is important to underline that British-Russian relations have already deteriorated before the Crimea crisis, and the economic interdependency between parties was relatively less compared to other Big Two. German and French government's shift on security perception regarding Russia resulted in a convergence of strategies between the Big Three. However, even the adoption of the third level of sanctions was limited only to exports of specific energy-related equipment and technology for oil production and exploration rather than a ban on the entire energy sector. This indicated the determinative power of economic interdependence, which liberal intergovernmentalism assumes starting point for nation-state preferences.

Furthermore, the sanction regime was weaker in comparison to other crises that the EU faced. As Taras Kuzio underlined, the sanctions agreed as a response to the

Crimea crisis “has never been as tough as those imposed against Iran⁶³” (2017, p. 8). According to the results derived from the study, the third hypothesis is confirmed, and the effects of interdependency and cost-benefit calculations on achieving a joint decision were traced.

Table 1: The MSSD table that indicates the Big Three’s positions in the Crimea Crisis

Independent Variables/Most Similar Systems	European norms and values		The role of Brussels-based institutions		Convergence of interests and cost-benefit calculations	
	<i>Before and after the downing of the MH17</i>		<i>Before and after the downing of the MH17</i>		<i>Before and after the downing of the MH17</i>	
France	✓	✓	×	×	✓	✓
Germany	✓	✓	×	×	✓	✓
United Kingdom	✓	✓	×	×	×	✓

In conclusion, as indicated in the table above, after the implementation of the most similar system design to the Crimea crisis, the following results were obtained:

- a. Since the beginning of the crisis, the statements of the Big Three have emphasised European norms and values. There was no divergence among France, Germany, and the UK on perceiving Russian actions as a clear breach of international law and territorial integrity of Ukraine. Thus, the first independent variable has an inconsequential effect on achieving a joint decision.

⁶³ In addition to the UN sanctions, the EU adopted wide range of economic and financial sanctions on Iran against the nuclear-proliferation. The sanction policy included the restrictions on trade in several goods such as export of arms, import of natural gas, oil, petroleum, and financial restrictions on Iranian banks, measures on transports sector including preventing the access of Iranian flights and vessels, and travel restrictions and asset freeze implemented for entities and individuals.

- b. There was no reference to Brussels-based institutions or supranational agents in the formation of foreign policy in the statements of the Big Three. During the crisis, the Brussels-based institutions assumed a facilitator role. Thus, the second independent variable has an inconsequential effect on achieving a joint decision.
- c. According to the statements of the Big Three, the initial divergence characterised cost-benefit calculations of the enduring sanction outcome and different security perceptions of Russia. The relatively high interdependency of France and Germany to Russia prevented the convergence with the UK to ensue. While France and Germany perceived Russia as a strategic partner and the security dimension of the crisis is overlooked, the UK perceived Russian actions as a security threat. Hence, the third independent variable has a consequential effect on achieving a joint decision.

Among the analysed variables, the EU cohesion was anchored in the security concerns along with the cost-benefit calculations stemming from different levels of interdependency. This study aimed to test 3 independent variables based on the main assumptions of three prominent European integration theories and explanatory power regarding the Crimea crisis. According to the results, the initial difference among the most similar systems is founded on the third independent variable: Interdependence, cost-benefit calculations, and security perception. It is not argued that only these three variables explain the foreign policy formation during the Crimean crisis. On the contrary, the influence of various factors such as the US foreign policy towards the Crimean crisis⁶⁴, Russian counter-sanctions, China's criticizing the EU's sanction decision⁶⁵ was important. The Big Three's convergence of strategies is particularly vital to pursue a collective response within the EU due to other member states keen to follow them. This study focuses on the decision-making process regarding CFSP rather than the efficiency of the sanction regime during the Crimea crisis.

⁶⁴ The USA was one of the first countries that adopted sanctions against Russian actions, and provided assistance for Ukrainian government.

⁶⁵ China was against the implementation of sanction regime against Russia and argued that the political solution is only way out.

Nevertheless, it is feasible to say that several factors constrained the EU's response⁶⁶. From the results of the present study, it can be concluded that the initial divergence among the Big Three undermined the EU unity on implementing sanction regime. Additionally, because of the intergovernmental nature of the CFSP, no institutional or legal structure prevented member states from pursuing their national foreign policies, which consequently weakened the EU's position.

The Crimea crisis is often described as one of the latest tests for the EU's CFSP, and the specific focus is attributed to sanctions' effectiveness. However, another critical aspect of the crisis is also its impact on CFSP. Priscilla Murphy defines crises as "bifurcation points that permanently redefine an organisation in a new and unexpected light" (1996, p. 106). Similarly, Peter M. Haas argues that "new ideas will be solicited and selected only after crises, for crises will alert politicians to the need for action and will seek to gather information about their interests and options" (2001, p. 11581). Historically, crisis moments lead to new initiatives that aimed to increase cooperation within the EU. In the case of Crimea, this study also aims to illustrate if any lasting consequences for the EU's CFSP. Thus, in the next section, the EU's CFSP regarding the eastern Mediterranean, which indicates a case for the EU's response to a dispute between its own member states, Greece and ROC, and a candidate state, Turkey will be analysed.

⁶⁶ The historical ties of the some member states with Russia, member states' dependency on Russian natural gas, Russia being an important market for agricultural products constrained the EU's response.

3.2. The Eastern Mediterranean Case

Energy has always been a crucial concern of international relations regarding its potential of being a driving force for inter-state cooperation or a source of conflict (Tsakiris et al., 2018, p. 1). The discovery of hydrocarbon resources in the Eastern Mediterranean has resulted in multifaceted interests, preferences, costs, and benefits that include a relatively high number of actors. Since the 1990s, the region's importance has significantly increased due to seismic search and drilling technology developments, rising energy prices, and high dependence on hydrocarbon resources (Stocker, 2017, p. 579). According to an oft-quoted study conducted by the USA Geological Survey, the eastern Mediterranean region hosts an estimated 122 trillion cubic feet of natural gas and 1.7 billion barrels of oil potential (Schenk et al., 2010, p. 4). These vast energy reserves have regional and global implications along with their geopolitical and geo-economic importance.

Despite the great potential, the eastern Mediterranean is a centre of historically strategic competition. Remarkably, several unsolved disputes among the ROC, Greece, and Turkey resulted in a hard-to-tackle deadlock that prevents cooperation among actors. The frozen conflict in Cyprus island⁶⁷ and long-standing disagreement between Turkey and Greece regarding territorial claims⁶⁸ lie at the centre of the tension. Thus, recent gas discoveries in the eastern Mediterranean triggered the conflict among the RoC, Greece, and Turkey by constituting a contemporary problem emerging on top of old unresolved conflicts.

Since the beginning of the 2000s, the countries take multiple steps to consolidate their sovereignty in the region. ROC signed agreements with Egypt (2003), Lebanon (2007), and Israel (2010) for the delimitation of EEZ's and declared its maritime borders as 12 nautical miles (United Nations Office of Legal

⁶⁷ The Republic of Cyprus was founded as an independent state in 1960 and Treaty of Guarantee signed at Nicosia declared the United Kingdom, Turkey, and Greece as guarantor powers. On 15 July 1974, the Greek supported military coup d'état overthrew Archbishop Makarios and five days later, Turkey carried out a military intervention to the island. Since then, Cyprus divided into two separate countries, Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) on the northern part which remains a de facto state and ROC on the southern part, the internationally recognised government of the island.

⁶⁸ The dispute between Greece and Turkey is over the delimitation of territorial waters, airspace, exclusive economic zones (EEZ) and demilitarised status of some of the Greek islands. Greece wants to extend its territorial waters to 12 nautical miles on the Aegean Sea. Furthermore, while Turkish side argues that the continental shelf of the country should be measured from the mainland, Greek side claims that the island's have their own continental shelf, which closely tied with the exclusive economic zones that refers to the country's control over natural resources in the region.

Affairs, 2003, p. 45). Similarly, Greece held meetings with Egypt (2004) and attributed its claims on extending territorial waters to 12 nautical miles on the Aegean Sea to benefit hydrocarbon reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean. Other parties to the dispute, Turkey and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), on the other hand, signed an agreement on the delimitation of the continental shelf⁶⁹ in 2011 (Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2011). The combination of the overlapping projections of the national sovereignty and the gas discoveries⁷⁰ in the region have precipitated and intensified the crisis (Demiryol, 2019, p. 448).

Given this background, the deep-rooted dispute in the eastern Mediterranean escalated in 2018 when Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu declared that the 2003 Cyprus-Egypt EEZ agreement is “null and void” according to international law and Turkey will begin offshore hydrocarbon activities in the region⁷¹ (Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2018). Later in October 2018, Turkey initiated its first deep-sea drilling operation in the eastern Mediterranean with the drilling vessel Fatih⁷². Although Turkey pursued an assertive foreign policy, the deteriorated relations with the neighbour countries, particularly Israel⁷³ and Egypt⁷⁴, caused Turkey to become isolated in the region. In this context, the Eastern Mediterranean Gas Forum (EMGF) was held in January 2019 with the participation of Greece, the ROC, Israel, Egypt, Italy, Jordan, and the Palestinian Authority to cultivate the collective interests of the actors regarding gas reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean. However, Turkey has deliberately uninvited regardless of its 1792 kilometre coastline (Merz, 2020, p. 3). Against the alliance led by Greece and ROC, Turkey signed a maritime delimitation treaty with the Libyan Government of

⁶⁹ Accordingly, Turkey claims EEZ on Blocks 1, 4, 5, 6, 7 and behalf of the TRNC on Blocks 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 12, 13; which clashes with approximately 70% of the ROC's EEZ and also with Greece's EEZ.

⁷⁰ The gas discoveries of Israel in 2009 and 2010 (Tamar and Leviathan), Cyprus in 2011 (Aphrodite), and Egypt in 2015 (Zohr) had a reminder and triggering effect regarding the hydrocarbon potential in the Eastern Mediterranean.

⁷¹ Turkish Petroleum Corporation had already been granted an offshore exploration license in the Eastern Mediterranean on 14 November 2008.

