



DISTANT YET STRATEGIC

Explaining Patterns of The European Union's
Declaratory Diplomacy on The
South China Sea Dispute

by

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work, crafted with passion, to my future, with the humble hope that it paves the way for me to achieve greatness.

ABSTRACT

This research delves into the patterns of the European Union's declaratory diplomacy in the South China Sea (SCS) dispute, analyzing the nuanced evolution of the EU's approach in over a decade. Through a mixed-method approach combining quantitative content analysis and qualitative hypothesis testing, the study reveals a complex interplay of assertiveness and vagueness in the EU's diplomatic engagements. By mapping the frequency, forms, and characteristics of the EU's declaratory diplomacy, the research challenges the simplistic narrative of the EU solely becoming more assertive. Instead, the analysis of critical patterns showcases a dynamic landscape where the EU has demonstrated assertiveness alongside conveying vague statements, indicating a multifaceted approach to addressing security challenges in the region and the SCS dispute.

Furthermore, the study explores the strategic interactions of the EU in the SCS, emphasizing the interconnected nature of the EU's diplomatic efforts and its role in managing power dynamics in the Indo-Pacific region. The research finds merit in explaining the patterns of EU declaratory diplomacy in the SCS through behaviors of balancing and signaling practices. By uncovering the complexities of EU engagement in the SCS, the research provides valuable insights for policymakers, scholars, and practitioners seeking to navigate the evolving security landscape of the region. This nuanced perspective enriches our understanding of the EU's strategic behavior in the SCS and cautions against oversimplifying the EU's evolving stance in the region. Overall, this research contributes to a broader understanding of the EU's declaratory diplomacy in the SCS dispute, offering a comprehensive analysis of the EU's diplomatic patterns and strategic interactions in the region.

Keywords: European Union, Foreign Policy, Patterns, Declaratory Diplomacy, South China Sea, Strategic Interaction.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A2/AD	Anti-Access/Area Denial
ARF	ASEAN Regional Forum
ASEM	Asia-Europe Meeting
ASEP	Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership Meeting
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CLCS	UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf
CMP	Coordinated Maritime Presences
COC	Code of Conduct
CSDP	Common Security and Defense Policy
DOC	Declaration on Conduct
EC	European Commission
EEAS	European External Action Service
EEC	European Economic Community
EEZs	Exclusive Economic Zones
EIA	US Energy Information Administration
EPC	European Political Cooperation
ESS	European Security Strategy
EU	European Union
EU NAVFOR	Operation Atalanta/European Union Naval Force
EUGS	Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy
EUMSS	European Union Maritime Security Strategy
EUSRs	EU Special Representatives
FON	Freedom of Navigation
FONOPs	Freedom of Navigation Operations
FPDA	Five Power Defense Arrangements
HR	High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
IGCs	Intergovernmental Conferences
IMP	Integrated Maritime Policy
IUU	Illegal, Unregulated, and Unreported

MSS	Maritime Security Strategy
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
PCA	Permanent Court of Arbitration
PD	Public Diplomacy
PRC	People's Republic of China
PSC	Political and Security Committee
QMV	Qualified Majority Voting
SCS	South China Sea
SDNT	Single Draft SCS COC Negotiating Text
SEA	Single European Act
SLOCs	Sea Lanes of Communications
TAC	Treaty of Amity and Cooperation
TEU	Treaty on the European Union
UK	United Kingdom
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNGA	United Nation General Assembly
US	United States
HR/VP	High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the Commission
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Problem Statement

“The EU and its Member States have, thus, strategic interests, across the global maritime domain, in identifying and addressing security challenges linked to the sea (European Union, 2014).”

Within the security framework of the European Union (EU), there exists a cross-institutional maritime dimension that mimics the EU’s overall systemic structure, i.e. a complex combination of intergovernmental practices institutionalized at the Council level along with supranational practices extending over the European Commission, the Europe External Action Service (EEAS), as well as numerous decentralized structures (Germond, 2015, p. 105). Howbeit maritime security is presently embedded within EU policy frameworks, Brussels initially entered the maritime discourse strictly through strategic economic terms as seen by the European Commission’s (EC) Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP) in 2007. Such an economic focus was further developed with the adoption of the Blue Growth initiative in 2012, where the Commission acknowledged the maritime potential rendering *“seas and coasts for jobs and growth* (European Commission, 2012, p. 2).” The lack of security discussions within the institution’s maritime discourse led to criticisms of the EU having ‘Sea-blindness’ (Germond, 2015), referring to a lack of awareness of and overlooking the significance of the maritime domain. Thus, the adoption of the Maritime Security Strategy (MSS) in 2014 marks the EU’s arguably tardy first step into the maritime security discourse.

As the sea is perceived as a valuable source of prosperity for the EU, the maritime security narrative brought by the MSS lies on the EU’s dependency on *“open, protected and secure seas and oceans for economic development, free trade, transport, energy security, tourism and good status of the marine environment* (European Union, 2014, p. 1).” In simplified terms, one can say that the EU requires maritime security to achieve its maritime economic interests. The MSS framework understands maritime security as *‘a state of affairs of the global maritime domain,’* where there exists the enforcement of international law, the guarantee of navigation freedom, and the protection of citizens, infrastructure, transport, the environment, and marine resources (European Union, 2014, p. 3).

Intrinsically, the MSS document possesses dimensions of geopolitics as well. Although the EU has consistently denied geopolitical imaginaries since the establishment of the European Communities (Heffernan, 1998), the geopolitical aspect of the EU can be perceived through the

post-structuralist processes of the ‘othering’ (Diez, 2004). Diez (2004) refers to the EU’s geopolitical construction of ‘them’ against ‘us (the EU and its citizens),’ creating a foundation of political identity. Thus, it becomes important to identify the EU’s constructed ‘other’ and within which spaces they lie, as such a process normalizes the EU’s ‘policing’ practices by projecting power, norms, and security beyond its external boundaries (Germond, 2015, p. 130). Observing the geopolitical discourse present in the MSS document, the EU has classified maritime areas of strategic value within and transcending its maritime margins (Council, 2014). In a demonstration of its normative power, the EU encouraged the armed forces of its member states to play a strategic role at sea and ‘*provide global reach, flexibility and access that enable the EU and its Member States to contribute to the full spectrum of maritime responsibilities* (European Union, 2014),’ as a global security provider.

“In an era of globalization, distant threats may be as much a concern as those that are near at hand.” (European Union, 2003)

The establishment of a maritime facet within the European Union's security framework, aligning with the development of the EU's geopolitical vision, compels the EU to extend its security measures beyond its territorial confines as a means of safeguarding its internal security (Germond, 2011, p. 573). This brings the attention to a geographically distant multidimensional dispute, where the EU has major interests, yet mostly takes part remotely without having any direct claims, that is the South China Sea (SCS). As the People’s Republic of China (PRC) presumably claims most of the area through the demarcation of the Nine Dash Line, the conflict protracts as China’s historical claim overlaps with the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) of Brunei, Indonesia, Taiwan, The Philippines, Malaysia, and Vietnam.

The long-standing dispute of the SCS comprises a competition for territorial and jurisdictional claims over EEZs, numerous islands, low-tide elevations, rocks, and reefs, as well as the associated rights to build, oil and gas exploitation, and bountiful fishing grounds (Buszynski & Hai, 2021, p. 151). Moreover, the SCS has become an intense strategic area for the great power rivalry of China and the United States (US). Challenging the status quo, China’s increasing assertiveness in the SCS has occurred since the 1988 Johnson South-Reef Skirmish against Vietnam (Garcia, 2019). Over the years, Beijing has challenged the status quo by carrying out major island constructions and large scale land reclamations on various maritime features as well as militarizing the area by building dual-use airports and ports (Zhong, 2020).

As the EU’s economic partnership has grown in numbers with China and ASEAN into its second and third largest trading partner contemporarily, statements of EU representatives concerning Brussels’ major interest in a stable and peaceful SCS today are easily found

(Buszynski & Hai, 2021; Pejsova, 2019b). However, despite currently having approximately 40% of its foreign trade passing through the SCS (Borrell, 2020), the EU only began to explicitly address the dispute in 2012. Corresponding with the publication of the IMP in 2007, the EU also agreed upon ‘Guidelines on The EU's Foreign and Security Policy in East Asia’ within the same year. Nevertheless, the South China Sea dispute was not addressed nor mentioned within the guidelines. Through a revision of the Guidelines in 2012, the EU had made its first address to the SCS dispute as “*a threat to regional security*” with “*a direct bearing on the interests of the EU* (Council of the EU, 2012).”

In recalling the significance of the SCS dispute, however, the EU stands upon a position of ‘*principled neutrality*,’ signifying that it does not take any stance on sovereignty issues yet is in favor of crisis management processes and international law solutions (Duchâtel & Huijskens, 2015; European Parliamentary Research Service, 2022). Such an approach explains the EU’s following statement within the revised Guidelines in 2012,

“The EU and its Member States, while not in any sense taking position on these various claims, should nevertheless recall the great importance of the South China Sea for the EU... encourage the parties concerned to resolve disputes through peaceful and cooperative solutions and in accordance with international law (in particular UNCLOS) (Council of the EU, 2012).”

Nevertheless, the EU’s neutral stance has been heavily criticized as a form of ambivalence and/or inaction, particularly in the event of the 2016 South China Sea arbitration where the court ruled in the favor of the Philippines and against China. The EU released a relatively ‘weak’ statement, only 3 days after the court’s ruling on June 12th, 2016, simply acknowledging the tribunal’s decision instead of expressing the expected support (Fallon, 2016). Presumably a grand moment for the defense of the rule of law, potentially strengthening the EU’s role as a normative power, became a risk of slow erosion of European values in the international arena (Duchâtel, 2016, p. 56).

Notwithstanding prior critiques, in defining EU-China relations moving forward, the EU has regarded China as a ‘systemic rival’ in 2019 and has explicitly stated an EU policy shift into ‘*a more realistic, assertive, and multi-faceted approach* (European Commission, 2019).’ Furthermore, a rather less neutral statement was made regarding the SCS dispute, as the EU states that China’s maritime claims in the area and its refusal to accept the binding tribunal rulings in 2016 affects the international legal order and ‘*makes it harder to resolve tensions affecting sea lanes of communications (SLOCs) vital to EU interests* (European Commission,

2019). 'Calling upon the *full unity* of EU member states to achieve aims with China (European Commission, 2019), the statements released by the EU today are often considered as far from neutral. In 2021, the EU reiterated *its strong opposition* against China's unilateral actions in the area (European External Action Service, 2021). Moreover, the European Parliament released a resolution on 'the EU and the security challenges in the Indo-Pacific' in June 2022, calling out "*China's rapid military build-up, its increasingly assertive and expansionist behaviour in the Indo-Pacific region, its military activities in the...South China Seas,*" as rising tensions (European Parliament, 2022).

Taking into account the geographically distant nature of the dispute, the EU's struggle between pragmatism and principles, and the reluctance of some EU member states to confront China, renders the complexity in analyzing the EU's engagement to the SCS dispute (Cottey, 2019; Pejsova, 2019b). At the same time, such complexity raises many questions on Brussels' shift in approaching the South China Sea: Has the EU essentially become more assertive? If so, why, and why at that moment? Has the shift of the EU's engagement on the SCS been proven to be linear? Has the EU abandoned its principled neutrality? To what extent is the EU's diplomacy underlined by economics, security, and/or geopolitics? Regardless, the aforementioned complexity has led the EU's most consistent form of diplomacy, in responding to the unfavorable security developments in the SCS, to be reactive declarations, statements, and comments (Duchâtel, 2016, p. 55).

Such a form of engagement, however, should not be seen as a failure of the EU to carry out actions (Cardwell, 2016, p. 1). With one's expectations for the EU to employ state-like instruments in the SCS, the EU's declaratory diplomacy is often overlooked, particularly those statements that are considered to be less assertive or not having the 'right' momentum. When in fact, these overlooked statements would express as much insight as others into the interest and position of the Union toward the dispute. Taking into account the aforementioned complexity of the EU's engagement with the SCS dispute, the research questions how can the EU's declaratory diplomacy in the South China Sea dispute be explained?¹ One must look closely beneath *some* of the EU's bold and/or timid statements to find the thorough picture of Brussels' diplomatic engagement in the South China Sea, and ultimately discover the explanations behind it.

1.2 Academic Literature Review

1.2.1 Researching The European Union as An International Actor

¹ A more curated research question is found at the end of the Literature Review.

With the placement of the European Union (EU) as the subject of foreign policy in this research, one finds it crucial to first discuss the conceptualization of the European Union as an actor in existing foreign policy analysis literature. In the study of network governance to EU foreign policy by Filtenborg, Ganzle, and Johansson (2002), the EU is perceived to operate as a multileveled, transnational system with a distinctive governance structure that interacts with subnational, national, and supranational entities. The authors find policy decisions to be made through multifaceted interdependencies that challenge the traditional notions of actors in the international realm. Taking the case of the Northern Dimension Initiative, the authors argue that the EU's capacity to produce and implement a common foreign policy is more than a simple aggregation of member states' foreign policies (*Ibid*). It is rather a process that transcends traditional state-centric approaches through multileveled governance, leveraging the collective resources, expertise, and diplomatic networks of member states, producing network governance initiatives, as a state-like non-state actor (*Ibid*). Nonetheless, the authors acknowledge the challenges posed by internal governance structures that may hinder the formulation of coherent foreign policies.

Ginsberg (1999), on the other hand, emphasized the EU as a complex and evolving actor in international affairs with growing presence and influence, however, not a unified fully-fledged foreign policy actor. Ginsberg (1999) found a widespread gap within the expectation of a common foreign policy for the EU and the capacity with which its common institutions may be able to fulfill. The EU's institutional framework was argued to be lacking the necessary mechanisms to function as a fully autonomous and effective foreign policy actor (p. 448). Taking inspiration from Chris Hill's (1993) Capabilities-Expectations Gap, both Hill and Ginsberg argue that the EU is not effective in its capacity to produce collective decisions and its impacts in international events. Ginsberg (1999) highlighted the concept of 'presence' that indicated how the EU is perceived by external actors and the influence that it holds over the global stage. Such a presence, however, is not found by Ginsberg to be adequate to show coherent and deliberate actions that illustrate the EU to have full-fledged foreign policy capabilities. This owes to the fact that Ginsberg (1999) finds inconsistencies in how the EU projects its presence as an international actor. A rather more skeptic argument was made by Ojanen (2000) as she argues that the EU experiences troubles in 'transforming its normative strength into operational capability.' Ojanen (2000) finds the EU to be ineffective in shaping or influencing the international environment in any instrumental fashion.

Conversely, Cardwell (2011; in Collins & White, 2011) argues for the European Union to be seen as an autonomous foreign policy actor with a mechanism of power sharing

between its institutions. Having a particular status as a non-state polity, the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) is argued by Cardwell to serve as the aforementioned mechanism despite not encompassing all of the EU's external policies. With the CFSP acting as the EU's claim to autonomy on the global stage, Cardwell (2011) argues that it becomes part of the EU's constitutionalizing process reflecting its evolution from a common internal market to a player in global affairs. Cardwell, however, acknowledges the intricate relationship between the EU and its member states in its foreign policies that is only partially explained by the EU treaties, nonetheless does not undermine the actorness of the EU as a foreign policy maker.

Cardwell's arguments support those of Dashwood (2004) in his analysis on the relationship between the European Union and its member states. Dashwood (2004) underlines the principle that the EU only possesses 'those powers which have been conferred on it,' or what he calls the principle of conferral which is precisely the role of the CFSP according to Cardwell. Dashwood perceives the EU as an actor to be a complex system comprising of sub-orders, one of which being the CFSP. Despite perhaps having differing arguments with Cardwell concerning the entire mechanization of the EU as an actor, Dashwood elaborated the existence of coordination behind the implementation of CFSP as a basis of the EU's actorness in international affairs. The EU's role as a global actor is shaped by the coordination of Member States' foreign policies through the CFSP, thus emancipating the EU as a full-pledged player in global affairs.

In perceiving the European Union as a subject of foreign policy, this research underlines the fact that the EU acts internationally regardless to what extent does it possesses state-like foreign policy making capacity. Turning the view away from state-centric barriers of world politics into the international presence and actorness of an entity such as the EU, Michael Smith (2003) offers the existence of a conceptual link connecting deterritorialization of the state and the ways in which regional governance might foresee an extra-national EU foreign policy. External actors anticipate the EU's response to global issues and international crises which then takes the role as a collective foreign policy endeavor with which EU member states frequently justify their national foreign policies (Cini & Bourne, 2006, p. 124). Despite the skepticism of Smith, Hill, and Ojanen of the EU as a full-fledged foreign policy actor, it can be confidently stated that it is necessary to assess the impacts of the EU's behavior in the global arena and analyze the underlying grounds for such behavior.

Standing upon the existence of a collective decision that is the CFSP, the research places the EU to have international presence and actorness that are worth analyzing as a

collective action. It attempts to move beyond examining the EU's international actorness with the benchmark of state foreign policy. As Cini & Bourne (2006) highlighted, a paradox emerges if the EU's foreign policy were to be continuously seen to be on par with the state. One that is to argue that the EU is constructing a state-like foreign policy or to argue that the EU and its system of diplomatic coordination are condemned to be measured against a set of state-based criteria that they would never fulfill (p. 125).

1.2.2 The European Union's Foreign and Security Policy

Prior to addressing the discourse surrounding the European Union's approach to the South China Sea dispute, this section finds relevance in delving into the existing scholarly debates on the EU's overall approach to foreign and security policies. Particularly, it explores the understandings and criticisms on the EU's decision-making process behind its foreign and security policies along with the idea of the rules-based liberal international order that it exports to the world. Such a discussion is necessary to fully understand the maneuverability of the EU as well as the values that the institution brings into its foreign and security engagements in the South China Sea dispute.

The European Union has had a long-standing aim in building a united front in foreign affairs. Since the end of the Cold War, the EU has been asserting its identity in the international scene through the implementation of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) (Bindi, 2010). The CFSP was established in 1993 by the Treaty on European Union (TEU), aiming for "*preserving peace, strengthening international security, promoting international cooperation and developing and consolidating democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms* (European Union, 1992)." Having been strengthened by various treaties after its creation, the CFSP is associated with several institutional actors and bodies such as the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the European External Action Service (EEAS), the EU Special Representatives (EUSRs) and the EU delegations. Similar to many other EU institutions, however, the decision-making process in implementing the CFSP relies strongly on a unanimous vote in its favor and in some cases with a pre-approved Qualified Majority Voting (QMV). Member states are allowed to exercise 'constructive abstention' followed by an abstention of any actions that might conflict with the EU's activities upon said decision.

In the early 2000s, Michael Smith (2004) studied EU foreign policy-making through a lens of multi-level governance. Smith (2004) acknowledged that the CFSP does not hold a supranational function as other EU policy domains (p. 740), however, rather a

decentralized deliberative process subject to the ultimate authority of member states through an unanimously authorized QMV (p. 743 & p. 755). Nonetheless, CFSP marked significant progress towards multi-level governance as it placed foreign policy within a formal legally binding EU policy domain with authoritative decision-making rules and limited compliance mechanisms (p. 743). The CFSP policy process reflects an interplay as well between national and institutional level practices that in turn results in differing extents to which the multi-level governance approach can be applied across foreign policies. Smith identifies that domestic politics (i.e. government stance on CFSP; existence of coalition; and centralized or federal state) within the EU may improve and/or interfere with the implementation of CFSP (p. 752). The optimalization of multi-level governance on the CFSP would rely on situations where the issue conforms with the European Council mandate, the decision is reached by QMV (instead of forced consensus), has been on the agenda for a long time, does not involve violence, involves explicit delegation to EU sub-institutions or a pre-existing framework, utilizes EU budget funding, with input from the European Parliament (p. 753). Smith (2004) argues that the CFSP requires extensive institutional reforms in its decision making and a mechanism to cope with increase in membership (p. 756). Such is how, according to Smith (2004), deadlocks could be avoided towards a common EU foreign policy (p. 756).

Asle Toje (2008) provides a deeper focus in the lack of decision-making mechanisms to overcome dissent behind the EU's inability to effectively deliver foreign and security policies despite having adequate capabilities and institutions (p. 121-122). Toje (2008) explains the existence of a 'consensus-expectations gap' that is a discrepancy between what EU member states are expected to agree on and what member states are able to consent to (p. 122). Having examined consensus as a policymaking method in EU foreign policy through the case of the Darfur humanitarian crisis, Toje finds that consensus allows the EU to cherry-pick global issues and select those that favor consensus (p. 132). Thus, EU foreign policies tend to be defined by the tools that can be agreed upon instead of the most effective tools to fulfill a certain objective. The EU may address a humanitarian crisis through vague declarations yet pledge armed forces to situations without need for coercion (p. 132). The CFSP, however, has been a pivotal change to EU foreign policy making and setting the security agenda as it underlines common positions and joint actions (p. 132-133). Toje (2008) does not view the EU to be an effective global intervener nor a mediator in international disputes, but more likely a regional pacifier, a large aid donor, and a joint supervisor of world economy (p. 139). What the EU may achieve in the international

system, however, is contingent upon the making of a unified vision by member states on what type of actor the EU desires to be abroad.

Looking beneath the consensus, Stefan Lehne (2012) argues for the existence of a tacit agreement between the three largest and most resourceful EU member states to lead the agenda and shape EU foreign policy decisions i.e. Germany, France, and the United Kingdom (p. 5). Lehne (2012) sees the dynamic as such due to their low dependency on multilateral institutions in influencing global development in comparison to other EU member states (p. 8). Moreover, the 'Big Three' operate in several other international institutional frameworks such as the UNSC, the G7, and NATO (p. 8). Lehne's (2012) analysis shows that policies pushed by a united Big Three would most likely be adopted by the entire 27, in contrast to those characterized with dissent amongst the Big Three (p.8). Within the three big powers, Lehne finds the UK to have been the most ambitious foreign policy actor in the EU at the time, while France possessed the desire and potential to play a leading role in EU foreign policy (p. 13-18). Germany, on the other hand, is considered to be reluctant to lead on foreign policy matters (p. 10). The bloated influence of the Big Three, however, may diminish over time as the EU strengthens the role of its common institutions such as the EEAS (p. 4). Nevertheless, the key to the strength of EU foreign policy, according to Lehne, is the maintenance of the eurozone (p. 12).

As an integral part of the CFSP directly correlated to the defense and security nature of this research, the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) created under the Treaty of Lisbon needs to be scholarly assessed. Thierry Tardy (2018) revisited the defense element of the CSDP and argues that there is evidence for an evolution towards a more centralized EU defense-oriented posture (p. 11). Tardy saw the rise of involvement from member states and European institutions in the defense market alongside an increasingly threatening security environment for Europe. Despite acknowledging a rising defense role for the EU, Tardy also showed the lack of conceptualization on what defense signifies in the EU context. Within the security-defense nexus, Tardy finds the ambiguity of the relationship between defense and use of force that has not been agreed upon among member states, the hesitation of member states on hard conceptions of defense, and the uncertainty on whether defense should be a prerogative role of the EU.

Following a PhD dissertation by Simon Sweeney (2015), CSDP is argued to be dominated by bureaucratic politics with a strong interplay between the attachment of member states to sovereignty and the need for pooling strategic capability for a stronger EU contribution to international security through the creation of a Grand Strategy (p. 221). Sweeney found weak support in arguing for the CSDP intending to enhance the credibility

of the EU as a strategic actor (p. 223). Albeit acknowledging that the CSDP has accommodated the rise of EU presence through missions, the limited actorness that the CSDP brought to the EU has rendered missions to be small, low-cost, and having low risk. Sweeney perceives the CSDP to be a manifestation of bureaucratic politics where there exists a hierarchical technocracy that responds to member states within the European Council and its proxies. The outcomes of these bureaucratic politics, however, are low-level and underreported thus blurring the role of responsibility. Sweeney argues that the policies taken under the CSDP is rather based on satisficing instead of strategic gains, aiming for compromise and consensus instead of defending principles.

Following the establishment of the CSDP, the Treaty of Lisbon assigned the European External Action Service (EEAS) as an assisting body to the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HR) as an effort to improve the coherence of the EU's implementation of the CSFP and CSDP. Lequesne (2013), then, analyzed the EEAS as a bureaucratic institution made to decrease transaction costs between the various actors of the EU foreign policy making. Contrasting to those who argue the EEAS to be a typical institutional centralization of modern states, Lequesne explains how the EEAS is a center of coordination that runs horizontally and vertically. Horizontally, the EEAS is bureaucratically involved mostly with the European Commission and thus inventing innovative institutional procedures to overcome distrust from the member states. While vertically, the EEAS is confronted with vertical bureaucracy in its coordination with member states and the foreign policies exported by the states in other international forums where the EU does not possess a standing (i.e. the UNGA where the EU holds an observer status; the UNSC where the EU does not have representation).

Lequesne (2013) views as well that member states are forced to consider the EEAS in their declaratory positions in other forums. Thus, the EEAS becomes a coordination builder that certainly influences the bureaucratic phase of EU foreign policy making, however, has no power to influence politics of the issues at hand. Lequesne argues that the EEAS is still in search of its own identity, but it contributes to the coherence of EU foreign policy within its limitations. The EEAS is constrained in its diplomatic bureaucratic function and produces new ideas for EU foreign policies in a sectorial and limited manner instead of strategic. Nevertheless, Lequesne emphasized that the EEAS surely plays a role in foreign policy making through coordination, information providing, and limited production of strategic ideas, therefore proving that member states do not dominate every phase of EU foreign policy making.

In exploring the extent of agenda-setting capacity of the EEAS and the HR, Vanhoonacker and Pomorska (2013) examined strategies employed by the two relatively new foreign policy entities to build credibility and attract attention (p. 1328). The authors emphasized the EEAS' large investment in capacity building despite being structurally challenged with understaffing and budgetary capacity. Noting also the diverse professional backgrounds of its members and the absence of a standardized operating procedure, the EEAS seems to be lacking an *esprit de corps* that is simply a question of time to develop. Nevertheless, the EEAS drafts the formal agenda of meetings and is within a powerful position to resist certain demands. Finally, the authors argued how the EEAS has raised the interest of the EU in being a soft power and changing the international context of emerging powers. As the character formation of the EU's diplomatic system is relatively recent, the authors claim that the EEAS has been preoccupied with internal problems than investing efforts to mobilize partners and concretizing the framing of foreign policy matters (p. 1329).

Acknowledging the EU's interest to be a soft power, Simon Duke (2013) then discussed the EU's foreign policy through its delegations in the context of Public Diplomacy (PD). As all scholars in EU foreign policy, Duke finds importance in the Lisbon Treaty as an advent of EU delegations to serve under the CFSP. For the purpose of PD, EU delegations are designed mainly to communicate the EU's "values, policies, and results of its projects" towards other countries and stakeholders. With an intermestic nature, the EU's PD also gives the mandate to delegations to communicate the EU's external actions to the medias of its member states in addition to overseas media. Duke revealed that in 2012, the EEAS had jointly published an Information and Communication Handbook for EU Delegations in which delegations are encouraged to focus their actions and messages on promoting the EU as a major partner in democratic transition, the world's largest cooperation and development donor, a global economic power, promoter of human rights, and as a global security provider (Duke, 2013). These priority areas are said to be 'inspired by the promotion of EU values and based on the delivery of peace, security, and prosperity'. Duke (2013) argues that the shift from traditional diplomacy to PD in the EU means that there should be a centralization in which the EEAS should assume a key role with a clear strategic view of the EU's global role.

The aforementioned discussion of the EU's foreign and security policy has extensively illustrated the complex intricacies of its formation, organization, and implementation. The EEAS itself, as an institution mandated specifically in the spectrum of foreign and security policy, is the result of a series of political compromises amongst EU institutions and the member states (Lequesne, 2013). Thus in analyzing the EU's

engagement on the South China Sea dispute, one has to acknowledge the EU's approach to its foreign and security policies as well as the institutions involved in its policy-making and implementation. Although the EU has established a body such as the EEAS, the role of the European Commission, European Parliament, European Council, and The Council of the EU do not lose their significance on the matter. Further elaboration on the EU's foreign and security policy is found on the second chapter (See section 2.1.).

1.2.3 The European Union's Approach to The South China Sea Dispute

The following section elaborates on the existing literatures regarding the development of the European Union's (EU) approaches and policies taken concerning the South China Sea. Scholars have also discussed and analyzed what may be the underlying frameworks and/or rationalities that are driving the EU's engagements in the dispute. The literary gap found through this literature review lies in the necessity of a more thorough presentation of the EU's behavior in the SCS dispute prior to conducting an objective analysis of its drivers. Hence, this research aims to fill that gap, however, understands the significance of studying existing works in advance.

Following the South China Sea Arbitration in 2016, Maier-Knapp (2017) argues that the European Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) have cautiously expressed a clear and coherent stance of neutrality throughout the SCS dispute. The EU, however, utilizes official statements collectively in reprimanding disagreeable actions in the area (Maier-Knapp, 2017, p. 464). Acknowledging that the main competencies of the EU's foreign and security policies lies in its member states, nonetheless, the collective supranational EU representation in the dispute has created the view of the EU as '*coherent political and security actor*' in Southeast Asia (Maier-Knapp, 2017, p. 470). Activities of the EEAS, particularly, has promoted the EU as a rationalizer of interests, expertise provider, and dialogue facilitator in maritime space. Maier-Knapp addressed the EU's approach as an integral part of the EU's objective in becoming a security actor in the long-run (Maier-Knapp, 2017, p. 465).

On a differing note, Casarini (2021) argues for a gradual decline in the EU's traditional neutrality position in the South China Sea disputes, leading to a strengthened position towards Beijing. Such an evolution owes to China's militarization of the area, thus resulting in an urgency and willingness amongst EU member states to conduct concrete actions instead of sticking to its usual diplomatic protests in defending the rules-based order in the SCS (Casarini, 2021, p. 115). The EU's response to Chinese assertive behavior is visible through the EU's facilitation of ASEAN-China dialogue on a code of conduct of the

SCS and its support for naval operations by its members. Aside from the naval diplomacy undertaken by the EU's member states, arms sales (primarily naval units) by European states have also contributed a strong form of support towards the claimant states, however, risks destabilizing the area (Casarini, 2021, pp. 114–115). Nevertheless, Casarini (2021) did not develop further in regards to the EU's contemplation behind the evolving strategy chosen.

Cottey (2019) argues a noteworthy point through his qualitative study on the EU's strategic policies on both South and East China Seas. Acknowledging the evolution of the policies of the EU as Casarini (2021) did, Cottey finds the EU to have reflected a normative/liberal/multilateralist approach in the early 2010s, promoting substantive norms as a liberal power (Cottey, 2019, pp. 7–8). Due to limited impact in its normative approach, the EU became increasingly assertive, resulting in the emergence of a power balancing approach noting the Freedom of Navigation Operations (FONOPs) done by France and the United Kingdom (UK). Nonetheless, Cottey (2019) also highlighted the existence of elements of acquiescence to Chinese advances as many EU members remain concerned of antagonizing China, taking examples of Greece and Hungary. Arguing that these three approaches co-exist, Cottey expressed disagreements on the EU's principled neutrality stance as he proposed that de facto Europe rejects Chinese intentions of acquiring the two seas. Such is why the EU is quietly re-balancing its policies in Asia towards states except China (Cottey, 2019, p. 15).

Focusing more in detail on the EU's distinct balancing strategy, Zhong (2020) analyzes the EU's diplomatic instruments in its adoption of a strategic offshore position with an onshore ambition. After reviewing Brussels' strategic plans and declarations, Zhong also argues the EU as a balancer in the SCS dispute with a purpose to prevent China's dominance in Asia (Zhong, 2020, pp. 88, 106). Furthermore, he explores the extent to which the EU is taking part in the dispute as well as the instruments and tactics it applies. Finding that the EU employs more soft balancing instruments whilst observing potential employment of hard ones, Zhong sees the EU's priorities to be security dialogues, cooperation with other claimants, and participating in the US-led coalition. According to Zhong, such an approach is taken due to the absence of the EU's military presence in the Indo-Pacific, as the EU is not a military power, thus hindering power projection and significant influence exertion.

Contrary to Zhong (2020), Nengye & Qi (2018) argues that the EU deliberately seeks to differentiate itself from the US. Despite having criticized Beijing's behavior through its keenness to promote a rules-based order, Nengye & Qi sees the EU's acknowledgement of the 2016 SCS Arbitration to be in line with China's nonappearance

approach in the Arbitration, unlike the US' hardline approach that called upon China's respect of the decision (Nengye & Qi, 2018, pp. 3–4). The explanation behind the EU's support for the Chinese approach in the area is because both China and the EU perceive the SCS as a significant shipping lane for their economic interests. Nengye & Qi (2018) elaborated the EU's role in international cooperation mechanisms in the SCS to have begun with the EU-China 2020 Strategic Agenda, where cooperation against illegal, unregulated, and unreported (IUU) fishing is addressed. A working group in 2016 between the two entities established a platform for the EU's involvement in fisheries management in the SCS. Thus, Nengye and Qi concludes with the unique contribution that EU has begun to undertake in the SCS, has a background of the EU's interests to protect its trade and shipping, all the while enhancing peace and security as well as maintaining a rules-based order.

Southgate (2019), on the other hand, argues that Europe is at a crossroads on whether to continue its diplomatic initiatives or to implement an approach consisting of more hard power in the SCS. Noting the challenges, however, the existence of an unanimity principle leads to resource constraints in enhancing the EU's military capabilities. Southgate perceives Brexit as a possible catalyst in military improvement as the EU is at a loss of the UK's naval projection power, though it might also discourage the EU to engage in geographically distant conflicts such as the SCS (Southgate, 2019, p. 246). Regardless, the EU's engagement in the SCS hinges upon the EU's aim in becoming a global security power and the ways it opts for in exerting influence. Southgate (2019) also argues that the EU's approach is dependent on the international system configuration and shifts in power distribution within it, in reference to the US-China rivalry (Southgate, 2019, p. 247).

Paikin, et.al. (2023) share similar concerns as Southgate (2019) i.e. the US-China techno-ideological rivalry acts as a large factor in constraining the EU's policy options, however, prompts the EU to place greater attention in the SCS dispute as well. Furthermore, Paikin, et.al argues that the existence of a global multipolarity, in addition to China's rise in power, certainly impacts the EU's choice of approach in the SCS, forcing its role to be limited and simply complementary to the US whilst attempting to push its normative approach on the sidelines (Paikin et al., 2023, p. 19). With a recent open great power competition in the resourceful area of the SCS, the EU's engagement is subject to the complex regional fragmentation in the Indo-Pacific and internal contestation within the EU (Paikin et al., 2023, pp. 19–21).

Nonetheless, Paikin, et.al. (2023) notes as well the hardening of the European approach towards China in the matter, striking an increasingly coherent and assertive

position. Relying mostly on its member states, an aspect of hard power is surely present albeit not prioritized. Other instruments of engagement in the SCS utilized by the EU involves public diplomacy, people-to-people contacts, and bilateral relations as well as multilateral relations between the EU and ASEAN, (Paikin et al., 2023, pp. 26–27). However, Paikin, et.al. criticizes the EU’s focus on “preserving the rules-based international order” as a linguistic mistake in its engagement with the ambivalence of Southeast Asian states towards the perceived western-made rules (Paikin et al., 2023, p. 11). The authors revealed through fieldwork interviews that such rapidity of alteration in the EU’s engagement in the SCS testifies the EU’s capacity to act in response to the continuously evolving geopolitical dynamics, amidst the entire underlying backdrop.

Aligning with apprehensions by Paikin, et.al. (2023) and some others (Casarini, 2021; Cottey, 2019; Southgate, 2019), Heiduk’s (2019) writing elaborated on the EU’s internal quarrel regarding its strategic alignment on the SCS dispute as an effect of what Heiduk calls “*Chinfluence*” (Heiduk, 2019, pp. 159–161). In this sense, Heiduk refers to China’s globally imposed economic strength resulting in watered-down statements by the EU. Even so, Heiduk proposes that Brussels has leveled up its engagement with claimant states in the field of non-traditional security, preferring multilateralism as initially argued by Cottey (2019). Thus, Heiduk (2019) finds the EU to have considered ASEAN as the cornerstone of evolving security architecture in the Indo-Pacific. That said, the EU is seen as lacking significant hard power capacity in the region as many have argued. Instead, it sought to transfer ideas and best practices in managing the seas and resources as well as marine protection. Heiduk (2019) argues that Europe is rather focused on its immediate neighborhood as China is not perceived as a strategic competitor. Using a dominant economic prism, the EU’s approach to the SCS dispute is easily softened by internal divisions. From a grand perspective, the EU’s engagement becomes ambiguous and indecisive between undertaking a rights-based approach and promoting international law or submitting to member states policy preferences, driven by economic matters (Heiduk, 2019, p. 165).

