

Multilateral interaction in the fight against nuclear and chemical weapons: the European Union and international non-proliferation institutions (EU-NONPROLIF)

PROJECT SUMMARY



How does international security cooperation work in the fight against Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)? This was the general theme of a major two-year research project on the European Union and its relation with other relevant international organizations in the area of non-proliferation of WMD that has been recently completed at the [Centre for Science & Security Studies](#) at King's College London. The project was generously supported by the European Union.

In Brief

The European Union (EU) is a 'strange animal' in international affairs. It is neither a nation state nor a typical international organization. Although it is active in a broad range of areas – from agriculture to peace-building – what it is and what it does has been widely contested. This project has shed light on this 'strange animal' in what is arguably its newest field of activity: defence and security. More specifically, it had a closer look at the EU's activities and their effectiveness in one of the most prevalent security issues of our times: the proliferation of WMD. It focused on the behaviour of the EU in the context of the international non-proliferation regime, i.e. the web of international treaties, organizations and institutions that regulate WMD-related issues.

Project Results

Based on a qualitative research design, the project analyzed a large number of relevant primary and secondary sources, including elite interviews with policy-makers. The key findings were published in an article for [International Affairs](#), the flagship journal of the British Royal Institute of International Affairs. This article examines the first ten years of the 2003 [EU WMD Strategy](#), the principal document on non-proliferation at the European level. By scrutinizing what the EU actually did in specific cases of its non-proliferation policy, it concluded that – contrary to wide-held perceptions of the EU as an ineffective security actor – the EU can deliver practical outcomes in areas as diverse as conducting high-level nuclear negotiations with Iran, strengthening the verification

work of international non-proliferation organizations and supporting non-proliferation efforts in partner countries. This is not to say that the EU's non-proliferation policy has been without shortcomings. Yet, on the whole its output has been better than expected. This was also the main message of a policy brief published for the [European Leadership Network](#), a group of senior European political, military and diplomatic figures.

Building partly on previous research, the overall research results were backed up by various analyses that have been published in major academic journals in the field of International Relations. These articles deal with specific cases of European non-proliferation policies. The article on the Iranian nuclear crisis was published in [Cooperation and Conflict](#) and demonstrates how EU member states, above all France, Germany and the UK, were able to cooperate intensively over an extended period of time in the negotiations with Iran. Quite to the contrary, a [forthcoming article on India](#) shows that the EU is still far away from a fully-fledged non-proliferation actor, as member states cannot agree on the crucial accommodation of India in the international non-proliferation regime. Finally, an article on EU non-proliferation outreach efforts in North Africa and the Middle East in the journal [Mediterranean Politics](#) outlines the EU's more subtle non-proliferation policies aimed at establishing the basic international non-proliferation norms and rules in this region.

Research Collaboration and Knowledge Exchange

Throughout the project, the interaction with other researchers and policy-makers played a major role in its implementation. All research findings were presented at the principal academic conferences and workshops in the field of International Relations, including the conventions organized by the [International Studies Association](#) and the [European International Studies Association](#). Together with Johanne Grøndahl Glavind, a colleague at Aarhus University in Denmark, various conference panels with different papers on European non-proliferation policies were organized. This effort led finally to the forthcoming publication of a co-edited special section on 'The EU and the nuclear non-proliferation regime: internal and external challenges' in the journal [European Security](#). In the realm of practitioners, outputs were produced that fed directly into policy efforts to make the international non-proliferation regime more effective, in particular during a number of knowledge exchange activities such as invited talks, policy workshops and policy publications. In this respect, it is necessary to highlight the pivotal role played by the [EU Non-Proliferation Consortium](#), the European network of independent non-proliferation think tanks, which will publish one of the project's major policy papers in the next few months. This network has turned into the main platform where European researchers and practitioners in the field of non-proliferation can interact and exchange their knowledge and expertise.

This summary has been published as featured research project on the King's College London website:
<http://www.kcl.ac.uk/sspp/departments/dsd/research/featured.aspx>