⁷² The first drilling ship of Turkey named after Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror.

⁷³ While Israel is one of the key actors in the region, the relationship between Turkey and Israel drained after 2009 when Israel executed Operation Cast Lead in Gaza and further deteriorated with the attack on Mavi Marmara which resulted in the loss of 10 aid volunteers.

⁷⁴ Egypt is the first country started drilling activities in the region and one of the most important producers and exporter of gas. The close relations with Egypt under the Mursi administration were turned down after the coup, and Ankara called for sanctions against Marshal Sisi.

National Accord (GNA) in 2019 to consolidate its sovereignty in the region (United Nations, 2019). In the multilateral game played in the predominantly ROC, Greece, and Turkey triangle, rising tensions and moments of conflict from time to time have transformed the Eastern Mediterranean into “a strategic region in which larger geopolitical fault lines involving the EU” (Tanchum, 2020).

Following the Russian-Ukrainian conflict that raised concerns over the energy security of Europe, the hydrocarbon reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean entered the agenda of the EU through its potential to become the alternative energy hub. However, past and contemporary claims stem from competing domestic interests of the actors within the region have led to the formation of a new geopolitical front in the borders of Europe. The EU has a direct stake in the matter since it involves two member states, Greece and ROC, and a candidate state, Turkey. Furthermore, despite the antagonism between the Greek and Turkish sides, both countries are members of NATO, an alliance established to guarantee the security of its members⁷⁵. Thus, the Eastern Mediterranean dispute emerges as a new challenge for the EU’s foreign policy. On the one hand, since the crisis involves EU member states, Greece and ROC, and poses a threat to the region’s stability, it is necessary for the EU to formulate an immediate and effective policy. On the other hand, the member states’ different levels of alignment with Turkey and the overall high interdependent nature of the relations⁷⁶ obstruct a consensus on forming a common position.

With the current nature of the EU-Russia relations at a standstill, the EU’s stance towards the developments in the Eastern Mediterranean constitutes a new challenge for its global actorness. Furthermore, since the EU is an insider rather than an outsider in this context compared to the Crimea case, it is also a test to bolster its credibility in the regional order. In this context, before analysing the positions of the prominent member states and the EU’s power, the next part will provide a general overview of the EU’s reaction to the developments in the Eastern Mediterranean region.

⁷⁵ The primary objective of the NATO is “guarantee the freedom and security of its members through political and military means.” For further information, see: ‘WHAT IS NATO?’, NATO, <https://www.nato.int/nato-welcome/index.html> [accessed 10 April 2021].

⁷⁶ Includes cooperation on trade, legal affairs, security and migration.

3.2.1. The EU's Response to the Eastern Mediterranean Crisis

The Common Strategy of the European Council of 19 June 2000 on the Mediterranean region (European Council, 2000) and A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign And Security Policy (European Union External Action Service, 2016) constitutes the framework of the EU's policy regarding its regional aims and goals in the Eastern Mediterranean and defines EU as a "global foreign policy actor" (Efstathiou, 2021). According to the documents, the Eastern Mediterranean is a region that has strategic importance for the EU, and on the political front, the union has the objective of establishing a common area of peace and stability.

Following Turkish FM Çavuşoğlu's claims for offshore resources in the Eastern Mediterranean, the Sapiam 12000 vessel, Italy's ENI company chartered for the drilling gas in offshore Cyprus, stopped by the Turkish navy, resulting in a diplomatic standoff (Maltezou, 2018). Additionally, Turkey launched a military exercise in the region, resulting in an Italian drilling vessel being compelled to return. On 22 March 2018, European Council adopted a conclusion on the recent escalations, which states that condemning "Turkey's continued illegal actions in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Aegean Sea and underlines its full solidarity with Cyprus and Greece," however, there was no mention of sanctions policy (European Council, 2018). Furthermore, Donald Tusk underlined that EU member states "stands united behind the Republic of Cyprus regarding its right to explore and exploit its natural resources in its Exclusive Economic Zone" (2018). While member states broadly agree that Turkey's actions in the Eastern Mediterranean are problematic, they differ in resolving this conflict.

After the first Turkish drilling vessel Fatih's operation, Turkey continued its oil and gas exploration in the region with drilling vessel Yavuz⁷⁷ and seismic research vessels Barbaros Hayrettin and Oruç Reis⁷⁸, but this time escorted by Turkish warships. (Daily Sabah, 2019). In response to this, the EU reaffirmed its solidarity

⁷⁷ The drilling ship Yavuz named after first legitimate Ottoman Caliph Selim I, known as Selim the Resolute and Selim the Grim. During his reign, the Ottoman lands enormously expanded after the conquests in the Middle East.

⁷⁸ The research vessels Barbaros Hayrettin and Oruç Reis took theirs name from the admirals of the Ottoman navy which enabled the Ottomans to establish great superiority against many states in the Mediterranean.

with Cyprus and underlined “the serious immediate negative impact” of Turkish actions in the Eastern Mediterranean, and invited the Commission and EEAS to submit options for “appropriate measures without delay, including targeted measures” (European Council, 2019). Accordingly, Foreign Ministers of the member states of the Council of Europe decided to suspend negotiations on the Comprehensive Air Transport Agreement and agree not to hold EU-Turkey high-level dialogues due to Turkish drilling activities in the Eastern Mediterranean (Council of the European Union, 2019). Turkish side had underlined that the acts are taken for the sake of solidarity “will backfire” (Republic of Turkey Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2019). Regarding the EU's decision to impose sanctions on Turkey, Turkish Foreign Minister Çavuşoğlu stated that “no need to take it too seriously⁷⁹” (Sputnik Türkiye, 2019). Furthermore, Çavuşoğlu underlined the high interdependency between the EU and Turkey, “the EU needs us,” and added that the sanction decision was initially adopted ostensibly “they had to make valueless decisions to satisfy the Greek Cypriots” (Sputnik Türkiye, 2019).

Similar behaviour patterns seen in the Crimea crisis were also observed in the Eastern Mediterranean dispute; as Sinem Adar and Ilke Toygür emphasised, member states tend to position themselves based on their national interests (2020, p. 4). Furthermore, the obstacle of divergent security perceptions of its member states on forming and implementing a collective foreign policy strategy – the chronic problem of Brussels prevailed again (Efsthathiou, 2021). Even though member states broadly agreed that Turkey’s drilling activities were illegal, the response was vague. The Council conclusions which underlined “all options will be on the table” (European Council, 2020a) against Turkish actions, and in case of any escalation, “the EU will use all the instruments and the options at its disposal” (European Council, 2020b) have not actualised.

The split among member states regarding the Eastern Mediterranean crisis was emerged in three forms: pro-sanctions, pro-diplomatic solutions, and those taking a more moderate stance. On the one hand, the ROC pushed for a more rigid stance and a sanction policy since the initiation of the dispute with the support of France, Greece, ROC, and Austria. On the other hand, Germany, Poland, Hungary,

⁷⁹ The statement is translated from Turkish to English. The authentic statement is as follows: *Çok da ciddiye almaya gerek yok.*

the Czech Republic, and Slovakia favoured diplomatic tools to tackle the crisis by considering having closer relations with Turkey and the mutually dependent policy areas between Turkey and the EU. Similarly, countries such as Italy, Malta, and Spain, which have close alignment with Turkey in their foreign policy strategies in the Middle East, took a distant stance against additional sanctions. Lastly, the UK, which is no longer a member state, refrained from following a policy that would alienate Turkey from the bloc and NATO (International Crisis Group, 2020).

As Sinan Ülgen (2020) stated, the Eastern Mediterranean crisis is an “opportunity to demonstrate the coming of age of the EU as a credible foreign policy actor.” Since the initiation of the dispute, the EU repeatedly expressed solidarity with ROC and described Turkish drilling activities in the region as illegal. Nevertheless, its member states' diverge perceptions and interests prevented forming a collective response against the crisis in the Eastern Mediterranean.

According to Gegeout's (2010) and Hill's (2011) arguments, which positioned France, Germany, and the UK as the *Great Power Directoire* of the EU and prominent foreign policy executives, the Eastern Mediterranean crisis reflected similar patterns of the Crimea crisis. Due to Brexit, the Big Three relatively shrank into two: France and Germany, with the decreased role of the UK in the foreign policy formulation. Franco-German cooperation on foreign policy dated back to the Elysée Treaty of 1963 promoted consultation on crucial matters to achieve parallel positions (C. Hill, 2011, p. 80). Nevertheless, the foreign policy formulation of the French and German governments during the Eastern Mediterranean dispute was remarked as divergence. While France favoured a more rigid sanction policy against Turkey's actions, Germany took a more constructive approach and emphasised the importance of dialogue.

In applying Most Similar Systems Design (MSSD) to the Eastern Mediterranean case, this study aims to elucidate the convergence and divergence of the Big Three⁸⁰. By doing so, three possible variables that may be characterised as the cause of the divergence between them will be scrutinised. The policy formation of the Big Three in the Eastern Mediterranean crisis will be analysed via three main

⁸⁰ After the diminishing role of the UK, the focus will be on France and Germany among the Big Three regarding the EU's foreign policy formulation. Nevertheless, the UK's position is additionally included for the Treaty of Guarantee and the historical British presence in the region.

independent variables based on European integration theories of both constructivist and realist perspectives; social constructivism, neofunctionalism, and liberal intergovernmentalism; and EU's ability to take a joint decision will be considered as a dependent variable. To elucidate the divergence and convergence between the Big Three, the following three hypotheses will be analysed:

H1: In line with the social constructivist approach, the European norms and values – such as the rule of law, human rights, democracy, territorial integrity, sovereignty rights and good neighbourly relations – trump the domestic interests of Big Three on achieving a common position in the Eastern Mediterranean crisis.

H2: In line with neofunctionalism, the EU institutions – such as the European Commission, EAAS – and policies play a decisive role in the process of producing a joint decision in the Eastern Mediterranean crisis.

H3: In line with liberal intergovernmentalism, the Big Three's convergence of interests and cost-benefit analysis leads to a collective decision in the Eastern Mediterranean crisis.