In the ambiguity of the EU’s approach presented by Heiduk (2019), Pejsova (2019) elaborates on how Brussels’ decision-making is weighted heavily by bilateral relations with Beijing and member states’ interests. Such weighs would explain European arms sales to SCS claimant states as well as dual-use technology transfers to China, contributing to the militarization of the SCS (Pejsova, 2019a, p. 3). However, Pejsova (2019) also found a shift in the EU’s engagement in becoming more grounded and realistic into ‘*realpolitik* with European characteristics’. The EU, thus, corresponds to the concept of principled

pragmatism, lowering its intensity in promoting democratization and acknowledges the need for hard power to gain further strategic autonomy in global affairs. Hence, Pejsova (2019, p. 3) analyzes the EU's continuation in approaching China whilst maintaining its normative discourse and subtly expressing support for the military actions by its member states.

In spite of not being a traditional security player in the SCS, Brussels' attitude with ASEAN evolved from considering itself as a natural power into going beyond empty political postures and taking practical and concrete actions in demonstrating its capacity and contributions (Pejsova, 2019a, p. 6). Such an approach, implied by Pejsova, might be taken by Brussels to mend ASEAN's perspective of the EU as it initially does not see Europe as a critical partner to play with in terms of security. Overtime, the EU has proven its value in easing regional tensions through its work on maritime security and conflict prevention with individual Southeast Asian claimants (Pejsova, 2019a, p. 5).

Conversely, Duchâtel (2016, p. 54) sees the EU as a marginal and disconnected player in the South China Sea as the EU faces a gap between its intentions and capabilities towards security matters in Asia. The gap worsens as the security environment in Europe's neighborhood deteriorates, thus limiting the EU's role in the SCS as simply a partner in values with restricted contributions (Duchâtel, 2016). Duchâtel argues that Europe's engagement in the SCS remains to be focused on declaratory diplomacy, as in reactive statements reaffirming principles of peaceful conflict resolutions and international law (Duchâtel, 2016, p. 55). Moreover, the EU seems to be constrained even within its comments, shown by its refrain from directly supporting the Philippines in the 2016 Arbitration due to its neutral stance. Similar to other scholars, Duchâtel also takes into account two other instruments of the EU's engagement i.e. arms sales and FONOPs (Duchâtel, 2016, p. 57). Although these are alternatives or rather complements of Brussels' principled statements, Europe seems to lack capacity in providing strong leadership to enforce an international maritime order (Duchâtel, 2016, p. 58). Nevertheless, Duchâtel sees potential in an enhancement of consistency and coherence within the EU's role, provided that Brussels becomes more supportive of the 2016 ruling.

The presented literature review has shown the existence of extensive research, be it on the dynamics of the EU's engagement in the SCS dispute or analyzing its decision making on account of the complex elements involved. This dissertation certainly shares its view on the existence of constraints behind the EU's actions as well as various impetuses which are driving the EU's contributions. Hence, this research aims to find explanations

behind the EU's engagement practices as in why the EU chose to conduct its diplomacy in a certain way in a given moment. This brings the realization that a pattern of the EU's engagement in the SCS has never been established despite an abundance of research done beneath it. Most scholars have relied on major momentum within the SCS dispute and/or particular diplomatic actions of the EU (or its representatives and member state officials) in its analyses. Therefore, this research aims to fill the gap of the non-existing complete picture of the EU's engagement in the SCS dispute, to obtain a holistic analysis of its explanations.

As argued by Duchâtel (2016), the EU's first and foremost consistent engagement in the SCS dispute is found to be in the instrumental form of declaratory diplomacy. Although acknowledging other instruments taken by the EU in the area, this research attempts to generate a discursive pattern of the EU's declaratory diplomacy as an effort to establish a rather more dynamic view on the EU's engagement in the SCS dispute and analyze the possible explanations behind it. According to Wesslau (2013) of the Swedish Folke Bernadotte Academy, declaratory forms of diplomacy has become a staple of modern diplomacy practices (p. 78). By engaging in declaratory diplomacy, states and international organizations convey their official stances as well as show presence and engagement through which they treat as means to place political pressure intended to influence the behavior of others (Cardwell, 2016; Wesslau, 2013). Keukeleire and Delreux (2022) identifies declaratory diplomacy as one of the main functions of diplomacy particularly in what they call 'Relational Foreign Policy', seeking to influence the behavior and relations of other actors (p. 35).

Through Feron's (2015) analysis of the EU's declaratory diplomacy, the foremost motives found for the EU are to form an opinion or position on an existing political situation, to communicate a position on cases involving human rights, and to convey positions regarding elections in third countries. Such engagements are taken to achieve the objective of asserting the identity of the EU while at the same time managing the relations amongst member states and institutions. Finally, Feron (2015) argued that the profile of the EU as an international actor is mainly shaped by its statements and declarations. Declaratory diplomacy is also interpreted as a standard practice of the CFSP, however, one that is not to be overlooked (Keukeleire and Delreux, 2022, p. 180).

Henceforth, this dissertation finds the establishment of patterns of the EU's declaratory diplomacy on the South China Sea dispute to be reflective on the nature of the EU's presence and engagement on the issue. That said, this analysis does not undermine the significance of other forms of diplomacy conducted by the EU on the matter. The author

also recognizes that an entirely objective outlook could never be secured, thus the research intends to present a comprehensive mapping of the EU's declaratory diplomacy (to date) in the SCS dispute, to best understand the approach prior to analyzing its explanations. Hence, the research questions **how can the patterns of the European Union's declaratory diplomacy in the South China Sea dispute be explained?**

1.3 Research Design

Found to be best explained as a whole, this section of research design elaborates the methodology, methods, and theoretical frameworks of this research.

1.3.1 A Mixed-Method Process Tracing Research

In its venture to answer the research question, this dissertation is guided by a mixed-method design, employing both quantitative and qualitative elements as well as an inductive and a deductive approach under the umbrella of a Process Tracing method. Process tracing refers to the attempt to identify the process of causal intervention between independent variables and the process experienced by the dependent variable. The dependent variable in this research refers to the EU's declaratory diplomacy on the SCS, whereas the independent variables tested as hypotheses are the EU's balancing behavior with the US and ASEAN, as well as the EU's signaling practice of its 2019 EU-China Strategic Outlook and its 2021 Indo-Pacific Strategy.

Mahoney (2012) explains how process tracing firstly demands the documentation of sequences to establish prior and post occurrences owing to a certain explanation/s. Referring to the pattern documentation of the EU's declaratory diplomacy in the SCS, such is where an inductive approach is necessary. In bridging the gap on the non-existing comprehensive picture of Brussels' engagements in the dispute, this research borrows the method of content analysis to identify patterns within texts and hence, map out a declarative sequence of diplomacy based on a metadata generated by the author. Further explanation of the content analysis method used can be found in 1.4.2.

Subsequently, the research is followed by a qualitative analysis of the attained quantitative data, with the purpose of finding competing explanations based on a Bayesian probabilistic reasoning (Benoit, 2020). It refers to the usage of logic and in-depth knowledge of context as instruments to evaluate the inferential power of each causal process observations (Benoit, 2020). Mahoney perceives the attempt to find causal explanation through hypothesis-testing to be the second step of the process tracing research. Corresponding to Mahoney's different kinds of empirical tests, this research takes

the form of straw in the wind tests i.e. tests that provide some evidence in favor of or against a hypothesis, nonetheless not necessarily decisive in confirming nor eliminating the hypothesis in question (Mahoney, 2012, p. 3). Thus, the tests would elaborate on the extent of the validity of the hypotheses identified from the patterns, seeing that EU's diplomatic patterns in the SCS can hardly be reduced into a single causality process. Further explanation regarding the methods of hypothesis-testing can be found in 1.4.3.

The usage of process tracing methods aids the uncovering of causal mechanisms and contributes to in-depth descriptive knowledge (Mahoney, 2012). Adapting Bernard and Ryan's (2010, p. 4) table of data type and analysis, a methodological mapping of the research stages can be seen on Table 1, whilst a more detailed mapping of the methods can be seen on Figure 1.

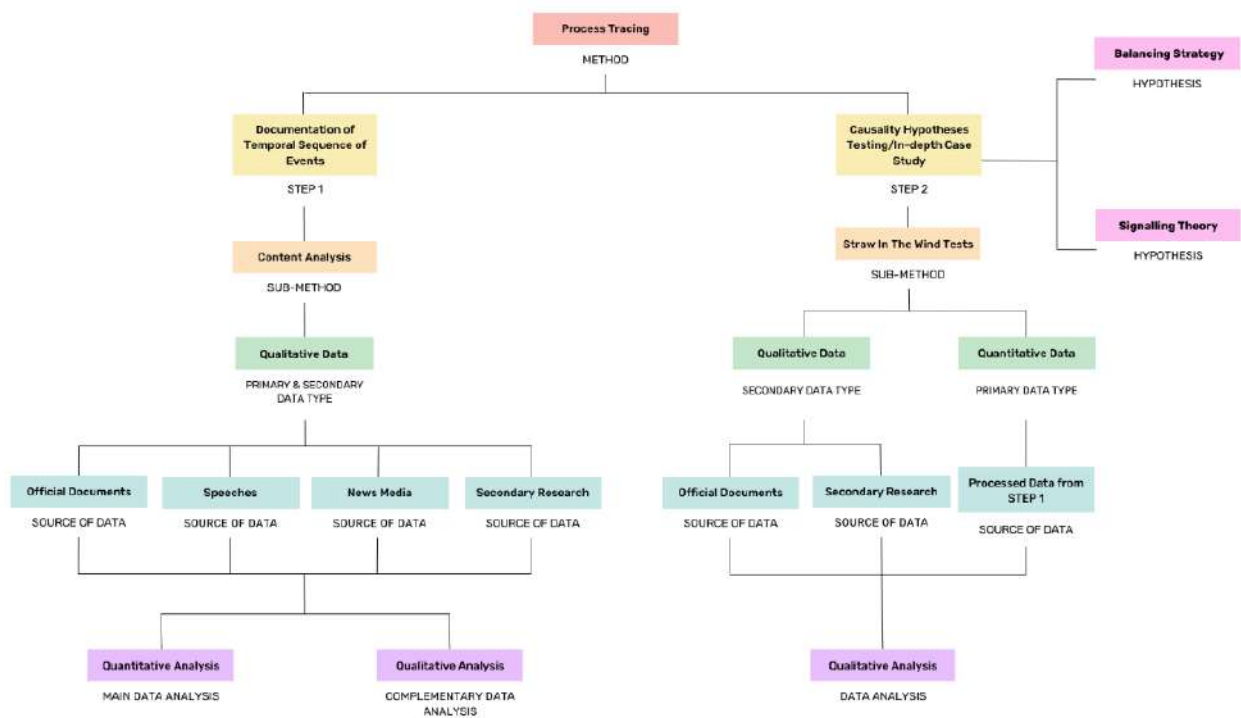
Table 1. Recapitulation of Mixed-Methods

	QUALITATIVE DATA	QUANTITATIVE DATA
QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS	STEP 1 & STEP 2 Interpretive text studies, hermeneutics, grounded theory, etc.	STEP 2 Search for and presentation of meaning in results of quantitative processing
QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS	STEP 1 Turning words into numbers, quantitative content analysis, word frequencies, word lists, etc.	- Statistical and mathematical analyses of numerical data

Source: Author's original table adapted from Bernard & Ryan (2010, p. 4)

The set of methods are chosen to provide a comprehensive picture of the EU's engagement in the SCS through declaratory diplomacy and explore possible explanations behind it. Figure 1 below illustrates the methodological process with clarity.

Figure 1. Breakdown of Research Methods



Source: Author’s Original Work

The following section explains the first step of the research that is the generation of the patterns of the EU’s declaratory diplomacy in the South China Sea in a more technical manner. Subsequently, the section will be followed by a methodological elaboration on the hypothesis-testing.

1.3.2 Step One: Establishing Sequential Patterns Through Content Analysis

In the simplest form, content analysis refers to the human coding of discourse into researcher-defined categories to uncover patterns and relationship of knowledge and power within social structures (Benoit, 2020; Curini & Franzese, 2020, p. 462). Within a process tracing method, the calculations become subject to time as the pattern generation requires an establishment of a temporal process. Critically extracting features from textual data, the research defines labels and/or ratings for each unit of texts (Benoit, 2020; Curini & Franzese, 2020, p. 467). Therefore, it is quantitative by nature albeit only comprising of calculating frequencies of keywords or labels within curated categories. The content analysis process of semi-quantitatively analyzing qualitative data translates to ‘the systematic analysis of the meaning of material in need of interpretation by classifying it into a category system’ (Stamann, et.al., 2016 in (Kuckartz & Rädiker, 2023)). The

category systems, as argued by Stamann, et.al. serve as a basic instrument for the desired systematization of manifest and latent communication content.

The extraction of a constructed content analysis as a pattern of the EU's diplomacy is made possible by the concept of social constructionism, one of which is proposed by Kenneth J. Gergen. Gergen (2009) argues the construction of reality through language as the objective reality does not exist yet is socially constructed through communication. He introduced the concept of 'saturated meanings', referring to the deep embed of language within social interactions which saturates experiences and contributes to the construction of identities and relationships (Gergen, 2009). Thus, one can argue that analyzing the declarative forms of diplomacy by the EU will demonstrate a comprehensive picture of reality within which the EU engages in the SCS dispute. Implemented in the study of political science, Lena Hansen's study of the Bosnian war rests on the conceptualization of foreign policy as a discursive practice (Larsen, 2018, p. 19). Ontologically linking policy and identity, Hansen sees that policy discourses construct problems, objects, as well as subjects, whilst simultaneously articulating the policies to address them (Larsen, 2018, p. 19).

1.3.2.1 Data Sampling

The research samples its primary data temporally, tracking the EU's declaratory diplomacy back to June 2012 as it marks the first statement made by Brussels on the South China Sea dispute. Contemporarily, it analyzes data up to 2022, marking the last recorded entire year following the release of the EU's Indo-Pacific strategy. As the data of EU declaratory diplomacy takes the form of press releases, declarations, statements, speeches, op-eds, communiqué, briefs, and other documents, the source of such data derives from the press corner of the European Commission (EC), European Council, Council of The European Union, European External Action Service (EEAS), and EEAS Archives. Such sampling owes to the intricacies of the EU's foreign policy decision making process (see section 2.1.1.). Emphasizing a united voice in its foreign policy, the study of discourses from the aforementioned EU institutions is found relevant to represent the EU's foreign policy on the matter.

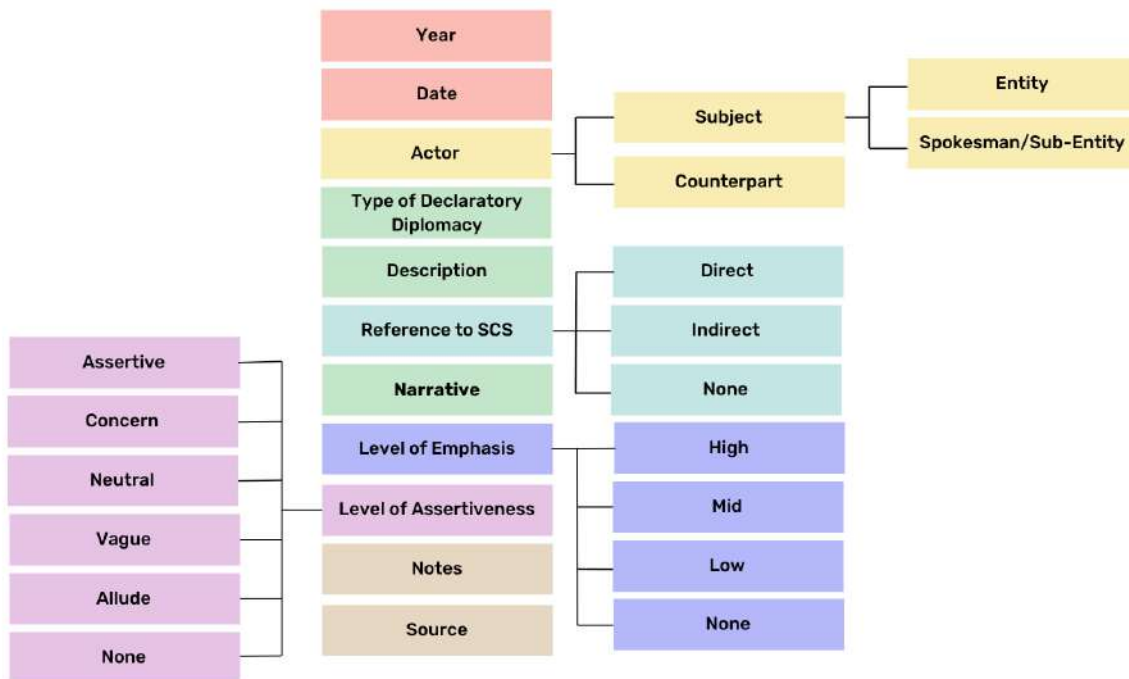
With the abundance of data available in the aforementioned official sites, the searching mechanism involved the filtering of the time frame and the use of keywords "South China Sea" that is meant to discover direct engagements with the dispute. Subsequently, the searching mechanism also uses the terms "Maritime Security" to mainly find indirect and none engagements albeit requires more context to be part of the data patterns. The two sampling keywords chosen were based on preliminary

research and identification as the two most relevant keywords for this research. Taking into account the EU institutional actors involved in foreign policy making, this research finds it sufficient to hold the data gathered to represent the EU’s declaratory diplomacy on the South China Sea dispute.

1.3.2.2 Data Categorization and Coding

In Benoit’s interpretation, this research will focus on the manifest characteristics of the textual data as in the form of communication contained in the discourse, with some cases indicating the latent characteristics of contents itself (Benoit, 2020; Curini & Franzese, 2020, p. 466). The data will signal not only an underlying orientation, but also a degree of political maneuverability (Benoit, 2020, p. 466). With that in mind, this research has coined a framework in mapping the EU’s declaratory diplomacy to a security-related dispute beyond Europe’s vicinities illustrated by Figure 2 below. Considering the focus on manifest characteristics, the categorizations presented underlines the directness of the reference towards the SCS dispute, the level of assertiveness in its communication, and the level of emphasis on the dispute within the entire declaration. It is certainly also significant to highlight the actor variable to map the subjective involvement in each engagement.

Figure 2. Content Analysis Framework for Patterns of EU Declaratory Diplomacy in the SCS.



Source: Author’s Original Work (See Appendix I).

The crossing of these coded categorizations renders the research to be relatively innovative as a mapping of declaratory diplomacy has never been done in such a way and evidently, the sole possible method to conduct the analysis is the content analysis research method. The possibility of categorizing directness, assertiveness, and emphasis owes to what Spies (2019) calls diplo-speak or diplolingo (p. 198-200). Spies (2019, p. 199) explains the diplomatic culture where exists the extensive use of euphemisms and ambiguity, expressed to leave room for maneuvering in order to manage the complex and entangled domestic and international politics. Certainly, diplolingo can be coded or classified in various ways leading us to be aware of the limits of content analysis. The metadata explaining the classification of the dataset can be found in Chapter III alongside the presented data findings. With respect to the research question and the method used, Chapter III touches upon the explanation of these patterns as well, in a broad manner.

1.3.3 Step Two: Straw In the Wind Hypotheses-Testing

Mahoney (2012, p. 1) explains process tracing as a methodology for testing hypotheses in social sciences, combining preexisting generalizations. Taking the form of straw in the wind tests, the research explores evidence to argue whether a hypothesis has merit, however, does not confirm nor eliminate the hypothesis completely. Such a testing method is found to be optimal for this research in the account of the complexities behind causality processes of foreign policy making, particularly one of the EU. The testing of hypotheses in the regard of process tracing has often been viewed as in-depth case studies within an existing case study. Based on the findings discovered throughout the analysis of the EU's declaratory diplomacy on the South China Sea, this research pursues two of many hypotheses that may or may not be meritorious to the generated patterns.

The selection of hypotheses owes to the concept of Strategic Interaction found in Robert Jervis' work titled "*Perception and Misperception in International Politics*," originally published in 1976. Jervis was a prominent colleague of Kenneth Waltz who engages abundantly with Waltz's structural realism theory. Through his work, Jervis conceptualized strategic interactions departing from Waltz's security dilemma and emphasized the role of cognitive biases in shaping decision-making processes in the international realm. He argues that actors in the international system rely on subjective interpretations of the interests and capacities of fellow actors, thus potentially bringing a spiral of misunderstandings and even conflicts. In his understanding of the deterrence concept, the capacity to communicate intentions in a certain way plays a significant role in

shaping the behavior of adversaries. Amidst historical experiences and cultural diversity, Jervis highlights the influence of the framing of issues on strategic interactions. Although Jervis' works place states as actors who conduct strategic interactions within international relations, his concepts have often been adapted to an institutional level of analysis specifically the European Union by scholars such as Stephan Keukeleire, Tom Delreux, Michael Smith, and many others. To further understand the foreign policy capacity and mechanisms of the EU, an overview of its development can be found in Chapter II, in addition to the first and second sections of the literature review (*See section 1.2.1. & 1.2.2.*).

Within strategic interactions, Jervis elaborates that actor behaviors may take many forms, two of which taken for this research are the conceptual behavior of balancing and signaling policies. Jervis conceptualized the phenomenon of signaling policies as a practice in which actors communicate their intentions, interests, and capabilities to the international system and the actors within it. Such communication comprises the deliberate transmission of information through various means, one that this dissertation focuses on is through public statements, referred to as declaratory diplomacy. Through his work, Jervis (1976) emphasized the significance of signaling in shaping the expectations of others, both allies and adversaries, as it allows the clarification of intentions as commonly first delivered through policy documents or previous statements. The concept posits that actors interact strategically through communication to influence the behavior of other actors, thus shaping the security dynamics in international politics. Nevertheless, signaling comes with its complexities as it has the potential to be misunderstood or to be a form of deception. Within an uncertain and competitive environment, the practice of signaling experiences more difficulties are conveying credible signals. Jervis underlines this concept through the perspective of how actors' decision making contemplates assessments of the signals of other actors. This research, however, employs this concept from another perspective, that is hypothesizing the patterns of the EU's declaratory diplomacy on the SCS dispute to be explained as signaling practices of some particular EU's foreign policies.

Another form of strategic interaction discussed by Jervis (1976) that is closely related to the former is balancing behavior, seen as a strategic response to perceived threats deriving from more powerful actors. Through balancing behavior, actors align with others to counterbalance a dominant actor's power within the international order, thus enhancing security and deterring aggression from adversaries with larger capacities. Underscoring strategic calculations and factors, balancing may take the form of alliances, military buildups, as well as diplomatic maneuvers, to maintain or restore the equilibrium in the

system. Focusing on a specific diplomatic maneuver that falls under the category of soft balancing, this research employs declaratory diplomacy as part of an actor's balancing strategy. Such is made possible due to the influence pertained by declaratory diplomacy toward the perception and behavior of other actors, as argued by the signaling theory. Thus, signaling practices, in this regard, act as tools to support an actor's soft balancing strategy to strengthen strategic credibility and contribute to the stability of the status quo. This research utilizes this concept as a hypothesis, where it delves into the possibility of explaining the patterns of the EU's declaratory diplomacy on the SCS dispute as part of the EU's balancing strategy, specifically with the United States (US) and ASEAN.

Overall, the hypotheses explore the interconnected nature of the EU's declaratory diplomacy and its strategic interactions in terms of soft balancing and signaling, enabling the EU manage power dynamics in the global order.

1.4 Limitations of Research

As explained in the Research Design, this dissertation involves a generation of sequential patterns through a content analysis method, thus requiring coding and classification. The category development process in a content analysis study, however, is an act of construction pertinent to the existing knowledge and preconception of the analyst (Kuckartz & Rädiker, 2023, p. 197). Therefore, the inevitable downfall of a content analysis study of qualitative data is the subjective bias of its coding system. To mitigate the subjectivity, the research outlines a metadata in Chapter III to explain and standardize each variable used to assist readers in understanding the research. Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that the placement of each entry into the categories in the metadata remains to be a cognitive bias of the analyst, yet arguable with evidence.

As part of this limitation, the data identifies the category 'Reference to SCS' in which a declaratory diplomacy of the EU could have a *direct* reference to the SCS dispute or rather *indirect*, or *none* at all. Nonetheless, as the data sampling explores instances of declaratory diplomacy merely using the keywords 'South China Sea' and 'Maritime Security,' an analysis of *indirect* and *none* engagements could obtain an entirely different result if it were searched using another keyword such as perhaps ASEAN or naval diplomacy. Moreover, this research opts to not analyze those categorized as *none* in reference to the SCS dispute within the pattern generation. This decision is made due to the insufficiency of data and concept to identify whether the dispute should or should not be part of the referred declaratory diplomacy. Nevertheless, the accumulated data mounting to 28 instances of those categorized as not having

references to the SCS in a relevant context still serves to analyze the patterns when put in context with those categorized as *direct* and/or *indirect*.

With the generation of patterns owing to the use of descriptive data which displays instances of the EU's declaratory diplomacy on the SCS dispute over a specific period of time, the research thus cannot conduct an analysis of causality by confirming or eliminating a hypothesis (e.g. hoop tests, smoking gun tests). Such is the reason why the research chose to employ Straw in the Wind tests through qualitative analysis, to explore the merit of potential causes. Albeit its limitations in explaining causality, the research argues several hypotheses which possess merit to explain the generated patterns of the EU's declaratory diplomacy on the SCS dispute.

1.5 Dissertation Structure

Following the Introductory Chapter, the dissertation dedicated **Chapter II** to elaborate the developments of key variables to the research, i.e. the European Integration in relation to foreign policy, the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CSFP), the Maritime Dimension of the EU's Foreign Policy, the EU's external relations with the Asian region, and the South China Sea dispute itself. The Chapter ends with a brief explanation of the significance of the contested sea for the European Union.

Chapter III thoroughly explains the patterns of the EU's declaratory diplomacy on the SCS dispute, associating the findings with the development of variables from Chapter II. It begins with an explanation of the metadata needed for the content analysis process as referred to in the research design. The elucidation of patterns is then divided into two sections, one that expands upon the EU's declaratory diplomacy on the matter through descriptive variables such as the frequency and type of engagement, whereas another develops and interprets the pattern through the critical variables such as the reference to the dispute, the level of assertiveness, and the level of emphasis.

Chapter IV explores the hypotheses corresponding to the identified concepts of strategic interaction. Firstly, it delves into the external dynamics of the pattern explanation, referring to the balancing concept. The section is distributed into two balancing partners which are the US and ASEAN. Secondly, it follows through the internal dynamics of the pattern explanation, referring to the foreign policies deployed by the EU through a signaling concept. The section is partitioned into analyzing the 2019 Strategic Outlook on China and the 2021 Strategy for Cooperation in The Indo-Pacific.

The dissertation ends with **Chapter V** with its conclusion.

CHAPTER II

UNDERSTANDING THE EUROPEAN UNION'S FOREIGN AND SECURITY POLICY AND THE SOUTH CHINA SEA DISPUTE

2.1 The European Union's Foreign and Security Policy

“The EU must speak with one voice on foreign policy (European Parliament, 2022).”

Despite the Parliament's remark above being relatively recent, the *raison d'être* for European states to present a cohesive European front on foreign and security policy has persisted since the early days of the European integration process. Traced back to (at least) the 1961 proposal by the Fouchet Committee during the period of the European Economic Community (EEC), an aspiration to build a union of states with the purpose of developing a common foreign and defense policy had already existed (Bindi, 2010, p. 16). Facing resistance, the proposal was shelved, and discussions of foreign policy beyond the scope of trade were unheard of until the emergence of the European Political Cooperation (EPC) from the Davignon Report in 1970 (Keukeleire and Delreux, 2022, p. 51). The EPC became the first form of institutionalization for the principle of consultation on major foreign policy matters within an integrated Europe. The 1973 Copenhagen Report further specified the role and mechanism of the EPC, indicating that the institutional framework of the EPC occupies 'problems of international politics' as an additional and distinct function to the activities of the Community undertaken in the Treaty of Rome (Bindi, 2010, p. 21).

Responding to the questioning of Europe's interests in comparison to those of the US' so-called global responsibilities, the EEC foreign ministers also adopted a 'Declaration on European Identity' in Copenhagen, to better define its role and placement in world affairs (*Ibid.*). The declaration (1973) affirmed that European Unification would benefit the international community as the Europe of the Nine² displayed their intention to play an active role in ensuring a just basis in world affairs. The Nine also stated that *“In pursuit of these objectives the Nine should progressively define common positions in the sphere of foreign policy,”* which can be argued to be the first official root of the existing Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) of the European Union today (Declaration on European Identity, 1973).

² The Europe of The Nine refers to Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany (Federal Republic), Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the UK

In 1974, the Gymnich formula was created to allow foreign ministers to consult on foreign policy issues, all the while the Community's enlargement process was taking place (Bindi, 2009, p. 24). The functions of the EPC and the Gymnich meetings were further developed in 1981 through the London Report. The scope of action of the EPC was then made to include 'the political and economic aspects of security' in 1983 by the Stuttgart Solemn Declaration, which called for common principles and objectives along with potential joint actions in the foreign policy spectrum (Nuttall, 1987). Stressing the significance of consistency between the actions of the EPC and the Community, the document called for concerted action on 'international problems of law and order (Solemn Declaration on European Union, 1983).'

To a greater depth, the European Parliament, in 1984, approved a draft treaty to profoundly reform the institutionalization of the EPC to have greater coordination with external relations and to have a legal personality alongside a new European Union. Emphasizing defense matters, the draft treaty strengthened by the Dooge Committee Report would have given authorization to the European Council to widen foreign policy coordination into arms trade questions (Gower, 2002, p. 26; Bindi, 2010, p. 24). In spite of not being endorsed by member states, the Community undertook another path to reform by the development of the Single European Act (SEA) in 1985. The SEA codified the EPC and the European Council which in turn affected the Community's foreign policy (Fink-Hooijer, 1994, p. 181). It also affirmed the need for member states to reciprocally inform and consult their positions and actions to ensure the coordinated effectivity of 'their combined influence,' whilst 'common principles and objectives are gradually developed and defined (Bindi, 2010, p. 24).'

The SEA identified the European Council to hold a leading role within the EPC, assisted by the European Commission, and the European Parliament to be kept in the loop (*Ibid*). The SEA discussed (albeit did not focus on) the political and economic aspects of European security matters and requested member states to define common positions in the context of international institutions. Further codifying actors, the SEA encoded the role of the troika³ and the Presidency in the EPC, along with the sub-institutions involved in decision-making (*Ibid*, p. 25).

Approaching the end of the Cold War, in April 1990, the completion of the monetary union with a political union was proposed by François Mitterrand and Helmut Kohl (*Ibid*, p. 26). The proposition led to the 1990 Dublin Intergovernmental Conferences (IGCs) which were pivotal in constructing the future of the EU, marked by the signing of the Maastricht Treaty in 1992

³ The troika refers to the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, the foreign minister of the country holding the EU Presidency, and a senior representative from the European Commission (Bindi, 2010, p. 25)

(*Ibid*). With the Dublin IGC's discussions on a political union, involving the creation of a common foreign policy, the Maastricht Treaty (also called the Treaty on the European Union (TEU)) established what is known contemporarily as the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) of the European Union.

2.1.1 Overview of The European Union's Foreign and Security Policy

“There is no clash between national and European interests. Our shared interests can only be served by standing and acting together (Mogherini, 2016, p. 16)”

Entered into force alongside the TEU in November 1993, the CFSP institutionally replaced the EPC and became the second pillar of the newly established three-pillared European Union. The CFSP is governed by Title V provisions of the TEU and was crucially addressed in Art. 2 of the Common Provisions that specified the Union's objective to ‘*assert its identity on the international scene,*’ through the implementation of the CFSP and eventually a common defense policy (Consolidated Version of The Treaty of The European Union, 2012, p. 18; Bindi, 2010, p. 27). Albeit having been subsequently strengthened by multiple treaties, the core aims of the CFSP persist to be peace preservation, strengthening of international security, promotion of international cooperation, development and consolidation of democracy, the rule of law, and respect for human rights as well as fundamental freedoms (as spelled out in Art. J.1.2.) (Malovec, 2023). The following article then stipulated the pursuance of such objectives through concerted action between the systematic cooperation of member states (*Ibid*). Thus, the member states are to define common positions and refrain from any actions that contradict the EU's interests or ‘impair its effectiveness as a cohesive force in international relations (European Union, 1992; Bindi, 2010, p. 27).’

Reflecting some of the codified mechanisms from the SEA, the CFSP was to be represented by the Presidency, whilst state diplomatic missions and the EC delegations were to collaborate, and the Parliament had the right to be consulted (*ibid*). The European Council was granted the authority by the TEU to define and implement CFSP guidelines based on unanimity (Keukeleire and Delreux, 2022, p. 80-81). Moreover, the Council of Ministers was to discuss foreign policies with the association of the Commission (p. 82-83, 97). The administrative expenditures of the CFSP were to be borne by the European Community budget, as operational expenditures owed to a system that would charge the EC budget upon the decision of the European Council (Morillas, 2019). The Council and Commission are also held responsible for ensuring the consistency of the Union's external

actions to harmonize the Community's and Intergovernmental activities abroad. A brief structural explanation of the CFSP is deemed necessary as the CFSP has undergone extensive amendments through several treaties that modified the way EU foreign policies are formed and implemented.

Under the Treaty of Amsterdam, signed in 1997, the CFSP was reinforced in its capacity for action through the establishment of a new foreign policy instrument and decision-making mechanism upon other amendments (Keukeleire and Delreux, 2022, p. 60). The treaty gave power to the European Council to unanimously define 'common strategies' (in addition to joint action and common position) in areas of common interest (Wallace and Wallace, 2005, p. 52). Whereas in decision-making, the treaty allowed the exercise of 'constructive abstention'⁴ which entails the responsibility to also abstain from any activities that contest the Union's actions taken under said decision (Morillas, 2019, p. 44). The treaty also allowed the practice of Qualified Majority Voting (QMV) for decisions applying a common strategy and implementing joint actions (*Ibid*). Following the Treaty of Nice, which entered into force in 2003, a report on a European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) was adopted, marking a step closer to a common defense policy (Keukeleire and Delreux, 2022, p. 61). Streamlining the decision-making process, the treaty authorized the Political and Security Committee (PSC) to exercise political control in addressing the strategic direction of crisis management operations (European Commission, 2003).

The development of the EU's foreign and security policy presented a concrete landmark in December 2003 as it published the first European Security Strategy (ESS), identifying joint threat assessments and explicit objectives in proceeding with EU security interests guided by core European values (Council of The European Union, 2003; 2009). Titled '*A Secure Europe in a Better World*,' the document highlighted the EU as a global player who is ready to be held responsible for global security (Council of The European Union, 2003, p. 28). It addressed interrelated key threats of terrorism, Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) proliferation, regional conflicts, state failure owing to 'bad governance,' and organized crime of which Europe is a prime target (trafficking in drugs, women, illegal migrants, and weapons) (*Ibid*).

In tackling these identified threats, the EU elaborates on its existing efforts such as adopting a European Arrest Warrant in attacking terrorist financing, pursuing policies against the proliferation of WMD, and restoration of good governance initiatives in the

⁴ Constructive abstention: an abstention which does not block the adoption of the decision.

Balkans, Afghanistan, and the DRC. Moreover, it strives to broaden its engagement with Mediterranean partners and the Arab World. Pushing for a rules-based international order through multilateralism, the EU underscores the upholding of International Law and strengthening of the UN as ‘a European priority’ (Council of The European Union, 2003, p. 5). As for reaching the potential of a coherent European foreign policy, the EU proposed to be more active through multiple simultaneous operations and preventive engagements, more capable through the establishment of a defense agency, and finally more coherent by bringing together instruments and capabilities on different levels (p. 7). The implementation of the ESS was then evaluated in 2008 through a report titled ‘*Providing Security in a Changing World* (Council of The European Union, 2009),’ which recommended sustained efforts in preventing WMD proliferation (p. 12), improvements in crisis coordination and civil protection mechanisms (p. 14), enhanced counterterrorism measures (p. 14), and expansion of capabilities alongside the widening of mission spectrums such as joint disarmament operations, and provision in third country counterterrorism (p. 42).

