

## Abstract

### Olaf Poeschke: Coherence under Maastricht and beyond

#### EU external action and cross-pillar coordination

'Speaking with one voice' is known to be one of the major challenges EC/EU Member States face since the European Political Cooperation was introduced in 1970. While much attention has been paid to the *intergovernmental* side of the coin, *inter-institutional* (or *cross-pillar*) coordination in the area of EU external action has been less carefully examined.

This article focuses on the fault line between the EC external action, the so-called first pillar, and the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), the second pillar of the EU. Taking into account both instruments and policy fields, it analyses four pertinent cases of cross-pillar interaction, namely: a) EU Special Representatives: How does the EU make use of them and how do EUSRs relate to the 'first-pillar representatives' of the EU, the various Commission delegations in third countries? b) EU/EC agreements: To what extent does the current contractual practice vis-à-vis third states take into account the increased relevance of CFSP? c) Sanctions policy: How (well) do Member States and institutions coordinate in this particular policy field, given that a specific cross-pillar *modus operandi* for sanctions is in place? d) 'Stability policy': In the absence of any such mechanism, how do Member States and institutions coordinate in this grey zone of EU competence?

It appears that, despite regular claims for enhanced coherence and cross-pillar synergy, current practice often results in carefully maintaining what could be labeled 'pillar purity'. Pillar purity more often than not seems to be the common denominator of various competing actors involved. Against this background the impact of the pillar-ripping reform treaty on future EU practice will be assessed.