3.2.2. Formulation of a CFSP During the Eastern Mediterranean Crisis: *Great Power Directoire*

Similar to the Crimea crisis, there was an initial breakdown among member states on responding to the Eastern Mediterranean dispute stemming from the different levels of engagement with Turkey. Greece and Cyprus, supported by France, advocated a more confrontational stance. The crisis reached its climax after the collusion of Greek and Turkish warships⁸¹ in the Eastern Mediterranean, bringing the two countries to the brink of conflict. Before the collective response from the EU, the French government deployed warships and jet fighters to the region (Trofimov & Gauthier-Villars, 2020). Additionally, joint military exercises were conducted in the Eastern Mediterranean by Greece, ROC, France, and Italy⁸² (Deutsche Welle, 2020). While France was openly in favour of a sanction regime

⁸¹ On August 2020, Turkey sent Oruç Reis for seismic research to the contested areas in the Eastern Mediterranean escorted with warships, and Greece responded by sending its own naval forces.

⁸² Italy also conducted a military exercise with Turkey and pursued a balance policy.

against Turkish actions and supported Greek-Cypriot claims in the field, Germany pursued a reconciliatory approach. Germany, which has close ties with Turkey in various policy spheres and as a country that hosts the highest number of Turks in Europe, followed a pro-dialogue and diplomatic approach. The Crimea crisis was marked as the leading role of Germany in the foreign policy formulation of the EU. Similarly, the German government again adopted an assertive policy in the Eastern Mediterranean crisis by assuming a mediator role.

France and Germany converged in their strategies after the de-escalation of the crisis in the region after the collision. The EU member states developed different priorities because of their different level of alignment with Turkey and their fragilities against a sanction regime⁸³. It is feasible to say that the discrete relations between Germany, France, and Turkey caused them to take different stances in the Eastern Mediterranean dispute. The initial period of the crisis indicated a split between France and Germany. While France's relatively weak bilateral relations with Turkey allowed the French government to take a hard line, the German-Turkish relations' multidimensional and more intertwined nature resulted in Germany taking a more cautious policy. The UK's role remained distinctly faint; however, it displayed a stance in favour of dialogue and diplomacy. How is the divergence and convergence among the prominent member states affected the EU's ability to take a joint decision on the cases of the Eastern Mediterranean? Is it feasible to say diverse positions of the Big Three stem from different levels of alignment and intertwined relations with Turkey constrained the EU's response? By focusing on prominent foreign policy executives' preference formation, France and Germany, along with the UK, this study aims to focus on three potential variables that affected EU's CFSP; the impact of European norms and values, the role of Brussels-based institutions, and the cost-benefit calculations which have a decisive effect on the inter-state bargaining process.

⁸³ Countries such as Italy, Spain and Malta has domestic interests such as cooperation in Middle East, exposure to economic woes and migration.

3.2.2.1. The Initial Response: Upholding European Norms and Values

The Crimea crisis was perceived as a breach of European norms and values through the violation of ROC's EEZ and Greek-Cypriot sovereignty rights. Council decisions and declarations repeatedly underlined the violation of international law and described Turkish actions in the region as illegal. The initial response of the French government indicated a rigid policy against Turkish actions. In a meeting with Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis, French President Emmanuel Macron stated that "the European Union and France will not show any weakness" against the violations in the Eastern Mediterranean (Kathimerini, 2019). The French government pursued unilateral policies apart from the supranational EU stance, such as sending naval forces and jets⁸⁴ to the Eastern Mediterranean and conducting military exercises. After the escalation of the crisis amid to collision of Turkish-Greek ships, French Defense Minister Florence Parly described French policies in the following words:

"Our message is simple, priority for dialogue, cooperation, and diplomacy so that the Eastern Mediterranean becomes an area of stability and respect for international law" (Deutsche Welle, 2020).

However, it was feasible to say that the French government followed a more confrontational policy towards the dispute rather than diplomatic means. During a press conference, President Macron underlined that there should be "consistent(y) in deeds and words" by reference to the early statements⁸⁵ and added that "I can tell you that the Turks only consider and respect that. If you say words that are not followed by acts... What France did this summer⁸⁶ was important: it is a red line policy" (Rose & Pineau, 2020). Unlike other EU member states, France's solidarity with Greece and Cyprus was also effective on the ground.

Despite the divergence of France and Germany in responding to the Eastern Mediterranean dispute, French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Angela Merkel agreed that "attacks on EU sovereignty would not be accepted" (Michalopoulos, 2020). German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas

⁸⁴ In order to show solidarity with Greece and Cyprus, France announced that it has temporarily increased its military presence in the Eastern Mediterranean.

⁸⁵ Statements and declarations made by both French government and the EU.

⁸⁶ The deployment of the French naval and air forces to the region.

underlined the German government's stance as "we have a very clear position — international law must be respected, so progress in EU-Turkey relations is only possible if Ankara stops provocations in the Eastern Mediterranean" (Stamouli & Posane, 2020). France and Germany converged their strategies regarding delineating the dispute as a violation of its member state's sovereignty and rights under international law. However, their position on how the EU should respond to it has diverged. German Foreign Minister Maas underlined the necessity to act in common sense and dialogue:

"Turkey and Greece are our NATO allies. The contentious issues surrounding the natural gas reserves in the Eastern Mediterranean can only be resolved in line with international law and through a sincere dialogue" (German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2020).

Similarly, German Chancellor Merkel emphasised the NATO partnership "Both states are NATO members, which makes it all the more urgent to resolve the tensions peacefully" and added that "Germany has worked hard to help de-escalate the situation" (German Federal Government, 2020b). When the crisis reached its peak, Germany assumed the role of mediator as having the Presidency of the Council of the EU. Chancellor Merkel stressed the solidarity with Greece in the following words, "as EU member states, we all have a duty to take our Greek friends' rights seriously and support them where they are right," also stated that the "relationships are multifaceted" (Basay & Karadag, 2020). Merkel's statements emphasised the complex nature of the dispute: High interdependency with Turkey and the responsibility to show solidarity with Greece.

While the German side often stressed the dispute parties as NATO alliances, the French side argued the opposite. Emmanuel Macron described Turkish actions as provocations and stated that he does "not consider that in recent years Turkey's strategy is the strategy of a NATO ally... when you have a country which attacks the exclusive economic zones or the sovereignty of two members of the European Union" (Rose & Pineau, 2020). The different approaches to crisis resolution are visible in both French and German discourses. France showed unconditional support for Greek-Cypriot claims and positioned Turkey as an outsider. On the contrary, Germany tried to take a moderate stance and emphasised the alliance between Turkey and Greece.

The differentiation in perceptions of strain and incitement towards the crisis was observed in the German and French discourses. German Chancellor Merkel emphasised the need for “stability in the Eastern Mediterranean, not tensions” for the solution (German Federal Government, 2020c). However, French President Macron positioned Turkey as the source of tension by describing Turkish actions in the region as an “expansionist policy, mixing nationalism and Islamism, which is incompatible with European interests and is a destabilising factor⁸⁷” (Chebil, 2020). A similar differentiation took place in the collision event that escalated the tension between Turkey and Greece. President Macron described the deployment of naval and air forces to the region as “proportionate” and added that “we did not send an armada” (Rose & Pineau, 2020). According to Macron, the French response was appropriate against Turkish actions in the region. However, the emphasis on ‘sending an armada’ represented French position regarding its red lines in the Eastern Mediterranean. The message implicitly indicated how far France could go in case of further escalation of the crisis.

Building and preserving peace is one of the core norms of the EU (Manners, 2002, p. 242). According to the TEU, the union defines and pursues common policies and actions to “preserve peace, prevent conflicts and strengthen international security” (Article 21 (2)). German Foreign Minister Haas underlined the necessity of building a constructive atmosphere to preserve peace and prevent escalation of the crisis in the Eastern Mediterranean by inviting all parties to “continue to work on sensible neighbourly relations” (German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2020d). In an interview, Haas commented on French actions:

“There is a risk of military escalation wherever military units encounter each other – even if the parties concerned claim the opposite. It does not bring us any closer to a solution if we send troops and ships wherever Turkey is present. That would be simply throwing our weight around. We have to show that we can develop diplomatic strength through European foreign policy and that we are not resorting to the methods of the Cold War” (German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2020c).

The divergent approaches to the solution of dispute constituted the central dichotomy between the French and German governments. In the case of the Eastern Mediterranean, the confrontational and constructive approaches formed two camps

⁸⁷ The statement is translated from French to English. The authentic statement is as follows: *Une politique expansionniste; qui mêle nationalisme et islamisme, qui n'est pas compatible avec les intérêts européens et facteur de déstabilisation.*

within the EU in which the member states were also divided over their domestic interests.

In line with Germany, the UK was in favour of a diplomatic solution. Despite the referendum held on 23 June 2016, which resulted in the British split from the EU, the UK remained a member state until 31 January 2020. Even though the UK's diminishing role in the EU's foreign policy formation was visible, the Eastern Mediterranean dispute was particularly important for the British interests due to its historical connections in Cyprus island and presence in the region.⁸⁸ In a meeting with the German and French defence ministers, British Defence Secretary Ben Wallace stressed the importance of "respecting the rule of law, respecting freedom of navigation, the different issues that are at stake in the Eastern Mediterranean" for the solution (The United Kingdom Ministry of Defence, 2020). Like the German and French statements, the British side condemned Turkish drilling activities in the Eastern Mediterranean. British Spokesperson for the High Commission underlined that "the UK has been clear from the very beginning that we condemn Turkish drilling activities into the waters around Cyprus. We also continue to call for de-escalation" (Kampouris, 2020).

The Big Three was converged on describing the Eastern Mediterranean crisis as an issue of international law and sovereignty. In the divergence between France and Germany on responding to the dispute, the UK supported German initiatives. The British Defence Secretary underlined the importance of a constructive policy in the Eastern Mediterranean:

"The United Kingdom is very supportive of the German effort to try and negotiate a political solution in that it is absolutely the right thing to do and I have offered my support to my German colleagues, to make sure we hopefully deliver a good result on that" (The United Kingdom Ministry of Defence, 2020).