A further pivotal juncture for the EU foreign policy mechanism was the Lisbon Treaty of 2009 which provided the EU with legal personality, institutionalized its external service, as well as eliminated the pillar system of the TEU (Keukeleire and Delreux, 2022). Above all, the treaty established a set of CFSP actors i.e. the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy serving as well as Vice-President of the Commission (VP/HR); and the European External Action Service (EEAS) as the EU’s diplomatic service (*Ibid*). In light of the EU’s longing for a united voice in the sphere of defense, the Treaty of Lisbon grounded the workings of the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP) as an integral part of the CFSP (Morillas, 2019, p. 48).

Continuously evolving, the VP/HR namely Federica Mogherini presented the Global Strategy for the European Union’s Foreign and Security Policy (EUGS) in 2016, signifying a philosophical transformation from the former European Security Strategy of 2003. With respect to the evolving global context and challenges, the EUGS took into account hybrid threats such as climate change, cyber-attacks, economic volatility, and energy insecurity, thus placing more responsibility on the EU as a global actor. Facing these challenges along with those identified before (terrorism, nuclear proliferation, inter-state conflicts, and so forth), the EU emphasized the need to possess strategic autonomy to enhance Europe’s capacity to address security challenges and promote stability (Mogherini, 2016). In its external action, the EU also stressed its principled yet pragmatic

approach (p. 8) i.e. the navigation between policies of isolationism and rash interventionism in its responsible engagement with the world whilst maintaining sensitivity to contingency (p. 16). Such an approach ensures that the EU's activities are grounded in its values as it acknowledges the practical reality of the global landscape as well. Pushing to be a global actor for the sake of a rules-based order, the EUGS listed several priorities that are the Union's security, state and societal resilience to the East and South of the EU, developing an integrated engagement to conflicts, cooperative regional orders, and 21st-century global governance (p. 18-43).

Upon reflection on European security and defense in June 2021, the Strategic Compass on Security and Defense was presented in November 2021 as a policy document that stipulates the EU's strategy on security and defense for the following 5 to 10 years. With a developed shared vision on the matter, the framework of action provided by the Strategic Compass was to politically guide the implementation of the EU's strategic autonomy in crisis management, resilience, capabilities, and partnerships, with the EU as a global security provider (Council of the European Union, 2022). The document was revised, modified, and re-published in 2022 subsequent to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, to take into account the disruption of the European security order and the alteration of the EU's stance, aims, and instruments of defense (*Ibid*). Built upon its values, the revision highlighted principles of sovereignty, global rules-based order, protection of European citizens, solidarity amongst member states, international law, and the UN charter. Overall, the EU strives to be a more assertive, proactive, and decisive security provider for the next decade by strengthening its geopolitical posture, coordinating among member states, enhancing resilience against hybrid threats, investing in innovative defense mechanisms, strengthening partnerships, and pursuing strategic autonomy, as elaborated in its 2022 Strategic Compass for Security and Defense (p. 62).

The observation of the development of EU foreign policy formation has shown an extensive process of codification and institutionalization, coming a long way from the EPC days. Through the CFSP, the EU has ripened its voice within a broad set of common values, interests, and policies that it to be put forward in the international arena. With an extent of effectiveness, the CFSP has led the EU to produce the ESS, EUGS, the Strategic Compass, and an abundance of strategies within them. Moreover, the CFSP, as was majorly influenced by the SEA, provided a codification of actor responsibilities among the Council, Commission, Parliament, Council of Ministers, and member states. Further developments have shown coordination efforts through the construction of the HR/VP and EEAS. Such

a mechanism illustrates the complexity of EU foreign policy decision-making and renders it inevitable to involve all of the aforementioned actors in EU foreign policy analyses. Thus, acknowledging the bureaucratic political process, it is evident that member states possess the power to define common strategies in areas of common interests through the European Council and concrete actions of foreign policy through the Council of the EU. Nonetheless, such a bureaucratic process is the exact pathway to understanding the EU's institutional capacity to produce a unanimously agreed common foreign policy, asserting its international presence as a united front. The EU as a union that presents its foreign policies, in this dissertation, might be addressed as well as the Union or Brussels.

2.1.2 The Development of a Maritime Security Dimension in The EU's Foreign and Security Policy

“At a time of growing geopolitical tensions, the EU must learn to speak the language of power also at sea (Josep Borrell [@JosepBorrellF], 2023)”

Having been criticized for suffering from *sea blindness*, fragmentary elements of the EU's maritime policy can be found, as it turns out, since the 2003 European Security Strategy. Mentioned solely once, the EU simply acknowledged “a new dimension to organized crime which will merit further attention is the growth of maritime piracy (Council of The European Union, 2003, p. 4).” The EU acknowledged the significance of the seas further in the Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP) of 2007, where it identified Europe's maritime spaces and coasts as central to its prosperity by being its trade routes, climate regulator, food source, energy and resource origins, residential as well as recreation sites for EU citizens (European Commission, 2007). Therefore, with its focus on sustainable sea-based economic activity, the IMP elaborated on several action areas centered upon maximizing the use of maritime areas, building maritime knowledge, providing coastal quality of life, promoting the EU's global leadership, and rendering the actorness of Maritime Europe more visible (*Ibid*). The IMP, however, referred to maritime surveillance as highly important in promoting the safe use of the sea and Europe's maritime borders (p. 5). Despite so, the document did not specify what maritime security entails for the EU but rather as a means to sustainably “explore the potential of sea-based economic activity (p. 15)”.

The following year, the EU launched its first naval operation to deter piracy off the Somali coast as a form of support to several UN resolutions adopted in 2008 (EEAS, 2021a). Namely, Operation Atalanta/European Union Naval Force (EU NAVFOR)

Somalia, the EU then developed the initiative into a wider global action in preventing and combatting piracy acts in the Indian Ocean (EEAS, 2021a). Certainly, with such a milestone in its maritime-related actions, the 2008 implementation report of the ESS saw the crucial need to enter piracy within the spectrum of organized crime, relating the issue to state failure (Council of The European Union, 2009, p. 21). The newly developed ESS, however, did not emphasize any other maritime-related security issues. Instead, the EU's maritime approach was accompanied by the Blue Growth initiative in 2012 which aimed to stimulate long-term growth and jobs within the Blue Economy whilst safeguarding the sustainability of the marine environment (European Commission, 2012, p. 12). A month after the publishing of Blue Growth, the Commission iterated the Limassol Declaration as a European agenda to create jobs and stimulate growth in the maritime sectors (The Limassol Declaration – A Marine and Maritime Agenda for Growth and Jobs, n.d.).

In 2013, a stepping-stone towards European maritime security and defense was demonstrated by a study of the maritime dimension of the CSDP analyzing the 'Geostrategic Maritime Challenges and Their Implications for The European Union.' The study underlined the shift in geopolitics that led to the emergence of maritime security threats i.e. collapsing states in the EU's neighborhood, growing assertiveness of rising maritime powers (Russia and China), international terrorism, disruption to the freedom of the seas posed by piracy and state actors, illegal migration, transnational crimes, and environmental-related issues such as oil spills and illegal fishing (European Parliament, 2013). These threats were identified under the importance of rising maritime economic exchanges which bring the need for the EU to possess a stronger maritime power in order to secure critical global flows, trade routes, and its maintenance infrastructures (*Ibid*). Considering the impacts on the EU's maritime security environment in its neighborhood and SLOCs, the study became the EU's foundation for a comprehensive maritime security strategy that synergizes the EU's IMP and CSDP.

Discussions for a European Union Maritime Security Strategy (EUMSS) were further developed in March 2014 through a Joint Communication brought to the Parliament and Council by the European Commission and HR/VP, exploring the elements required for the strategy (European Commission, 2014). Against a backdrop of the EU's dependence on 'open, safe seas and oceans for free trade, transport, tourism, ecological diversity, and for economic development (European Commission, 2014, p. 2),' the EU concedes to the need to protect maritime space as it is vulnerable to become arenas of conflicts, terrorism, and/or organized crimes. With the transport of 90% of its external trade and 40% of its

internal trade (at the time) by sea, the EU intends to pitch in to rules-based good governance at sea through a strategic, cross-sectoral approach to maritime security, with its cornerstone being the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) (*ibid*). With the Joint Communication as one of the EU's major milestones in constructing a conception and policy framework for maritime security, the development of threat assessment, interest identification, and plan of action was embedded in the policy document adopted by the Council of The EU in the following three months.

Therefore, it was not until June 2014 that the EU produced a Maritime Security Strategy (EUMSS), covering both the EU's internal and external maritime security. The strategy offered the EU's first-ever conception of maritime security, i.e.

“a state of affairs of the global maritime domain, in which international law and national law are enforced, freedom of navigation is guaranteed and citizens, infrastructure, transport, the environment, and marine resources are protected (European Union, 2014, p. 3).”

Guided by principles of cross-sectoral approach, functional integrity, respect for rules and principles, and maritime multilateralism, it is important to note some of the principal aims of the strategy which are to promote rules-based good governance at sea and to enhance the EU's role as a global actor as well as security provider at sea and from the sea (p. 5-6). The strategy underlined common strategic maritime security interests for the EU and its member states, of which some external interests are the preservation of peace as per the UN Charter; peaceful settlement of maritime disputes according to international law; prevention of conflicts; preservation of freedom of navigation; protection of the global EU supply chain and maritime trade; sustainable exploitation of marine resources; and the effective management of maritime areas of EU interest to counter cross-border organized crimes.

Upon the aforementioned common interests, the EU identified detrimental risks and threats including the use of force against member states over maritime zones, external aggression relating to maritime disputes, cross-border organized crimes (piracy, human trafficking, migrant smuggling, *etc*), terrorism and unlawful acts at sea, WMD proliferation, denial access to the sea and straits, obstruction of SLOCs, and so forth (European Union, 2014). Thus the EU's main areas of implementation in its strategy revolve around its external action (through its various range of instruments such as the CSDP, Maritime Security Operations, political dialogues, and sustenance of maritime

presence by member states' armed forces); maritime awareness, surveillance, and information sharing (through cross-sectoral cooperation); capability development (of dual-use technologies, and civil-military interoperability); risk management, protection of critical maritime infrastructure, and crisis response (by developing a common maritime security risk management); and finally research and innovation (*Ibid*). The Maritime Security Strategy was then reviewed, revised, and broadened in its action plans in June 2018 through the Council conclusions on the revision of the European Union Maritime Security Strategy (EUMSS) Action Plan by the Council of the EU (2018).

Through the Maritime Security Strategy, maritime issues officially gained an entry point to the EU's foreign policy agenda on security and defense. With regard to Mogherini's EUGS in 2016, it is observed that maritime security was certainly more discussed than before (Mogherini, 2016). Nevertheless, its discussions were scattered within the policy document and were not deserving of a dedicated section which would have indicated its significance to European security. Maritime security, however, was part of the deepening element of the EU's commitment to global governance for the 21st century, in which the need for global maritime growth and security through open and protected sea routes was emphasized (European Union, 2016, p. 41). Giving itself a role as a '*global maritime security provider*,' the EU vowed to contribute to global maritime security and implement UNCLOS regulations (*Ibid*). Such a role was re-iterated in the 2017 Council Conclusions on Global Maritime Security which reemphasized the priority of addressing maritime security issues and stressed the full respect of UNCLOS (Council of the European Union, 2017). The EU also underlined its pursuit of a comprehensive approach to contribute to the security and stability of the global maritime domain that is in line with the 2016 EUGS (Mogherini, 2016). Following the EU's reaffirmation on maritime security, the EUMSS was revised in 2018 to highlight renewed commitments in more specific sectoral areas whilst strengthening the EU's commitment to the principles of international maritime law and desire for further coordination in its approaches (Council of the European Union, 2018a, p. 4).

The Strategic Compass of 2022, on the other hand, densely covered maritime security as one of its strategic domains. Finding the maritime domain to be increasingly contested, the EU committed to further assert its interests at sea as well as improve the maritime security of the EU and its member states (Council of the European Union, 2022, p. 2). The document made clear that the key to such achievement would be to ensure unfettered access to the SLOCs and maintain universal respect for the UNCLOS (p. 24).

The Strategic Compass also has plenty of references to the Coordinated Maritime Presences (CMP) conceptual framework. Established around the same time as the Compass, the CMP was made as a tool to ‘*strengthen EU maritime security engagement around the world*’ (European Union, 2022a, p. 1).⁵ In accordance with the EU’s Maritime Areas of Interest⁵, the EU deploys member states’ naval assets (voluntarily) to ensure a stronger and permanent maritime presence whilst increasing the EU’s capacity in its role as a global maritime security provider. As of 2022, the EU has launched CMP operations in the Gulf of Guinea and the North Western Indian Ocean in which member states’ navies contributed to securing SLOCs and passing trades from transnational organized crimes (p. 2). Following so, the EU’s foreign policy on maritime security continues to be developed such as by revising the EU MSS once more in 2023.

Throughout an elaboration of the development of the EU’s maritime security dimension, it is evident that Brussels has advanced considerably marked by the formal conceptualization of maritime security in 2014. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the EU departed with a strict economic conception of maritime areas which remained strongly attached to its maritime security definition as the MSS was drafted with a setting of the sea as “*a valuable source of growth and prosperity*” (European Union, 2014, p. 2).” Such an approach certainly differs from that of China which sees the maritime area as a critical security domain that requires it to build a blue water maritime power (Patricia and Satya, 2022). Having chosen to play the role of a global maritime security provider, the EU strives to promote a rules-based good governance framework at sea. One must constantly bear the EU’s concept in mind when analyzing Brussels’ foreign policy on maritime issues.

2.1.3. The European Union, The Region of Asia, and The Indo-Pacific Region

“Europe and Asia have a direct stake in each other’s security (Borrell, 2023)”

Europe’s relations with Asia are traced back to 1964, marking the formal establishment of diplomatic relations between Japan and the EEC. In 1975, China became the first socialist state to recognize the EEC with whom it actively engaged in trade and economic cooperation (Broadbent, 1976). Amidst building diplomatic relations with various Asian states, the EEC initiated formal relations with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1977 and jointly signed the ASEAN-EEC Cooperation

⁵ Per 2022, the EU Maritime Areas of Interest are the Gulf of Guinea and the North Western Indian Ocean. Discussions on expanding the Maritime Areas of Interest to the Indo-Pacific are underway (Council Conclusions on Indo Pacific Strategy, 2021).

Agreement in 1980 (Delegation of the EU to ASEAN, 2022). For decades, Europe relied on bilateral relations, multilateral forums, commercial policies, and development aid as policy instruments in its relations with Asia. Such was the case until the EU encompassed its relations with Asia within its task of developing a Common Foreign and Security Policy.

In July 1994, a Communication from the Commission to the Council presented a document titled ‘Towards a New Asia Strategy’ which affirms the urgency for the EU to “*accord Asia a higher priority,*” with the purpose of maintaining its role as a leader in the world economy (Commission of the European Communities, 1994). With Asia’s rising economic weight, the EU declared that the main thrust of policies in Asia in the present and future is associated with the economic spectrum (*ibid*). To reap economic-related benefits, the EU had sown a policy framework on the political and security aspects in the region to foster the balance of power. Thus, the EU’s strategy toward Asia at the time is to strengthen political dialogue and discuss joint actions on arms control, WMD non-proliferation, human rights, and drug-related matters (*Ibid*). The framework coincides with an economy-centered strategy towards Asia guided by the aim of bolstering the EU’s economic presence in the area. With the exact purposes of the strategy, the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) was inaugurated in 1996, as the main platform connecting Europe and Asia for dialogue and cooperation on contemporary challenges (EEAS, 2021b).

Serving to modify the aforementioned strategy, the Commission published another Communication titled ‘Europe and Asia: A Strategic Framework for Enhanced Partnerships’ in 2001, which takes into account the developments during the intervening period such as EU enlargement (Commission of the European Communities, 2001). Maintaining the core aim to strengthen the EU’s political and economic presence in Asia, the newly developed strategy elaborated its plan of action for the entire region of Asia as well as specifically for the identified key sub-regions i.e. South Asia, Southeast Asia, Northeast Asia, and Australasia (*Ibid*). The sub-regional approach was deemed necessary due to the underlying diversity of Asia and the challenges it faces. Thus, the EU has underlined strategic action points for strengthening political and security engagements; enhancing mutual trade and investment flows; contributing to the reduction of poverty; promoting the protection of human rights; contributing to the spread of democracy, good governance, and rule of law; building global partnerships, and strengthening mutual regional awareness (p. 28). Specifically, the strategy emphasized its priorities on its relations with regional powers namely India, Japan, and China; other key partners such as

ASEAN, Australia, and Korea, and finally in inter-regional fora that is the ASEM (Commission of the European Communities, 2001).

Following the 2001 Asia Strategy (Commissioner for External Relations, 2001), an absence of development on an overarching regional strategy was observed. Instead, sub-regional strategies (and joint strategies) emerged such as the 2007 Regional Strategy Paper for Assistance to Central Asia; the 2007 Guidelines on The EU's Foreign and Security Policy in East Asia; the 2007 Nuremberg Declaration on an EU-ASEAN Enhanced Partnership; the 2012 Bandar Seri Begawan ASEAN-EU Enhanced Partnership Action Plan; the 2015 Joint Communication on The EU and ASEAN partnership with a Strategic Purpose; and so on. The EU's regional address towards Asia re-transpired only in 2016 in Mogherini's EUGS where a section on 'A Connected Asia' was found (Mogherini, 2016). Placing importance on peace and stability in Asia as a pre-requisite to European prosperity, the EU attempted to enhance its economic diplomacy and security role in the region. The short one-page section on Asia emphasized a coherent approach to China (incl. trade and investment) based on respect to the rule of law, human rights, and climate action (European Union, 2016). Furthermore, the EU focuses on economic diplomacy with strategic partners (Japan, India, ASEAN) along with a rounded political approach to Asia (i.e. State-building of Afghanistan; Non-proliferation in the Korean Peninsula; Freedom of Navigation in East and Southeast Asia; Addressing transnational crimes in Central and South Asia; Democratic Transition in Myanmar) (*Ibid*).

Corresponding to the 13th Foreign Ministers meeting of the ASEM in November 2017 which conceptualized "*Connectivity*" for Asia-Europe relations, the EU produced a Joint Communication titled 'Connecting Europe and Asia: Building Blocks for an EU Strategy' in 2018. Upon the conception of Connectivity as a means of facilitating access to "*foster deeper economic and people-to-people ties* (European Commission, 2018)," the Commission proposed concrete initiatives to improve inter-regional connections through interoperable transport, energy, and digital networks (*Ibid*). The EU promotes a strategy that is strongly linked to the principles of sustainable, comprehensive, and international rules-based connectivity (*Ibid*). Nevertheless, it was quite evident that the strategy was not made fundamentally by political and security considerations but rather an economic and socio-cultural approach.

Contemporarily in 2018, in order to mutually reinforce the Euro-Asia Connectivity, the EU published the Council Conclusion namely 'Enhanced EU Security Cooperation In and With Asia,' which was part of the efforts to strengthen the CSDP corresponding to the

2016 EUGS (Council of the European Union, 2018b). The document underlined the key areas to deepen inter-regional security engagement i.e. maritime security; cybersecurity; counterterrorism, hybrid threats, conflict prevention, non-proliferation of biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons, and regional cooperative order development (p. 3). Thus, the Council of the EU put forward '*immediate priorities*' for EU-Asia security cooperation, of which some are supporting regional peace and stability, improving the visibility of the EU's engagement, increasing coordination with bilateral initiatives, strengthening state-capacities in addressing maritime security matters, conducting preventive diplomacy efforts, deepening existing cooperative frameworks, and so on (p. 3-4).

Amongst the development of EU strategies in Asia, the most consistent of all is the EU's acknowledgment of how the term 'Asia' is an oversimplification and false conception (Commission of the European Communities, 1994). The EU continuously stated its awareness of the vastly diverse political, economic, and sociocultural profiles present in the region that would render it absurd to draw up a monolithic EU-Asia relationship (Commission of the European Communities, 2001; Commissioner for External Relations, 2001). Such is precisely the reason why the EU tends to more actively engage with sub-regional and/or bilateral approaches, resembled by the case of the 2016 EU Strategy On Myanmar; 2018 EU-India Strategy; 2018 EU-ASEAN Plan of Action; 2019 EU-China Strategic Outlook; 2019 EU Strategy on Central Asia; and so forth.

One that is incredibly relevant to this research and reflects a game-changer in the EU's relations with Asia is the 2021 EU Strategy for Cooperation in The Indo-Pacific.⁶ Through the Joint Communication of the strategy, the EU explicitly stated its intention to '*increase its engagement with the region*' for the purpose of reinforcing a rules-based international order, addressing global challenges, and constructing the underpinning of sustainability in the region's economic recovery (European Commission, 2021). The basis of Europe's approach is to promote democracy, the rule of law, human rights values, the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), along with the Paris Agreement (*Ibid*). With the acknowledgment of how the EU and the Indo-Pacific countries share mutual interests in each other's security and economic well-being, the strategy underlined

⁶ The document 'Joint Communication To The European Parliament and The Council: The EU Strategy For Cooperation In The Indo-Pacific' identifies the Indo-Pacific region to comprise Australia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, the Republic of South Africa, Malaysia, Thailand, The Philippines, Myanmar, Singapore, Brunei Darussalam, Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia, and ASEAN.

seven main priority areas in its concrete actions spanning from the green transition to security and defense, among others.

It is apparent that the EU has augmented its engagement with the region of Asia and the countries within since its early formation by the TEU. The Euro-Asian relations have grown contemporarily as the EU developed its CFSP, underlined by Europe's realization of Asian rising power and global economic weight. Striving to improve its presence in Asia, the EU focuses mainly on sub-regional and bilateral strategies along with occasional monolithic strategies with specific addresses. In its strategies, the EU has always emphasized its natural economic partnership with Asia whose prosperity is contingent on a peaceful and stable region. Therefore, Brussels proposes policies guided by principles of democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and sustainability. To do so, it relies strongly on political dialogue, bilateral and inter-regional fora, political security cooperation, knowledge-sharing and experience exchanges, joint naval operations and exercises, people-to-people exchanges, and so on.

The above elaboration encompasses the development of Europe's united voice in foreign and security policy, the unfolding of a maritime security dimension within, and finally a brief trajectory on EU relations with the region of Asia and the Indo-Pacific. Such an extensive explanation is deemed necessary to understand fully the values and mechanisms in EU foreign policy along with the intricate interplay of multilevel actors behind it. On a contextual basis, the maritime nature of the South China Sea dispute rendered it significant to discuss the development of an EU approach to maritime security, thus shedding light on how the EU conceptualizes the maritime domain, the extent to which the EU prioritizes maritime-related matters, and the span of EU strategic policies in the spectrum. Whereas a discussion on EU-Asia relations serves as a background to observe how the EU interacts with the region, on which domain of issues, utilizing which instruments, and the values that are driving the relations.

2.2. The South China Sea Dispute

“What is at stake in the South China Sea has a direct impact on every nation (US Mission to ASEAN, 2020).”

The South China Sea (hereinafter: SCS) has been deemed by many as the world's most vital and contentious body of water. It is a massive marginal sea of the West Pacific Ocean with a size of approximately 3.6 million square kilometers (Sacks, 2022). It is bordered by 8 littoral states comprising China, Vietnam, The Philippines, Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia,

Singapore, and Taiwan (p. 3). The sea possesses over 250 land features (mostly inhabitable) identifiably organized into six groupings i.e. the Pratas Islands, the Scarborough Shoal, the Paracel Islands, the Spratly Islands, the Macclesfield Bank, and the Natuna Islands (p. 2). The Paracel Islands alone hosts at least 130 features, located around 185-240 kilometers away from China's Hainan Island and the Vietnamese coastline (p. 4). Whilst the Spratly Islands host over 100 features and take up 410.000 square kilometers of the SCS space (*Ibid*). Curving around the south rim of the sea, parts of the islands fall into the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) of the Philippines, Malaysia, and Brunei. Differing from the Paracels, the Spratly Islands require human modifications to be able to support habitation (p. 4). The Pratas Islands, currently under Taiwanese control, take place in the northeastern of the sea (p. 5). While the Scarborough Shoal, presently controlled by China, is located 225 kilometers west of the Philippines and serves as a substantial fishing ground (*Ibid*). The Natuna Islands, containing at least 154 features, are entirely under Indonesian control with a contested EEZ (*Ibid*). Finally, the biggest elongated underwater atoll which is The Macclesfield Bank falls under the jurisdiction of China and Taiwan (*ibid*).

The vast sea carries an estimated one-third of global trade shipping amounting to approximately \$3.37 trillion in 2016 (Sacks, 2022). The following year, 40% of global (liquified) natural gas sailed through the SCS. Moreover, the sea provided around 12% of the world's fisheries in 2019 (p. 3). An estimated 33% of global crude oil exports are also transported through the contested waters (Cordesman, 2018; US Energy Information Administration (EIA), 2018). Perceived as the most significant maritime route for the transport of goods and raw materials from Africa and Europe to Asia, the economic prosperity of many relies on the SCS maritime crossroads. Aside from having plentiful fish reserves, the SCS boasts unexplored massive oil and gas deposits, estimated by the United States (US) to be 11 billion barrels of oil and nearly 5.4 trillion cubic meters of natural gas with much more possibly unchartered and warned to have questionable extraction feasibility (US Energy Information Administration (EIA), 2018). Reports have shown an estimation of 105 billion barrels of hydrocarbon reserves present as well in the SCS (*Ibid*).

The strategic significance of the SCS has rendered the area an Indo-Pacific geopolitical hotspot where the surrounding littoral states possess competing claims on islands, rocks, reefs, and low-tide elevations (Senkyr and Merkle, 2023). The central concern, however, is directed towards the People's Republic of China (PRC) and its ultimate historical claim up to nearly 90% of the SCS, resulting in paramount territorial disputes with its Southeastern littoral neighbors (*Ibid*). China's sweeping sovereignty claims have also fueled tensions of a power

struggle with the US as China increasingly implements a repressive approach to foreign ships and aircraft, hindering the maintenance of open and secure sea lanes and trade routes as per UNCLOS regulations. In addition, the SCS is at risk of becoming a theatre of war, spilling into the entire Southwest Pacific maritime area, as it is closely associated with the Taiwan contest (Senkyr and Merkle, 2023). The following section reviews the major milestones in the development of the SCS dispute with an emphasis on China's assertions.

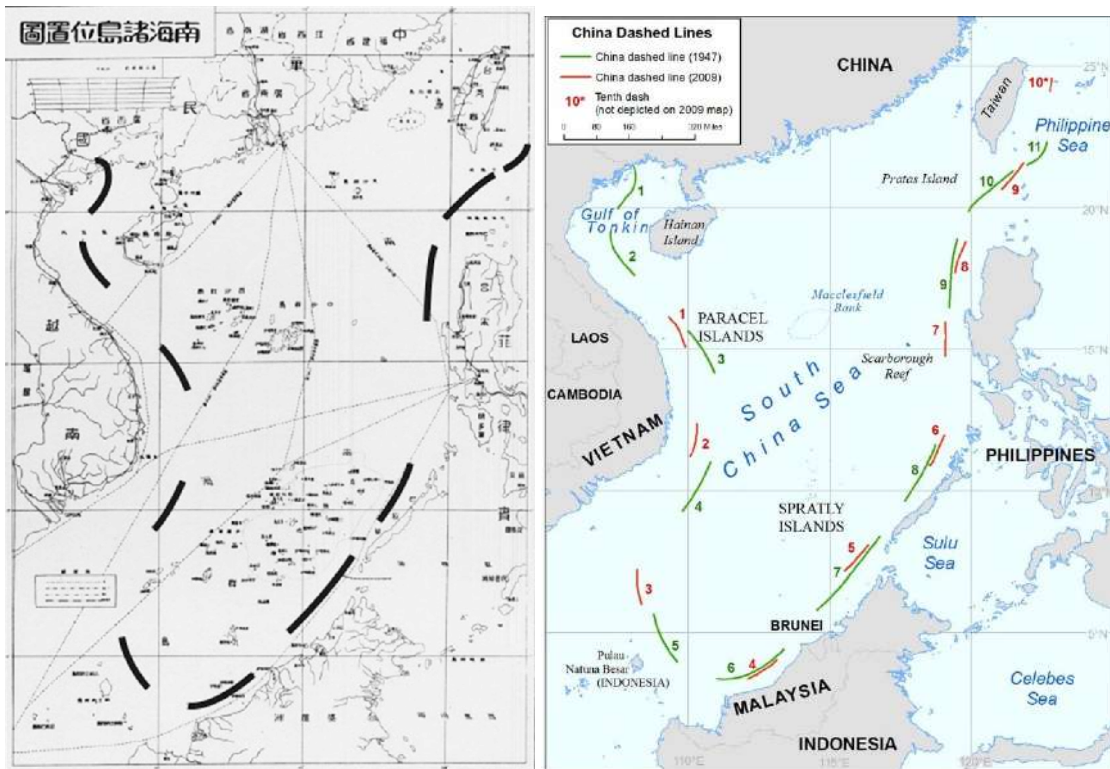
2.2.1. Overview of The South China Sea Dispute

“It will be a Sea with agreed boundaries based upon universal principles and governed by shared responsibilities to use its resources most wisely, a Sea where fish stocks are managed collectively for the benefit of all, where the impacts of oil exploration and international shipping are alleviated and where search and rescue operations can take place unimpeded. It could happen – if a line is redrawn (Hayton, 2014).”

In the South China Sea, the PRC mainly asserts its territorial sovereignty over the island groups of Paracel and Spratly as well as claims maritime rights in the associated waters.⁷ The contemporary foundation for Beijing's claim of territorial sovereignty in the area is a statement by former Chinese premier Zhou Enlai in 1951, taking place amid the peace treaty negotiations between the Allies and Japan and the San Francisco conference (Fravel, 2011, p. 293). Premier Zhou stated that despite Japanese occupation for some time, the Paracel or Xi Sha (西沙) Islands and the Spratly or Nan Wei (南威) Islands have consistently been of Chinese territorial ownership (Tian, 2016). The claim is associated with a map published by the Guomintang government in 1947 that illustrated a U-shaped 11-Dash Line or 11-Segment Line indicating the Republic of China's territory in the South China Sea (Fravel, 2011, p. 294-295). Subsequent to the formation of the PRC led by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), a portion of the line comprising the Gulf of Tonkin was removed in 1953, altering the claim into the 9-Dash Line or the South Sea Intermittent Line (*Ibid*). The dotted-lined map presented by China serves as its historical claims of much over two-thirds of the SCS to this day.

Illustration 1. The Eleven-Dash Line Map and The Nine-Dash Line Map

⁷ Within its Nine-Dash Line stipulation, China's claims retains all major SCS features with exceptions to the Pratas and Natuna Islands.



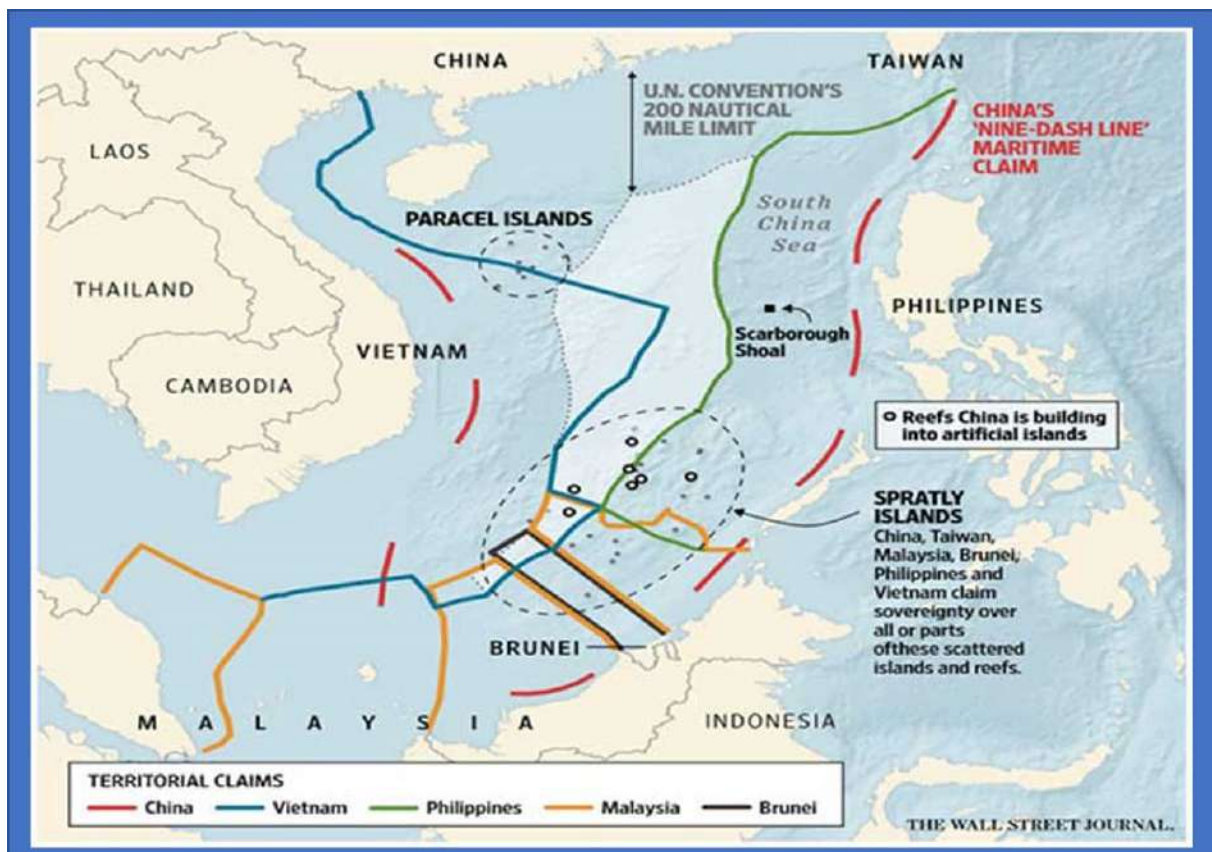
Source: Hossain (2013); Grady (2016).

In 1958, Beijing promulgated a declaration on China’s Territorial Sea, linking its territorial claims to its maritime rights to territorial waters for the first time (Fravel, 2011, p. 294). Instantly following the end of US intervention in the Vietnam War, in 1974, the PRC occupied the west Paracel Islands and built a military installation, pushing Vietnamese troops away to the Spratly Islands (*Timeline*, 2023). Corresponding to the evolution of an international maritime legal regime, namely the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) signed in 1982, China began codifying its claims and legal system accordingly which led to the 1992 Law on the Territorial Sea and the Contiguous Zone of the PRC and the 1998 Law on the EEZ and Continental Shelf of the PRC (*Ibid*). The 1998 law stipulates that EEZ regulations “*shall not affect the historic rights that the PRC enjoys,*” referring to its nine-dash line historical map (People’s Republic of China, 1998). Nevertheless, there have been controversies on what such historical rights entail as their spatial scope has never been legally clarified. Beijing, however, has consistently included the historical map in its claims towards the UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS).

Pertaining to the UNCLOS regulations which codify a state’s territorial sea up to 12 nautical miles and EEZ up to 200 nautical miles off its coastline (United Nations Convention on The Law of The Sea, 1982), Chinese sovereign claims on the SCS overlap with those of Southeast Asian claimants and Taiwan along with their EEZs. Vietnam,

occupying 21 features of the Spratly Islands by 2016, retains the islands to lie within its EEZ as outlined by UNCLOS (Sacks, 2022). In 1975, a reunited Vietnam proceeded with its claim extending to the Paracel Islands based on historical presence. The Philippines grounds its claims on the Spratly Islands and the Scarborough Shoal per the UNCLOS-regulated continental shelves along with evidence of historical occupation (Baviera, 2016). At the same time, Malaysia also possesses maritime claims on certain features of the Spratly Islands which arguably coincides with its EEZ and is supported by historical claims as well (Roach, 2014). The Republic of China or Taiwan, which has not ratified the UNCLOS, asserts claims on some features as well within the Spratly Islands, particularly the largest natural feature namely Taiping Island on which it maintains a military presence (Sacks, 2022). Based on historical rights, Taiwan also claims the Paracel Islands amongst others as its assertion is closely linked to the 9-dash line and 11-dash line (Lee, 2017). Brunei, having less extensive claims than the others, retains the features that lie within its EEZ (Kassay, et al., 2016). On the other hand, Indonesia is mostly impacted by China's 9-dash line claims within their EEZs along with the overlapping claims in their vicinity (*Ibid*). Nevertheless, the SCS remains of great importance to Indonesia as it has over 85% of its international trade passing through the area (Schrag, 2017).

Illustration 2. Overlapping Claims in The South China Sea



After years of continuous minor yet important confrontations between the claimant states, six years of negotiations yielded the signing of a non-binding Declaration on Conduct (DOC) by ASEAN and China in November 2002 (*Timeline*, 2023). As the first multilateral agreement agreed upon by China on the matter, it seeks to commit to easing tensions between the claimants and act as a pre-requisite in discussions towards a Code of Conduct (COC) as a binding guideline to conflict resolution (Buszynki, 2003). Negotiations for a COC, however, remained stalled for years until the initial draft of guidelines to implement the DOC was adopted in 2011 (Panda, 2020). Some have argued that stagnated negotiations on a binding COC owed to differing interpretations of UNCLOS in the SCS between China and its Southeast Asian neighbors (Trang, 2022). A slight progress was then made in 2012 when ASEAN ministers had agreed upon the key elements of the COC on governing rules for maritime matters that is to be proposed to China (*Ibid*). Amidst rising tensions, ASEAN failed to issue a communiqué a week after for the first time in 45 years as Southeast Asian states could not reach an agreement on how to perceive China's claims in the SCS ("Asean Nations Fail to Reach Agreement on South China Sea," 2012).

In 2013, the Philippines instituted arbitral proceedings against China in the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) concerning the role of historical rights and the origin of maritime privileges in the South China Sea based on UNCLOS as well as the lawfulness of China's actions in the area (Permanent Court of Arbitration, 2016a). Despite China's refusal to participate nor accept the court proceedings, the PCA unanimously ruled in favor of the Philippines in 2016, identifying China's claims and actions in the Filipino maritime domain as legal violations of the Convention (*Ibid*). The tribunal declared that "*China shall respect the rights and freedoms [...] under the Convention [...] (and) shall desist from further unlawful claims and activities* (Permanent Court of Arbitration, 2016b)." With its non-acceptance position, China refused the award and maintained that it was null and void (Campbell and Salidjanova, 2016). The award had little to no impact on China's actions as it continued its militarization and land reclamations in the SCS and Filipino military domains (Jakhar, 2021). Unexpectedly, however, Filipino President Rodrigo Duterte has undermined the tribunal's ruling as well by calling the award "*just a piece of paper*" (Feng, 2021; Jakhar, 2021).

Albeit so, negotiations on a binding COC continued, and an agreement on a Single Draft SCS COC Negotiating Text (SDNT) was reached and released in August 2018

(Panda, 2020). ASEAN and China also had set to finalize the COC by 2022, however, this was proven to not be the case. The multilateral talks stagnate on the question of UNCLOS being the sole source of law in defining the COC as some parties claim that historic rights are at play (Trang, 2022). Additionally, one must not exclude the fact that maritime incidents, naval clashes, acts of power projections and deterrence, unlawful explorations, missile deployments, illegal fishing, drone captures, naval collisions, militarization, land reclamation, and navy stand-offs have all occurred between certain claimant states as well as non-claimant states (such as the US) alongside on-going negotiations (*Timeline*, 2023). The reignition of COC talks was then seen in 2023 as Indonesia prioritized the matter at the commencement of its ASEAN chairmanship (Vu, 2023). By July 2023, negotiations yielded an agreement on new guidelines as an initiative to accelerate the negotiating process for the COC, with the aspiration to be completed in three years time (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2023). The following months, however, showed a turn of events as China's Ministry of Natural Resources announced its official 2023 'standard' map illustrating a **Ten-Dash Line**, which has entered India and Russia into the equation as it coincides with their respective territories (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2023; Ma, 2023). In spite of condemnations from the parties involved, Chinese military and civilian actions continue in the area as Beijing employs a strategy of Anti-Access/Area Denial (A2/AD) (Patricia and Satya, 2022). Tensions grow as Southeast Asian states defend their claims, along with major powers such as the US, France, Australia, and the UK lawfully conduct Freedom of Navigation Operations (FONOPs) in the high seas of the SCS.

2.2.2. What's At Stake for The European Union

“One of the two aorta veins of the European [Union's] economy goes through this [Indo-Pacific] region (EEAS, 2021b)”

The remarks above by HR/VP Josep Borrell are safe to be affirmed as not an overstatement. With 74% of the European Union's international trade volume being transported by sea, it has been estimated that 40% of the EU's foreign trade cruises through the contested South China Sea (Ministère de l'Europe et des Affaires étrangères, 2023; *International Trade in Goods by Mode of Transport - Statistics Explained*, 2023). With the entire Indo-Pacific region, EU imports reached 844 billion euros and its exports reached 583 billion euros in 2021 (Eurostat, 2022). Furthermore, the two main contesting actors of the maritime area, China and ASEAN, are respectively the EU's largest and third largest commercial partners. The two-way trade between the EU and the PRC amounted to 580 billion euros in 2018 alone, with approximately 1.5 billion euros of daily trade in goods

(Casarini, 2020). The number rose to a total of 696 billion euros in 2021, which is 16.2% of the EU's entire trade in goods (Kebler, 2024; Destatis, n.d.). Southeast Asian states as a whole, represented by ASEAN, had over 320 billion euros of trade in goods and services with the EU in 2018 (Casarini, 2020). On the other side, the EU holds the position as the largest trading partner for China and the third largest for ASEAN states, serving over 10.2% of total ASEAN trade (*Ibid*). Having been expressed numerous times by EU officials, the maintenance of a rules-based order and governance at sea along with its free and peaceful use is of vital interest to Europe with a direct stake in the EU's stability and prosperity. An open conflict in the region would most likely plunge the global economy, and the EU's within it, into a severe crisis (Senkyr & Merkle, 2023). The EU has extensively overlooked the significance of the SCS on this aspect through the 2013 document underlying the maritime dimension of the CSDP. Nonetheless, at the time, the document did not observe specific existing risks in the domain except for the threat of piracy. Naval skirmishes between claimant states were only identified as a potential threat (p. 48).

In the notion of the EU as a normative power, an understanding of the EU's role in international affairs was first coined by Ian Manners (2002). Briefly put, Manners argued that the EU possesses a capacity to influence other entities deriving from the export of its values (EEAS, 2016). With the rule of law as one of Brussels' core values, one of the vital interests that is often found in EU external action is a rules-based global order that underpins every aspect of its foreign policy. To quote the 2016 EUGS, "*Our interests and values go hand in hand. We have an interest in promoting our values in the world. At the same time, our fundamental values are embedded in our interests* (Mogherini, 2016, p. 13)." This brings us to how the South China Sea dispute challenges the rules-based order through China's assertive behavior, the ambiguity of UNCLOS interpretation, ineffective legal enforcement, and competition for great power influence in the matter (Ho, 2023). In its 2022 Strategic Compass, the EU explicitly states,

*"A new centre of global competition has emerged in the Indo-Pacific, where geopolitical tensions **endanger the rules-based order** in the region, and **put pressure on global supply chains**. The EU has a crucial geopolitical and economic interest in stability and security in the region. We will therefore protect our interests in the region, also **by ensuring that international law prevails in the maritime and other domains** (Council of The European Union, 2022, p. 10)."*

With its self-identified role as a global security provider, the EU retains importance in the prevalence of its normative power and the rules-based global order that strives to uphold. As Russia's invasion of Ukraine threatens the fundamental principles of sovereignty, territorial integrity, and international law, the similar challenges posed by the SCS dispute in the forms of restricting freedom of navigation and many others negatively affect EU interests in the same manner (Kebler, 2024). Therefore, despite the distance, the stakes for the EU in the South China Sea are high, both economic and geopolitical. In the long run, the SCS dispute and how it is or will be dealt with has been perceived as a pre-requisite to potential similar disputes in the future which threatens European security. At the 15th Asia Security Summit, the French minister of defense stated, "*If the Law of the Sea is not observed in the China seas today, it will be in jeopardy in the Arctic, the Mediterranean and elsewhere tomorrow* (Drian, 2016)," a view that is also shared by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) (Ham, et.al., 2016).

With the SCS being a hotspot for the US-China power struggle, the EU is also faced with a deepening strategic rivalry within which it is conflicted with maintaining a state of strategic neutrality, strategic alliance with the US, or keeping away from China's list of enemies due to the EU's complex economic interdependence (Kulkarni, 2023). That said, the EU has great stakes in ensuring that the overall adversarial power struggle between the two major powers does not hinder the vital interests of the EU, particularly in their major arena i.e. the South China Sea. Nevertheless, it has been made clear that the EU shares the concerns of the US regarding China's unilateral actions and the disruption of a rules-based order. In sum, the steps that the EU takes today within the dispute certainly shape the future of EU relations with Asian states and parties involved.

CHAPTER III

MAPPING THE PATTERNS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION'S DECLARATORY DIPLOMACY ON THE SOUTH CHINA SEA

“As long as tensions in the South China Sea remain below the threshold of armed confrontation, the policy debate in Europe will remain focused on how to best formulate statements (Duchâtel, 2016, p. 54).”

The European Union began engaging with the South China Sea dispute in mid-June 2012, despite the dispute itself dating back decades prior, through the last written point in the Guidelines on the EU's Foreign and Security Policy in East Asia. The Guidelines perceived that the tensions in the SCS (as an example of competitive nationalism) could *if unchecked* implicate regional stability, as well as broader navigation and commerce, which would affect EU trade and investments. It is imperative to note that the document explicitly states the EU does not take any position on the territorial claims in the area, however, ‘*recall the great importance*’ of the SCS for the EU (Council of the European Union, 2012). Along with promoting a peaceful dispute resolution and a consensual, international-law-based settlement of maritime borders, the EU is often described as maintaining a position of principled neutrality. Such an approach entails no position on the sovereignty aspects of the dispute yet supports crisis management and resolutions based on international law (Duchâtel and Huijskens, 2015), certainly relating to the EU’s normative power on the values of rules-based international order.

To some extent, the EU’s engagement in the SCS dispute has evolved beyond statements, particularly represented by some member states that have been boosting their naval presence in the region. France, as an illustration, has conducted regular passages through the South China Sea since 2014 to challenge Beijing’s claims. Starting in 2015, France has been part of an annual routine joint military exercise with the US and Japan. In 2018, the French navy transited through the vicinity of the South China Sea in two instances, particularly the strategic strait of Taiwan and the reefs along the Spratly Islands, for the purpose of FONOP and naval exercises. Despite being questioned by Chinese authorities as being provocative, France continuously deployed its military vessels to the SCS to conduct training exercises and freedom

of navigation patrols in the following years (Reuters, 2021; Zhang, 2021; Zheng, 2016; Ali and Stewart, 2019; Maritime Awareness Project, 2021).

Prior to Brexit, the United Kingdom (UK) was another EU member state which sustained its presence in the area. Formally recognizing the matter in 2014 through the ‘UK National Strategy for Maritime Security,’ the UK has been vocal on the upholding of international law in the SCS and many have argued that it has practiced its rights for innocent passage in the area since the early 2000s. In 2006, the UK took part in a joint exercise as part of the Five Power Defense Arrangements (FPDA) with Australia, Malaysia, Singapore, and New Zealand, which brought 21 warships, 85 aircraft, and 1 submarine to the SCS (Government of Singapore, 2006). Nevertheless, UK FON operations and their documentation became more intensive following the 2016 Brexit. Germany, on the other hand, sailed a warship to the contested waters for the first time in nearly two decades in 2021 with the objective of involvement in maintaining a rules-based international order. Demonstrating the progress of engagement in the SCS, one simply cannot argue that Europe has zero influence in the disputed waters, keeping in mind as well the EU’s participation in multiple forums that presumably possess the mandate to address the SCS dispute such as the ASEAN Regional Forum, the Asia-Europe Meeting, the Shangri la Dialogue, and many others.

As a distant partner, however, the EU has limited contributions that have led to the criticisms it faces today. Studied in the literature review, scholars have evidently provided one thing in common that can be summarized as a gap between the EU’s intentions and capabilities, rendering it a marginal player at best in a remote dispute such as the SCS. Certainly, the discrepancy for the EU in taking part in the SCS dispute derives from various factors such as the deteriorating security in the EU’s immediate neighborhood, the unanimity principle in the EU foreign policy decision-making mechanism, a limit in naval resources, and many more. Such a gap can already be seen through a minimal number of EU member states who deployed their warships to ensure the freedom of navigation that the EU craves in the contested domains. At the institutional level, the EU’s response to declining security situations remains constrained to reactive statements that reaffirm the principles of a rules-based international order (Duchatel, 2016), understood in this dissertation as *Declaratory Diplomacy*. Through Feron’s (2015) study on the EU’s declaratory diplomacy, one can perceive that the EU forms and communicates a position regarding high-political issues in third countries to assert the EU’s identity and manage the relations within the EU and beyond, thus shaping the EU’s profile as an international actor. Keukeleire and Delreux (2022) nuanced this understanding by explaining how declaratory foreign policy is a standard practice of the CFSP which is not to

be underestimated as there have been cases where member states oppose or veto CFSP declarations, illustrated by Hungary's block of declarations regarding Chinese human rights violations and even actions in the South China Sea (p. 181).

In spite of predominantly conveying forms of declaratory diplomacy that reiterate the EU's support for a peaceful dispute settlement and a rules-based order in the SCS, one cannot ignore the different manifest characteristics (and to some extent latent as well) that render feasible the observation of an oscillating trend in how the EU engages with the SCS dispute. As the dominant practice of the EU's engagement on the matter, it is in fact crucial that these characteristics are analyzed to truly conceive the dynamics of the EU's interaction with the SCS dispute. With no disregard for other forms of the EU's diplomacy in the SCS, this section presents well-accumulated data on the EU's declaratory diplomacy on the South China Sea dispute since its initial covering in the Guidelines on the EU's Foreign and Security Policy in East Asia on June 15th, 2012, until the year of 2022 marking a year after the practice of the EU strategy for cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, published on September 16th, 2021.

3.1. The Metadata

Corresponding to the data categorization and coding framework coined by the author (*See section 1.4.2.2. and figure 2*), the dissertation has accumulated 189 entries of the EU's declaratory diplomacy on the South China Sea dispute from mid-June 2012 to 2022. In spite of mostly consisting of forms of declaratory diplomacy of the EU directly, some may involve those that affiliate the EU such as the G7, Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), or Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership Meeting (ASEP). As a process tracing research, the data is organized firstly by the *Year* and *Date* on which it was published. It is followed by a category of *Actor* specified into *Subject* and *Counterpart*. The *Subject* is indicated with two columns which are the *Entity* that refers to the institution (thus predominantly the EU) and the *Spokesman/Sub-Entity* that identifies the sub-institution (e.g. European Commission, European Parliament, etc) or in some cases the spokesman (e.g. HR/VP, President of the European Council, etc). The *Counterpart* refers to the entities that are affiliated by the declaratory diplomacy, either as a partner or as the targeted entity.

Proceeding to the form of declaratory diplomacy itself, the data defines the entry based on the *Type of Declaratory Diplomacy* which are restricted to *brief, communique, document, joint statement, op-ed, other, press release, project, resolution, speech, and statement/declaration*. Followed by *Description*, the data openly indicates the title of the declaratory diplomacy as it is reported corresponding to its type. Certainly, to strengthen the

data quality, the dataset also specifies the exact *Narrative* within the declaratory diplomacy as in how the dispute was addressed. For the analytical purposes of the pattern generation, the author identified three main variables, of which two are *Reference to South China Sea* and *Level of Assertiveness*. The indicator *Reference to SCS* specifies whether the South China Sea dispute was addressed in a *direct* or *indirect* manner or even *none* at all within a relevant declaratory diplomacy of the EU. Whereas the indicator *Level of Assertiveness* identifies the nature of the EU’s declaratory diplomacy which can be sorted into *assertive*, *concern*, *neutral*, *vague*, *allude*, or *none*. As these variables are closely interlinked, the following table specifies how these indicators are defined within the EU’s declaratory diplomacy,

Table 2. Metadata of Reference to SCS Dispute and Level of Assertiveness

		Reference to the South China Sea (SCS) Dispute		
		none	indirect	direct
Level of Assertiveness	0: none	no mentions albeit within a relevant context		
	1: allude		may or may not be seen as a reference to the issue within a relevant context	
	2: vague		refers to the issue in a less obvious manner; describes only the issue in the regional aspect, OR in a maritime aspect, OR in the China aspect, etc	
	3: neutral		without explicitly mentioning the SCS dispute; refers to the issue in a more obvious manner without clearly expressing position	a statement that specifies that the EU is not taking sides (may invoke identity of actor maintaining a rule-based order); mentioning the issue without clearly expressing position
	4: concern		without explicitly mentioning the SCS dispute; refers to the issue in an obvious manner and expresses disapproval; expressing threats to EU interests	a statement of disapproval that does not entail action; expressing the issue as a threat to EU interests
	5: assertive		without explicitly mentioning the SCS dispute; refers to the issue in an obvious manner and entails threat to action of deterrence	a strong statement of opposition which may entail threat to action of deterrence

Source: Created by Author.

The table proposes the understanding that in cases where there is an *indirect* reference to the SCS, the declaratory diplomacy can be *allude*, *vague*, *neutral*, *concern*, or in rare times even *assertive*. In cases of a *direct* reference to the SCS dispute, the declaratory diplomacy may solely be *neutral*, *concern*, or *assertive*, as it is not anymore *vague* or *allude*.

The third main variable is *Level of Emphasis* which specifies to what extent was the South China Sea dispute prioritized within the EU’s declaratory diplomacy. The indicator identifies a level that is *low*, *mid*, or *high*, that is applicable to *direct* references to the SCS as the author finds it insufficient for an indirect reference to have an identifiable emphasis. The table below explains further how the *Level of Emphasis* is identified within an entry of the EU’s declaratory diplomacy on the SCS dispute,

Table 3. Metadata of Level of Emphasis

Level of Emphasis		Reference	Description
Numeric	Value		
-	None	None; Indirect	No Emphasis
1	Low	Direct	South China Sea is mentioned briefly; ideally one or two sentences or simply at the end
2	Mid	Direct	South China Sea is addressed in one section or paragraph; Section might be security, maritime security, directly 'south china sea', or others
3	High	Direct	The declarative engagement was entirely made to address the South China Sea

Source: Created by Author.

Through these main analytical variables, respectively, along with the descriptive variables indicating time, actors, and types of engagements, the research maps the patterns of the EU’s declaratory diplomacy on the SCS dispute in a chronological manner in correspondence to its directness, assertiveness, and emphasis. The dataset is also supported by *Notes* and *Sources* for its reliability, quality, and additional contextual information (if required). (See Appendix I)

3.2. Dissecting The Descriptive Patterns of The EU’s Declaratory Diplomacy on the South China Sea

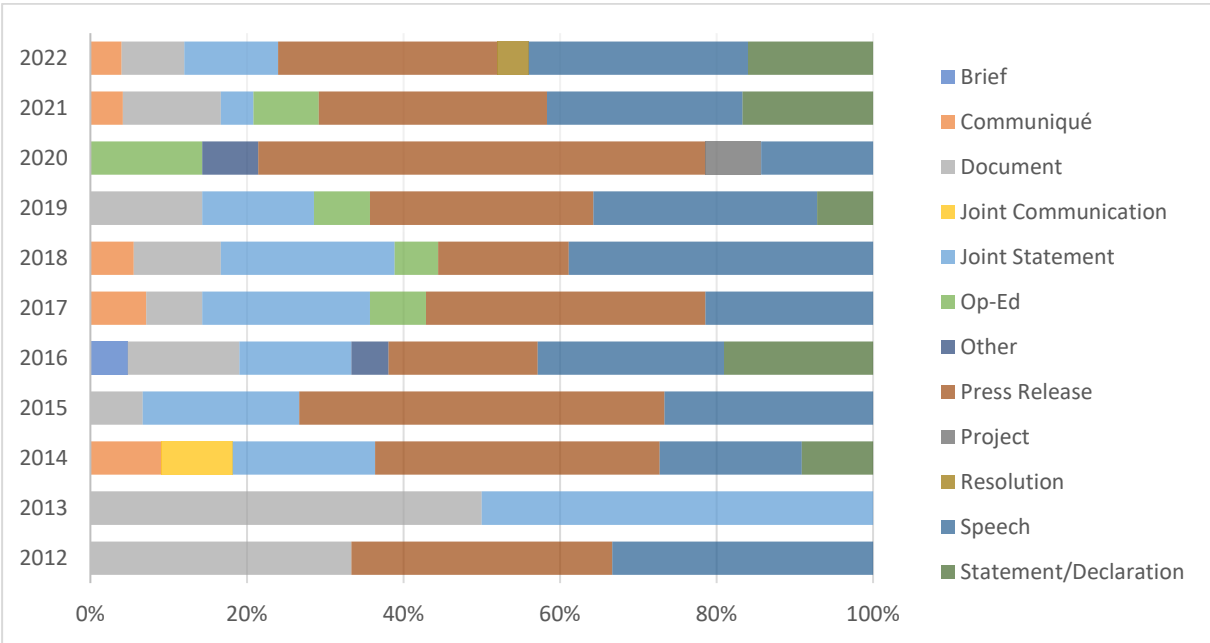
With the indicators outlined in the previous section, the analysis of the EU’s declaratory diplomacy on the South China Sea dispute requires firstly the dissection of its descriptive variables, particularly its general chronological distribution and the forms of declaratory diplomacy. The dataset comprises **189 entries** of which **161** involved a reference to the South China Sea dispute, be it direct or indirect references. Those who discussed the SCS dispute mostly took the forms of documents, statements, and joint statements, as well as speeches. The remaining portion of data owes to those forms of declaratory diplomacy in which an address to the SCS dispute would be considered relevant, however, this was not the case. The following *table 4* indicates the **monthly and annual chronological patterns of frequency** in the EU’s declaratory diplomacy on the South China Sea dispute, whereas *Figure 3* below shows the **annual chronological mapping of the types** of declaratory diplomacy taken by the EU on the matter.

Table 4. General Monthly and Annual Chronological Patterns of Frequency

Row Labels	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Grand Total
Jan			1					1	1	1		4
Feb						1	3	1	1		2	8
Mar			2		1			2		1	1	7
Apr				1	5			1		4	4	15
May				1	5	2	3	2		1	5	21
Jun	1		2	3	2	1	3		1	2	2	17
Jul	1			1	7	2	3	1		1		16
Aug			4	1		2	1	7	1	1	4	21
Sep					2		1		3	3	1	10
Oct	1		2		1	1	3	1				9
Nov		1		3	1	4	2		2	2	3	18
Dec				1					3	4	6	14
N/A									1			1
Grand Total	3	2	11	15	21	14	18	14	14	24	25	161

Source: Author’s Original Work (See Appendix I)

Figure 3. Annual Chronological Mapping of Types of Declaratory Diplomacy



Source: Author’s Original Work (See Appendix I)

Albeit entering the picture in June 2012, the EU barely addressed the issue until 2014. During the years 2012 and 2013 combined, the EU explicitly touched upon the contested waters merely four times. Interestingly as well, the EU’s initial engagement to the dispute took place a year after ASEAN and China adopted a draft of guidelines to implement the 2002 Declaration on Conduct in 2011. Aside from the EU’s address to the dispute through the East Asian Guidelines, the HR/VP at the time namely Catherine Ashton referenced the matter during a speech in Cambodia on July 13th, 2012, by simply mentioning the SCS as a broader security issue in the region before turning the focus into the reformation of Myanmar. The speech occurred in tandem with the failure of ASEAN states to issue a joint statement that would

mention the SCS agenda, arguably due to disagreements on the role of multilateralism in dispute settlements. In early 2013, the significance of the SCS was extensively discussed as a geostrategic maritime challenge implicating the EU within a policy document underlining the maritime dimension of the CSDP. The document elaborated on transnational threats such as piracy and terrorism which threatened the stability of the area yet identified the territorial disputes as a potential acute danger due to which interstate skirmishes could occur. It did, however, acknowledge the complexity of fundamental sovereignty within the dispute with an emphasis on China's and Vietnam's territorial claims along with the role of ASEAN in the talks on a Code of Conduct (COC), which was also addressed at the end of the year in a joint statement with Japan. The setting of the dispute as of maritime importance within the EU's CSDP took place within the same month as when the Philippines instituted arbitral proceedings against the PRC under the UNCLOS. It thus becomes crucial to highlight that the document addressed how the concerned states assert their claims in relation to UNCLOS as it stated that the legal instrument is available for interpretation and compromise, thus protracting the dispute.

The EU's activities of declaratory diplomacy on the dispute grew more often particularly since the Joint Communication for an EU Maritime Security Strategy was presented to the Parliament and the Council by the HR/VP and the Commission in March 2014. The year 2014 marked entries within which the EU mostly raised the SCS dispute alongside the US and Vietnam. The EU failed, however, to introduce its concerns entirely in press releases following an ASEM summit and a meeting between the presidents of the European Council and Commission at the time with the premier of the PRC, Li Keqiang. Ever so slightly more discussed in 2015, it is observed that the EU had published plenty more press releases referencing the issue along with growing numbers of speeches and joint statements. Significantly noted is the speech that took place at Tsinghua University, China, by the EU Ambassador to the PRC namely H.E. Dr. Hans Dietmar Schweisgut in November 2015 through which the peaceful development of the SCS was mentioned as a consideration for further strategic cooperation between the EU and China in foreign and security policies (EEAS, 2015). During the year, the HR/VP namely Federica Mogherini played a key role in the rise of the EU's presence in the dispute discussions leading to half of the engagements in various forms. Furthermore, the EU's cooperation with ASEAN was relatively a major part within the year as five out of fifteen references within four months were conveyed as part of efforts to scale up partnership with its Southeast Asian partner. Such interest coincides with the release of joint communication between the two regional entities on a partnership *with a strategic purpose* within the same year, marking closer interregional ties.

In 2016, a spike was observed within the patterns showing 21 references to the South China Sea dispute from March to November, mostly being press releases and speeches as well as some vital policy documents. Surely the rise was expected as July 12th, 2016 was when the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) awarded the SCS Arbitration in favor of the Philippines and against Chinese historical claims and actions. In March, the EU reaffirmed its commitment to maintaining a *legal order* of the seas based on the UNCLOS along with its neutrality towards the sovereign claims. The declaration also affirmed the EU's concerns about the militarization of the area and urged claimants to resolve disputes in accordance with arbitration procedures as was the case being pursued by the Philippines, despite China's refusal. Despite the strengthening of the EU's position on the matter in March, the SCS dispute was only mentioned once in Mogherini's EU Global Strategy published in June 2016 as a possible area to be explored for the EU's contribution to global maritime security although the document consisted of a section on EU-Asia relations. On an unspecified note, it stated its desire to seek further universalization and implementation of the UNCLOS and existing dispute settlement mechanisms. Within the same month, the EU published a joint communication highlighting *elements for a new EU strategy on China*, within which it firmly expressed its concerns on the maintenance of freedom of navigation and overflight as prime importance to the EU. Amongst numerous other declaratory diplomacies within the year, the EU released a declaration on the SCS arbitration outcome three days subsequent to the tribunal's award. Criticized by many, the EU simply acknowledged the Award and reiterated its neutrality without indicating any parties addressed in the Award prior to normatively explaining the general contribution of the dispute settlement mechanism and supporting talks for the COC between ASEAN and China. Thus, the EU's declaratory diplomacy on the SCS in 2016 was a peculiar case as it seemed to maintain its latent characteristics with varying degrees of manifestation which will be further discussed in Section 3.3.

With respect to the patterns observed in 2016, the year 2017 showed a one-third decline in the frequency of EU declaratory diplomacy on the SCS, predominantly in the form of press releases. Three of five press releases were published with Japan as a counterpart, plainly mentioning the dispute as an issue of common interest. Whereas two joint statements with ASEAN along with a speech by the president of the European Council, Donald Tusk, at the ASEAN-EU Commemorative Summit, affirmed a shared recognition of the principles of UNCLOS (European Council, 2017). On June 19th, 2017, however, the EU released a document of *Council Conclusions on Global Maritime Security* which encouraged its member states to promote confidence-building measures in light of rising tensions in the SCS and urged peaceful

resolutions amongst ASEAN member states and China (Council of The European Union, 2017a). During Tusk's speech following an EU-China Summit in Brussels at the beginning of the month, conversely, the SCS dispute was not at all touched upon (European Council, 2017b).

Amongst the declaratory diplomacies in 2018 that totaled up to 18 entries, the EU's engagement in the SCS dispute mostly took the form of speeches, followed by joint statements and press releases. Notably, a speech by the Commission president, Jean-Claude Juncker, at a Munich Conference in February criticized the EU's principle of unanimity on foreign policy decision-making processes which in turn led the EU to not be able to reach a unified position on the South China Sea disputes. The speech occurred a little after a week of the French nuclear attack submarine passage in the SCS as a FON operation. The importance for the EU to demonstrate unity on the issue was also highlighted during a speech at a G7 summit by European Council president, Donald Tusk, on which he touched upon the land reclamations and militarization in the area widely known as being conducted by the PRC. As 2018 also indicated the year in which the EU revised its Maritime Security Strategy, the SCS among other maritime areas was addressed as *a maritime zone with great strategic interest* which would require full coordination of the EUMSS. Another key takeaway from 2018 is illustrated by a Joint Statement from the 20th EU-China Summit in July that reasserted the EU member states and China as parties to the UNCLOS and demonstrated the EU's support for COC negotiations between the PRC and ASEAN. Both entities also called upon all concerned parties to peacefully resolve the disputes and refrain from tension-generating actions. The next month, ASEAN and China agreed upon the Single Draft South China Sea Code on Conduct Negotiating Text (SDNT) and a targeted finish line on the COC by 2022.

At another EU-China Summit in April 2019, the two entities jointly released a similar statement as the prior year. Despite the statement, China accused the French frigate *Vendémiaire* of illegally entering the SCS and the Taiwan Strait as they are *Chinese waters* within the same month (Seibt, 2021). On a more independent basis, however, the EU put forward a Strategic Outlook on China in March which addressed the hardships in resolving tensions in the SCS due to Beijing's territorial claims that do not abide by the UNCLOS and its non-acceptance of the SCS Arbitration Awards back in 2016. In spite of the Outlook which can be argued to be a pullback from the EU's principled neutrality, the EU engaged slightly less in 2019 in comparison to the year before. At the 18th Asia Security Summit in June, Mogherini conveyed a speech that did not mention nor reference the SCS disputes completely. During the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), however, numerous press releases showed how Mogherini underlined the importance of the developments in the SCS and called for transparency and rapid

conclusions for a legally binding COC. Further expressing its concerns, the EEAS released a statement in August, condemning unilateral actions in the SCS and reaffirming its commitment to the legal order of the seas. Two months later, the EU and China held their first maritime security seminar in Hainan, China, within which the EU promoted the UNCLOS without explicitly raising concerns about the South China Sea. The ambiguous relationship between the EU and China within this year of 2019 renders us to question whether the EU's Strategic Outlook on China influenced the adopted declaratory diplomacies on the SCS (*See Section 4.1.2.*).

With the same number of engagements, as it was in 2019 that is 14 entries, the dataset found eight of which to be press releases in 2020, possibly due to abundant interactions with third parties. During the year, the EU reiterated its mutual interest and concern in the contested waters with the Philippines, ASEAN, Australia, and Vietnam. Regarding the EU-China Summit, Leaders' Meetings, and consultations on security and defense, three press releases throughout the year revealed how the EU urged for self-restraint amidst conflict escalations in the area and explored potential cooperation for CSDP operations. In the Summit, nonetheless, European Council President, Charles Michel, gave a speech in which he called upon China *to refrain from unilateral actions in the South China Sea, to respect international law, and (to) avoid escalations*, despite merely one sentence near the end of the remarks. At the end of the year, the EU released a statement delivering the results of the EU-China Leaders' Meeting which was titled '*Standing Firm on EU Interests and Values*,' however, its interest in a free and secure South China Sea was not found.

With respect to the previous years, the EU engaged through declaratory diplomacy on the SCS dispute much more intensively in 2021, mounting to 24 engagements, mostly in the forms of press releases, speeches, statements, and documents. Despite the Indo-Pacific Strategy being published in September, the Council of the EU has adopted conclusions on the matter since April. Both the Council Conclusions document and the associated press release noted the EU's concerns about the intense dynamics of geopolitical competition which has resulted in tensions within the supply chains and security. Thus, it underlined the significance of cooperation with the Indo-Pacific in securing *free and open maritime supply routes* and expressed the EU's desire to render the Indo-Pacific a maritime area of interest within which there needs to be *a meaningful European naval presence*. It certainly becomes significant to note that such a statement was made a month after a French nuclear attack submarine *Emeraude* and one other naval vessel cruised through the SCS as part of a patrol mission to strengthen

French naval presence in the area (Seibt, 2021). The EU's Strategic Compass published within the same period also addressed,

“There is also a growing reaction to its (China's) increasingly assertive regional behaviour (Council of The European Union, 2022, p. 10).”

Furthermore, the EU released a statement on April 24th, 2021, on challenges to peace and stability in which it addressed tensions in the SCS *including the recent presence of large Chinese vessels at Whitsun Reef*. This statement has been one of the most discussed amongst scholars in regard to the EU's approach to the SCS as it raised questions on Brussels' principled neutrality. Another similar statement was made later in the year highlighting unilateral actions by Chinese vessels in the contested area to which the EU stated its *strong opposition*.

In August 2021, the EU delivered a statement to the UN Security Council outlining its priorities for and approach to ensure maritime security. In the context of promoting multilateralism to resolve tensions in contested waters, the EU referenced the situations in the Gulf of Guinea, the Red Sea, the Caribbean, East and South China Sea. The following month, on the release of the EU's Indo-Pacific Strategy, the HR/VP Josep Borrell re-iterated the importance of European naval presence in the region on which the EU intends to explore ways to *ensure an enhanced naval deployment by Member States*. He stressed the non-threatening nature of the EU's presence, but rather as a contribution to the security of SLOCs. On a more explicit basis, the research also observed press releases that involved the EU such as with the US and the G7, within which the parties affirmed concerns over *China's problematic and unilateral actions* and underlined the importance of upholding rules-based frameworks at sea. Witnessing the EU's declaratory diplomacy more attentively in 2021, one may raise the question of whether the newly found Indo-Pacific strategy was a catalyst to the rise of engagements, taking into account that the council had concluded on the matter since early in the year. Such a relationship between the Indo-Pacific strategy and the EU's declaratory diplomacy on the SCS requires to be explored further (*See Section 4.2.2.*).

The EU was found to engage even more frequently on the SCS in 2022 with up to 25 registered declaratory diplomacy, similarly at most taking the forms of press releases and speeches followed by statements/declarations. Corresponding to the 2021 Indo-Pacific Strategy, the French presidency of the Council of the EU and the HR/VP Josep Borrell co-organized a Ministerial Forum for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific in February 2022. Through its press release, highlighting the participation of ministers and representations of the EU's 27 member states and 30 Indo-Pacific states, it is observed that the EU announced its conceptual extension

of CMP to the Northwestern area of the Indian Ocean and commitment to a rules-based international order. The contested waters of the SCS, however, were not part of the press release. In April 2022, the EU-China Summit resulted in a statement that covered the Russian invasion of Ukraine, China's sanctions on the EU and its member states, the Chinese human rights situation, cybersecurity threats, situations in Afghanistan, Myanmar, and the Korean Peninsula, however, not the situations in the South China Sea. The EU did, however, discuss the escalations in the SCS during the ASEAN Regional Forum as well as bilaterally with Vietnam, Australia, the US, and Japan.

In June 2022, the Parliament adopted a resolution on *The EU and security challenges in the Indo-Pacific*, within which it showed that the EU is no longer neutral on the sovereign claims of the littoral states, taking precedence from the 2016 SCS Arbitration Awards. Welcoming more intensive joint naval activities with its Indo-Pacific partners, the EU expressed its *deep concern* about China's blue water military build-up and expansionist behaviors in the East and South China Seas, including the Taiwan Strait (European Union, 2022b). At the 40th anniversary of the UNCLOS, Josep Borrell delivered a statement referring to the South China Sea as an illustration of the seas as *the world's foremost geopolitical arena*, followed by a reiteration of the EU's opposition to unilateral actions that would undermine stability and order. Further promoting the implementation of the DOC and COC negotiations, the EU and ASEAN restated the importance of peace and security in the SCS in accordance with international law at the Commemorative Summit, with the EU being represented by Council President, Charles Michel. Nevertheless, the two remarks given by President Michel merely touched upon maritime security and the significance of the protection of trade routes.