The UK was in favour of solving the crisis through diplomacy and negotiation. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson indicated his "concern about recent tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean" and stressed, "the need for calm" (Reuters, 2020).

According to social constructivism, EU member states forge a collective identity committed to common liberal norms and values. Thomas Risse argues that

⁸⁸ The UK is one of the guarantor powers in the Cyprus island promulgated by the Treaty of Guarantee dated back to 1960. Additionally, the UK hold two military bases in the island, named Akrotiri and Dhekelia, which around 3,500 troops are deployed.

EU norms and values have a decisive effect on the preferences and interests of the member states (2009, p. 148). Furthermore, the member states' compliance to the supranational rules and norms constitutes a vicious circle that creates a similar foreign policy behaviour (Tonra, 2003, pp. 288, 289). In the Eastern Mediterranean crisis, four crucial dimensions of the European norms and values came into prominence: The rule of law, territorial integrity, building-preserving peace, and good neighbourly relations. Germany meticulously avoided a sanction policy against Turkey while France pursued a hard-line stance since the beginning of the crisis. Although the UK did not play an influential role in forming a common foreign policy, the British government's position was similar to the German counterpart. Due to the guarantor position, it assumed with Turkey and Greece on the Cyprus island; the UK displayed a more constructive stance towards the dispute parties. Despite their divergence on responding to the crisis, the Big Three described Turkish actions as a violation of the EU member states' territorial sovereignty stemming from international law and asserted solidarity. While the German and British sides promoted a diplomatic approach, the French side supported a sanction regime. The initial split between France and Germany was in the method of preserving and defending European norms and values rather than describing them. As a result, due to the divergence of approaches, the emphasis on European norms and values did not produce a joint position.

3.2.2.2. A Dream or Reality?: Achieving An Ever Closer Union

The UK's decision to withdraw from the EU resulted in questioning European unity and its future. After the Withdrawal Agreement entered into force in January 2020, the UK officially left the EU and became a third country. The Eastern Mediterranean dispute occurred during the Brexit and was marked as one of the last crises that the EU-28 faced. After this incident, which caused the solidarity and future of the EU to be questioned, the formation of a common foreign policy towards the Eastern Mediterranean crisis became an important agenda. The member states' different levels of alignment with Turkey and the highly intertwined nature of the EU-Turkey relations were the most critical factors that affected the crisis response.

According to neofunctionalism, inter-state relations cannot be explained as a sole interest-driven game among nation-states (Hooghe & Marks, 2019, p. 1114). While the Crimea case demonstrated that the initial split among member states resulted from their diverse interests, a similar segregation pattern was observed in the member states' positions in the Eastern Mediterranean crisis. The EU was divided into three camps: pro-sanction, pro-diplomatic solution, and moderate stance according to their cost-benefit calculations. As Thomas Risse emphasised, the neofunctionalist school predicts an ever-increasing role of supranational institutions on decision-making (2005, p. 300). Although there is no formal institutionalisation in the foreign policy formulation process, the role of supranational institutions and agents in the formation of CFSP remains noteworthy. Thus, in this part of the study, the role of supranational institutions will be elaborated throughout the foreign policy formulation in the Eastern Mediterranean crisis.

Even before the crisis escalated between Turkey, Greece, and Cyprus, President Macron underlined that the EU should pursue an active policy in the Eastern Mediterranean. In 2017, Macron gave a speech on a new initiative for Europe that underlined the importance of the Eastern Mediterranean and the EU unity on formulating policies:

“Europe must have a foreign policy that focuses on certain priorities: first of all, the Mediterranean region (...) The only way to guarantee our future is to re-establish a sovereign, united and democratic Europe” (Présidence de la République française, 2017).

The French and German stances represented two different approaches to responding to the dispute. When the crisis reached its climax in August 2020, French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Angela Merkel came together at Fort de Brégançon to overcome their differences. French President Macron affirmed that “the approaches of Berlin and Paris had not always been the same in their modalities” but emphasised the mutual purpose in the Eastern Mediterranean, “our strategic objective is the same: European sovereignty and stability”⁸⁹ (Chebil, 2020). The German-French divergence was the most prominent obstacle in forming

⁸⁹ The statement is translated from French to English. The authentic statement is as follows: *Notre objectif stratégique est le même: la souveraineté européenne et la stabilité”, a affirmé Emmanuel Macron, en reconnaissant que les approches de Berlin et Paris n'avaient "pas toujours été les mêmes dans leurs modalités.*

a collective front during the Eastern Mediterranean dispute. In the same meeting, Chancellor Merkel underlined the importance of raising one voice for the EU to be an effective actor in the region:

“Europe is only strong if it speaks with one voice. This is particularly important with respect to international crises such as the conflict between Greece and Turkey in the Eastern Mediterranean” (German Federal Government, 2020c).

During the crisis, Germany held the Presidency of the Council of the EU and played a leading role in the dispute’s solution. In parallel to Chancellor’s statements, German Foreign Minister Maas underlined the importance of the EU unity before the Foreign Affairs Council meeting:

“Our guiding principle is: Only if Europe speaks with one voice will its words carry weight in the world at large. All in all, Europe should become more capable of taking action and effectively safeguard its values and interests.” (German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2020c).

Traditionally, whether the EU was an effective foreign policy actor or not was questioned through its responses to the crises, and particularly, the divergences among the member states undermined the EU unity. In the Eastern Mediterranean, French President Macron criticised the differentiation and hesitation among member states in responding to the dispute. At the press conference in Ajaccio before for the seventh summit of the southern countries of the EU (MED7),⁹⁰ President Macron stated that “Europe must have a more united and a clearer voice” and he wanted the seven countries “to agree on strong common positions on our red lines” in Eastern Mediterranean dispute (Momtaz, 2020). Clément Beaune, French Secretary of State for European Affairs, underlined the importance of French initiatives to ensure solidarity:

“The MED7 summit in Ajaccio made it possible to advance this European unity on an approach combining firmness and dialogue (...) France’s solidarity with Cyprus is total. It is a question of principle which must unite Europeans. The EU must, first of all, protect its member states, that is the meaning we give to Europe, to this political project”⁹¹ (Vie publique, 2020).

⁹⁰ The MED7 group is consisted of seven Mediterranean and Southern European Union member states, Cyprus, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Portugal, and Spain. It is established in 2013 for seven member states to coordinate on the issues related with their common interests.

⁹¹ The statement is translated from French to English. The authentic statement is as follows: *Le sommet du MED7 à Ajaccio a permis de faire progresser cette unité européenne sur une approche alliant fermeté et dialogue (...) La solidarité de la France avec Chypre est totale. C'est une question de principe qui doit rassembler les Européens. L'Union européenne doit d'abord protéger ses Etats membres, c'est le sens que nous donnons à l'Europe, à ce projet politique.*

Neofunctionalist school has argued that the European project, which started with the goal of economic cooperation among European countries, may lead to political integration through spill-over (E. B. Haas, 1958, p. 16). Although Clément Beaune described the EU as a political project, the supranational institutions and agents remained relatively ancillary in forming a common foreign policy in the Eastern Mediterranean dispute. During the Informal Meeting of EU Foreign Ministers, HR/VP Josep Borrell Fontelles explained the preparatory work completed by supranational institutions for the sanction policy:

“The Council expressed a political consensus, to ask the relevant Council Working Groups to speed up their work in order to add individuals suggested by Cyprus to the list of the existing regime for illegal drillings in the Eastern Mediterranean, with a view to a rapid adoption. We also agreed that in the absence of progress in engaging with Turkey, we could develop a list of further restrictive measures that could be discussed at the European Council on 24-25 September” (Borrell Fontelles, 2020).

Similar to the role assumed by European Commission and EASS during the Crimea crisis, the supranational institutions and agents acted as facilitators by undertaking technocratic tasks in the foreign policy formation process. HR/VP Borrell’s statements in a question asked related to the sanction policy of the EU also represented this role, “as High Representative, I have been asked by the European Council to present options” (European Union External Action Service, 2020). Although Brussels generally assumed a technocratic role, reference to supranational institutions and agents was found in French and German discourses. In the Foreign Affairs Council, German Foreign Minister Maas stressed the EU’s presence in resolving the tensions between Turkey and Greece:

“During the urgently needed talks, the EU and its High Representative Josep Borrell will play a central role and Germany will do everything it can to support him” (German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2020c).

The fact that Germany held the presidency of the Council at that time was effective in bringing EU institutions and agents to the fore in the Eastern Mediterranean crisis. In the Ajaccio declaration after the 7th Summit of the Southern EU countries, MED7 countries similarly approved German initiatives and HR/VP’s prominence in the resolution of the dispute:

“We welcome the mediation efforts of the HR/VP and Germany in order to achieve a resumption of the dialogue between Greece and Turkey on the maritime zone issue” (French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, 2020a).

French President Emmanuel Macron also emphasised the stance of the European Parliament in the Eastern Mediterranean crisis in a Tweet which he posted Turkish in his official Twitter account:

“In Ajaccio, we sent a clear message to Turkey: let us reopen a responsible dialogue, in good faith, without naivety. This call is now also that of the European Parliament. It seems to have been heard. Let us move on”⁹² (Macron, 2020).

Compared to the pattern of their domestic foreign policy preferences in German and French governments’ discourses, reference to the Brussels-based institutions and international agents remained relatively weak. However, emphasizing the impact of European security on national security, British Defence Secretary Ben Wallace stated that “the security of Europe is important to all of our security” (The United Kingdom Ministry of Defence, 2020). Although the UK’s separation from the EU officially concluded in 2020, the influence of supranational institutions and agents in the UK’s foreign policy has gradually decreased since 2016. The UK, which followed an active foreign policy within the EU and unilaterally during the Crimean crisis, was relatively less interventionist in the Eastern Mediterranean dispute. Before the official split of the UK from the EU, the Minister for Europe, Cristopher Pincher, visited Nicosia in 2019 and openly declared the British position on the dispute by underlining a different aspect of the situation from the French and German counterparts:

“I made it very clear that Great Britain deplores any drilling in the waters close to Cyprus and supports the right of Cyprus to extract oils in its EEZ. Most importantly, that wealth should be extracted for the benefit of all Cypriots on the island” (The Republic of Cyprus Ministry of Interior, 2019).