As observed from the figures and the annual detailed chronological explanations of the patterns, the EU engaged through declaratory diplomacy on the far-distanced contested waters of the South China Sea with a fluctuating dynamic of frequency and forms. As it began to engage with the dispute in 2012, it must be noted that the EU did not have a formally and commonly defined concept or strategy for maritime security at the time. Following the establishment of the EUMSS, however, the EU was continuously present in addressing the dispute although more or less intensively in certain years. After 2014, the lowest EU engagement in the dispute was recorded in the years 2017, 2019, and 2020, which is arguably puzzling as the year 2017 marked the release of Council Conclusions on Global Maritime Security, the year 2019 showed the EU's production of the EU-China Strategic Outlook, and the year 2020 was when the EU addressed the matter within an EU-China Summit. The major spikes, however, are concluded to be in the years 2016, 2021, and 2022, with over 20

engagements in each year. Amounting up to 70 engagements within these three significant years, 48 of which took the forms of press releases, speeches, and statements/declarations.

Perhaps one can argue through the Agenda-Setting Theory that the EU is increasingly prioritizing the South China Sea dispute as it intends to draw more attention to EU presence in the matter by conducting forms of declaratory diplomacy more intensively. Certainly, however, the frequency of interaction is not sufficient for such an argument. In light of the current popular discourse on the fact that the EU has stricken a more assertive approach to the SCS in the past few years, the data presented in this research discovers the need to explore the comprehensive dynamics within the EU's declaratory diplomacy. The data showed that there has been a certain degree of assertiveness found as well throughout the times prior to recent developments to which many scholars have referred. The data illustrates a fluctuating dynamic in the nature of the EU's declaratory diplomacy on the South China Sea which is elaborated further in the following section.

3.3. Analyzing The Critical Patterns of The EU's Declaratory Diplomacy on The South China Sea

Through the chronological dissection of data on the frequency and forms of the EU's declaratory diplomacy on the SCS, it comes as no surprise that one consistently finds Brussels' affirmation about the importance of upholding international law, including the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). Departing from a rule of law principle, the EU constantly uses legally coded languages such as freedom of navigation and overflight, confidence-building measures, arbitration, tribunals, Code of Conduct, Declaration of Conduct, compliance, and dispute settlement mechanisms, among others. In addressing the disputes, Brussels would also use language that insinuates a threatened orderly status quo such as ocean governance, rules-based maritime order, violations, escalation of tensions, threatened peace, permanent physical change (of maritime features), regional stability, and so forth. Returning to Gergen's concept of saturated meanings in social constructionism, the deep embedding of language used by the EU in its interaction with the South China Sea dispute contributes to the construction of the EU's identity, in this case as a global rules-based maritime security provider. Although the proposition of the EU as a *security provider at sea* was only proposed with the EUMSS in 2014 and reiterated in the 2016 EUGS, the engagement of the EU with the SCS dispute since 2012 has demonstrated such an identity construction evidently seen from its language.

Moreover, the use of legal and status quo-associated language constructs the relationship of the EU with the SCS dispute, the claimant states, and ASEAN, however, also the non-

claimant parties such as the US, the UN, other states or entities, and consequently the international community as a whole. Through such language, the EU has constructed an intricate relationship that places its presence predominantly within conflict management instead of a deterring actor, a role mostly played by the US. Nevertheless, there have been discussions of the EU becoming a more assertive actor in the South China Sea, particularly since the Indo-Pacific Strategy. At the same time, there exists discourse of the EU as a marginal and neutral actor in the contested waters. As previously mentioned, European Commission President Juncker has also highlighted the inability of the EU to reach a unified position on the SCS, rendering the EU's declaratory diplomacy under the CFSP umbrella more complex. The research finds the need to explore the EU's foreign policy as Hansen conceptualized it as a discursive practice amidst the aforementioned debates surrounding the SCS dispute, questioning the nature of its approach. Through Spies' concept of diplo-speak on diplomatic culture, it is understood that the more *assertive*, *direct* (explicit), and *emphatic* the EU engages in the SCS, the less room for maneuver it has in managing the evident entanglement of its internal and international politics. Conversely, the more *allude*, *indirect*, and *subdued* the EU's declaratory diplomacy is, the more maneuverability it possesses.

With many arguing for the EU to have just become more assertive in 2021, the EU's *assertive* approaches in the past are often overlooked. Contemporarily, the EU's vagueness from time to time throughout its engagement, even after the Indo-Pacific Strategy, has also been omitted on many occasions. Although this research does not necessarily disagree with the bid of the EU's increasing assertive presence in the dispute, it proposes a more complete picture of the EU's declaratory diplomacy in the SCS, acknowledging that the EU's assertiveness is not strictly new and its neutrality and/or ambiguous approach are not left in the past. The data in this research, shown in the table below, reveals the comprehensive dynamics of the EU's declaratory diplomacy on the South China Sea dispute.

Table 5. Critical Patterns of the EU’s Declaratory Diplomacy on the SCS Dispute

Row Labels	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	(blank)	Grand Total
Direct	2	2	10	11	19	10	13	12	12	15	13		119
Assertive			1	2	2	1	2	2	1	10	6		27
High								1		2			3
Mid			1	2	1	1	1		1	5	6		18
Low					1		1	1		3			6
Concern		1	3	4	4	1	2	2	6	1	2		26
High			1		1								2
Mid		1	2	3	3			2	3		2		16
Low				1		1	2		3	1			8
Neutral	2	1	6	5	13	8	9	8	5	4	5		66
High					1								1
Mid	1	1	1	1	5	2	3	2		1	2		19
Low	1		5	4	7	6	6	6	5	3	3		46
Indirect	1		1	4	2	4	5	2	2	9	12		42
Assertive										3	1		4
None										3	1		4
Concern									1	3	1		5
None									1	3	1		5
Neutral				1		1		1		1	2		6
None				1		1		1		1	2		6
Vague	1		1	1	1		2		1	1	7		15
None	1		1	1	1		2		1	1	7		15
Allude				2	1	3	3	1		1	1		12
None				2	1	3	3	1		1	1		12
None	1	1	2	1	3	3	6	3	1	2	5		28
None	1	1	2	1	3	3	6	3	1	2	5		28
None	1	1	2	1	3	3	6	3	1	2	5		28
(blank)													
Grand Total	4	3	13	16	24	17	24	17	15	26	30		189

Source: Author’s Original Work (See Appendix I).

From a bird’s eye view, certain patterns stand out such as the spike of neutral declaratory diplomacy in 2016, the relatively consistent directness since 2014 and its surge in 2016, the overall influx of assertiveness throughout the decade, and the sudden rise of indirect engagements in 2021, among others. Exploring a deeper understanding, the following proposes key takeaways from the patterns presented above.

At a glance, it is observable that the EU has only conveyed forms of declaratory diplomacy that are direct, and assertive, with a high level of emphasis, three times in over 10 years, taking place once in 2019 and twice in 2021. These three instances signify that the EU dedicated entire statements that specifically and explicitly targeted the South China Sea dispute (as written in their titles), using strong opposing language. The EU’s declaratory diplomacy associated with these three most ‘extreme’ categories is mainly characterized by calling out the presence of *unilateral actions* (by Chinese vessels) in the SCS that *endanger peace and stability*, the portrayal of tensions as a *serious threat*, and an expression of the EU’s *opposition* to any unilateral actions. In advocating for all parties to comply with the UNCLOS, these engagements also recall the importance of freedom of navigation and overflight in the SCS to maintain a *free, secure, and open maritime supply chain* which serves as a precedent for

enhancing European FON operations and often becomes the narrative of France, the UK, and Germany in their operations.

At the same time, it is well-anticipated that the EU was not at all *assertive* nor *highly* emphatic in its early engagements in 2012 and 2013. The declaratory engagements found within these two years did not express strong opposition and instead outlined the contested situation and addressed the need to restore peace and stability in the region through multilateralism and international law. Despite some would vaguely refer to the dispute as a concern of *maritime security in Asia* during this period, the 2012 Guidelines on the EU's Foreign and Security Policy in East Asia explicitly addressed the '*recent escalations of tensions*' in the SCS, however, stated that the EU and its member states do *not in any sense take position on these various claims*. Such an approach rendered the document to be in the *neutral* category. With a *mid*-sense of emphasis, nonetheless, the Guidelines reserved a section specifically to address the SCS dispute albeit at the very end. Maintaining a similar level of emphasis, the EU's 2013 CSDP Maritime Dimension Document expressed the dispute to have an acute danger and extensively outlined the pertinent consequences, thus categorized to be of *concern*.

Although the previous section has shown how the EU's declaratory interaction with the SCS dispute grew in 2014 following the conceptualization of maritime security, it is crucial to note that the EUMSS did not directly address the South China Sea yet solely referred to it as a multitude of challenges in *East and Southeast Asia's maritime areas*, placed in a *vague* level of assertiveness. Nevertheless, the EU's first *direct* statement of *concern* with a *high* level of emphasis was found in May 2014, stating "*We are concerned*" about recent incidents between China and Vietnam regarding the Chinese oil rig HD981. On a different note, although *direct-assertive* level engagements were found in 2014 and 2015, the EU's first independent *direct-assertive* declaratory diplomacy on the SCS was found in 2016, whereas those prior was associated with the G7 in which the EU possesses privileges and obligations. In fact, the EU's first *direct-assertive* diplomacy took place in tandem with the release of Mogherini's EUGS in June 2016. Despite having a *low* level of emphasis, the document expresses its intentions to uphold FON specifically in East and Southeast Asia as well as *stands firm* on the UNCLOS and arbitration processes. In the context of the EU's contribution to global maritime security, it *directly* mentioned the South China Sea as an area to be explored in its efforts to implement the UNCLOS.

Regarding the surge of data in 2016, however, it must be noted that the rise was predominantly experienced at the *direct-neutral* level of which 13 engagements were found. Interestingly as well, 19 out of 21 declaratory diplomacies found within 2016 addressed the

South China Sea dispute *directly*. During this year, it can be argued that the EU's *neutrality* was most visible, beginning with HR/VP Mogherini's speech in April to the National Defense University in Indonesia, restating "I will not take position on which island belongs to whom." As the international community witnessed the 2016 SCS Arbitration ruling on July 12th, Council President Tusk conveyed remarks with a *low* level of emphasis at the EU-China Summit, that did not at all show a sense of assertiveness yet merely referred to the rule-based international order as the common interests of the EU and China, thus re-demonstrating its *neutrality*. Three days following the ruling, the EU explicitly reiterated its *neutrality* by stating "The EU does not take a position on sovereignty aspects relating to claims," despite the Award rendering Chinese claims not to possess any recognized legal basis and despite the EU's advocacy on the role of dispute settlement mechanisms on the matter. The position was strengthened by and was blurred by other *direct-neutral* declaratory diplomacies with *low* and *mid*-levels of emphasis as seen from the conclusions on the EU Strategy on China, the EEAS press release on key delegation activities, and remarks on the ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting, among others.

Although having conducted less declaratory diplomacy in comparison to 2016, a similar pattern of a predominant *direct-neutral* approach was found throughout 2017-2019. Furthermore, a slight rise in *indirect* engagements was also observed in 2017 and 2018 respectively, categorized mostly as *allude* and some as *vague*. As an illustration, within the policy document 'Enhanced EU Security Cooperation in and With Asia' of May 2018, it was striking to find that the Council of the EU merely mentioned *maritime security* as a key area for deeper engagement and that the EU should help strengthen the capacity of ASEAN to address maritime security issues such as upholding FON. Upon consideration of the context of the document which referred to the region of Asia, the role of ASEAN, along with the maintenance of FON, the dataset has placed the document to be *indirect-vague*. Moreover, two Op-eds that were written by Tusk and Mogherini, both on Euro-Asian ties, were registered to the data compilation as *indirect-allude*. These categorizations were due to how they simply touched upon their cooperation in maritime security without any specification and instead focused mostly on the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

A specific takeaway was also found in June 2018 within the revised EUMSS Action Plan where the EU addressed the SCS *directly* with a *mid-emphasis* albeit with a *neutral* tone, thus formally inserting the SCS dispute into the maritime security agenda and moving forward from the 2014 EUMSS *indirect-vague* declaratory diplomacy. In 2019, it is observed that most engagements were *direct-neutral*, nevertheless, there seem to be many ambiguities. The EU released a Strategic Outlook on China which is arguably of *concern* as it called out *directly* the

implications of China's maritime claims and refusal of the tribunal award on the international order and the SLOCs affecting EU interests. As the EU-China Summit took place the following month, the joint statement was *direct-neutral*, with Tusk's post-summit speech *not at all* mentioning the SCS dispute and Mogherini's speech during the 18th Asia Security Summit in June, which heavily focused on North Korea. In August, Mogherini delivered another speech during the EU-ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference where she touched upon the SCS issue *assertively*, explicitly indicating the EU's desire to engage with Asia more and even militarily. This was then followed by multiple press releases and speeches alongside ASEAN. As discussed earlier, the dataset has also recorded a *direct-assertive* statement with *high emphasis* for the first time in late August 2019, addressing unilateral actions that have deteriorated the maritime security environment in the area. Strangely, however, it must be noted that the EU Ambassador to China, Nicolas Chapuis, only *indirectly and neutrally* referred to the SCS dispute during the first EU-China Maritime Security Seminar in October 2019.

Within the patterns, the year 2020 showed a slight decline in *neutral* declaratory diplomacy and a rise in those of *concern*, particularly during the second half of the year. In this period, the EU made references to China's expansionism in the SCS, escalation of tensions due to unilateral actions, militarization of islands in the area, and destabilizing actions, along with pushing for the finalization of the COC approximately in 8 instances within five months. The EU was especially *assertive* in September as seen through HR/VP Josep Borrell's Op-ed on the EU-ASEAN partnership, as it *directly* referred to the SCS with a *mid-emphasis* as follows,

“We cannot allow countries to unilaterally undermine international law and maritime security in the South China Sea, thereby representing a serious threat to the peaceful development of the region.”

Nevertheless, a statement from the EU-China Leaders' meeting at the end of the year, in which the EU was represented by Charles Michel and Ursula Von der Leyen, failed to address the issue entirely.

Exceedingly paramount, the EU's declaratory diplomacy that is *direct-assertive* towards the SCS dispute experienced a major surge in 2021 up to ten engagements with various levels of emphasis. At the same time, direct-concern and neutral engagements have visibly decreased, whereas indirect engagements, with differing levels of assertiveness, rose to nine. With regard to the EU's mere acknowledgment of the 2016 SCS Arbitration ruling, it becomes essential to point out that the EU released a *highly* emphasized statement in April 2021 which recalled the Award rendered under UNCLOS. Placed as *direct-assertive*, the statement expressed the EU's

strong opposition to unilateral actions in the context of the tensions caused by Chinese vessels in the SCS. On the second *highly* emphasized *direct-assertive* statement in November, the EU specified a point in the ruling that rendered the Second Thomas Shoal to lie within the Filipino EEZ and continental shelf. Amidst some similar *direct* engagements that oppose unilateral actions across the year, the period also recorded *indirect-assertive* statements for the first time. In short, the three entries that were characterized as *indirect-assertive* had references to the Indo-Pacific region as *a center of intense geopolitical competition*, and mentioned *free and open maritime supply routes, maritime security, naval presence, China's increasingly assertive regional behavior*, and *freedom of navigation*, among others. Amidst *assertive* declaratory diplomacy, however, *indirect-vague* instances were also found, such as during an EU statement for the UNGA on the law of the sea where the dispute was not at all touched upon, as well as an EU joint press release with the ASEAN Regional Forum.

Despite having an increased engagement in 2022, the EU's declaratory diplomacy on the SCS grew solely within *indirect* references. To some extent, the EU maintained its *direct-assertive* engagement with six declaratory diplomacies recorded, albeit not as much as the prior year. The EU was highly *assertive*, however, within the Parliament's resolution in June which addressed China's behavior in the Indo-Pacific region to be "*assertive and expansionist*," primarily in advancing its claims in the SCS. Within its Strategic Compass, the EU had been *indirectly assertive* by discussing live maritime exercises with Indo-Pacific partners as geopolitical tensions become a threat to the rules-based order. Furthermore, a rise in *indirect-vague* engagements was witnessed in 2022, even in the EU-ASEAN Commemorative Summit, the EU-ASEAN Strategic Partnership document, and the anniversary of the UNCLOS. What was striking, however, was how the EU-China Summit in April focused on the Russian invasion of Ukraine and issues in Afghanistan, Myanmar, and the Korean Peninsula, without referring to the SCS disputes at all. During a meeting with the UNCLOS, the EU also did not touch upon the SCS and instead solely discussed the situation in Ukraine.

The elaboration of specific key takeaways above certainly renders the complexity of the EU's engagement with the South China Sea dispute much clearer. Within the bigger picture, one sees how the EU's first independent *direct-assertive* declaratory diplomacy was conveyed within the same year of its peak in *neutrality*, as one observes the releasing of the EUGS in tandem with the EU's *neutral* (and deemed weak by many) acknowledgment of the SCS Arbitration Award. It is, however, undeniable that the EU's declaratory diplomacy on the SCS experiences an increasingly *assertive* trend, as illustrated by the table below and particularly within its independent engagements.

Table 6. Patterns of Level of Assertiveness and Reference Directness

Row Labels	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Grand Total
⊖ Assertive			1	2	2	1	2	2	1	13	7	31
Direct			1	2	2	1	2	2	1	10	6	27
Indirect										3	1	4
⊖ Concern		1	3	4	4	1	2	2	7	4	3	31
Direct		1	3	4	4	1	2	2	6	1	2	26
Indirect									1	3	1	5
⊖ Neutral	2	1	6	6	13	9	9	9	5	5	7	72
Direct	2	1	6	5	13	8	9	8	5	4	5	66
Indirect				1		1		1		1	2	6
⊖ Vague	1		1	1	1		2		1	1	7	15
Indirect	1		1	1	1		2		1	1	7	15
⊖ Allude				2	1	3	3	1		1	1	12
Indirect				2	1	3	3	1		1	1	12
Grand Total	3	2	11	15	21	14	18	14	14	24	25	161

Source: Author's Original Work (See Appendix I)

Nevertheless, it is also inevitable that the EU has shown an extent of *assertiveness* with third parties since 2014 and independently since 2016. Moreover, it would be misleading to argue that the EU is no longer *vague* in addressing the SCS dispute since it became more assertive in 2021. Throughout 2021-2022, the EU has also conveyed the matter in an *allude* or *vague* manner in significant instances such as during its statement in the UNGA session on UNCLOS and the EU-ASEAN Commemorative Summit.

Taking into account a variable that demonstrates an act of prioritization, one must also observe the level of emphasis. As shown in Table 7, the EU has merely addressed the SCS dispute with a *high* level of emphasis six times since its initial engagement, five of which lie within the categories of *concern* and *assertive*.

Table 7. Patterns of Level of Emphasis and Level of Assertiveness.

Row Labels	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Grand Total
⊖ High			1		2			1		2		6
Assertive								1		2		3
Concern			1		1							2
Neutral					1							1
⊖ Mid	1	2	4	6	9	3	4	4	4	6	10	53
Assertive			1	2	1	1	1		1	5	6	18
Concern		1	2	3	3			2	3		2	16
Neutral	1	1	1	1	5	2	3	2		1	2	19
⊖ Low	1		5	5	8	7	9	7	8	7	3	60
Assertive					1		1	1		3		6
Concern				1		1	2		3	1		8
Neutral	1		5	4	7	6	6	6	5	3	3	46
Grand Total	2	2	10	11	19	10	13	12	12	15	13	119

Source: Author's Original Work (See Appendix I)

Despite the low number, the EU conveyed its first *highly* emphasized statement in 2014, only two years after its first approach in 2012, with a tone of *concern*. Furthermore, another similarly categorized statement was delivered within the same year as the EU's *neutral* statement on the

acknowledgment of the tribunal award. It must surely be noted, however, that the remaining three entries with *high* emphases occurred most contemporarily and were categorized as *assertive*, thus confirming the existing scholarly arguments.

Turning the focus more on declaratory diplomacies with *Mid* and *Low* emphases, it is reasonable to observe that the less emphatic the EU is, the less assertive the engagements are, as most diplomacies with a *low* emphasis fell in the category of *neutral* in assertiveness. Whilst those with a *mid*-emphasis show quite distributed data amongst the levels of assertiveness from *neutral* to *assertive*. The following table also illustrates an interesting finding, crossing the levels of emphasis and the types of declaratory diplomacy.

Table 8. Patterns of Levels of Emphasis and Types of Declaratory Diplomacy

Row Labels	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Grand Total
High				1	2			1	2			6
Statement/Declaration				1	2			1	2			6
Mid	1	2	4	6	9	3	4	4	4	6	10	53
Communiqué			1			1	1			1	1	5
Document	1	1		1	2	1	1	1		1		9
Joint Statement		1	2	3	3	1	2	2		1	3	18
Op-Ed									1			1
Press Release				2	1				3	3	2	11
Resolution											1	1
Speech			1		1			1			2	5
Statement/Declaration					2						1	3
Low	1		5	5	8	7	9	7	8	7	3	60
Document					1							1
Joint Statement							1					1
Op-Ed								1	1			2
Other					1				1			2
Press Release			4	2	2	5	2	3	4	1	2	25
Speech	1		1	3	4	2	6	3	2	5	1	28
Statement/Declaration										1		1
Grand Total	2	2	10	11	19	10	13	12	12	15	13	119

Source: Author’s Original Work (See Appendix I)

Briefly seen, the table above presents how most declaratory diplomacies possessing a *mid-level* of emphasis come in the forms of joint statements, press releases, and documents. Interestingly, a *mid-emphasis* could already be found since the early years of the EU’s engagement with the SCS dispute. Whereas declaratory diplomacies with a *low* emphasis predominantly take the forms of speeches and press releases, which may be understandable due to the little space and time within these two forms of engagement. Overall, however, it is also significant to take into account that there is a growing trend of employing a *mid-emphasis*, particularly since the drop in 2015. At the same time, the trend of utilizing a *low* level of emphasis is declining.

With the abundance of findings presented through the mapping of patterns of the EU’s declaratory diplomacy on the South China Sea dispute, this research offers an abundance of research puzzles to be explored. This dissertation identified two of the wide range of puzzles

i.e. one that externally concerns the EU's declaratory diplomacy corresponding to its counterparts (US and ASEAN) and another internally deals with the EU's momentums in releasing the 2019 Strategic Outlook on China and the 2021 Indo-Pacific Strategy. This chapter has nevertheless established and explained the patterns, in association with the development of the EU's maritime foreign policy, foreign relations with Asia and the Indo-Pacific, and the South China Sea dispute itself. To explore these explanations further, the next chapter will delve into the two hypotheses, guided by the concept of balancing and signaling strategic interactions as their foundations, to observe whether the patterns were at all merit-influenced in the manner of the Straw in The Wind method.

CHAPTER IV

EXPLORING STRATEGIC INTERACTION DYNAMICS TO EXPLAIN EU DECLARATORY DIPLOMACY IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA

“Declarations can be understood as an integral part of the progress of forging a common foreign policy for the EU and they should not merely be regarded as empty words (Cardwell, 2016)”

Scholars have often scrutinized the EU’s practice of declaratory foreign policy as merely representing lowest common denominator politics, nevertheless, it is conclusively the basic function of diplomacy that is *“to continuously indicate where you stand in the world and in relation to the constant stream of events (Keukeleire and Delreux, 2022, p. 180).”* As the EU’s identity and value-promotion objectives customarily trump external goals, Cardwell (2016) finds it crucial for the EU to project its values and identity in international politics, thus underlining that even benign forms of declaratory diplomacy possess a certain impact. Declaratory diplomacy is, in fact, an integral component in the forging and strengthening of the Common Foreign and Security Policy and is not without significance. Demonstrating institutional dynamics both internally and externally, the declaratory foreign policy of the EU arises from cooperation and agreement among member states (Cardwell, 2016, p. 2). In cases where a common view fails to be reached, vetoes and oppositions to declarations by member states occur, exceedingly when criticizing major powers prominently (but not solely) exemplified by Hungary, Greece, Czechia, Poland, and Italy (Keukeleire and Delreux, 2022, p. 181). Departing from the concept of strategic interaction, the EU’s declaratory engagement to the SCS dispute thus is a result of a decision-making process between actors based on their cognitive biases of the behavior of others. Contemporarily, the curated communication of EU interests and intentions through declaratory diplomacy contributes to the shaping of the behavior of others. Nonetheless, it is part of a strategic interaction that manifests in behaviors such as balancing and signaling. The analysis within this section refers often to Appendix I.

4.1. External Dynamics: Balancing EU Strategic Interactions through Declaratory Diplomacy in the South China Sea Dispute

“In a world where the USA is still well ahead even of China on most indicators of power, only a grouping of the rich states stands much chance of ‘balancing’ the USA, and that only in a purely diplomatic sense. The EU is the prime candidate to lead such activity (Hill, et al., 2023, p. 938).”

Although this research acknowledges the challenges for the EU to reach a unified position generally and consistently on China, particularly for politically and security-related susceptible issues, the previous chapters have demonstrated the capacity of European Institutions to engage in declaratory diplomacy on the South China Sea dispute. The necessity to trace the process of such engagement throughout the decade, however, bears to how various challenges and factors of decision-making have prompted differing degrees, manifest, and even latent characteristics of declaratory diplomacy, as it is part of strategic interaction. On top of the pattern findings from the previous chapter, the data collection process of this research has revealed that the EU’s declaratory diplomacy on the SCS dispute differs in correspondence to its counterparts as well. Corresponding to the complex nature of transatlantic relations explained at the start of this sub-section, this research has found that the EU and the US have had instances where they addressed a high-political dispute such as the SCS hand in hand, instead of a demonstration of the US’ divide and rule game. On the other hand, the data has also recorded a multilateralist partnership between the EU and ASEAN. Placing the focus on the two counterparts of EU declaratory diplomacy on the matter, it proposes a hypothesis analyzing the balancing behavior of the EU, respectively, in different ways. Delving further into these particular declaratory diplomacies, the analysis suggests that a balancing behavior has an explaining potential to the patterns.

4.1.1. The European Union and The United States

“No other pair on the international stage can match the partnership between the European Union and the United States. Neither Europe nor America will find a major partner that is more aligned and more powerful (EEAS, 2020a).”

Despite comprising nearly two hundred instances of declaratory diplomacy on the SCS in total throughout a decade, there have only been seven times in which the EU declaratively referred to the South China Sea dispute alongside its Atlantic neighbor. Although such a number does not make a compelling case for a balancing behavior, it is worth noting that two of them were conveyed in 2014 while the remaining five were

recently made in 2021 and 2022. Prior to analyzing the discourses within the transatlantic declaratory diplomacy, the following explores the US approach to the SCS dispute as well as the underlying EU-US relations.

The EU-US partnership has made strides for over six decades, with the US presently described by the EU as its *'foremost strategic partner in promoting peace and stability around the world* (EU Delegation to The United States, 2023).' Traced back to the early stages of European integration, some have recalled that a large extent of the Europeanization process owes to an operationalized US structural foreign policy that is the post-WWII Marshall Plan, therefore entailing US support for most of the EU's enlargement projects. With strongly interwoven values and economic ties, cooperation and a well-built relationship between the two major powers are surely expected as both are proponents of democracy, human rights, and free markets (Mix, 2015). Nevertheless, it does not come without disagreements as strategic interactions do, mainly around matters of trade policies, the Iraq war, the International Criminal Court, the role of politically-motivated sanctions, financial burden-sharing in NATO, data privacy and surveillance, as well as the approach towards the People's Republic of China, among others.

Through the US Indo-Pacific Strategy, developed since Trump's presidency, it is understood that the US has underlined five objectives in the region i.e. *advance a free and open Indo-Pacific; build connections within and beyond the region; drive regional prosperity; bolster indo-pacific security; and build regional resilience to transnational threats* (The United States, 2022, p. 7). The strategy is stated to be in concert with that of the EU, meaning principled, long-term, and founded upon the resilience of democracy. Much like the EU's Strategy for Cooperation in The Indo-Pacific, the US touches upon the desire to *build support for rules-based approaches* within the maritime domain, mentioning the South China Sea (p. 8). In November 2020, the US Senate Committee on Foreign Relations published *'A Concrete Agenda for Transatlantic Cooperation on China,'* meant to lay out several areas with potential for collaboration with European partners on the challenges brought by China (The United States, 2020). On maritime security specifically, the agenda addressed concerns about China's aggressive behavior in its efforts to attain greater control of SLOCs in the SCS, thus establishing the necessity to uphold rights to FON and stability (p. 106). The US, thus, considers this to be the starting point of cooperation and coordination with Europe as it connects the EU's framework on multilateral engagement on a common approach towards a common interest with a focus on the SCS disputes (p. 107).

Differing from the EU, the US is generally seen to adopt a more confrontational approach to China, often described as a ‘*Containment*’ policy (Casarini, 2021). Whilst the EU only formally addressed the matter in 2012, the US has invoked its security presence in the SCS since 1995 through port visits and joint exercises, to constrict Beijing’s unilateral activities in the contested seas (Wu, 2000). In July 2010, the US Secretary of State Clinton declared “*freedom of navigation, open access to Asia’s maritime commons, and respect for international law in the South China Sea,*” as a national interest (Clinton, 2010). In precisely the following decade, the US declared its official position on maritime claims in the SCS, stating that Chinese claims across the SCS and its *bullying* activities in the attempt to control are *completely unlawful* (Pompeo, 2020). Aligning with the 2016 Arbitration Award, the US asserts its rejection of PRC’s claims and its proclaimed Nine Dash Line with great detail (*Ibid*). Departing from such a position, the US was recorded to have conducted 21 Freedom of Navigation Operations in the span of three years, from 2020 to 2022 (Ai, 2023).

Returning to the data collected in this research, the US was found to be the non-claimant state counterpart with the most declaratory diplomacy with the EU. In March 2014, a joint statement was released in the event of an EU-US Summit in which the two partners *directly* urged ASEAN and China to expedite negotiations on a Code of Conduct and reaffirmed their commitment to FON and lawful sea functions. Despite being early in the EU’s timeline on addressing the SCS disputes, the statement was seen to be *of concern* and with a *mid-emphasis*, demonstrating a trait of soft balancing. Followed by a *direct-neutral* speech by a member of the Commission in the context of discussing a strategic vision for the transatlantic partnership, the SCS is mentioned with *low emphasis* as a situation with *simmering tensions*. The research did not find conclusive evidence on EU declaratory diplomacy with the US for most of the timeline from 2015 to 2020, showing that soft balancing characteristics were not present.

Stepping into 2021, however, three press releases by the EU associating the US and one joint statement were found, in tandem with the rising amount of *direct-assertive* declaratory diplomacy of the EU as discussed in the previous chapter. In May 2021, a press release was published on consultations in the event of the first high-level meeting of the US-EU dialogue on China and stated the SCS dispute to be of shared concern without outlining any details. The next month, a joint statement to renew the transatlantic partnership was released, addressing the SCS dispute *directly, assertively*, and with a *mid-emphasis*. The statement declared the following, among other things, “*We remain*

seriously concerned about the situation in the East and South China Seas and strongly oppose any unilateral attempts to change the status quo and increase tensions (European Council, 2021).” At the end of 2021, Brussels and Washington held their second high-level meeting of the dialogue on China, within which they published a press release of the same category, *direct-assertive-mid emphasis*. Aside from expressing *strong concern* about Chinese unilateral actions in the SCS, the two partners declared the situation to have “*direct impact on (their) security and prosperity (Ibid).*” Through these two forms of declaratory diplomacy and the establishment of the High-Level Meeting of the EU-US Dialogue on China itself, one finds strong merit of the hypothesis of soft balancing between the two countries against China.

Furthermore, another press release in December 2021 on the High-Level Consultations on the Indo-Pacific showed a less obvious balancing effort as it addressed the dispute in an *indirect* manner yet still falls under an assertiveness category of *concern*. With both having a strategy on the Indo-Pacific at this time, the EU and the US reaffirmed their intention to cooperate for a *free and open Indo-Pacific* and identified priority areas including FON and maritime security without explicitly referring to the SCS. The transatlantic partners did, nonetheless, refer to the maintenance of the 1982 UNCLOS and instead iterated their interest in the status quo of the Taiwan Strait which geographically coincides with the SCS. Although not directly referring to the dispute, the press release also shows characteristics of soft balancing, even arguably a more visible trait than the previous instances, as it strongly emphasizes the collective intention and concern of the two distant partners. In 2022, further consultations on the dialogue on China and the Indo-Pacific resulted in a press release published in December which was found to be *direct, assertive, and with mid-emphasis*. The two partners reasserted their concerns about China’s expansive and unlawful maritime claims. They committed to pursuing further coordination for maritime security in the area comprising a joint EU-US naval exercise and other efforts to uphold lawful uses of the sea.

Beyond the timeline of this research, the aforementioned commitment was realized in March 2023, marking the first-ever EU-US Joint Naval Exercise comprising Italian and Spanish naval vessels on behalf of the Union (Han, 2023). Despite referring the collaboration to the EU-US Consultations on the Indo-Pacific which had expressed China’s expansionist traits in the SCS, the press release of the joint exercise did not touch upon the dispute and instead affirmed the EU-US framework of *patrolling and exercising high seas freedom of navigation* (EEAS, 2023). It must be noted, however, that this was

not the first time a European vessel had conducted a joint naval drill with the US in the area or even in the South China Sea. Coinciding with the press release in May 2021, the French navy sent two of its naval vessels to cruise through the SCS for a joint exercise with Japanese and US navies (Made, 2021; Wang, 2021). In 2016, French naval vessels also joined US aircraft carriers for patrols in the SCS (Zhang, 2021). Nevertheless, the joint exercise or the innocent passage in the contested waters by the French navy was not covered by the EU's declaratory diplomacy. The Chinese government, however, has addressed the presence of French navy ships in the SCS to be a contribution to the "*US' Anti-China Stratagems* (Korybko, 2021)."

It is, therefore, observed that significant characteristics of soft-balancing were merely shown from 2021, particularly seen through the establishment of the EU-US High-Level Meetings on China and Consultations on the Indo-Pacific which certainly have merit in explaining the patterns of the EU's declaratory diplomacy on the SCS. Though there might have been other forms of balancing in the years prior, they were not reflected in the EU's declaratory diplomacy on the matter. To nuance the analysis, however, Brussels addressed the EU-US-China Triangle amidst the great power competition in 2020, within which the EU states, "*Amid US-China tensions as the main axis of global politics, the pressures to "choose sides" is increasing [...] We must use (our own interests and values) as compass not the expectations or pressures from outsiders, but what we as EU want and need* (EEAS, 2020b)" Six months later, the EEAS published a vision to kickstart a new transatlantic era within which it underlined three focus areas including China's rising assertiveness, albeit not discussing matters of the SCS nor maritime security (EEAS, 2020a). Regardless of the extent to which the EU stands by such self-reliance, the examination of a hypothesis in the framework of the EU's declaratory diplomacy on the SCS positively possesses merit to view the EU as contemporarily undergoing soft-balancing behavior with the US, particularly since 2021.

4.1.2. The European Union and ASEAN

"In the face of growing geopolitical insecurity and challenges to multilateralism, the EU and ASEAN will form a stronger bond. We do so in defense of our values, ASEAN centrality, and a shared rejection of spheres of influence and the premise that 'might makes right' (European Council, 2020)."

Given evident exigencies, the EU declaratively interacted more with ASEAN regarding the SCS dispute in comparison with the US, as shown by 31 declaratory

diplomacies consistently from 2015 to 2022. Understanding that the EU has long strived for a global order based on effective multilateralism (Council of The European Union, 2003), ASEAN has often been described as ‘*a natural partner*’ of the EU as Borrell once expressed that the bonds between the EU and ASEAN are pioneered by a collective commitment to rules-based multilateralism (EEAS, 2021d). Particularly in the case of the SCS dispute, ASEAN serves to establish a multilateral space for claimant parties to negotiate the delimitation of the contested maritime boundaries, whether with non-Southeast Asian claimants such as China and Taiwan or amongst ASEAN members themselves (Laksmana, 2023). With most of the claimant states being a party of ASEAN, it is certainly a valid strategic assumption that ASEAN has the potential to be leveraged as a diplomatic platform in responding to China’s aggressive assertions. One can argue such a balancing argument as exemplified by the DOC and COC negotiations led by ASEAN, made to manage tensions between claimants as talks on delimitation continue. Nevertheless, the stagnation in the ASEAN-led negotiations for a binding COC has led to popular skepticism about multilateralism or rather about the actorness of ASEAN in dealing with such a high-political and security matter.

Many have argued that the lack of progress in COC negotiations pertains to China’s behavior, often criticized as ‘*dragging its feet*’ (O. Wang and Chen, 2023),’ as it openly prefers bilateral talks instead of the multilateral ASEAN for a (Liu, 2016). Albeit massively impacting the negotiations, agreeing on how to approach the maritime boundary disputes and a rising China is also not an easy matter for ASEAN member states. This is demonstrated by ASEAN’s failure to address the dispute back in 2012 in its communique and existing bilateral negotiations between China and Southeast Asian claimants such as the Philippines, Malaysia, among others. Contemporarily, however, negotiations for a binding COC have been re-ignited under Indonesia’s chairmanship of ASEAN in July 2023. Bringing the EU into the picture, its declaratory diplomacies on the South China Sea dispute continuously reiterates its support for a strong ASEAN as the *nucleus* of the regional architecture, thus pushing for “*an ASEAN-led process towards an effective, substantive, and legally binding Code of Conduct* (EEAS, 2022a; EEAS, 2022b).” Similar to the previous section, this hypothesis aims to explore whether a soft balancing behavior with ASEAN has merit in explaining the patterns of the EU’s declaratory diplomacy to the SCS dispute. Prior to delving closely into the declaratory diplomacies of the EU with ASEAN as its counterpart, one must probe into the nature of relations between the two regional institutions.

The EEC was the first entity to have established informal relations with ASEAN back in 1972, formalized in 1977, and institutionalized through a Cooperation Agreement in 1980. In 1994, the EU co-founded the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), which is a significant platform for security talks comprising 27 members and has been an active member since (“ASEAN Regional Forum,” n.d.). Further commitment to dialogue and cooperation with a long-term vision was expressed through the Nuremberg Declaration in 2007, and diplomatic relations were established merely a year after the adoption of the ASEAN Charter in 2008. In 2012, the EU accessioned the ASEAN Treaty of Amity and Cooperation (TAC), therefore becoming legally bound to ASEAN-made principles on peaceful coexistence and cooperation (ASEAN, 2024b). Following 44 years of relations, the EU and ASEAN agreed to declare their relationship as a strategic partnership with a commitment to high-level summits to be conducted regularly. The partnership identified four areas of cooperation i.e. economics; security; sustainable connectivity; and sustainable development. Presently, the EU has a fully-fledged delegation to ASEAN with its relations guided by the ‘Plan of Action to Implement the ASEAN-EU Strategic Partnership (2023-2017).

In the years prior, the two parties have acted upon the Bandar Seri Begawan Plan of Action (2013-2017) and the ASEAN-EU Plan of Action (2018-2022). Focusing on the timeline of this research (2012-2022), the two Plans of Action outlined several activities for Political and Security Cooperation which included the enhancement of maritime security cooperation. The section underlined the respect for the rule of law, sovereignty, territorial integrity, FON and overflight, as well as the peaceful resolution of disputes, as per UNCLOS, whilst encouraging cooperation in tackling maritime issues more comprehensively, though no specifications were indicated. Following ‘The State of Southeast Asia’ survey report of 2022 conducted by the ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, the EU was perceived to have the highest political and strategic influence on Southeast Asia in 2021, however, is entirely incomparable to the perceived influence of China and the US (Seah, 2022).

With a strong inter-regional dialogue spanning over 45 years, the EU’s Indo-Pacific Strategy certainly takes into account Brussels’ relations with ASEAN. Two years prior to the release of the EU’s Strategy for Cooperation in The Indo-Pacific, ASEAN published the ASEAN Outlook on The Indo-Pacific in June 2019. Although the policy document does not explicitly touch upon the South China Sea dispute, ASEAN emphasized the maritime domain as a key element in the regional architecture evolution (ASEAN, 2019). Within its areas of cooperation, it addressed maritime issues first and foremost,

elaborating on the existence of ‘*unresolved maritime disputes*’ with a conflict breakout potential (*Ibid*). The ASEAN Outlook envisages ASEAN Centrality as the foundational principle for cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, and such was given prominence by the EU’s Indo-Pacific Strategy as it supports ASEAN-led mechanisms including in the settlement of the SCS disputes (*Ibid*). The harsh effort to find a concrete stance of ASEAN towards the SCS dispute, nonetheless, solely results in the desire for ASEAN to “*promote a peaceful and stable environment in the South China Sea* (ASEAN, 2024a).” Scholars argue that this is due to divergence in the extent of relations that Southeast Asia states have with China.

The data provided in this research showed how there have been rare instances where the EU has conveyed declarative diplomacy on the SCS with ASEAN as its counterpart that goes over the edge of *neutral* in its assertiveness level. As observed from the table below, the EU was seen to be the most *direct* in 2019 albeit most *neutral*. Whereas the EU has only shown an *assertive* level of engagement twice in 2019 and 2021, with a *low* level of emphasis.

Table 9. Patterns of the EU’s Declaratory Diplomacy on the SCS Dispute with ASEAN as Counterpart

Row Labels	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	Grand Total
Direct	3	3	1	1	7	3	2	3	23
Assertive					1		1		2
Low					1		1		2
Concern	1					1		2	4
Mid	1					1		2	4
Neutral	2	3	1	1	6	2	1	1	17
Mid	1	2	1		1		1	1	7
Low	1	1		1	5	2			10
Indirect	2		2					4	8
Neutral			1						1
None			1						1
Vague	1							3	4
None	1							3	4
Allude	1		1					1	3
None	1		1					1	3
Grand Total	5	3	3	1	7	3	2	7	31

Source: Author’s Original Work (See Appendix I)

The two *direct-assertive* instances were categorized as such simply because the two speeches inserted the South China Sea dispute within the context and at the same time discussed entailing actions i.e. the deployment of military advisors, and the enhancement of the EU’s maritime presence, thus having *low emphases* (EEAS, 2019). Generally, the narrative of the EU’s declaratory diplomacy highlights the interconnectedness of security between the two distant regions impacted by the SCS dispute and the necessity to continue

and deepen cooperation in resolving the matter. A common interest that is often emphasized as both have been described as a *like-minded partner for multilateralism*, is the upholding of the 1982 UNCLOS. The EU's main narrative with ASEAN as its counterpart, however, is the EU's intention and interest to *step up* its engagement with the region, particularly due to the rising tensions on the SCS.

Understood briefly from the data presentation above, the EU's declaratory diplomacy on the SCS dispute with ASEAN is incredibly different in comparison to its approach with the US. Despite both having *assertive* instances, the framing within the declaratory diplomacy surely differs as it may be *direct and assertive* with the US in a way that strongly opposes China's behavior. With ASEAN as its counterpart, the EU touched upon the dispute simply in terms of context and addressed the need for action without clearly targeting the SCS or China. Nevertheless, these 31 instances are not the only times that the EU has referred to the role of ASEAN in the dispute. Despite conveying declaratory diplomacy without exactly having ASEAN as a Counterpart, the EU has consistently shown its support for ASEAN-led negotiations and mechanisms. In over half of the declaratory diplomacy recorded by the dataset, the EU has explicitly expressed how it "*supports the ASEAN-led process towards an effective, substantive and legally binding Code of Conduct in the South China Sea* (European Commission, 2021)."

Following the analysis of the EU's predominantly *neutral* declaratory diplomacy with ASEAN as a Counterpart as well as how it often reiterates its support for the ASEAN-led mechanisms, this dissertation finds merit in a hypothesis of *balancing* in a different perspective than previously thought. With the difficulty of finding an *assertive* position of ASEAN and a rather normative statement of promoting peace and stability in the regional maritime domain (ASEAN, 2023), the EU's declaratory diplomacy on the matter is observed to have adjusted to ASEAN's diplo-lingo, providing a larger room for maneuver primarily due to the stakes pertaining to Southeast Asian states. At the same time, the EU continuously supports ASEAN centrality in dispute management and settlement. Therefore, it cannot be argued that the EU is balancing with ASEAN. Instead, the research proposes more merit in how the EU has made itself available as a balancing partner and temporarily imposes itself as a balancing power for ASEAN by *siding* with the Southeast Asian institution, rather than China's more bilateral approach. To understand whether the EU is adjusting to the diplo-lingo of ASEAN, much more research needs to be conducted on the ASEAN's declaratory diplomacy on the South China Sea dispute and then compared with those of the EU, perhaps through another process tracing research.

4.2. Internal Dynamics: Signaling EU Foreign Policy as Strategic Interaction in the South China Sea Dispute

“The opposite side of the coin of perception was signaling—i.e., how (actors) tried to convey desired images of themselves and their intentions (Jervis, 1976, p. xvi).”

With the employment of declaratory diplomacy as a major instrument of EU engagement in the South China Sea dispute, it can be broadly understood that the EU is signaling to the international stage its intentions and interests. As Cardwell (2016, p. 2) argues, such declaratory diplomacy, albeit not posing legal implications, expresses the EU’s official position arising from the collaboration between member states. In addressing the SCS dispute, the EU’s declaratory diplomacy offers valuable insight into the foreign policy interests sought by the Union and the specific values that it seeks to export. Nevertheless, EU foreign policy interests surely evolve as indicated through differing policy documents and papers throughout time. Considering that this dissertation opted for process tracing research, this section intends to explore whether the signaling practices of two recent EU foreign policies have merit in explaining patterns of EU declaratory diplomacy on the SCS dispute. The two foreign policies referred to in the analysis are the 2019 Strategic Outlook on China and the 2021 Strategy for Cooperation in The Indo-Pacific. Upon studying each of these policies, the dissertation examines the patterns to observe whether signaling practices are reflected in terms of the emphasis, assertiveness, directness, or even the narrative of the EU’s declaratory diplomacy on the SCS.

4.2.1. The European Union-China Strategic Outlook (2019)

The Joint Communication by the European Commission and the HR/VP made as a contribution to the European Council, titled “*EU-China – A strategic outlook*,” was adopted on March 12th, 2019, with its bulk comprising 11 pages. The document is divided into seven sections of which three are identified as relevant to the context of the South China Sea dispute i.e. *Introduction; Cooperating with China to support effective multilateralism and fight climate change; and Commitment to international peace, security, and sustainable economic development.*

The introduction of the document elaborates on the enduring relationship between the EU and China mainly due to their extensive trade partnerships. It provided precedent, however, on how China’s economic growth, ambitions as a global power, political influence, and technological power have led Europe to perceive a shift in the balance of *opportunities and challenges* posed by China. It is important to note that the policy

described China as various partners such as the biggest trading partner, a strategic partner, a cooperation partner, a negotiating partner, an economic competitor, and a systemic rival. As the EU described this policy shift to be *more realistic, assertive, and multi-faceted* approach-wise, it addressed the need for the EU to balance interests with China. The EU placed importance on *a principled defense of interests and values* amidst deepening its interaction with China on common interests. The EU discussed about the need for full unity among member states in their approach to China.

Beyond the introduction, the policy shows the EU's commitment to engage with China in a manner that aims to uphold the rules-based international order and to support effective multilateralism. This is surely not a foreign statement coming from the EU as it is continuously observed as well within the collected data on declaratory diplomacy regarding the SCS dispute. The EU, however, then acknowledged how China's version of multilateralism is not universal and departs from a different perspective of the rules-based international order. Furthermore, the document also states how there are differing applications of international law in the context of security concerns. Highlighting previous and existing security cooperations (e.g. Denuclearization of Iran and DPRK, counter-piracy in the Gulf of Aden, peace processes in Afghanistan and Myanmar), the EU put forward China's capacity and responsibility in tackling regional security challenges. The most *direct* sentence expressed in the document for this research however is the following,

“China's maritime claims in the South China Sea and the refusal to accept the binding arbitration rulings issued under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea affect the international legal order and make it harder to resolve tensions affecting sea lanes of communication vital to the EU's economic interests (p. 3-4)”

The EU then related China's behavior in the SCS to be contrasting to its demands for representation on matters regarding the Arctic. Moreover, the EU expressed its concerns about China's rise and ambitions in its military capabilities. The policy document ended with an endorsement of several actions, which included the strengthening of cooperation with China to fulfill collective responsibilities and the deepening of EU-China engagement on peace and security.

In addition to the *direct* approach taken by the EU in addressing its concerns on the SCS, it is the first time that the EU perceived China as *‘a systemic rival promoting alternative models of governance,’* instead of the usual cooperation partner (Riba and Wolf, 2021). With such a label being new in the EU's diplomatic language regarding a

strategic partner (Cameron, 2019), scholars have seen the policy to be a major shift within Sino-European relations (Small, 2020). Chen and Gao (2022) view the shift to be a milestone in the deterioration of EU relations with China in a collective process of securitization on China as an existential threat. Paikin, et. al. (2023) and C. H., Wu, et al. (2023) perceive the label and the policy shift precisely in the account of the SCS dispute. In a view that is shared as well in this dissertation, China’s ambiguous and unilateral interpretation of the 1982 UNCLOS and its (internationally declared) unlawful assertion of historical rights challenges the existing international law as a model of governance. The label ‘*systemic rival*’ thus raises questions on the nature of the EU’s engagement in the SCS dispute, and thus requires to be given close attention within the patterns.

Following the release of the EU’s Strategic Outlook on China until the end of 2022, the data recorded 73 EU declaratory diplomacies on the SCS dispute. Viewed at a glance within the table below, an immense rise throughout the years is found, particularly the jump from 2020 to 2021.

Table 10. Patterns of the EU’s Declaratory Diplomacy on The SCS Dispute After EU-China Strategic Outlook

Row Labels	2019	2020	2021	2022	Grand Total
Direct	8	12	15	13	48
High	1		2		3
Assertive	1		2		3
Mid	2	4	6	10	22
Assertive		1	5	6	12
Concern	1	3		2	6
Neutral	1		1	2	4
Low	5	8	7	3	23
Assertive	1		3		4
Concern		3	1		4
Neutral	4	5	3	3	15
Indirect	2	2	9	12	25
None	2	2	9	12	25
Assertive			3	1	4
Concern		1	3	1	5
Neutral	1		1	2	4
Vague		1	1	7	9
Allude	1		1	1	3
Grand Total	10	14	24	25	73

Source: Author’s Original Work (See Appendix I)

Within these 73 instances, it is not a difficult task to find EU declaratory diplomacies that are as *direct* or of *concern*, and even *assertive*, as how China’s claims and behavior in the

SCS is addressed within the Strategic Outlook. The data shows that 48 *direct* engagements were found, of which 21 were categorized as *concern* or *assertive* with at least a *mid-level* emphasis. Taking into account the game-changing label given by the EU to China, the term ‘systemic rival’ or a reference to ‘systemic rivalry’ were only used in the context of the SCS dispute six times since the release of the Strategic Outlook, shown by the table below.

Table 11. Patterns of EU Declaratory Diplomacy on The SCS Dispute (Strategic Rival(ry))

Row Labels	2020		2021			2022	Grand Total
	14-May	27-Aug	26-May	15-Jun	2-Dec	21-Mar	
Direct	1	1	1	1	1		5
Mid					1	1	2
Assertive					1	1	2
Low	1	1	1				3
Concern		1					1
Neutral	1		1				2
Indirect						1	1
None						1	1
Assertive						1	1
Grand Total	1	1	1	1	1	1	6

Source: Author’s Original Work (See Appendix I).

In 2020, the EU firstly reiterated the 2019 Strategic Outlook as a policy that is supported by every member state and re-referred to China as a *systemic rival* while simultaneously a partner of common objectives. Seen as *direct-neutral* with a *low* emphasis, it also briefly acknowledged its differing approach explicitly on the tensions in the SCS. In August, the EU re-used the label ‘*systemic rival*’ in explaining its approach to a growing US-China competition, in which it mentioned China’s expansionism behavior in the SCS through its presence, militarization, and non-acceptance of the 2016 ruling, thus showing *concern*.

The following year where a spike of engagements was recorded, the EU referred to ‘*systemic rivalry*’ merely in three instances, all associated with the US as counterpart. The three engagements stated the collective reiteration of the complexity of EU-US relations with China with elements of *systemic rivalry*. Within the three statements, the South China Sea was *directly* referenced. The first, taking place in May, was addressed in a *neutral* manner with *low* emphasis, simply by highlighting the issue as of shared concern without delving into details. The other two instances were considered to be *assertive* with *mid* emphasis as they both expressed an opposition to unilateral actions to alter the status quo and raise tensions. Both affirmed the *critical importance* of upholding the UNCLOS and the promotion of FONOP operations. In 2022, however, only one engagement was found with a labelling of China as a *systemic rival*, that is within the revised document of

the Strategic Compass for Security and Defense (Council of The European Union, 2022). As discussed previously, nonetheless, the policy document does not address the SCS dispute *directly*, yet referred to the dispute as a center of global competition with tensions that endanger the rules-based order and global supply chains. The document also addressed China's assertive regional behavior and the prevalence of international law in the regional maritime domain, placing the category to be *assertive*.

It is thus concluded that although the 2019 Strategic Outlook on China has contributed to how China and the SCS dispute is perceived within EU declaratory diplomacy, it was not as influential to explain the patterns as a signaling practice. One would assume that a step up in language by labelling China to be *a systemic rival* would lead to a rather more assertive EU signaling through its declaratory diplomacy on the SCS dispute. Nevertheless, the data following the Strategic Outlook demonstrated many engagements where the EU was considered to be *assertive* without referring to the Outlook nor the label *systemic rival(ry)*. Though the term does not have much merit as a signaling practice to explain the patterns, it becomes a question of why such a demonstrative term in the context of the SCS dispute is not signalled consistently, when it may serve well for the EU's role, position, and interests.

4.2.2. The European Union Strategy for Cooperation in The Indo-Pacific (2021)

The EU Strategy for Cooperation in The Indo-Pacific was firstly drafted and agreed upon by the Council of the EU through its Council Conclusions released on April 16th, 2021. The policy document itself took the form of a Joint Communication consisting of 17 pages, drafted by the Commission and the HR/VP, adopted and published on September 16th, 2021. The document initially introduced the Indo-Pacific region and its strategic significance in the eyes of the EU as a background of the intention to boost engagement. The EU defined the Indo-Pacific region referred to by the policy within which the South China Sea is described as a major waterway and a key area to fishing activities. Furthermore, all the claimant states of the dispute are identified as part of the strategic scope. The regional geopolitics resulting in *intense competition* in disputed areas and maritime domain were one of the first issues that was addressed by the policy, even touching upon China's military accumulation. Explained as having direct impact to the security and prosperity of Europe, the projection of force and tensions in the SCS dispute was immediately addressed. In the section of partnerships, the EU emphasized the

centrality of ASEAN, supporting an ASEAN-led process in pursuing a legally-binding COC on the SCS as often reiterated in the EU's declaratory diplomacy. Oddly, however, the SCS dispute was not *directly* addressed further from this point nor within the areas within the pursuit of the EU's vision for the region.

In the elaboration of the priority areas of the Indo-Pacific Strategy, the SCS dispute was *indirectly* referred to in various contexts. Firstly, in the sector of sustainable and inclusive prosperity, cooperation in ensuring maritime security and FON in the region was deemed necessary to promote a resilient value chain. Secondly, the strengthening of ocean governance in the Indo-Pacific as regulated by the UNCLOS and International law requires further action from the EU to guarantee sustainable ocean management. The action needed would be for the EU to continue its key role as a *global maritime security provider*. Third and most relevantly, the section on security and defense endeavors to foster *an open and rules-based regional security architecture*, within which SLOCs are secure and naval presence is enhanced. The section involves a dedicated sub-part on naval presence which seeks to increase joint naval drills and port visits with Indo-Pacific partners to ensure FON and reinforce European naval diplomacy. The EU commits to have more naval presence in Indo-Pacific waters by its member states and showed its interest to establish the region to be a Maritime Area of Interest (MAI). The policy document ends with proposed actions including the strengthening of ocean governance and the exploration of means to improve naval deployments by EU member states for the purpose of protecting SLOC and FON in the Indo-Pacific region, whilst developing the capacity of partners to promote regional maritime security.

Since the release of the Council Conclusions on the Strategy for Cooperation in The Indo-Pacific on April 16th, 2021, there have been a total of 45 instances of the EU's Declaratory Diplomacy on the SCS.⁸ Shown in the table below, those marked "Yes" involves a reference to the Strategy on the Indo-Pacific, amounting to 28 declaratory diplomacies.

⁸ Not including the release of the Council Conclusions and Joint Communication on the Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific.

Table 12. Patterns of EU Declaratory Diplomacy on the SCS Dispute After the Indo-Pacific Strategy

Row Labels	2021		2021 Total	2022		2022 Total	Grand Total
	Yes	No		Yes	No		
Direct	6	7	13	8	5	13	26
Assertive	2	7	9	4	2	6	15
Concern					2	2	2
Neutral	4		4	4	1	5	9
Indirect	6	1	7	8	4	12	19
Assertive	1		1	1		1	2
Concern	3		3	1		1	4
Neutral	1		1	1	1	2	3
Vague	1		1	4	3	7	8
Allude		1	1	1		1	2
Grand Total	12	8	20	16	9	25	45

Source: Author’s Original Work (See Appendix I).

It has been often displayed in this research that the EU’s declaratory diplomacy on the SCS dispute peaked in 2021 and 2022. It is newly found, however, that over half of these engagements have a reference to the Indo-Pacific strategy, showing merit of signaling practices. The relevant declaratory diplomacies in this case are distributed in terms of assertiveness with a slight rise in an *assertive* tone through the year. As a signaling effort, these references certainly demonstrate the EU’s position, interests, and intentions. Delving deeper into how the EU signaled its Indo-Pacific strategy in its declaratory diplomacy on the SCS, this research identifies two main narratives.

Following the study of the data to which the strategy was referred, the first identified narrative behind it is as a recurrent signal to show the EU’s commitment in increasing their engagement with the region and its challenges. This was explicitly emphasized during an EU visit to Indonesia and ASEAN in which the EU conveyed one key message with its launch of the strategy that is, “*we want to step up our engagement and work with our partners [...] in the region* (EEAS, 2021d),” continued with an expression of EU readiness as a maritime security provider. Other than such a highly explicit statement, however, the EU’s changing strategy in the Indo-Pacific has also often been reiterated to reaffirm a strong commitment to the promotion of shared values in the region (EU Delegation to Australia, 2022; European Council, 2021). Secondly, the EU’s Indo-Pacific strategy has commonly been referred to in the setting of signaling how the EU share strategic interests in the Indo-Pacific region with its partners in various contexts including the promotion of maritime security which involves the South China Sea dispute. The EU’s signaling practices of the strategy with such purpose were found to show alignment with the US’ Indo-Pacific Strategy, India’s Indo-Pacific Oceans’ Initiative, ASEAN Outlook

on the Indo-Pacific, and the interests on partner states in general such as the Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia, and Australia.

Thus, it can be concluded that the EU's Strategy for Cooperation in The Indo-Pacific has quite an influential merit in explaining the patterns of the EU's declaratory diplomacy on the SCS dispute. It is arguable that the rise of declaratory diplomacy on the SCS in 2021 to 2022 was due to the clarity of common EU policy provided by the EU's Indo-Pacific Strategy, as it is a ground-breaking moment for the EU to address the SCS dispute in a regional policy document. Focusing on a smaller geographical scale in Asia, the EU elaborated the significance of the Indo-Pacific with the South China Sea contest as one of the main underlying backgrounds. Further analysis on the development of interests and positions of EU member states on the SCS dispute amidst the formation of the Indo-Pacific Strategy would then show a more nuanced evidence to whether the EU has been able to establish a more unified position through this strategy, therefore arguing for an increased engagement following its creation.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The European Union's declaratory diplomacy in the South China Sea (SCS) dispute has been a subject of intricate analysis in this research, aiming to unravel the nuanced patterns and strategic interactions of the EU in this complex geopolitical landscape. The central research question driving this study was: *How can the patterns of the European Union's declaratory diplomacy in the South China Sea dispute be explained?* Through a meticulous examination of the EU's diplomatic engagements in the SCS dispute, this research has shed light on critical findings that offer valuable insights into the EU's approach to the dispute, its foreign policy and engagement with relevant partners, and its implications for regional, inter-regional, and international dynamics.

The analysis of the EU's declaratory diplomacy in the SCS dispute argues for a dynamic interplay of assertiveness and vagueness in the EU's approach over time. With its first declaratory diplomacy on the dispute, the EU released a policy document comprising the Brussels' position and interest apropos the SCS precisely a year after ASEAN and China adopted the Guidelines for The Implementation of the Declaration of Conduct. Following scholarly discussions on the EU becoming more assertive in approaching the dispute, this research argues conclusive findings on a rising assertiveness trend. Contrary to the simplistic narrative of the EU solely becoming more assertive in the dispute, however, the research uncovered that an aggregate of less assertive and even allude forms of declaratory diplomacy are still present in the EU's engagement. At the same time, the research also found that the EU has shown a capacity to be independently assertive years prior to this trend, taking place initially in 2016 where it was heavily criticized for being neutral in the event of the SCS Arbitration. Nevertheless, the EU has been consistently present in explicitly addressing the SCS dispute through declaratory diplomacy since the deployment of its Maritime Security Strategy in 2014.

Amidst a decade of persistent direct engagement, the EU rarely dedicated an entire act of declaratory diplomacy to the dispute. The research found that most of the EU's declaratory diplomacy that touches upon the dispute would simply mention the South China Sea or have a paragraph or brief section on the dispute itself or maritime security in general. Interestingly, the research showed that when the SCS dispute was given less focus, the tone of declaratory diplomacy tended to be more neutral. With more emphasis, the more variety of assertiveness was found, be it neutral, concern, or assertive. By mapping the frequency, forms, and characteristics of the EU's declaratory diplomacy, this study challenged conventional

perceptions and highlighted the complexity of the EU's engagement in the SCS. Such a nuanced perspective enriches one's understanding of the EU's strategic behavior in the SCS and underscored the need to avoid oversimplifying the EU's evolving stance in the region.

In the process of analyzing the patterns of the European Union's declaratory diplomacy regarding the South China Sea dispute, this study has systematically linked different diplomatic interactions with the evolution of EU foreign and security policies, institutional frameworks, maritime security strategies, relations with Asian nations, other forms of EU diplomacy, and the unfolding events pertaining to the dispute. To further explore explanations to the patterns, the hypotheses testing in this research explored the interconnected nature of the EU's declaratory diplomacy and its strategic interactions in terms of soft balancing and signaling. The results of the straw in the wind analysis further enrich our understanding of the EU's strategic interactions in the SCS dispute. By exploring the external dynamics of balancing with partners such as the US and ASEAN, as well as the internal dynamics of signaling through strategic documents like the 2019 EU-China Strategic Outlook and the 2021 Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, this research has identified potential causal relationships and hypotheses worth considering.

Firstly, the research examined the impact of external pressures on the character of the EU's declaratory diplomacy and analyzing the EU's role in balancing power dynamics in the region. The analysis found merit in explaining the patterns of EU declaratory diplomacy on the SCS dispute through a soft balancing behavior with the US, significantly shown from the year of 2021 and after. Despite having minor signs of soft balancing in 2014 and jointly practicing other forms of diplomacy with the US, the patterns of EU declaratory diplomacy did not reflect soft balancing traits in the years of 2015 to 2020. The extent to which the EU is soft balancing with the US contemporarily through declaratory diplomacy on the SCS dispute, however, is a question of further research as the EU has also iterated its desire to stand on its own amid US-China tensions.

With its Southeast Asian regional partner, on the other hand, the EU's declaratory diplomacy on the dispute showed a great sense of support for ASEAN-led mechanisms of conflict management and settlement. The EU has also shown a more neutral node in its interactions to the dispute with ASEAN. Thus, the analysis proposed that the EU provided effort in demonstrating itself as a balancing partner for ASEAN instead of balancing with ASEAN itself. The continuous explicit provision of support since 2015 renders the EU to be argued as a soft balancing partner for the regional organization in which most of the SCS claimants are part of. Such an analysis proposes further research in ASEAN's and its member states' declaratory diplomacy on the SCS alongside the EU to observe the inter-regional strategic

dynamics. It is important to note, however, that the diplo-lingo utilized by the EU with the two partners differs significantly with diverse characteristics of emphasis and assertiveness. The analysis of these two hypotheses, therefore, also provides merit to how the EU adjusts its selection of words in its declaratory diplomacy on the SCS dispute in correspondence to its counterparts.

Secondly, the research sought to explore internal signaling dynamics, focusing on how the EU's declaratory diplomacy in the SCS reflects its internal foreign policy strategies and objectives, particularly the 2019 Strategic Outlook on China and 2021 Indo-Pacific Strategy. Following the analysis of the patterns of EU declaratory diplomacy on the SCS dispute after the EU-China Strategic Outlook, the research found that the policy and its groundbreaking label of China as 'systemic rival' were not much signaled despite the growing number of assertive engagements. Although the hypothesis is not considered to have strong merit, it is certainly puzzling to ask why was the Strategic Outlook on China, which directly touched upon the SCS dispute and coined an aggressive label for China, not much reflected in the EU's declaratory diplomacy on the SCS dispute.

Conversely, the 2021 Strategy for Cooperation in The Indo-Pacific was found to possess an influential merit in explaining the patterns. Along the rise of declaratory diplomacy on the SCS and its certain characteristics, the Indo-Pacific Strategy was often referred to by the EU to express its commitment to increase its engagements to the region inter alia the SCS dispute and/or to emphasize common interests and intentions with its partners. Following the examination of EU declaratory diplomacy on the SCS in cases where it mentions the Strategy, it appears that the policy document manifested a more unified approach of the EU in the region, keeping in mind that the SCS dispute was adequately emphasized as its underlying background. Such a finding prompts further research into the development of positions and interests of EU member states on the SCS dispute to deeply analyze the extent to which the materialization of the Indo-Pacific Strategy was due to more common ground on the approach to these contested waters.

Ultimately, this research has proficiently delineated the patterns of EU declaratory diplomacy on the SCS dispute for over a decade. This establishment lays the groundwork for delving into substantive explanations that bear significant promise for future scholarly inquiries aimed at grasping the evolving dynamics of the EU's diplomatic engagements in the dispute. The analysis found the strongest merit in explaining these patterns to be the EU's behavior of soft balancing with the US, the EU's presence and support as a soft balancing partner for ASEAN, and the EU's signaling practices of its Indo-Pacific Strategy. Nevertheless, the

research finds that the patterns of EU declaratory diplomacy in the SCS offer an abundance of entry points to analyze the drivers behind EU's behavior.

This research makes a significant contribution to the existing literature by offering a comprehensive analysis of the EU's declaratory diplomacy in the SCS dispute. By uncovering critical patterns, exploring strategic interactions, and challenging simplistic narratives, this study provides valuable insights for policymakers, scholars, and practitioners seeking to navigate the evolving security landscape of the region. The findings of this research underscore the need for a nuanced understanding of the EU's role in the SCS and highlight the complexities of its diplomatic engagements in the region. Thus, the research encourages scholars to critically analyze the complexities of EU engagement in the South China Sea and other geopolitical hotspots. Scholars can build upon this research to delve deeper into the dynamics of EU behavior, the impact of declaratory statements on state behavior, and the evolving role of the EU in regional security architectures and specifically the SCS dispute. At the same time, the methodological innovation not only provided a new perspective in analyzing the EU's engagement in the dispute, but the mixed-method approach combining quantitative content analysis and qualitative hypothesis testing allow scholars to adapt and apply to study other diplomatic engagements and conflicts.

This research also makes a substantive contribution to the field of policymaking. The insights from the research can assist policymakers to grasp the complexities of EU behavior and navigate the evolving security landscape in the Indo-Pacific region. With a nuanced understanding that policymakers can leverage, it allows an opportunity to enhance the EU's strategic engagement in the region and to effectively address security challenges. The author aspires that the patterns discovered may contribute to developing coherent and effective policies that align with the EU's interests and values in the region, thus fostering constructive relationships, effectively managing conflicts, and working towards peaceful resolutions in the region.

To close with, the author looks forward to criticisms and further researches that would methodologically and/or substantially complement the findings of this dissertation and answers to its limitations.