While the role of the EU and supranational decision-making mechanisms is not expected to be important in the UK’s discourses after the Brexit referendum, it has observed that the UK had similar foreign policies with Germany for crisis resolution. The British government tended to keep an equal distance from the parties to the conflict and called for de-escalation. After the official split of the UK from the EU, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson stressed that the “UK would continue to work with both sides to de-escalate the situation” and underlined the origin of the dispute Cyprus problem, “a settlement in Cyprus was in everyone’s

⁹² The statement is translated from Turkish to English. The authentic statement is as follows: *Ajaccio’da, Türkiye’ye net bir mesaj gönderdik: iyi niyetli, naiflik olmaksızın sorumlu bir diyalogu yeniden açalım. Bu çağrı bundan böyle Avrupa Parlamentosu’nun da çağrısı. Görünüşe göre de işitilmiş. İlerleyelim.*

interest” (Bilgic Cakmak, 2020). The diverging position of the UK stemming from its guarantor status on the Cyprus island has been observed in the discourses. The similar foreign policy stances before and after its formal departure from the EU was also an important sign of the diminishing, or relatively non-existent, influence of the EU institutions and organisations in the UK’s foreign policy formation.

Two main arguments of neofunctionalism, the concept of spill-over and elite socialisation, stand for the supranational foreign policy, which eventually overcame the national interests. In this context, the formation of multiple identities – both national and supranational – through social interaction between member states results in emphasizing one voice and collective action. Although the emphasis on European unity and raising one voice has been observed in the discourses of the French and German governments, their diverging foreign policy choices indicated diverse meanings attached to those calls. In other words, forming a supranational and inclusive foreign policy stance represented a negotiation process in which each state defended its own national policies. On the other hand, it has been observed that the UK has completely diverged from the purpose of establishing a supranational common foreign policy since it entered the process of leaving the EU. Thus, the significance attached to supranational agents or institutions on the foreign policy formulation was not detected in the statements of the Big Three, despite the limited reference in the French and German discourses. Additionally, no evidence was found that indicated the increased influence of supranational institutions in the decision-making processes.

During the Eastern Mediterranean crisis, the most influential actors were the head of the government or foreign ministers of Germany and France. The supranational agents – European Council groups, European Parliament, European Commission, EASS, HR/VP – remained relatively ancillary. Thus, the role of Brussels was secondary and technocratic rather than decisive.

3.2.2.3. Domestic cost-benefit calculations: The impact of interdependency

Turkey-EU relations date back to 1959 with its association application to the EEC. Although relations between parties reached a stalemate that membership

possibility is unlikely in the foreseeable future, high interdependency and functional cooperation remain still. Since the Custom Union Agreement was signed in 1995, the trade relations between Turkey and the EU have expanded dramatically. The cooperation in foreign and security policies, energy, and justice affairs (particularly combatting illegal migration⁹³) spheres continued to increase (Müftüler-Baç, 2017). Thus, the EU member states have developed a different level of economic and political ties with Turkey – which explains the diverse responses to the Eastern Mediterranean crisis.

Liberal intergovernmentalism takes economic dependency as a starting point in explaining the domestic interests of the nation-states (Risse, 2005, p. 299). In parallel, the lack of consistency in foreign policy issues within the EU has been explained because the interests of the member states are “too closely intertwined” (Moravcsik & Schimmelfennig, 2009, p. 485). In the Eastern Mediterranean dispute, EU member states’ diverging economic interests and cost-benefit calculations were the main driving force behind the division on forging a collective response. While member states that have close alignment with Turkey, such as Germany, were against implementing a sanction regime, member states such as Greece and France, which relatively has a weak relationship with Turkey, were in favour of sanctions. As indicated in the previous section, due to the intergovernmental nature of CFSP, supranational institutions have limited role in the formation of foreign policy in principle, and no authority to enforce the decisions. Thus, the preferences of the member states, particularly the ones which have a stronger negotiation power, are the prominent indicator of the foreign policy outcomes.

In the case of the Eastern Mediterranean, the main driving force behind the member states’ positions was economic and political ties with Turkey and the security dimension of the dispute. Turkey’s geopolitical importance for regional stability and security was one of the most important factors influencing the EU’s response to the crisis. In the Foreign Affairs Council, German Foreign Minister

⁹³ The Refugee Deal was signed on 18 March 2016 between the EU and Turkey for the purpose of cooperation in response to the irregular migrant flow resulted from the Syrian civil war. According to the agreement, Turkey would accept each refugee who illegally crossed the EU’s borders in return, the EU would accept refugees from Turkey for each one sent back. Additionally, the proposed plan included EU funds for the refugees and visa liberation for Turkish citizens.

Heiko Maas stressed the good relations with Turkey by particularly underlining the strategic dimension:

“The EU’s relations with Turkey will be one of the focuses of the Council today. It is clear that this relationship is strategically important as well as complex. While good relations are important to Germany and the EU, Ankara needs to send clear signals of détente in the Eastern Mediterranean” (German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2020c).

Foreign Minister Maas’ emphasis on the importance of good relations for the EU and Germany indicated the depth and intertwined nature of German-Turkish relations. In 2019, Germany accounted for 9.19 per cent of all Turkish exports and 9.17 per cent of all Turkish imports, making it the first-ranked trade partner of Turkey (World Bank, 2019). Along with USD 36,346 million trade value between parties, Germany is also the centre of the largest Turkish diaspora in the EU, with the Turkish migrant background roughly equal to 2.8 million (German Federal Statistical Office, 2020, p. 68). Furthermore, the German government gave particular importance to the Refugee Deal with Turkey in preventing the migration crisis. In 2016, Chancellor Merkel had visited the Syrian refugee camps in Turkey and promoted the deal along with EU delegations (BBC News, 2016). According to the latest data, the EU member states host over 1 million Syrian refugees and asylum-seekers, and Germany is the far-most largest host country with a 59 per cent rate (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2021). Thus, Germany’s close alignment of Turkey and domestic interests was an important factor affecting the German position.

The German-French divergence on responding to the dispute was resulted in European foreign policy to “drown in the Eastern Mediterranean” (Ülgen, 2020). By focusing on the differences among two prominent member states, German Foreign Minister Maas underlined the strengthening the crisis response abilities of the EU:

“We still need France and Germany to work side by side here – as the basis for strong European engagement (...) the Franco-German motor does not just work when it purrs along. On the contrary! This motor is nothing but a compromise machine powered by striking a balance between different positions – which we have had and will continue to have. It is obvious that this creates friction. But this is the only way to create solutions which others in Europe can support”(German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2020e).

Similarly, French Secretary of State for European Affairs, Clément Beaune, underlined the differences between Germany and France with particular focus on Turkey in an interview:

“It is a mistake to believe that the Franco-German partnership does not work because of its differences: rather, it doesn’t work when we cannot find any common ground to put aside our differences. There is nothing worse than a self-celebrating Franco-German relationship where differences are glossed over when they actually exist. We do not have the same relationship to external power, we do not have the same relationship to Turkey” (Gressani & Lumet, 2020).

The French-Turkish relations were less interdependent when compared with Germany, and tensions arose from time to time between parties for various reasons. In 2019, trade exchanges between parties were roughly equal to USD 14.712 million, and France was the seventh-largest trade partner of Turkey (World Bank, 2019). While the economic ties were relatively weaker than the Germany, political relations constituted the main problem between France and Turkey. The political disagreements such as French opinion on Turkish accession to the EU⁹⁴ and the Prophet Muhammad cartoon⁹⁵ strained the relations between France and Turkey. However, the main divergence between parties in the Eastern Mediterranean was about the competition in Libya⁹⁶. Due to clashing foreign policy preferences in the Middle East, France was particularly vocal in its criticism towards Turkey in the Eastern Mediterranean dispute and strongly supported the sanction regime. According to Galip Dalay (2021), the dispute in the region provided an opportunity for the French government to bolster its opposition against Turkish foreign policy and promote France’s domestic “geopolitical aspirations.” President Emmanuel Macron’s speech at the 75th United Nations (UN) General Assembly indicated the French government’s discomfort with Turkey’s Libya and Syria policies in the Eastern Mediterranean:

“We respect and are prepared to dialogue with Turkey, but we expect Turkey to respect European sovereignty, international law and to provide clarification

⁹⁴ Former French President Nicolas Sarkozy was against Turkish accession to the EU due to its demographical, economical and cultural differences. Similarly, according to French President Emmanuel Macron, Turkey has no chance of progress towards European membership.

⁹⁵ The historian teacher Samuel Paty showed the controversial caricatures of Prophet Muhammad that had been published in early 2015. This situation, which has been reacted by Muslims around the world, French President Macron defined as a right to free speech.

⁹⁶ During the Second Libyan Civil War, France and Turkey supported rival sides and pursued clashing interests in the region. French government supported Hifter and Turkish government supported the UN-recognised Government of National Accord (GNA) of Libya. Furthermore, Turkey launched a military operation and deployed troops to support GNA.

concerning its activities in Libya and Syria. Insults are ineffective. These words and actions have no place in responsible relationships between States. Nor can they hide Europe's call for accountability. As Europeans, we are prepared to dialogue for the essential construction of a Pax Mediterranea⁹⁷, but not through intimidation or a bullying mentality; international law must be complied with, and there must be cooperation and respect among allies. These are non-negotiable principles" (French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, 2020c).

Nevertheless, due to Turkey's geopolitical position, cooperation was necessary for achieving peace in the Eastern Mediterranean. German Foreign Minister Maas underlined that the crisis environment contradicted the interests of all parties, including the EU:

"The tensions are placing a strain on relations between the EU and Turkey. What is more, further escalation can only be detrimental to all sides, particularly those directly affected on the ground." (German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2020b).