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A P P E N D I X I

Year	Date	Actors			Type of Declaratory Diplomacy	Description	Reference to SCS			Level of Emphasis	Narrative	Level of Assertiveness					Notes	Indo-Pacific	Systemic Rival	Source		
		Entity	Subject Spokesman/Sub-Entity	Counterpart			Direct	Indirect	None			0 None	1 Allude	2 Vague	3 Neutral	4 Concern					5 Assertive	
2012	15-Jun	EU	Council of the EU		Document	Guidelines on the EU's Foreign and Security Policy in East Asia	1	0	0	2	The recent escalation of tensions in the South China Sea, arising from conflicting claims among a number of littoral countries, including China, could have important implications for security and stability in the region, including more broadly for the freedom of navigation and commerce. The EU and its Member States, while not in any sense taking position on these various claims, should nevertheless : - recall the great importance of the South China Sea for the EU (inter alia in the perspective of promoting the rules-based international system, the principle of freedom of navigation, the risk of tensions impacting on the consistent increase in trade and investment, with negative consequences for all, energy security); - continue to encourage the parties concerned to resolve disputes through peaceful and cooperative solutions and in accordance with international law (in particular UNCLOS), while encouraging all parties to clarify the basis for their claims; - recall previous work to build a collaborative diplomatic process on these issues at the regional level, and encourage ASEAN and China to build on this foundation and agree on a Code of Conduct; - and, if welcomed by the relevant parties, offer to share the experience of the EU and its Member States in relation to the consensual, international-law-based settlement of maritime border issues, and to the sustainable management of resources and maritime security cooperation in sea areas with shared sovereignty or disputed claims.	0	0	0	1	0	0	The recent increase in tensions in the South China Sea, with conflicting claims involving several countries in the region, could if unchecked have implications for navigation and commerce across the broader region, including for EU trade and investment interests. The EU has a major interest in encouraging China to take a broader view of its global interests and responsibilities, notably in the political, economic, commercial and monetary fields, as well as to play a constructive role appropriate to that of a global power in the promotion of effective multilateralism and the resolution of international and regional issues. THERE IS A SPECIFIC SECTION FOR SCS				chrome-extension://ef4fdbmnmhbpcjgpcgclefndmkaajhttp s://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-11492-2012-INIT/en/pdf
2012	27-Jun	EU	Parliament	Vietnam	Document	Partnership Cooperation Agreement (PCA)	0	0	1	-	So coming to the post-ministerial conference in Phnom Penh was a chance to review progress. We have looked at what we have been doing, how we have managed to cooperate and how we continue to do so; and also to join in the ASEAN Regional Forum, which was a chance to discuss the broader security issues and the broader political issues of this region. And that includes looking at areas like South China Sea, thinking about how to try and move forward in support of Burma/Myanmar as it moves forward with its own reforms; and how to again build in strong collaboration between the different countries through our free trade agreements, our cooperation agreements.	1	0	0	0	0	Vietnam as a claimant state of South China Sea. No mention of maritime security or freedom of navigation			chrome-extension://ef4fdbmnmhbpcjgpcgclefndmkaajhttp s://policy.asiapacificenergy.org/sites/default/files/EU-Vietnam%20Partnership%20and%20Cooperation%20Agreement%20in%20PCAs%20.pdf		
2012	13-Jul	EU	Catherine Ashton/High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy	Cambodia	Speech	Remarks of High Representative/Vice-President Catherine Ashton at the end of her visit to Asia	1	0	0	1	During a working lunch, regional issues will be discussed; topics will range from the Korean peninsula, the Iranian nuclear issue and the deteriorating situation in Syria to the recent developments in Burma/Myanmar. Maritime security in Asia and the integration process in East Asia may also be raised	0	0	0	1	0	Focus on DPRK, maritime piracy			https://ec.europa.eu/commission-presscorner/detail/en/memo_12_560		
2012	29-Oct	EU	EC		Press Release	FACTSHEET ASEM 9 SUMMIT	0	1	0	-	During a working lunch, regional issues will be discussed; topics will range from the Korean peninsula, the Iranian nuclear issue and the deteriorating situation in Syria to the recent developments in Burma/Myanmar. Maritime security in Asia and the integration process in East Asia may also be raised	0	0	1	0	0	Focus on DPRK, maritime piracy			https://ec.europa.eu/commission-presscorner/detail/en/memo_12_819		
2013		EU	Catherine Ashton/High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy	Asia Security Summit	Speech		0	0	1	-	Most of the ships passing through the Malacca Strait would also be navigating through the South China Sea. Up to 80 % of all the oil imports to Japan, South Korea, China and Taiwan pass through this sea lane. The natural resources in the South China Sea are of global significance. Even according to most conservative estimates, the region holds reserves of 30 billion barrels which would equal a year's worth of global consumption at current rate, or one third of the estimated, undiscovered oil reserves in the Arctic. The gas reserves are expected to be manifold. China, Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia are already drilling at their coasts. China is also developing capabilities for deep sea mining, and may begin explorations in 2013.90 The annual fish landing stands for one tenth of the global yield. Overfishing is a serious threat to the sustainability of the fish stocks. As China's territorial claims over the South China Sea are both extensive and ambiguous, the United States has reason to be concerned. However, it would be misleading to regard the region solely through the prism of China-United States rivalry. Many of the issues are deeply rooted in the local soil and are related primarily to the history and troubled relations of the countries within the region.	1	0	0	0	0	0	Focus on DPRK, maritime piracy			https://youtu.be/JY6esS63ba	
2013	Jan	EU	European Parliament; Directorate-General for External Policies of the Union		Document	THE MARITIME DIMENSION OF CSDF: GEOSTRATEGIC MARITIME CHALLENGES AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS FOR THE EUROPEAN UNION	1	0	0	2	Summit leaders stressed that the oceans, as the global commons for all the people of the world, should be open, free and secure, and underlined the importance of upholding these principles on the basis of international law, including the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. With regard to the South China Sea specifically, recalling the fundamental principles set out in the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, stressing the importance of peaceful settlement of disputes in the region in accordance with universally recognised international law, noting the launch of the official consultations between the parties on a Code of Conduct in September 2013, and encouraging further progress on the Code, they called upon all parties to seek durable solutions towards enhancing peace and stability in the region.	0	0	0	0	1	0			https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2861/30045		
2013	19-Nov	EU	Herman Van Rompuy/President of the European Council; Jose Manuel Barroso/President of the European Commission	Japan	Joint Statement	21st Japan-EU Summit Tokyo 19 November 2013 Joint Press Statement	1	0	0	2	East and Southeast Asia's maritime areas contain a multitude of challenges. Strong but unevenly distributed economic development, a growing population and competing claims on territory and maritime resources create a potent mix of disputes, instability and crises.	0	0	0	1	0			https://ec.europa.eu/commission-presscorner/detail/en/memo_13_1015			
2014	6-Mar	EU	EC; High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy		Joint Statement	JOINT COMMUNICATION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL For an open and secure global maritime domain: elements for a European Union maritime security strategy	0	1	0	-	a maritime regime based on international law; reaffirm commitment to the freedom of navigation and lawful uses of the sea; call on parties to avoid taking unilateral action to change the status quo and increase tensions in the region; we urge ASEAN and China to accelerate progress on a meaningful code of conduct; CBMs; settle conflicts without use of force; UNCLOS. In the South China Sea, we urge ASEAN and China to accelerate progress on a meaningful code of conduct. We reiterate our calls on all parties to take confidence building measures and to settle conflicts without threat or use of force and by diplomatic means in accordance with international law, including UNCLOS.	0	0	1	0	0			https://ec.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/publication/2006854a57e-11e3-8438-01aa75ed71a1_langue=en			
2014	26-Mar	EU	Council of the EU	US	Joint Statement	EU-US Summit Joint Statement	1	0	0	2	a maritime regime based on international law; reaffirm commitment to the freedom of navigation and lawful uses of the sea; call on parties to avoid taking unilateral action to change the status quo and increase tensions in the region; we urge ASEAN and China to accelerate progress on a meaningful code of conduct; CBMs; settle conflicts without use of force; UNCLOS. In the South China Sea, we urge ASEAN and China to accelerate progress on a meaningful code of conduct. We reiterate our calls on all parties to take confidence building measures and to settle conflicts without threat or use of force and by diplomatic means in accordance with international law, including UNCLOS.	0	0	0	0	1	0			chrome-extension://ef4fdbmnmhbpcjgpcgclefndmkaajhttp s://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/23902/141920.pdf		

2014	8-May	EU	EEAS	Vietnam; China	Statement/Declaration	Statement by the Spokesperson of the EU High Representative on the recent escalation of tensions in the South China Sea	1	0	0	3	<p>We are concerned about recent incidents involving China and Vietnam relating to the movements of the Chinese oil rig HD981. In particular, the EU is concerned that unilateral actions could affect the security environment in the region, as evidenced by reports about the recent collision of Vietnamese and Chinese vessels.</p> <p>We urge all parties concerned to seek peaceful and co-operative solutions in accordance with international law, in particular the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, and to continue ensuring safety and freedom of navigation.</p> <p>We also call on the parties to undertake de-escalating measures and refrain from any unilateral action which would be detrimental to peace and stability in the region.</p> <p>The EU will keep following these developments closely</p>	0	0	0	0	1	0	Document missing from EU sources	http://mod.gov.vn/en/detail/sa-en-news/sa-en-news-item/5653045a-7d98-46bb-831d-47a22093822
2014	4-Jun	EU	EC	G7	Communiqué	G7 Leaders' Communiqué, June 2014 – Foreign Policy	1	0	0	2	<p>We reaffirm the importance of maintaining a maritime order based upon the universally-agreed principles of international law. We remain committed to international cooperation to combat piracy and other maritime crime, consistent with international law and internationally recognised principles of jurisdiction in international waters. We are deeply concerned by tensions in the East and South China Sea. We oppose any unilateral attempt by any party to assert its territorial or maritime claims through the use of intimidation, coercion or force. We call on all parties to clarify and pursue their territorial and maritime claims in accordance with international law. We support the rights of claimants to seek peaceful resolution of disputes in accordance with international law, including through legal dispute settlement mechanisms.</p> <p>We also support confidence-building measures. We underscore the importance of the freedom of navigation and overflight and also the effective management of civil air traffic based on international law and International Civil Aviation Organization standards and practices.</p>	0	0	0	0	0	1		https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ips_14_637
2014	12-Jun	EU		US	Speech	Strengthening the Transatlantic Partnership Beyond TTIP: A strategic vision for the EU and US	1	0	0	1	<p>All this leads to turbulence and unrest in more and more places around the world: In the Sahel, so painfully brought home to us by the kidnapping of those school girls in Nigeria.</p> <p>In Afghanistan and Pakistan.</p> <p>Throughout the Middle East, where the Syrian crisis shows little sign of easing. And the increasing pressure of fundamentalists in Iraq.</p> <p>Closer to home, Ukraine where the national army and separatists are now openly fighting each other in the Slavansk region.</p> <p>And we should not forget the simmering tensions in the South China Sea.</p> <p>On 25 and 26 August, President Barroso pays an official visit to Vietnam. On 25 August, in Hanoi, he will have a bilateral meeting with Prime Minister Dung. They are expected to discuss the conclusion of the Free Trade Agreement negotiations, development cooperation and South China Sea/East Sea-related issues, and they will attend a joint press conference at 10.55 am Brussels time.</p>	0	0	0	1	0	0		https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_14_464
2014	22-Aug	EU			Press Release	Daily News of 2014-08-22	1	0	0	1	<p>The two leaders discussed the ongoing tensions in the South China Sea/East Sea and agreed that territorial disputes should be settled peacefully in a spirit of cooperation and respect of international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea 1982 (UNCLOS 1982). President Barroso reiterated the EU's support for a political-diplomatic process and the rights of claimants to seek peaceful resolution of disputes in accordance with international law.</p>	0	0	0	1	0	0		https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/mex_14_0822
2014	25-Aug	EU		Vietnam	Joint Statement	Joint press statement between the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the European Union	1	0	0	2	<p>Last but not least, today we also exchanged views on the situation in the South China Sea/East Sea. We shared our concerns about developments in the area.</p>	0	0	0	1	0	0		https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/statement_14_257
2014	25-Aug	EU		Vietnam	Speech	Remarks by President Barroso following the bilateral talks with Prime Minister Dung of Vietnam	1	0	0	2	<p>In fact, the EU has high stakes in the region: trade and strategic interests, as well as energy and security dimensions. I have assured to Prime Minister Dung that the EU is following developments in the South China Sea with particular attention.</p> <p>We do not take a position on individual territorial claims, but we strongly encourage all parties to seek peaceful solutions in accordance with international law, in particular with the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. All sides should refrain from unilateral actions which could cause tension or unintended accidents.</p> <p>Regional cooperation and international cooperation is essential to address the challenges with which we are faced with.</p> <p>This is why ASEAN integration is very important and we strongly support it. It is time to set up a Strategic Partnership between the EU and ASEAN.</p>	0	0	0	0	1	0		https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_14_570
2014	25-Aug	EU			Press Release	Daily News of 2014-08-25	1	0	0	1	<p>President Barroso is in Vietnam today and tomorrow, where he had a bilateral meeting and a press conference with Prime Minister Dung. They discussed the conclusion of the Free Trade Agreement negotiations, development cooperation and South China Sea/East Sea-related issues.</p>	0	0	0	1	0	0		https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/mex_14_0825
2014	10-Oct	EU			Press Release	Daily News of 2014-10-10	1	0	0	1	<p>This Monday, President Barroso welcomes the Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung of Vietnam for a working lunch at the European Commission. Leaders will discuss Vietnam's domestic situation including human rights, economic recovery in the EU, state of play of the FTA negotiations, PCA including ratification process. Regional issues, in particular the Asia-Europe Summit, ASEAN, South China Sea/East Sea, Ukraine and Middle East.</p>	0	0	0	1	0	0		https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/mex_14_1010

Year	Date	EU	EU Representative	Partner	Type	Title	Score	Text	Score	Notes	
2014	13-Oct	EU	Jose Manuel Barroso/President of the European Commission		Press Release	Daily News of 2014-10-13	1 0 0 1	President Barroso welcomes Prime Minister Nguyen Tang Dung of Vietnam	0 0 0 1 0 0	Today, President Barroso welcomes the Prime Minister Nguyen Tang Dung of Vietnam for a working lunch at the European Commission. Leaders will discuss Vietnam's domestic situation including human rights, economic recovery in the EU, state of play of the FTA negotiations, PCA including ratification process. Regional issues, in particular the Asia-Europe Summit, ASEAN, South China Sea/East Sea, Ukraine and Middle East.	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/mex_14_1013
2014	15-Oct	EU	Herman Van Rompuy/President of the European Council, Jose Manuel Barroso/President of the European Commission	China	Press Release	Press statement following the meeting between Herman Van Rompuy, President of the European Council, Jose Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, and Premier of the People's Republic of China, Li Keqiang	0 0 1 -		1 0 0 0 0 0	Issues addressed: Ukraine, Middle East, North Africa, Sahel	chrome-extension://cfadabmmmbhpjgpcgkcfidndkaj/https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/23886/145126.pdf
2014	17-Oct	EU	Herman Van Rompuy/President of the European Council	ASEM	Press Release	Press statement by the President of the European Council, Herman Van Rompuy following the 10th ASEM Summit	0 0 1 -		1 0 0 0 0 0		chrome-extension://cfadabmmmbhpjgpcgkcfidndkaj/https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/23881/145157.pdf
2015	15-Apr	G7	EU, France, Germany, Italy	G7	Joint Statement	G7 Foreign Ministers' Declaration on Maritime Security	1 0 0 2	We are committed to maintaining a maritime order based upon the principles of international law, in particular as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). We continue to observe the situation in the East and South China Seas and are concerned by any unilateral actions, such as large scale land reclamation, which change the status quo and increase tensions. We strongly oppose any attempt to assert territorial or maritime claims through the use of intimidation, coercion or force. We call on all states to pursue the peaceful management or settlement of maritime disputes in accordance with international law, including through internationally recognised legal dispute settlement mechanisms, and to fully implement any decisions rendered by the relevant courts and tribunals which are binding on them. We underline the importance of coastal states refraining from unilateral actions that cause permanent physical change to the marine environment in areas pending final delimitation.	0 0 0 0 0 0 1		chrome-extension://cfadabmmmbhpjgpcgkcfidndkaj/https://www.mofa.go.jp/files/000078378.pdf
2015	18-May	EU	EC; Federica Mogherini/High Representative of The Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy	ASEAN	Document	JOINT COMMUNICATION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL The EU and ASEAN: a partnership with a strategic purpose	1 0 0 2	We call for the acceleration of work on a comprehensive Code of Conduct in the South China Sea and, in the interim, emphasise our support for the 2002 ASEAN Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea. We highlight the constructive role of practical confidence-building measures, such as the establishment of direct links of communication in cases of crisis and efforts to establish guiding principles and rules to govern activities, such as the ASEAN – China talks on a Code of Conduct on the South China Sea. We encourage States to do their utmost to implement their commitments, and we intend to assist them within the scope of our abilities and regional priorities. We furthermore welcome initiatives on maritime security in relevant fora, such as the East Asia Summit, the ASEAN Regional Forum, the EU-ASEAN cooperation, and regionally based Coast Guard Forums.	0 0 0 0 0 1 0	Maritime security is a key challenge of common concern and a key component of the EU's promotion of better ocean governance. Almost 50 % of world shipping (by tonnage) passes through the South China Sea. Energy supplies, raw materials and goods transiting these waters are of vital importance to most economies, including the EU's. The EU therefore has a strong interest in maintaining stability and security in the South China Sea, as well as respect for international law, including the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). It has consistently called for peaceful and cooperative resolution of territorial disputes and is a strong supporter of ASEAN's and China's ongoing efforts to agree a Code of Conduct on the South China Sea, encouraging an early conclusion of the negotiations.	chrome-extension://cfadabmmmbhpjgpcgkcfidndkaj/https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=JOIN:2015.22:FIN&from=EN
2015	19-May	EU	EC; Federica Mogherini/High Representative of The Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy	ASEAN	Press Release	EU proposes to scale up its partnership with ASEAN	0 1 0 -	Regional conflicts such as in Ukraine, the tensions in the South China Sea and the Iranian and North Korean nuclear issues are all, in essence, about core security principles and how to ensure compliance with international law. As strong proponents of rules-based and effective multilateralism, the EU and ASEAN have a vested interest in expanding their cooperation on these regional issues of global significance. Deepening EU-ASEAN cooperation in the various sectors will strengthen the rationale for moving to a formal Strategic Partnership which will require political commitment and resources on both sides.	0 1 0 0 0 0	Implementing an extensive 'package' of new initiatives in the area of non-traditional security (maritime security, disaster management and crisis response, transnational crime, training courses on preventive diplomacy, crisis management, mediation, the rule of law and election observation).	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/pr_15_5000
2015	29-May	EU	Jean-Claude Juncker/President of EC; Donald Tusk/President of European Council	Japan	Press Release	EU and Japan leaders meet to discuss joint efforts on peace, security and stability (23rd Summit between Japan and the European Union (EU))	1 0 0 1	Stepping up engagement on non-traditional security. The EU is an active member of the ASEAN Regional Forum. The EU and ASEAN work together to enhance crisis response and disaster management; the EU supports the ASEAN Centre for Humanitarian Assistance. The EU and ASEAN organised the Second High-Level Dialogue on maritime security cooperation in Kuala Lumpur in May 2015, to exchange lessons learnt on integrated and cooperative approaches to maritime issues, such as inter-agency cooperation, tackling transnational crime and port security.	0 0 0 0 0 0	Given the uncertainties in the regional security environment, leaders condemned all violations of international law and of the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity of states. Both sides stressed their concern about any unilateral actions that change the status quo and increase tensions and will continue to observe the situation in the East and South China Sea.	Archived EEAS Document https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/2205_en
2015	29-May	EU	EC	Japan	Joint Statement	23rd Japan-EU Summit, Tokyo, 29 May 2015 Joint Press Statement	1 0 0 2	Mindful of the uncertainties in the regional security environment, we condemn all violations of international law and of the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity of states. We underline the need for all parties to seek peaceful, and cooperative solutions to maritime claims, including through internationally recognised legal dispute settlement mechanisms, and to maintain full freedom of navigation and overflight of the high seas under international law as enshrined in the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea. The safety of navigation is essential for peaceful and sustainable development. We urge all parties to clarify the basis of their claims based on international law, and to refrain from unilateral actions, including the threat or use of force and coercion. We continue to observe the situation in the East and South China Sea and are concerned by any unilateral actions that change the status quo and increase tensions. We support the full and effective implementation of the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea and the rapid conclusion of the negotiations to establish an effective Code of Conduct in the South China Sea. We highlight the constructive role of practical confidence-building measures, such as the establishment of direct links of communication in cases of crisis and crisis management mechanisms in this regard.	0 0 0 0 0 1 0		https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/MEMO_15_5075

2015	31-May	EU	Federica Mogherini the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission	Asia Security Summit	Speech	Speech by High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini at the HSS Shangri-La Dialogue 2015	0	1	0	-	As while the EU continues to be deeply engaged IN Asia, we want to be more and more engaged WITH Asia, to address together our common challenges, and to take full advantage of our common opportunities. In today's world no region is as dynamic as Asia. There would be really good reasons to be optimistic about Asia's future. Still, the world of economics is closely connected to the world of security. And security threats are multiplying by the day. The most striking feature of Asia today is this unique combination of optimism, dynamism and fragility. We see signals of rivalries among powers re-emerging. Some maritime disputes are far from being settled. I believe we cannot afford it. We, Europe and Asia, have a strong interest in global security. A very basic interest regards the freedom of navigation on the arteries of the global economy: it is basic but essential, if you think of how integrated economic supply chains have become. We have a direct interest in the respect for international law. We believe regionalism and multilateralism are the framework for cooperative international relations. And cooperation calls for everyone to play by the same rules. Agreed rules make states secure, people free and companies willing to invest. When some decide to play by their own rules, cooperation gives way to confrontation- and in today's world that is bad news for everyone. The same applies to maritime disputes, too. We need to maintain a maritime order based on international law, including the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. We are not getting into the legitimacy of specific claims, but we are resolute as Europeans on HOW they should be resolved- that is, peacefully, without the use or threat of force. We support the ASEAN-China negotiations for a Code of Conduct and we hope they can be concluded soon.	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	Archived EEAS Document	https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/6254_en	
2015	8-Jun	G7	EU, France, Germany, Italy	Joint Statement	Leaders' Declaration G7 Summit		1	0	0	2	Maintaining a Rules-Based Maritime Order and Achieving Maritime Security We are committed to maintaining a rules-based order in the maritime domain based on the principles of international law, in particular as reflected in the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. We are concerned by tensions in the East and South China Seas. We underline the importance of peaceful dispute settlement as well as free and unimpeded lawful use of the world's oceans. We strongly oppose the use of intimidation, coercion or force, as well as any unilateral actions that seek to change the status quo, such as large scale land reclamation. We endorse the Declaration on Maritime Security issued by G7 Foreign Ministers in Lilbuck.	0	0	0	0	0	1	chrome-extension://cfadbdmnmhbjpcjgclefmdnkajhttp://www.bundesregierung.de/resource/blob/998440/436680/077251/687486b1d734c5390621a0bc_2015-06-08-g7-abschluss-eng-en-data.pdf/download=1			
2015	22-Jun	EU	Council of the EU	ASEAN	Press Release	Council conclusions on EU-ASEAN relations	0	1	0	-	The Council reiterated the EU's offer to contribute substantially to policy and security/defence related fora led by ASEAN, including the East Asia Summit. The Council emphasised the value of EU-ASEAN Co-operation on security, recognizing that we share common challenges that have a global impact including maritime security and "non-traditional" security challenges, spurred by common interests and new capacities on both sides to address security issues in a comprehensive way. The Council commended the EU's enhanced engagement in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), resulting also in co-chairing key meetings, in convening with Brunei Darussalam the first ARF Workshop on Preventive Diplomacy and Mediation and in organising two EU-ASEAN High-Level Dialogues on Maritime Security.	0	0	1	0	0	0	https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2015/06/22/fac-asean-conclusions/			
2015	22-Jun	EU	Federica Mogherini the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission		Press Release	Remarks by High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini following the Foreign Affairs Council	0	1	0	-	We have had then a discussion on some elements of our relations with Asia. We have discussed in particular our relations with China in view of the next EU-China summit next week, as well as the relations between the European Union and ASEAN and our projects that can be developed together with some Asian partners on connectivity.	0	1	0	0	0	0	Archived EEAS Document	https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/6342_en		
2015	29-Jun	EU	Jean-Claude Juncker/President of EC; Donald Tusk/President of European Council	China	Joint Statement	EU-China Summit joint statement: The way forward after forty years of EU-China cooperation	0	0	1	-		Issues addressed: BRI, Economics, Energy security, environmental security, gulf of aden, Ukraine, JCPOA	1	0	0	0	0	0	chrome-extension://cfadbdmnmhbjpcjgclefmdnkajhttp://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/23732/150629-eu-china-summit-joint-statement-final.pdf		
2015	2-Jul	EU	Mr Ugo Antonio/Acting Managing Director of the Asia-Pacific Department of the European External Action Service	ASEAN	Press Release	ASEAN-EU Senior Officials' Meeting 2 July 2015 - Brussels	1	0	0	2	The Meeting also discussed regional and international issues of common concern including current security challenges, the situation in Ukraine, the Iranian nuclear programme and the situation in the South China Sea. The serious concerns expressed by ASEAN over the recent developments in the South China Sea were recalled. The Meeting agreed on the need to maintain peace and stability in the region and to promote maritime security and safety, freedom of navigation and over-flight underlying the need to settle disputes by peaceful means, in accordance with universally recognised principles of international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). All parties concerned	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	Archived EEAS Document	https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/6308_en	
2015	7-Aug	EU	Federica Mogherini the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission	ASEAN	Press Release	Federica Mogherini steps up EU engagement with ASEAN in Kuala Lumpur	1	0	0	1	Ms. Mogherini also emphasised EU's enduring engagement in and with Asian partners on regional security challenges such as the South China Sea dispute, the Korean Peninsula, transnational crime, counter-terrorism, but evenly on overall regional maritime security and preventive diplomacy.	0	0	0	1	0	0	Archived EEAS Document	https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/2532_en		
2015	4-Nov	EU	Federica Mogherini the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission	ASEF Young Leaders Summit	Speech	Speech by HR/VP Federica Mogherini at ASEF Young Leaders Summit, Luxembourg, 4 November 2015	1	0	0	1	The European Union is not just a big free trade area. We are also a foreign policy community, a security and defence provider. For our own people and in the rest of the world, including in Asia. Cooperation, not confrontation, should be the driving force in solving any dispute in the South China Sea. And for this reason the EU constantly engage with all parties over there. Some of you might know about such engagement, but let me tell you: many European citizens don't. And of course most Asian citizens don't. But when you'll be in leadership positions, keep this in mind. Europe has a stake in Asia's security, and has a stake in cooperation with Asia.	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	Archived EEAS Document	https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/5927_en	
2015	6-Nov	EU	Federica Mogherini the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission	ASEM	Speech	Remarks by High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini following the 12th ASEM Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Luxembourg, 6 November 2015	1	0	0	1	We have had a deep discussion on the South China Sea and also on the developments in the Korean Peninsula, just to name a few, because the list would be long.	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	Archived EEAS Document	https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/6727_en	
2015	19-Nov	EU	H.E. Dr Hans - Dietmar Schiewe/ambassador of the European Union to the People's Republic of China	China	Speech	The European Union and China: global partners with global responsibilities at Tsinghua University Global Vision Lectures	1	0	0	1	Peaceful developments on the South China Sea, in the Malacca Straits, the Gulf of Aden are, in turn, the precondition for the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road. All this calls for shared responsibility and, as President Xi recently said: "adopting a new thinking of building partnerships, so as to jointly open up a new vista of common development and shared security". This, of course, also opens up the necessity of a more strategic cooperation between the EU and China in the area of foreign and security policy.	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	Archived EEAS Document	https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/15601_en

2015	2-Dec	EU	Jean-Claude Juncker/President of EC; Donald Tusk/President of European Council	Vietnam	Press Release	Press Statement by the President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker, the President of the European Council Donald Tusk and the Prime Minister of Viet Nam Nguyen Tan Dung	1	0	0	2	<p>We discussed regional and global challenges, including migration and refugee crisis, and agreed to work together to tackle them. We agreed that our strengthened partnership will contribute to ensuring regional peace and stability. We are committed to maintaining peace, promoting maritime security, freedom of navigation and overflight and unimpeded lawful commerce in the South China Sea. We share serious concerns over developments, including the large scale land reclamation and agree on the critical importance of refraining from the use or threat of force, of abstaining from unilateral actions and of resolving territorial and maritime disputes through peaceful means in accordance with universally recognised principles of international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). We support the full and effective implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) and the expeditious conclusion of an effective Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC).</p> <p>We strongly support the EU's furthering engagement with the region through all ASEAN-led processes and take note of the EU interest in joining the East Asia Summit. We agreed to make a strong contribution to ASEAN-EU relations and consider joint ASEAN-EU policy initiatives on challenges of global concern. We also agreed to explore possibilities for joint EU-Viet Nam initiatives in the UN framework.</p> <p>The EU is committed to maintaining a legal order for the seas and oceans based upon the principles of international law, as reflected notably in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). This includes the maintenance of maritime safety, security, and cooperation, freedom of navigation and overflight.</p> <p>While not taking a position on claims to land territory and maritime space in the South China Sea, the EU urges all claimants to resolve disputes through peaceful means, to clarify the basis of their claims, and to pursue them in accordance with international law including UNCLOS and its arbitration procedures.</p>	0	0	0	0	1	0	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/statement_15_0217
2016	11-Mar	EU	Council of the EU	Statement Declaration	Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on Recent Developments in the South China Sea	1	0	0	3	<p>The EU is concerned about the deployment of missiles on islands in the South China Sea. The temporary or permanent deployment of military forces or equipment on disputed maritime features which affects regional security and may threaten freedom of navigation and overflight is a major concern. The EU therefore calls on all claimants to refrain from militarisation in the region, from the use or threat of force, and to abstain from unilateral actions.</p> <p>The EU encourages further engagement in confidence building measures which seek to build trust and security in the region. The EU fully supports regional ASEAN-led processes and is looking forward to a swift conclusion of the talks on a 'Code of Conduct' which will further support a rules-based regional and international order. In this connection, the EU reiterates its offer to share best practices on maritime security.</p>	0	0	0	0	1	0	https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/03/11/hr-declaration-on-behalf-of-eu-recent-developments-south-china-sea/?text=The%20EU%20is%20committed%20to%20the%20Sea%20UNCLOS	
2016	6-Apr	EU	Federica Mogherini/the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission	Speech	European Union-Malaysia Partnership and Cooperation Agreement commencement	0	0	1	-	<p>Malaysia as a claimant state in the SCS dispute</p>	1	0	0	0	0	0	https://www.ec.europa.eu/en/5348_en	
2016	7-Apr	EU	Federica Mogherini/the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission	Press Release	High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini travels to Indonesia	1	0	0	1	<p>The visit will provide an opportunity to discuss a range of bilateral issues, including enhanced political dialogue, cooperation in the security field and on countering radicalisation, advancing trade relations, protecting the environment and combatting climate change, as well as matters of regional and international importance such as the South China Sea and the Middle East.</p>	0	0	0	1	0	0	https://www.ec.europa.eu/node/5344_en	
2016	7-Apr	EU	Federica Mogherini/the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission	Press Release	Daily News 07 / 04 / 2016	1	0	0	1	<p>The High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini will travel to Jakarta on 8 April for a two-day visit focussing on EU-Indonesia and EU-ASEAN relations. The visit will provide an opportunity to discuss a range of bilateral issues, including enhanced political dialogue, cooperation in the security field and on countering radicalisation, advancing trade relations, protecting the environment and combatting climate change, as well as matters of regional and international importance such as the South China Sea and the Middle East.</p>	0	0	0	1	0	0	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/mex_16_1295	
2016	8-Apr	EU	Federica Mogherini/the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission	Joint Statement	Joint Statement between the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia and the European Union's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice President of the European Commission on the Asia-Pacific	1	0	0	2	<p>The High Representative expressed her support for the central role of ASEAN and ASEAN-led mechanisms in the evolving regional security architecture in Asia. Both sides encouraged ASEAN efforts to seek peaceful resolution and management of maritime disputes in the region, including through the full and effective implementation of the Declaration of Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DoC) and the early conclusion of the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (CoC). Both sides are committed to maintaining a maritime legal order based on the principles of international law, as reflected notably in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). This includes the preservation of maritime safety, security, and cooperation, freedom of navigation and overflight. They called on all parties concerned to exercise self-restraint, to refrain from militarisation, the use and the threat of the use of force in the region, to abstain from unilateral action and to fully respect the diplomatic and legal processes.</p> <p>In maintaining peace and maritime security in the Asia Pacific, the Foreign Minister welcomed the EU's upcoming participation in Indonesian initiatives of the Multilateral Naval Exercise Keempo 2016.</p> <p>When distances grow smaller, geography becomes even more important. wherever I go around the world, including in this part of the world, our European Union is among the first trading partners. Much of this trade goes through the open seas, including through the Indonesian archipelago. President Jokowi is totally right when he says Indonesia can be a global maritime fulcrum. Europeans share an interest to make this hub safe, efficient and secure. Cooperation on maritime security is a win-win situation, and our joint efforts can pay off for both Europe and Indonesia.</p>	0	0	0	0	1	0	<p>Archived EEAS Document</p>	https://www.ec.europa.eu/node/2909_en
2016	9-Apr	EU	Federica Mogherini/the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission	Speech	Speech by the High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini at the National Defence University of Indonesia	1	0	0	2	<p>We also share an interest for all maritime disputes to be settled in a peaceful way. I am also talking of the South China Sea. I will not take position on which island belongs to whom but we have a common interest in that we should be careful through the use of force.</p>	0	0	0	1	0	0	<p>Archived EEAS Document</p>	https://www.ec.europa.eu/node/5327_en
2016	11-Apr	G7	EU, France, Germany, Italy	Joint Statement	G7 Foreign Ministers' Statement on Maritime Security April 11, 2016 Hiroshima, Japan	1	0	0	2	<p>We are concerned about the situation in the East and South China Seas, and emphasize the fundamental importance of peaceful management and settlement of disputes. We express our strong opposition to any intimidating, coercive or provocative unilateral actions that could alter the status quo and increase tensions, and urge all states to refrain from such actions as land reclamation including large scale ones, building of outposts, as well as their use for military purposes and to act in accordance with international law including the principles of freedoms of navigation and overflight. In areas pending final delimitation, we underline the importance of coastal states refraining from unilateral actions that cause permanent physical change to the marine environment insofar as such actions jeopardize or hamper the reaching of the final agreement, as well as the importance of making every effort to enter into provisional arrangements of a practical nature, in those areas. We encourage further engagement in confidence building measures such as dialogue which seeks to build trust and security in the region. We call for the full and effective implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) in its entirety and the early establishment of an effective Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC).</p>	0	0	0	0	0	1	<p>https://www.ec.europa.eu/node/2897_en</p>	

2016	20-May	EU	EC	G7	Other	The G7 Summit in Japan on 26 and 27 May 2016: the European Union's role and actions	1	0	0	1	During the G7 summit, members will exchange views and seek common ground on the most pressing foreign policy challenges, including Ukraine, Russia, the situation in Syria, Iran and Libya. Also the security situation with regard to North Korea and the East and South China Seas will be addressed.	0	0	0	1	0	0	Focus on Russia, Iran, Iraq, Libya, Syria	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/memo_16_1861
2016	27-May	G7	EU, France, Germany, Italy		Joint Statement	G7 Ise-Shima Leaders' Declaration	1	0	0	2	We reiterate our commitment to maintaining a rules-based maritime order in accordance with the principles of international law as reflected in UNCLOS, to peaceful dispute settlement supported by confidence building measures and including through legal means as well as to sustainable uses of the seas and oceans, and to respecting freedom of navigation and overflight. We reaffirm the importance of states' making and clarifying their claims based on international law, refraining from unilateral actions which could increase tensions and not using force or coercion in trying to drive their claims, and seeking to settle disputes by peaceful means including through judicial procedures including arbitration. We are concerned about the situation in the East and South China Seas, and emphasize the fundamental importance of peaceful management and settlement of disputes.	0	0	0	0	1	0		chrome-extension://efad8bmmmbipajpgclcfndmkaajhttp://www.mofa.go.jp/files/000160266.pdf
2016	Jun	EU	Federica Mogherini the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission		Document	Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign And Security Policy	1	0	0	1	Connected to the EU's interest in an open and fair economic system is the need for global maritime growth and security, ensuring open and protected ocean and sea routes critical for trade and access to natural resources. The EU will contribute to global maritime security, building on its experience in the Indian Ocean and the Mediterranean, and exploring possibilities in the Gulf of Guinea, the South China Sea and the Straits of Malacca. As a global maritime security provider, the EU will seek to further universalise and implement the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, including its dispute settlement mechanisms. The EU should continue to contribute actively to regional security in the Asia-Pacific through diplomatic and economic means while further developing its partnerships in the region. The EU remains concerned about the situation in the East and South China Seas, and should continue to emphasise the importance of peaceful settlement of disputes and to oppose unilateral actions that could alter the status quo and increase tensions. The EU upholds its position on compliance with international law by China and others in the context of their claims in the South China Sea. The large volume of international maritime trade passing through that area means that freedom of navigation and overflight are of prime importance to the EU. The EU should encourage China to contribute constructively to regional stability through confidence-building measures and support for the rules-based international order, especially respect for the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and its arbitration procedures, and the rapid conclusion of the ASEAN-China negotiations on a "Code of Conduct".	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	https://www.ec.europa.eu/ees/global-strategy-european-unions-foreign-and-security-policy_en
2016	22-Jan	EU	EC, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy	China	Document	JOINT COMMUNICATION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL Elements for a new EU strategy on China	1	0	0	2	The EU wants to see freedom of navigation and overflight upheld in the East and South China Seas. Disputes should be settled peacefully based on the rule of law and unilateral provocations avoided. Finally, on the South China Sea we will see an important ruling today. Therefore let me repeat this: The rule-based international order is in our common interest and both China and the EU have to protect it, as this is in our people's best interest.	0	0	0	0	1	0	chrome-extension://efad8bmmmbipajpgclcfndmkaajhttp://www.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/joint_communication_to_the_european_parliament_and_the_council_-_elements_for_a_new_eu_strategy_on_china.pdf	
2016	12-Jul	EU	Donald Tusk/President of the European Council	China	Speech	Remarks by President Donald Tusk at the EU-China summit in Beijing	1	0	0	1		0	0	0	1	0	0	https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press-press-releases/2016/07/12/tusk-opening-remarks-eu-china/	
2016	13-Jul	EU	Donald Tusk/President of the European Council	China	Speech	Remarks by President Donald Tusk after the 18th EU-China summit in Beijing	0	0	1	-		1	0	0	0	0	0	https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press-press-releases/2016/07/13/tusk-remarks-eu-china-summit/	
2016	14-Jul	EU	Jean-Claude Juncker/President of EC; Donald Tusk/President of European Council; Federica Mogherini the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission	ASEM	Brief	Background brief: 11th Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Summit, 15-16 July 2016, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia	0	1	0	-	The Summit will also seek for more cooperation on international and regional issues of common interest and concern. This includes the situations in the Middle East and North Africa, as well as Ukraine, the Korean peninsula and maritime security in Asia.	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/myanmar/downloads/2016/07/14/11th-asem-eu-summit-background-brief-15-16-july-2016_en
2016	15-Jul	EU	Council of the EU	China; The Philippines	Statement/Declaration	Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the Award rendered in the Arbitration between the Republic of the Philippines and the People's Republic of China	1	0	0	3	The European Union and its member states, as contracting parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), acknowledge the Award rendered by the Arbitral Tribunal, being committed to maintaining a legal order of the seas and oceans based upon the principles of international law, UNCLOS, and to the peaceful settlement of disputes. The EU does not take a position on sovereignty aspects relating to claims. It expresses the need for the parties to the dispute to resolve it through peaceful means, to clarify their claims and pursue them in respect and in accordance with international law, including the work in the framework of UNCLOS. The EU recalls that the dispute settlement mechanisms as provided under UNCLOS contribute to the maintenance and furthering of the international order based upon the Rule of Law and are essential to settle disputes. The EU also underlines the fundamental importance of upholding the freedoms, rights and duties established in UNCLOS, in particular the freedom of navigation and overflight. The EU supports the swift conclusion of talks aiming at an effective Code of Conduct between ASEAN and China implementing the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea. Recalling its Statement of 11 March 2016, the EU calls upon the parties concerned to address remaining and further related issues through negotiations and other peaceful means and refrain from activities likely to raise tensions. As a member of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) and as a High Contracting Party to the 1976 Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in South East Asia, the EU also wishes to "foster cooperation in the furtherance of the cause of peace, harmony, and stability in the region". The EU therefore stands ready to facilitate activities which help to build confidence between the parties concerned. While underlining the importance of all States working together to protect the marine ecosystem already endangered by the intensification of maritime traffic and dredging, the EU also wishes to "foster cooperation in the furtherance of the cause of peace, harmony, and stability in the region". The EU therefore stands ready to facilitate activities which help to build confidence between the parties concerned.	0	0	0	1	0	0	The Candidate Countries Montenegro* and Albania**, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this Declaration.	https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press-press-releases/2016/07/15/south-china-sea-statement/ https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/6873_en
2016	16-Jul	EU	Donald Tusk/President of the European Council	ASEM	Speech	Remarks by President Donald Tusk at the press conference after the 11th ASEM summit in Ulaanbaatar	1	0	0	1	How to strengthen Asia-Europe cooperation on international and regional security of common interest has also been central to our talks. Developments in our respective neighbourhoods, in particular, Ukraine, South China Sea and the Korean Peninsula reflect the need to protect the rules-based international order, in the best interest of our peoples.	0	0	0	1	0	0	Archived EEAS Document	https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/13799_en