In a similar manner, Chancellor Angela Merkel stressed the importance of a good relationship with Turkey for the EU's interests:

"It is important to us that we are able to take the path we had agreed on with Turkey, because it is in the best interests of both sides to develop the relationship between the EU and Turkey" (German Federal Government, 2020a).

The intertwined nature of Turkey-EU relations and cooperation in key policy areas such as trade and security were factors that required continued partnership even in times of crisis. Being aware of this situation, the German government has pursued a constructive policy since the initiation of the dispute. German Foreign Minister Maas stressed building a dialogue atmosphere in the Eastern Mediterranean:

"Particularly because relations with the EU are tense at the current time, constructive dialogue with Turkey is vital to find solutions to contentious issues in the Eastern Mediterranean" (German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2020f).

Despite the differences with the German government, French President Emmanuel Macron similarly underlined the importance of a constructive approach:

"Our responsibility as a member state of the EU and the Mediterranean states is to find ways and means to have a constructive policy in the Mediterranean, to build this Pax Mediterranean for all of us, one that will allow exchanges harmonious while ensuring respect for European sovereignty in the region"⁹⁸ (Présidence de la République française, 2020).

⁹⁷ The term *pax* referred to "peace" and Mediterranean refers to the eastern Mediterranean region. With this catch-phrase, President Macron called for a peace environment in the eastern Mediterranean for solution of the disputes.

⁹⁸ The statement is translated from French to English. The authentic statement is as follows: *Notre responsabilité en tant qu'Etat membre de l'Union européenne et Etats méditerranéens est de trouver les voies et moyens d'avoir une politique constructive en Méditerranée, de bâtir cette pax*

According to the press release regarding the conversation between Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and French President Emmanuel Macron, the French government emphasised the strong relations between the EU and Turkey:

“The Head of State reiterated his constant readiness to engage in dialogue and his interest in a solid relationship between the EU and Turkey, on a clear basis that is respectful of everyone’s interests” (French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, 2020b).

Unlike German discourses, there was no particular emphasis on the relations between France and Turkey. Furthermore, the French statements regarding the Eastern Mediterranean also stressed Turkish foreign policy in Libya and Syria, which indicated France’s purpose of upholding its domestic interests in the Middle East. Even when the tensions escalated between Greece and Turkey, German Foreign Minister Maas had stated that “it is clear that Turkey remains an important strategic partner for the EU” (German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2020b). The British government had followed a similar constructive policy in the Eastern Mediterranean. After the official procedures regarding Brexit were completed, the UK became dissociated from the EU-related foreign policy formation in the Eastern Mediterranean. In 2021, the German and British governments signed a Joint Declaration of intent for closer cooperation on foreign and security policy spheres. In the declaration whose 20th article was reserved for Turkey, the German and British governments shared the purpose of deepening relations with Turkey:

“We recognise the geopolitical strategic importance of Turkey and the need to work together on a wide range of mutual interests (...) We will intensify our cooperation with Turkey in shared institutional frameworks in order to support the rules-based international order and Turkey’s European orientation” (German Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2021).

The UK was the second-largest trade partner of Turkey, after Germany. In 2019, the trade exchanges between parties were equal to USD 17 million (World Bank, 2019). British Ambassador to Ankara, Dominick Chilcott, emphasised the deep economic ties between the UK and Turkey, “noting that the UK is the second-largest export market for Turkey, we are a very significant trading partner for Turkey” (Aydoğan, 2021). The UK’s constant call for dialogue and de-escalation could be explained by its complex interests in the Eastern Mediterranean, which require good relations with all parties to the dispute (Sakman, 2021, p. 74). During

mediterranea pour nous tous, celle qui permettra les échanges harmonieux tout en faisant respecter la souveraineté européenne dans la région.

the tension moments regarding gas exploration in the Eastern Mediterranean, Turkey bought its third drilling vessel named “Sertao” from the UK – well above its market price.⁹⁹ This purchase appeared in the headlines as “Turkey to continue drilling in the Eastern Mediterranean with UK ship” (Middle East Monitor, 2020). British Prime Minister Boris Johnson’s statements that underlined the alliance with both Turkey and Greece also demonstrated the UK’s equidistant approach to the parties of the dispute:

“As a NATO ally and long-standing partner of both Greece and Turkey, we are closely following developments in the area and concerned about the impact of recent events for regional stability” (Andritsopoulos, 2021).

Similarly, British Secretary of State for Foreign, Dominic Raab stressed Turkey’s importance for both transatlantic and British interests:

“Turkey is a key NATO ally and friend of the UK. Today I spoke Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu to discuss the need to de-escalate current tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean” (Raab, 2020).

Apart from close ties in trade relations, the British-Turkish alignment in the foreign and defence policy sphere constituted the other factor that influenced the British policy in the Eastern Mediterranean. Ambassador Chilcott stressed the UK’s desire for defence cooperation:

“We see defence cooperation and defence industry sector cooperation as important components of the bilateral relationship (...) the UK is very committed to working together with Turkey in the defence sector, and pursuing collaborations between our defence industrial sector” (Aydoğan, 2021).

The UK’s constructive policy resulted from close ties with Turkey in the fields of trade, defence, and foreign policy. Furthermore, similar to Germany, the British government stressed the importance of Turkey for the transatlantic alliance. The UK and Germany converged on pursuing a more constructive and cooperative stance towards the Eastern Mediterranean dispute. As Tolga Sakman stated, the UK’s strategy can be described as more “calm and rational,” especially compared to France’s confrontational approach (2021, p. 74). Although the membership of the UK officially ended on 31 January 2020, the British government continued to be a part of the solution to the dispute. The E3 meeting, which included French, German, and British defence ministers, took place in August 2020, marking the

⁹⁹ The predicted market value of the drilling ship was around \$120 million, however, Turkish side purchased it for \$37.5 million.

crisis's climax. Later, the UK signed a Joint Declaration with Germany for cooperation in foreign policy matters.

When the Big Three's foreign policy preference formation is analysed, it has observed that the divergence occurred in pursuing a sanction policy or dialogue-based approach, rather than upholding norms and values or enhancing the role of Brussel-based institutions. In the Eastern Mediterranean crisis, inter-state bargaining occurred at the head of the state or government level concerning the exhaustive calculation of the domestic interests and preferences, which affirmed the claims of liberal intergovernmentalism. Andrew Moravcsik has argued that nation-states formulate a policy mainly stemming from national preferences, later, bargain with one another to realise them, and eventually decide whether to delegate and transfer their sovereignty in international institutions to secure the substantive agreements they reach after the bargaining process (1999, p. 20). German and British governments' close ties with Turkey and their domestic interests resulted in them taking a more moderate and cautious position in responding to the crisis. On the other hand, the relationship between France and Turkey was relatively weak, and French interests were mainly contradicted with Turkish foreign policy choices, which resulted in the French government pursuing a hard-line policy. Thus, the divergence among the Big Three carved out fissures on the European response to the crisis. This situation, in which the UK and Germany formed one side and France the other, continued between Germany and France after Brexit. Due to the intergovernmental nature of the CFSP and lack of institutionalisation that surpassed the domestic foreign policies of the member states, the divergences constituted the primary factor that affected the EU's response in the Eastern Mediterranean dispute.

3.2.3. An Analysis: Application of the MSSD to the Eastern Mediterranean Crisis

As Sinem Adar and İlke Tongür (2020) underlined, different levels and forms of engagement with Turkey among member states, particularly prominent ones, obstructed a consensus on achieving a joint decision in the Eastern Mediterranean dispute. The paradoxes of European foreign policy – in Christopher Hill's (1998) words – which include convergences and divergences between the

national foreign policy of the member states and the CFSP, has historically been a chronic problem in the EU's crisis responses. This problem manifested itself in the Eastern Mediterranean crisis as well. The multifaceted nature of the dispute, which involves unsolved problems among ROC, Greece, and Turkey, along with overlapping identities such as being an EU member state/candidate and NATO ally, further intensified, and complicated finding the appropriate approach. Unlike the Crimea crisis, the EU was an insider to the dispute because of Greek and Greek-Cypriot membership. Thus, a comprehensive and effective response was necessary. However, diverging interests of the Big Three resulted in polyphonic response and the unity of the EU is questioned.

According to Berg-Schlosser & De Meur, the hypotheses must be formulated regarding its connection to the outcome for each condition in the MSSD research design (2008, p. 28). To this end, the present study aims to discuss the divergences among Big Three that make it difficult to reach consensus in the Eastern Mediterranean dispute. In this framework, the next section will analyse each hypothesis predetermined according to the European integration theories.

Taking its roots from the claims of social constructivism, the first hypothesis has utilised to analyse if the European norms and values – such as the rule of law, human rights, democracy, and good neighbourly relations – had a decisive or transformative effect on the policies of the Big Three to achieve joint decision in the Eastern Mediterranean dispute. According to the results obtained, France, Germany, and the UK's positions converged in promoting international norms, territorial integrity and sovereignty, and good neighbourly relations to solve the crisis. Nevertheless, this convergence did not ensure a joint decision. Thus, the first hypothesis is falsified. While French, German, and British governments condemned Turkish actions in the Eastern Mediterranean and described them as illegal, only France favoured a sanction policy. Both Germany and the UK perceived Turkey as a strategic partner and ally, which resulted in them pursuing a constructive policy and dialogue-based approach. Under these circumstances, other member states such as Greece, ROC, Italy, Poland, and vice versa similarly divided into groups that defend a hard-line sanction regime or diplomatic solution. As a result, a collective response against the developments in the Eastern Mediterranean was delayed, and consequently, the EU's power was undermined. France's persistence in

implementing sanction policy for Turkey changed only after the de-escalation of the tensions in the region.

The core concepts of neofunctionalism, spill-over, and the creation of multiple loyalties through elite socialisation has predicted a gradual increase in the role of Brussels-based institutions in the decision-making process. The second hypothesis is formed to explain if the EU institutions and agents – such as HR/VP, EP, European Commission, and EASS – had a decisive or transformative effect on the preference formation of the Big Three. According to the results derived, the role of supranational institutions and agents remained largely secondary. However, the German Presidency of the Council brought the EU institutions to the fore in the Eastern Mediterranean crisis.

It is crucial to underline the increasing role of Brussels when compared to the Crimea crisis. Poland held the Presidency of the Council during the Ukrainian-Russian dispute, and the supranational was remarkably weak. This pattern of change may have three reasons: The first one is that since Germany is a more robust and prominent member-state when compared to Poland, therefore, German initiatives may have more visible consequences. Secondly, the Brussels-based institutions and agents' increased effect could be explained by the German tendency to assume a leading role inside the EU, which inherently includes promoting supranationality. Thirdly, even though the Turkish membership process is in a deadlock that is hard to tackle, European orientation remained still; as a result, the EU hold negotiation power over Turkey. Although the increasing role of the Brussels-based institutions and agents has observed in the Eastern Mediterranean dispute, the second hypothesis has falsified due to the lack of evidence on their significant effect on achieving a joint decision among the Big Three. The European Commission, EP and HR/VP assumed a complementary role. Germany held the mediator role for the solution of the dispute. Thus, there is no evidence found regarding the supranational determinative effect over the national foreign policy preferences of the Big Three.

The intergovernmental nature of the CFSP and lack of institutionalisation on the foreign policy sphere resulted in policy formulation to be predominantly concluded at the head of government or state level. The third hypothesis is

formulated to analyse if the Big Three's convergence and divergence of national interests and overall cost-benefit analysis were the main factors that affected the joint decision in the Eastern Mediterranean crisis. The primary purpose was to analyse if the crisis response forged on the lowest common denominator stemming from different levels of alignment with Turkey. Germany and the UK had exclusive trade relations with Turkey. As of 2019, Germany was ranked as Turkey's number one trade partner, and the UK followed as second-largest. Apart from the economic ties, the German government gave particular importance to the Refugee Deal as the biggest host country within the EU. Additionally, the UK's relationship with Turkey in the spheres of foreign and defence emerged as an important factor that affected the British position.

Furthermore, the geopolitical importance of Turkey in the region and within the transatlantic alliance was emphasised by both German and British authorities several times. On the other hand, France was historically in favour of a more independent and de facto European foreign policy apart from NATO. Additionally, the relationship between France and Turkey deteriorated from time to time because of different foreign policy preferences and some political disputes. Since there were no exclusive economic ties between parties compared to Germany and the UK, the contradicting foreign policy ambitions resulted in the French divergence on pursuing a hard-line policy against Turkey. Despite the French initiatives to bring other member states and even Germany together to advocate a sanction regime in the Eastern Mediterranean, the tensions de-escalated among parties after August 2020. The initiatives of pursuing a diplomatic approach to the crisis in the leadership of Germany resulted in de-escalation steps taken, and a dialogue process started between Greece and Turkey.

The divergence among the Big Three was about the different cost-benefit calculations stemming from contradicting domestic interests in the Eastern Mediterranean. Germany and the UK favoured diplomatic solutions and dialogue due to the cost-benefit calculations of pursuing a sanction regime. It is important to underline that French-Turkish relations have already deteriorated because of the clashing interests in the Middle East. Decreasing tensions between the parties and taking steps towards dialogue resulted in a convergence of interest between the Big Three. However, the French side continued to pursue a more cautious stance against

the recent developments. According to the results derived from the present study, the third hypothesis is confirmed. It has observed that the interdependency and cost-benefit calculations have a decisive effect on achieving joint decisions in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Table 2: The MSSD table that indicates the Big Three's positions in the Eastern Mediterranean Crisis

Independent Variables/Most Similar Systems	European norms and values		The role of Brussels-based institutions		Convergence of interests and cost-benefit calculations	
	<i>Before and after the de-escalation steps</i>		<i>Before and after the de-escalation steps</i>		<i>Before and after the de-escalation steps</i>	
France	✓	✓	×	×	×	✓
Germany	✓	✓	×	×	✓	✓
United Kingdom	✓	✓	×	×	✓	✓

As indicated in the table above, by applying the MSSD to the Crimea crisis, the following results were obtained:

- a. Since the initiation of the dispute, the statements of the Big Three stressed the importance of the norms and values such as international law, sovereign rights, and good neighbourly relations, which the EU stands for. There was no divergence among France, Germany, and the UK on perceiving Turkish actions as illegal and supporting sovereign rights of Greece and ROC. Thus, the first independent variable has an inconsequential effect on achieving a joint decision.
- b. Although there was some reference to Brussels-based institutions or supranational agents in the statements of the Big Three, particularly on German discourses, no evidence was found that indicated a decisive or transformative effect upon national foreign policies. During the crisis, the supranational institutions and agents assumed a complementary role rather than being part of the decision-making. Thus, the second independent variable has an inconsequential effect on achieving a joint decision.

- c. According to the discourses of the Big Three, the divergence stemmed from the cost-benefit calculations of pursuing a sanction regime and different levels of alignment with Turkey. The relatively close ties between Germany, the UK, and Turkey prevented the convergence of interests with France. While Germany and the UK perceived Turkey as a strategic partner and ally, France's contradicting interests with Turkey in the Middle East resulted in the French government positioning itself against Turkey. Hence, the third independent variable has a consequential effect on the decision-making process for achieving joint action.

Among the analysed variables, the EU cohesion was undermined due to the divergent cost-benefit calculations stemming from different levels of alignment. The primary purpose of the present study was to provide an explanation by applying three independent variables based on the core assumptions of the European integration theories and explanatory power regarding the eastern Mediterranean dispute. According to the results derived, the initial difference among the most similar systems is founded on the third independent variable: Convergence of interests and cost-benefit calculations. Nevertheless, it is crucial to underline that these three variables cannot explain all the dimensions and indicators' that affected the foreign policy formation during the eastern Mediterranean crisis. There are various factors such as the US foreign policy¹⁰⁰, NATO's initiatives¹⁰¹, other actors in the region¹⁰² and Brexit. Furthermore, although the tensions sparked in March 2018 and reached a climax in August 2020, the UK gradually dissociated from the EU-related foreign policy formation in the eastern Mediterranean after the official procedures were completed in January 2020. The table below indicated the observations towards Germany and France in decision-making mechanisms in this process.

¹⁰⁰ The US' downsizing its role in the eastern Mediterranean created a power lacuna that threatens the regional and global stability.

¹⁰¹ The dispute in the eastern Mediterranean which almost turned into a military confrontation between two NATO members, Greece and Turkey. NATO activated a bilateral military de-confliction mechanism to de-escalation. For further information, see: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/news_178523.htm

¹⁰² The countries such as United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Israel and Libya has their own interests in the region, which resulted in a complex nature of relations that includes various alliances and agreements.

Table 2.1: The MSSD table that indicates the French and German positions in the Eastern Mediterranean Crisis

Independent Variables/Most Similar Systems	European norms and values		The role of Brussels-based institutions		Convergence of interests and cost-benefit calculations	
	<i>Before and after the de-escalation steps</i>		<i>Before and after the de-escalation steps</i>		<i>Before and after the de-escalation steps</i>	
France	✓	✓	×	×	×	✓
Germany	✓	✓	×	×	✓	✓

In the application of an MSSD research design, the analysed conditions and cases cannot be “a fixed priori” because political science is a dynamic discipline, and “new cases may be added, or others dropped, in the ongoing process of research” (Berg-Schlosser & De Meur, 2008, pp. 24, 25). In the case of the Eastern Mediterranean, the UK was initially still a member state but had left the EU during the escalation of the dispute. Therefore, this study included the UK in the analysis both for the existence of official membership status in the beginning and the British government’s independent role in the region from the EU. The third table included to demonstrate the convergences and divergences between France and Germany after the UK’s withdrawal. As indicated above, the UK’s separation from the EU did not affect France and Germany’s positions. The confrontational approach of the French government and constructive approach of the German government continued to create a split within the EU. The British government continued to take part in the solution of the eastern Mediterranean crisis by holding meetings with French and German governments and signing a joint declaration regarding foreign policy cooperation.

The Big Three’s convergence of strategies is particularly vital to achieving joint decisions in the foreign policy sphere due to other member states keen to follow them. The present study aims to make a discussion regarding the European foreign policy formulation by focusing on prominent member states, namely France, Germany and the UK, rather than answering the question of ‘what should have done?’ during the eastern Mediterranean crisis. Nevertheless, it is feasible to

say that several factors¹⁰³ prevented the EU and remarkably Big Three to achieve a collective decision at the beginning of the crisis. According to the results derived, it can be concluded that the initial divergence among the Big Three undermined the EU unity on achieving a joint decision in the eastern Mediterranean dispute initially. Only after the de-escalation steps taken from the Turkish side, the interests of the Big Three is converged. Additionally, the intergovernmental nature of the CFSP and lack of legal institutionalisation, which could prevent member states from pursuing their national foreign policies, resulted in constraining the EU power. The European People's Party (EPP)¹⁰⁴ parliamentarian Manfred Weber's comments regarding the eastern Mediterranean dispute also highlighted the paradoxes of European foreign policy:

"It's obvious that the unanimous decision-making process inside the European Council is blocking the whole power of the EU, and that was the same on the Turkey case. Individual interests were blocking this general understanding to go further" (Koutsokosta, 2020).

Five years after the Crimea crisis, the Eastern Mediterranean dispute constituted another flashing point where the EU's global actorness and effectiveness were questioned. During the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, member states' divergences, particularly Big Three, had undermined the EU's response. The Eastern Mediterranean dispute indicated a similar paradox within the EU that includes the national foreign policies of the member states and the CFSP. In the next chapter, a brief discussion on the findings by covering the above-stated research questions and hypotheses will be laid out.

¹⁰³ The member states' different level of alignment with Turkey, high interdependent nature of the EU-Turkey relations that make cooperation in various spheres such as trade, security, defense, judiciary affairs necessary, NATO membership of Turkey and Greece and lastly frozen conflicts in the region effected the EU's response.

¹⁰⁴ The largest political group in the European Parliament.

CONCLUSION

“Europe will not be made all at once, or according to a single plan. It will be built through concrete achievements which first create a de facto solidarity”
(Schuman, 1994).

French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman’s words dated back to the 1950s have revealed the reality of today’s EU. The ambition to create an ever closer union in the fields of economy and politics has remained vibrant. Since the creation of the EPC, various initiatives have aimed to build an effective and supranational European foreign policy. As a result of the steps taken towards this purpose, the CFSP has constituted one of the most salient topics relating to European integration research due to its complex nature that includes an intergovernmental structure designed to provide a supranational foreign policy. The EU’s capacity to produce a coherent foreign policy has increased with the each initiative and agreement until the Lisbon. Nevertheless, the EU’s search for a common voice in the international system has been continued to exist as a chronic problem.

The initial failure of the EU to forge a collective stance on the crises in Crimea and the Eastern Mediterranean has constituted the latest striking examples crystallizing the divergence within the EU and the major European powers’ tendency to prioritize their domestic interest. Since the initiation of a united European project, various European integration theories have tried to explain the dynamics of the process in different aspects, and all have their own strengths and weaknesses. The present study has utilised the dichotomy between rationalist and constructivist perspectives to analyse the Big Three’s preference formation and its consequent effect on the CFSP.

How has the divergence and convergence among the Big Three (France, Germany and the UK) affected the EU’s ability to take a joint decision on Crimea and Eastern Mediterranean crises? To answer the main research question of this study, the MSSD has applied to the Crimea and the Eastern Mediterranean crises. The policy formation of the Big Three has analysed via three main independent variables build on the core arguments of neofunctionalism, liberal intergovernmentalism and social constructivism, and the EU’s ability to take a joint decision has been considered a dependent variable. The first hypothesis has formed to indicate level of emphasis given to the European norms and values such

as international law, sovereign rights, and good neighbourly relations in the statements of Big Three. There was no pattern of divergence among the Big Three on perceiving both Russian actions in the Crimea conflict and Turkish actions in the Eastern Mediterranean dispute as a violation of international law and territorial integrity. Nevertheless, this convergence did not produce a joint decision. Second hypothesis has created to analyse the role of Brussels-based institutions and agents in the foreign policy making process. In the Crimea crisis, there was no reference found to the supranational institutions and agents, on the contrary, Germany and France undertook the role of mediator in the Normandy negotiations. In the Eastern Mediterranean, there was a low level of reference to Brussels-based institutions and agents in the statements of the Big Three, particularly on German discourses. However, a decisive or transformative effect upon national foreign policies lacked. The last hypothesis has formed to indicate the impact of interdependency and cost-benefit calculations of the Big Three in pursuing a sanction regime.

According to the findings, the Big Three's preferences diverged in both Crimea and the Eastern Mediterranean crisis, resulting in a dispersed front responding to the developments. The initial divergence among the Big Three delayed achieving a common position. Only after the convergence of the interests, the economic sanctions implemented against Russia. In parallel to Catherine Gegeout (2010) and Cristopher Hill's (2011) claims, the present study has affirmed the prominent role of the Big Three in the formation of a collective response.

The convergence of the Big Three interests is crucial to reach a common decision since other member states are keen to follow them. In the Crimea crisis, the German dependency on Russian energy resources and French interests in the Middle East and the sale of the two Mistral helicopter carriers resulted in them initially taking a moderate stance. The British government's persistence to pursue a sanction regime, stemming from already deteriorated relations with the Russian government and relatively low interdependency, has created two diverse camps within the EU. Some member states such as Poland, Baltic republics and Romania supported the UK lead sanction regime; others, such as Italy, Greece, ROC, opposed the implementation of sanctions and took a moderate position. Consequently, the EU's power was constrained. After the downing of the MH17, the Big Three's strategies converged in perceiving Russia as a security threat and as a result of the cost-benefit calculations of the sanctions. The joint decision on

implementing a sanction policy was achieved only after the Big Three's convergence and the persuasion of reluctant members.

In the Eastern Mediterranean crisis, the close alignment of German and British governments with Turkey compared to the French side constituted the primary fracture among the Big Three. France's relationship with Turkey has already deteriorated, and French interests in the Middle East, particularly in Libya, contradicted Turkish foreign policies in the region. Since the dispute included two EU member states, the EU became a party directly, the collective response was crucial. The EU never implemented a comprehensive economic sanction policy on Turkey, contrary to sanctions implemented on Russia. The divergence on pursuing a constructive or confrontational approach between Germany, France and the UK resulted in ambiguity, despite the official declarations' tone, which repeatedly underlined the possible restrictive measures. Nevertheless, the constructive approach, in which Germany assumed the leading role, resulted in the de-escalation of tensions between the parties and the start of the dialogue process. Unlike Russia, which left the EU's efforts to reach a solution using diplomatic channels unanswered, the Turkish government recalled the drilling vessel in the Eastern Mediterranean. As a result, the French government's persistence in implementing a hard-line sanction policy eased, and the Big Three's strategies converged.

The sub-question of this study has aimed to elucidate the crucial indicators that affect the convergence and divergence among the Big Three. What is the most important factor (i.e., domestic interests, the rule of law, democracy, supranational institutions) influencing the policies of leading states towards sanction regime, which is one of the tools of the CFSP? According to the results, the most crucial factor influencing the member states' decisions was domestic interests resulting from complex cost-benefit calculations. However, it is important to underline the influence of Europeanisation in terms of internalising European norms and values and the role of Brussels-based institutions and agents. Although neither supranational norms, values, institutions, and agents did not ensure a collective action, the Big Three's reference has indicated their effect on the national preference formation. Notably, the increasing tone of reference to the supranational institutions and agents in the Eastern Mediterranean dispute was striking compared to the Crimea crisis. The MSSD has applied to track the patterns of convergence and divergence among the Big Three in achieving a common position in the Crimea

and the Eastern Mediterranean crises. The discourses, statements and declarations has utilised to provide an interpretative analysis since the core of the present study exemplifies an qualitative one. The increasing emphasis on the role of supranational institutions in the Eastern Mediterranean dispute when compared with Crimea, has constituted one of the ambiguous part where the present study has provided a relatively limited analysis.

The Crimea crisis has been marked as the leading role of Germany in the literature (Aggestam & Hyde-Price, 2020; Iso-Markku & Müller-Brandeck-Bocquet, 2020; Koeth, 2016; Krotz & Maher, 2016; Maull, 2018; Schoeller, 2020; Siddi, 2020). In parallel, German initiatives to achieve peaceful resolution through a collective European response in the Eastern Mediterranean crisis have indicated Germany's increasing role in the CFSP. Especially after the Brexit, the Franco-German cooperation has constituted the vital aspect of the foreign policy formation process. Thus, further research is necessary to unveil the dynamics of the CFSP in the post-Brexit period.

In the application of the MSSD to Crimea and the Eastern Mediterranean cases, the present study has only utilised three European integration theories, namely neofunctionalism, liberal intergovernmentalism and social constructivism. Since this study has a qualitative method at its core, the effect of the variables based on rationalist and constructivist approaches has indicated as positive or negative in an interpretative way. As a result, it was not possible to detect grey areas that cannot be distinguished precisely. For example, a relatively low level of reference to the HR/VP and EP has detected in Germany and France's discourses in the Eastern Mediterranean crises. Nevertheless, due to the lack of evidence of its effect in achieving a joint decision, it has indicated as a cross mark in the MSSD table. In future studies, a quantitative method may provide more precise results in detecting and analysing ambiguous situations.

The present study has aimed to contribute to the research on the CFSP by analysing Crimea and the Eastern Mediterranean crises. By providing a particular focus on the influence of major European powers on CFSP (namely France, Germany and the UK), it has aimed to indicate how the convergences and divergences affected achieving a joint decision. It is important to underline that this study does not argue that the Big Three's positions are adequate to explain the CFSP. On the contrary, it is essential to focus on the influence of small states for a

comprehensive analysis. Similar to Clara Portela et al.'s work (2020), which have provided a two-level analysis on the persistence of sanctions in the Crimea crisis by focusing on Poland and Spain, an analysis on the impact of small states in reaching a collective decision will be a valuable contribution.

The Crimea and the Eastern Mediterranean crises have constituted the latest flashpoints where the EU's actorness is questioned. Due to the recent escalation between Russia and Ukraine¹⁰⁵, the European Council decided to prolong the economic sanctions against Russia until 31 January 2022, which was initially introduced on 31 July 2014. Although there have been various rhetoric¹⁰⁶ regarding the impact of sanctions, extending the sanctions has shown the continuity of the EU's stance on the Crimean crisis. In the Eastern Mediterranean dispute, after the recent convergence between Greece and Turkey through meetings¹⁰⁷ at the foreign ministers level, the EU welcomed the de-escalation and affirmed its readiness to engage with Turkey in the European Council held on 24 June 2021. It is expected that the Crimean and Eastern Mediterranean disputes, which are among the last crises in which the EU's CFSP was tested, will remain on the agenda due to their complex nature. The EU's actorness and effectiveness will continue to be a salient topic in international affairs, and its ability to forge a collective action will remain as the most vital indicator of its power.

¹⁰⁵ In April 2021, the Russian government increased its military presence in the borders of Ukraine with the additional deployment of 14,000 troops. Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba stated that Russia is "openly threatening Ukraine with war" (Peter, 2021).

¹⁰⁶ In a press conference after the EU summit on 26 May, French President Emmanuel Macron emphasized that "With Russia, the policy of progressive sanctions on frozen situations is no longer an effective policy" (Rettman, 2021).

¹⁰⁷ In April 2021, Greek Foreign Minister Nikos Dendias visited Ankara to meet Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu to discuss the situation in the Eastern Mediterranean and de-escalation of the tensions. Followingly, Çavuşoğlu visited Athens in May 2021. Dendias defined the purpose of the meeting as an "attempt to establish common ground and then, if possible, to proceed with the gradual normalisation of the situation in the longer term" (Hellenic Republic Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2021).

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clear and determined in defending EU's interests and solidarity with Greece and Cyprus. We want to find paths towards a healthier relationship. It is in the mutual interest of both the EU and Turkey [Tweet].

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