2016	18-Jul	EU	Council of the EU	China	Document	Council conclusions EU Strategy on China	1	0	0	2	The European Union and its Member States, as contracting parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), acknowledge the Award rendered by the Arbitral Tribunal, being committed to maintaining a legal order of the seas and oceans based upon the principles of international law, UNCLOS, and to the peaceful settlement of disputes. The EU does not take a position on sovereignty aspects relating to claims. It expresses the need for the parties to the dispute to resolve it through peaceful means, to clarify their claims and pursue them in respect and in accordance with international law, including the work in the framework of UNCLOS. The EU recalls that the dispute settlement mechanisms as provided under UNCLOS contribute to the maintenance and furthering of the international order based upon the Rule of Law and are essential to settle disputes. The EU also underlines the fundamental importance of upholding the freedoms, rights and duties established in UNCLOS, in particular the freedoms of navigation and overflight. The EU supports the swift conclusion of talks aiming at an effective Code of Conduct between ASEAN and China implementing the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea.	0	0	0	1	0	0	https://www.eesa.europa.eu/esaas/speech-high-representative-vice-president-federica-mogherini-carnegie-endowment-international	
2016	22-Jul	EU	Federica Mogherini the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission		Speech	Speech by the High Representative / Vice-President Federica Mogherini at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace	0	0	1	-		1	0	0	0	0	Mogherini discussed and mentioned many conflicts in detail yet not the SCS	https://www.eesa.europa.eu/esaas/speech-high-representative-vice-president-federica-mogherini-carnegie-endowment-international	
2016	25-Jul	EU	H.E. Miroslav Lajčák/Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, as the representative of the European Union	ASEAN	Speech	Opening remarks by H.E. Miroslav Lajčák, Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, as the representative of the European Union and Co-Chair of the Meeting ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting	1	0	0	1	Cooperation on security issues has been the biggest growth area in recent years, with even greater potential yet untapped. We have been building a strong partnership in areas such as maritime security, preventive diplomacy, disaster relief and crisis response and the fight against transnational crime. Terrorism, foreign fighters and radicalization are high on everybody's mind both in Europe as well as in ASEAN. In each case we should combine exchanging lessons learned on how to forge effective regional responses with EU support for concrete capacity building. It will also mean forging greater collaboration on key regional and global issues such as, for instance, climate change and migration. We should also do more to tackle top regional issues such as Ukraine, the South China Sea or Syria/Iraq/Da'esh. We need to work together to uphold core security principles and to ensure compliance with international law. The EU is ready and willing to contribute to this endeavour. We are partners of your region. And we believe it is our reciprocal interest to invest even more in our friendship and in the work we can jointly do for the security of our people.	0	0	0	1	0	0	Mogherini cannot attend	https://www.eesa.europa.eu/node/9747_en
2016	25-Jul	EU	H.E. Miroslav Lajčák/Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic, as the representative of the European Union	ASEAN	Statement/Declaration	Chairman's Statement of the ASEAN Post Ministerial Conference (PMC) 10+1 Sessions with the Dialogue Partners	1	0	0	2	The Meeting underlined the importance of maintaining peace, stability and security, freedom of navigation in and over-flight above the South China Sea. The Meeting noted the commitment of ASEAN Member States and China to ensure the full and effective implementation of the Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) in its entirety, and welcomed ASEAN Member States and China efforts to work towards the early conclusion of an effective Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC).	0	0	0	1	0	0	Published in EAS Archives	https://www.eesa.europa.eu/node/9447_en
2016	27-Sep	EU			Press Release	Key Delegation Activities: Update	1	0	0	2	EU's Security Role in the Region The EU has been following closely the developments in the region, especially in the South China Sea. The EU has strong interests in the region, be it from the trade point (80 % of world trade going through South China Sea) or from its role as a global actor promoting the rule of law. The EU has also made a statement on 15 July following the UNCLOS' Arbitral Tribunal Award (the EU is a contracting party to UNCLOS) acknowledging the Award and recalled its commitment to maintain a legal order of the seas and oceans based upon the principles of international law, UNCLOS, and to the peaceful settlement of disputes. The EU does not take a position on sovereignty aspects relating to claims. It expresses the need for the parties to the dispute to resolve it through peaceful means, to clarify their claims and pursue them in respect and in accordance with international law, including the work in the framework of UNCLOS. On this regard, the EU published a statement in March 2016 on the South China Sea calling on all claimants to resolve disputes peacefully and again following the ruling of the Permanent Court of Arbitration.	0	0	0	1	0	0	https://www.eesa.europa.eu/node/11274_en	
2016	30-Sep	EU	Mr. Tomasz Kozłowski/Ambassador of the European Union	India	Speech	Prospects for EU-India Security Cooperation	1	0	0	1	Are there more possibilities for an active EU role in the Indian Ocean? I believe that the EU can work with India in reducing potential rivalry and tension in the Indian Ocean, which would be destabilising for the whole world. The same goes in case of tension in the East and South China Seas. The EU and India could thus contribute to establishing a multilateral engagement in the Indian Ocean, by building on existing arrangements and platforms (such as the Indian Ocean Rim Association). Of course both India and the EU could join forces in promoting the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, as the basis of maritime governance. They could also work more closely in the field of maritime surveillance, for example by exploring ways to connect networks of different maritime security regimes, counter-piracy, disaster relief efforts, and common training and military exercises. One can mention also the potential for cooperation on land, where piracy's root causes lie; for instance, in maritime capacity-building projects in countries in the Horn of Africa which face particular challenges. The EU and India could also develop initiatives to establish track-II mechanisms for dialogue on maritime security, both in the Indian Ocean Region and the East and South China Seas. The two partners have already proved that they can cooperate efficiently in the maritime domain. They have done so already in the Contact Group on Piracy Off the coast of Somalia (the reduction of High Seas Risk Zone – as an example). I firmly believe that they can expand and develop this cooperation in a wider context, perhaps by replacing the existing anti-piracy dialogue with a broader, maritime security dialogue.	0	0	0	1	0	0	https://www.eesa.europa.eu/node/12382_en	

Date	Event	EU Actor	Partner	Document Type	Summary	0	1	0	-	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
2017-6-Oct	Joint Statement	EU	India	Joint Statement 14th India-EU Summit, New Delhi, 6 October 2017	India and the EU reaffirmed their commitment to enhance maritime security cooperation in the Indian Ocean and beyond. Both sides noted the recent joint manoeuvres (PASSEX) between the EU Naval Force and the Indian Navy off the coast of Somalia, as a successful example of naval cooperation. The EU looks forward to India's possible participation in escorting World Food Program vessels in the near future. They also underlined the importance of freedom of navigation, overflight and peaceful resolution of disputes, in accordance with the universally recognised principles of International Law, notably the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) 1982. Both leaders attached importance to the security, stability, connectivity and sustainable development of Oceans and Seas in the context of developing the "blue economy"	0	1	0	-	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2017-6-Oct	Press Release	EU		European Union generates global action for our ocean		0	0	1	-	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
2017-19-Oct	Speech	EU		Remarks by High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini upon arrival at the European Council		0	0	1	-	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
2017-2-Nov	Press Release	EU	Lao PDR	A Delegation of the European Parliament visits the Lao PDR	In addition, the Delegation received first-hand information on regional issues that Laos is well aware of as the previous ASEAN Chair, such as the South China Sea issue, the border conflict with Cambodia and its relations with China and Vietnam. EU countries also wish to witness and deepen our relationship with ASEAN, based on mutual respect, common interests and shared values. Unfortunately, the world has become a more dangerous and unpredictable place in recent years. Rapidly evolving international realities over four decades, ASEAN and the European Union have forged a relationship in which we can rightly be proud. The potential for greater engagement is enormous. From trade to climate, from maritime security to counter-terrorism, together we can make our two regions	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	
2017-13-Nov	Op-Ed	EU		Op-ed article by President Donald Tusk: "In a changing world, Asia and Europe need to deepen ties"		0	1	0	-	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
2017-14-Nov	Speech	EU	ASEAN	Remarks by President Donald Tusk at the ASEAN-EU commemorative summit in Manila		0	1	0	-	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
2017-14-Nov	Joint Statement	EU	ASEAN	Press statement of the ASEAN-EU commemorative summit on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the establishment of ASEAN-EU dialogue relations		0	1	0	-	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	
2018-17-Feb	Speech	EU		Speech by President Jean-Claude Juncker at the 54th Munich Security Conference		1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	
2018-20-Feb	Press Release	EU		President Juncker at the Munich Security Conference: EU to become more capable of world politics		1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	
2018-27-Feb	Press Release	EU	ASEAN	EU and ASEAN young leaders address shared global challenges		1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	
2018-28-May	Op-Ed	EU		Europe and Asia – together for a more secure world		0	1	0	-	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
2018-28-May	Document	EU		Enhanced EU Security Cooperation in and with Asia		0	1	0	-	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	
2018-1-Jun	Press Release	EU	China	Remarks by High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini at the joint press point with Wang Yi, State Councilor and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China		0	0	1	-	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
2018-8-Jun	Speech	EU	G7	Remarks by President Donald Tusk before the G7 summit in Charlevoix, Canada		1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	
2018-9-Jun	Communiqué	EU	G7	The Charlevoix G7 Summit Communiqué		1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	
2018-26-Jun	Document	EU		Council conclusions on the revision of the European Union Maritime Security Strategy (EUMSS) Action Plan (26 June 2018)		1	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	

2018	16-Jul	EU	Jean-Claude Juncker/President of EC; Donald Tusk/President of European Council	China	Joint Statement	Joint statement of the 20th EU-China Summit	1	0	0	2	China, the EU and its Member States are parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and respect the maritime order based on international law. The EU welcomes the ongoing consultations between China and ASEAN countries aimed at the conclusion of an effective Code of Conduct (CoC) for the South China Sea. The EU and China call upon all relevant parties to engage in dialogue, to settle disputes peacefully, and to refrain from actions likely to increase tensions.	0	0	0	1	0	0	chrome-extension://efadbe8mmmbhpcjgpldefidndkaj/https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/36165/final-eu-cn-joint-statement-consolidated-text-with-climate-change-clean-energy-annex.pdf	
2018	16-Jul	EU	Jean-Claude Juncker/President of EC; Donald Tusk/President of European Council	China	Speech	President Jean-Claude Juncker at the joint press conference with Donald Tusk, President of the European Council, and Mr Li Keqiang, Premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China at the EU-China Summit	0	0	1	-		1	0	0	0	0	0	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/SPEECH_18_454	
2018	16-Jul	EU	Jean-Claude Juncker/President of EC; Donald Tusk/President of European Council	China	Press Release	EU-China Summit: deepening the strategic global partnership	0	0	1	-		1	0	0	0	0	0	Issues addressed: the Korean Peninsula, their commitment to the continued, full and effective implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action – the Iran nuclear deal; joint, coordinated work on the peace process in Afghanistan; and the situation in eastern Ukraine and the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol.	
2018	17-Jul	EU	Jean-Claude Juncker/President of EC; Donald Tusk/President of European Council	China	Joint Statement	Joint statement of the 20th EU-China Summit	1	0	0	2	China, the EU and its Member States are parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and respect the maritime order based on international law. The EU welcomes the ongoing consultations between China and ASEAN countries aimed at the conclusion of an effective Code of Conduct (CoC) for the South China Sea. The EU and China call upon all relevant parties to engage in dialogue, to settle disputes peacefully, and to refrain from actions likely to increase tensions.	0	0	0	1	0	0	Archived EEAS Document	https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/48424_en
2018	17-Jul	EU	Jean-Claude Juncker/President of EC; Donald Tusk/President of European Council	Japan	Joint Statement	Japan-EU Summit Joint Statement	1	0	0	1	We also had good and constructive discussions on foreign and security policy issues. We confirmed common interests and concerns. We affirmed our intention to contribute jointly to international peace and stability based on the rule of law and through intensified consultation and coordination on global and regional issues, including our joint support for the Iran Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action and our shared commitments to addressing the issues of North Korea, Ukraine and Russia, maritime security, including the South and East China Seas, and non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, based on the Strategic Partnership Agreement signed today.	0	0	0	1	0	0	Archived EEAS Document	https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/48481_en
2018	3-Aug	EU	Federica Mogherini/the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission	Singapore	Speech	Speech by HR/VP Mogherini at the lecture "EU as a Global Actor" at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore	1	0	0	1	The European Union's engagement in this region is not new and it is here to stay. One of our first security missions abroad was back in 2005, a monitoring mission to accompany the peace process in Aceh, Indonesia, that we launched back then. Since then, our security cooperation with South-East Asia has grown much stronger and we are working to accompany peace processes; I just mentioned Myanmar as the most recent and probably striking example of our times, we are working together with Vietnam and Australia on maritime security, and we took part in military exercises with ASEAN.	0	0	0	1	0	0	Archived EEAS Document	https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/49112_en
2018	11-Sep	EU	Federica Mogherini/the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission		Speech	Speech by HR/VP Mogherini at the plenary session of the European Parliament on the state of the EU-China relations	1	0	0	1	So just to mention a few examples: I know that the European Union is perceived as mainly an economic and trade player, but we are expanding our role also in the security domain, not only the hard, traditional security, but also the non-traditional security field from cyber, to maritime, to hybrid threats.	0	0	0	0	1	0	Dialogues and engagement are the best way forward for us – not just for trade, but on all issues where we disagree with China. I could mention the situation in the South China Sea, restrictions to freedom of expression in Hong Kong, and we regret that the dialogue with Taiwan has been frozen for the last two years.	
2018	11-Sep	EU	Federica Mogherini/the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission		Speech	Speech by HR/VP Mogherini at the plenary session of the European Parliament on the state of the EU-China relations	1	0	0	1	But of course the most outstanding disagreement we have with China concerns the human rights situation in China, as underlined in your Report.	0	0	0	0	1	0		
2018	19-Sep	EU	EC; High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy		Press Release	EU steps up its strategy for connecting Europe and Asia	0	0	1	-		1	0	0	0	0	0	As a regional level, the EU is able to draw on its experience of contributing to the enhanced connectivity and integration of various regional cooperation structures, for example in the Baltic and Black Seas, as well as with ASEAN and as part of the ASEM process. Fostering increased region-to-region cooperation in connectivity would enable the European Union to increase openness, increasing on sophisticated data networks and transfers, energy connections, perfectly timed value chains and the mobility of people. Managing these flows means finding the right balance between facilitating them and ensuring their safety and security. In an era of hybrid threats and terrorism, "low security" matters. Access to trade routes remains dependent on an adequate	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/pr_18_5803
2018	19-Sep	EU	EC; High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy		Statement Declaration	JOINT COMMUNICATION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE, THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS AND THE EUROPEAN INVESTMENT BANK: Connecting Europe and Asia – Building blocks for an EU Strategy	0	0	1	-		1	0	0	0	0	0	chrome-extension://efadbe8mmmbhpcjgpldefidndkaj/https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/joint_communication_-_connecting_europe_and_asia_-_building_blocks_for_an_eu_strategy_2018-09-19.pdf	

2018	28-Sep	ASEP	EU & Member States	Joint Statement	Declaration of the Tenth Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership Meeting	0	0	1	-		1	0	0	0	0	0	Issues addressed: Rohingya Myanmar, North Korea denuclearization	chrome-extension://efad8bmmmbhpcjgclcfndmkaj/http://www.epgencms.europarl.europa.eu/cmsdata/uuid/3efcb2a2-74d9-4b14-49a7-889196c4c742/final-declaration-clean-pretty-layout-28-9-rev3.pdf
2018	19-Oct	EU	Jean-Claude Juncker/President of EC; Donald Tusk/President of European Council	ASEM	Press Release	ASEM Summit: Europe and Asia – Global Partners for Global Challenges	0	1	0	-		0	0	1	0	0	At the Leaders' Meeting, alongside matters of trade, connectivity and transport, leaders addressed global peace and security challenges, including climate change, non-proliferation, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action – the Iran nuclear deal, counter-terrorism, maritime security and migration. They agreed to strengthen the EU-ASEAN relationship, in particular to address global challenges and to work together to reinforce the rules-based international order and multilateralism.	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ipp_18_6136
2018	19-Oct	EU	Federica Mogherini/the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission	ASEM	Speech	Remarks by High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini at the press conference following the Europe-Asia Meeting (ASEM) Summit	0	1	0	-		0	1	0	0	0	I would like to mention a couple of more points that were at the centre of our work: our common work on security; the issues that are on top of our foreign policy agendas; and strengthening cooperation between us on international and regional security. If we see developments in our regions - both in Asia and in Europe - we see the need to protect and promote a rules-based international order - not only on trade, but also on security - and a cooperative approach to foreign policy.	Focus on Korea and Iran https://www.ecas.europa.eu/node/52467_en
2018	19-Oct	ASEM	EU & Member States	Joint Statement	Asia-Europe Meeting 12: Global Partners for Global Challenges	0	1	0	-		0	1	0	0	0	0	Leaders reaffirmed their commitment to maintain peace and stability and to ensure maritime security and safety, freedom of navigation and overflight and to combat piracy in full compliance with international law. They underlined the critical importance of peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with international law, in particular the UN Charter and the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), of refraining from the threat or use of force and unilateral actions that are against international law, in particular UNCLOS and of pursuing confidence building measures, and self-restraint.	chrome-extension://efad8bmmmbhpcjgclcfndmkaj/http://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/36803/asm12-chair-statement.pdf
2018	21-Nov	EU	Federica Mogherini/the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission	Australia	Speech	Remarks by High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini at the EU-Australia Leadership Forum 2018	1	0	0	1		0	0	0	1	0	In recent years this corporation has grown. We Europeans now know that our world is smaller and more connected than it has ever been and security in the in the Indo-Pacific region is today also crucial to our own European security. From the Gulf of Aden, to the South China Sea, from Afghanistan to North Korea: we share the same security agenda there . Our Australian friends today, I believe, see us Europeans as a global security provider with a strong role to play also on the other side of the world. We have started to cooperate on maritime security. We took part in military exercises with ASEAN [Association of South East Asian Nations] - this is new. And we work together to prevent radicalisation and to fight terrorism. We take part in the same military missions to preserve peace and security around the world. The theme that gathers us today - security - is a perfect illustration of our connectivity. The European Union and Indonesia share by large the same security challenges and threats, with distances and borders providing just an illusion of protection. Take maritime security: ninety percent of international trade is maritime, and two thirds of the world's maritime trade passes through Asian whilst 42% of the value of seaborne trade is managed by EU ship-owners, 3 of the 5 largest container shipping line are European, Maersk, MSC, CMA-CMG. The EU is the first trade actor in the world and the first provider and recipient of FDI. The EU is the first provider of FDI in ASEAN. One could imagine that the EU wants to impose its rule as it used to do for centuries. No, we have learned the hard way, throughout the mistakes made in the XIXth and XXth centuries that a rules based approach, though cooperation, is much more effective and less costly than aggression, domination, and oppression. It's no surprise that the European Union wants to promote rules-based good governance also at sea, freedom of navigation, and respect for international law and mechanisms to settle any disputes. Take piracy and freedom of navigation. The EU set up a multinational maritime mission under UN mandate to combat piracy in the Gulf of Aden, operation Atalanta 10 years ago. This mission is very successful (you will know more today) up to a point where piracy has almost ceased in this region and in addition, good learning ground for military cooperation and interoperability of forces. We are glad that the Indonesian Navy is showing interest. Several European Navies also let their vessels cruise through the South China Sea in order to make clear that freedom of navigation in international waters is a fundamental principle which must be respected.	https://www.ecas.europa.eu/node/54218_en
2018	30-Nov	EU	H.E. Vincent Gáirend/the EU Ambassador to Indonesia	Indonesia	Speech	Speech by H.E. Vincent Gáirend, the EU Ambassador to Indonesia, at the Public Dialogue "Advancing EU-Indonesia Security and Defence Partnership"	1	0	0	1		0	0	0	0	1	Entails action, talk of FONOP operations despite briefly	https://www.ecas.europa.eu/node/54676_en

Year	Date	EU Actor	Partner	Document Type	Topic	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
2019	22-Jan	EU	ASEAN	Joint Statement	Joint statement of the 22nd EU-ASEAN ministerial meeting	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
<p>We reaffirm our commitment to strengthen EU-ASEAN relations and cooperation across all areas of mutual interest, as outlined in the EU-ASEAN Plan of Action 2018-2022. We hold wide-ranging discussions on how to further strengthen EU-ASEAN cooperation, especially on global challenges, such as fair and open trade; the promotion and protection of human rights; cybersecurity; sustainable development; narrowing the development gap; connectivity; maritime security; the circular economy; energy security and clean energy; smart cities; healthy oceans; environmental protection; climate change; biodiversity; and counter-terrorism.</p> <p>We resolve to enhance political and security dialogue and cooperation between ASEAN and the EU, including at the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), such as in maritime security, cybersecurity, counter-terrorism, transnational crimes, and border management, and in this connection, look forward to the adoption of the EU-ASEAN Work Plan to Combat Terrorism and Transnational Crime for 2018-2020, and note the EU's interest in participating in the ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus Experts' Working Group activities.</p> <p>We underscore the importance of the full and effective implementation of the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) in its entirety, and support the efforts of ASEAN Member States and China to work towards the early conclusion of an effective Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC). The EU expressed its expectation that the Code of Conduct would be consistent with international law, including UNCLOS.</p> <p>We underline the importance of the respect of the rule of law, sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, maritime security and safety, freedom of navigation and overflight, peaceful resolution of disputes, in accordance with the universally recognized principles of international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and the relevant standards and recommended practices of the International Civil Aviation Organization and the International Maritime Organisation, and emphasise the importance of non-militarisation and self-restraint.</p> <p>The debate inside the room reflected the depth and breadth of our relations, from conflict in the Middle East, to the importance of the South China Sea and the Rohingya crisis, to promoting trade, investment, or higher education. Much was said but there was also a unity of purpose – a common desire to strengthen EU-ASEAN cooperation including in new areas such as combating unregulated fishing, or launching a new high level dialogue on environment and climate change, and an agreement in principle to upgrade our relations to a strategic partnership.</p> <p>This is what makes ASEAN so important for the EU in Asia – not just as a community of ten, but being also the core of the East Asia Summit, the ASEAN Regional Forum, or the ASEM+ process. And this is where ASEAN and the EU are already rightly expanding their security cooperation – from trafficking in persons to cyber-crime, from maritime security to transnational crime and counter-terrorism.</p> <p>Both ASEAN and the EU see regional integration as the most effective way to foster stability and prosperity. We are both committed to addressing global challenges through a system based on rules and multilateralism. We both have an interest in promoting fair and open markets, in shaping global economic and environmental rules, and in sustainable access to each other through open sea, land and air routes, in full respect of international law.</p> <p>As global stakeholders, the EU and ASEAN have the responsibility to advance the international rules-based order and preserve our "global commons." I have been immensely privileged, as the EU's first ambassador to ASEAN, to have seen our strategic relationship go from strength to strength. I am confident that it has even further to run and that, together, we will play a leading role in developing the global responses needed for the challenges of tomorrow.</p> <p>Second, we want to deepen our action in support of international peace, security and sustainable development. Building on the positive cooperation with China on the Iran nuclear agreement, we want to work with them for instance on the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, the peace processes in Afghanistan, or in addressing the Rohingya crisis in Myanmar. China should, however, accept binding arbitration rulings issued under the UN convention of the Law of the Sea related to its maritime claims in the South China Sea. We also want to cooperate with China and promote high governance standards, sustainability and a level playing field in respect to investments and economic cooperation with third countries, in Asia, Western Balkans or Africa, in particular in the field of infrastructure. We also want to engage more effectively with China on human rights issues.</p> <p>China is, simultaneously, in different policy areas, a cooperation partner with whom the EU has closely aligned objectives, a negotiating partner with whom the EU needs to find a balance of interests, an economic competitor in the pursuit of technological leadership, and a systemic rival promoting alternative models of governance. This requires a flexible and pragmatic whole-of-EU approach enabling a principled defence of interests and values. The tools and modalities of EU engagement with China should also be differentiated depending on the issues and policies at stake. The EU should use linkages across different policy areas and sectors in order to exert more leverage in pursuit of its objectives.</p> <p>China's maritime claims in the South China Sea and the refusal to accept the binding arbitration rulings issued under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea affect the international legal order and make it harder to resolve tensions affecting sea-lanes of communication vital to the EU's economic interests. They also stand in contrast to China's demands for representation on Arctic issues.</p> <p>China, the EU and its Member States are parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and respect the maritime order based on international law and uphold freedoms of navigation and overflight enjoyed by all states in accordance with international law. The EU welcomes the ongoing consultations between China and ASEAN countries aimed at the conclusion of an effective Code of Conduct (CoC) for the South China Sea. China and the EU call upon all relevant parties to engage in dialogue, to settle disputes peacefully, and to refrain from actions likely to increase tensions.</p>						https://www.ec.europa.eu/role/54912_en											
2019	18-Feb	EU	Francisco Fontan EU Ambassador to ASEAN	Op-Ed	"The EU and ASEAN: Advancing Partnership for Sustainability", op-ed by EU Ambassador to ASEAN Francisco Fontan	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
<p>Both ASEAN and the EU see regional integration as the most effective way to foster stability and prosperity. We are both committed to addressing global challenges through a system based on rules and multilateralism. We both have an interest in promoting fair and open markets, in shaping global economic and environmental rules, and in sustainable access to each other through open sea, land and air routes, in full respect of international law.</p> <p>As global stakeholders, the EU and ASEAN have the responsibility to advance the international rules-based order and preserve our "global commons." I have been immensely privileged, as the EU's first ambassador to ASEAN, to have seen our strategic relationship go from strength to strength. I am confident that it has even further to run and that, together, we will play a leading role in developing the global responses needed for the challenges of tomorrow.</p> <p>Second, we want to deepen our action in support of international peace, security and sustainable development. Building on the positive cooperation with China on the Iran nuclear agreement, we want to work with them for instance on the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula, the peace processes in Afghanistan, or in addressing the Rohingya crisis in Myanmar. China should, however, accept binding arbitration rulings issued under the UN convention of the Law of the Sea related to its maritime claims in the South China Sea. We also want to cooperate with China and promote high governance standards, sustainability and a level playing field in respect to investments and economic cooperation with third countries, in Asia, Western Balkans or Africa, in particular in the field of infrastructure. We also want to engage more effectively with China on human rights issues.</p>						https://www.ec.europa.eu/role/54456_en											
2019	12-Mar	EU	Jyoti Katarina/Vice-President for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness of the European Commission	Speech	Vice-President Katarina: College read-out and remarks on EU-China - a strategic outlook	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
<p>China is, simultaneously, in different policy areas, a cooperation partner with whom the EU has closely aligned objectives, a negotiating partner with whom the EU needs to find a balance of interests, an economic competitor in the pursuit of technological leadership, and a systemic rival promoting alternative models of governance. This requires a flexible and pragmatic whole-of-EU approach enabling a principled defence of interests and values. The tools and modalities of EU engagement with China should also be differentiated depending on the issues and policies at stake. The EU should use linkages across different policy areas and sectors in order to exert more leverage in pursuit of its objectives.</p> <p>China's maritime claims in the South China Sea and the refusal to accept the binding arbitration rulings issued under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea affect the international legal order and make it harder to resolve tensions affecting sea-lanes of communication vital to the EU's economic interests. They also stand in contrast to China's demands for representation on Arctic issues.</p> <p>China, the EU and its Member States are parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and respect the maritime order based on international law and uphold freedoms of navigation and overflight enjoyed by all states in accordance with international law. The EU welcomes the ongoing consultations between China and ASEAN countries aimed at the conclusion of an effective Code of Conduct (CoC) for the South China Sea. China and the EU call upon all relevant parties to engage in dialogue, to settle disputes peacefully, and to refrain from actions likely to increase tensions.</p>						https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_19_1664											
2019	12-Mar	EU	EC High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy	Document	JOINT COMMUNICATION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL AND THE COUNCIL EU-China – A strategic outlook	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
<p>China is, simultaneously, in different policy areas, a cooperation partner with whom the EU has closely aligned objectives, a negotiating partner with whom the EU needs to find a balance of interests, an economic competitor in the pursuit of technological leadership, and a systemic rival promoting alternative models of governance. This requires a flexible and pragmatic whole-of-EU approach enabling a principled defence of interests and values. The tools and modalities of EU engagement with China should also be differentiated depending on the issues and policies at stake. The EU should use linkages across different policy areas and sectors in order to exert more leverage in pursuit of its objectives.</p> <p>China's maritime claims in the South China Sea and the refusal to accept the binding arbitration rulings issued under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea affect the international legal order and make it harder to resolve tensions affecting sea-lanes of communication vital to the EU's economic interests. They also stand in contrast to China's demands for representation on Arctic issues.</p> <p>China, the EU and its Member States are parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and respect the maritime order based on international law and uphold freedoms of navigation and overflight enjoyed by all states in accordance with international law. The EU welcomes the ongoing consultations between China and ASEAN countries aimed at the conclusion of an effective Code of Conduct (CoC) for the South China Sea. China and the EU call upon all relevant parties to engage in dialogue, to settle disputes peacefully, and to refrain from actions likely to increase tensions.</p>						Yes											
2019	9-Apr	EU	Donald Tusk/President of the European Council; Jean-Claude Juncker/President of the European Commission	Joint Statement	EU-China Summit Joint statement	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
<p>China is, simultaneously, in different policy areas, a cooperation partner with whom the EU has closely aligned objectives, a negotiating partner with whom the EU needs to find a balance of interests, an economic competitor in the pursuit of technological leadership, and a systemic rival promoting alternative models of governance. This requires a flexible and pragmatic whole-of-EU approach enabling a principled defence of interests and values. The tools and modalities of EU engagement with China should also be differentiated depending on the issues and policies at stake. The EU should use linkages across different policy areas and sectors in order to exert more leverage in pursuit of its objectives.</p> <p>China's maritime claims in the South China Sea and the refusal to accept the binding arbitration rulings issued under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea affect the international legal order and make it harder to resolve tensions affecting sea-lanes of communication vital to the EU's economic interests. They also stand in contrast to China's demands for representation on Arctic issues.</p> <p>China, the EU and its Member States are parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and respect the maritime order based on international law and uphold freedoms of navigation and overflight enjoyed by all states in accordance with international law. The EU welcomes the ongoing consultations between China and ASEAN countries aimed at the conclusion of an effective Code of Conduct (CoC) for the South China Sea. China and the EU call upon all relevant parties to engage in dialogue, to settle disputes peacefully, and to refrain from actions likely to increase tensions.</p>						https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2019/04/09/remarks-by-president-donald-tusk-after-the-eu-china-summit-in-brussels/											
2019	9-Apr	EU	Donald Tusk/President of the European Council	Speech	Remarks by President Donald Tusk after the EU-China summit in Brussels	0	0	1	-	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<p>China is, simultaneously, in different policy areas, a cooperation partner with whom the EU has closely aligned objectives, a negotiating partner with whom the EU needs to find a balance of interests, an economic competitor in the pursuit of technological leadership, and a systemic rival promoting alternative models of governance. This requires a flexible and pragmatic whole-of-EU approach enabling a principled defence of interests and values. The tools and modalities of EU engagement with China should also be differentiated depending on the issues and policies at stake. The EU should use linkages across different policy areas and sectors in order to exert more leverage in pursuit of its objectives.</p> <p>China's maritime claims in the South China Sea and the refusal to accept the binding arbitration rulings issued under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea affect the international legal order and make it harder to resolve tensions affecting sea-lanes of communication vital to the EU's economic interests. They also stand in contrast to China's demands for representation on Arctic issues.</p> <p>China, the EU and its Member States are parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and respect the maritime order based on international law and uphold freedoms of navigation and overflight enjoyed by all states in accordance with international law. The EU welcomes the ongoing consultations between China and ASEAN countries aimed at the conclusion of an effective Code of Conduct (CoC) for the South China Sea. China and the EU call upon all relevant parties to engage in dialogue, to settle disputes peacefully, and to refrain from actions likely to increase tensions.</p>						Focus on WTO											
2019	1-Jun	EU	Federica Mogherini/the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission	Speech	18th Asia Security Summit, The IISS Shangri La Dialogue	0	0	1	-	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<p>China is, simultaneously, in different policy areas, a cooperation partner with whom the EU has closely aligned objectives, a negotiating partner with whom the EU needs to find a balance of interests, an economic competitor in the pursuit of technological leadership, and a systemic rival promoting alternative models of governance. This requires a flexible and pragmatic whole-of-EU approach enabling a principled defence of interests and values. The tools and modalities of EU engagement with China should also be differentiated depending on the issues and policies at stake. The EU should use linkages across different policy areas and sectors in order to exert more leverage in pursuit of its objectives.</p> <p>China's maritime claims in the South China Sea and the refusal to accept the binding arbitration rulings issued under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea affect the international legal order and make it harder to resolve tensions affecting sea-lanes of communication vital to the EU's economic interests. They also stand in contrast to China's demands for representation on Arctic issues.</p> <p>China, the EU and its Member States are parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and respect the maritime order based on international law and uphold freedoms of navigation and overflight enjoyed by all states in accordance with international law. The EU welcomes the ongoing consultations between China and ASEAN countries aimed at the conclusion of an effective Code of Conduct (CoC) for the South China Sea. China and the EU call upon all relevant parties to engage in dialogue, to settle disputes peacefully, and to refrain from actions likely to increase tensions.</p>						https://www.iiss.org/events/shangri-la-dialogue/shangri-la-dialogue-2019											
2019	Jul	EU		Document	Enhancing security cooperation in and with Asia	0	1	0	-	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
<p>China is, simultaneously, in different policy areas, a cooperation partner with whom the EU has closely aligned objectives, a negotiating partner with whom the EU needs to find a balance of interests, an economic competitor in the pursuit of technological leadership, and a systemic rival promoting alternative models of governance. This requires a flexible and pragmatic whole-of-EU approach enabling a principled defence of interests and values. The tools and modalities of EU engagement with China should also be differentiated depending on the issues and policies at stake. The EU should use linkages across different policy areas and sectors in order to exert more leverage in pursuit of its objectives.</p> <p>China's maritime claims in the South China Sea and the refusal to accept the binding arbitration rulings issued under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea affect the international legal order and make it harder to resolve tensions affecting sea-lanes of communication vital to the EU's economic interests. They also stand in contrast to China's demands for representation on Arctic issues.</p> <p>China, the EU and its Member States are parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and respect the maritime order based on international law and uphold freedoms of navigation and overflight enjoyed by all states in accordance with international law. The EU welcomes the ongoing consultations between China and ASEAN countries aimed at the conclusion of an effective Code of Conduct (CoC) for the South China Sea. China and the EU call upon all relevant parties to engage in dialogue, to settle disputes peacefully, and to refrain from actions likely to increase tensions.</p>						https://www.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/factsheet_en_asia_security_july_2019.pdf											

2019	1-Aug	EU	Federica Mogherini/the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission	ASEAN	Speech	Speech by High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini at the EU-ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference in Bangkok, Thailand	1	0	0	1	<p>If you think of our security cooperation: What happens, for instance, in the Korean peninsula, that I know is so relevant and pressing for you, or in the South China Sea, matters also for us Europeans. This is why in these years we have coordinated closer than ever also on security issues. We Europeans have, for the first time ever, taken part in an ASEAN naval exercise. And I am grateful for the opportunity we have had to participate in the East Asia Summit.</p> <p>We want to engage on security matters in Asia and with Asia even more. That is why we will also deploy military advisors in several of our European Union embassies across Asia – starting with our Mission to ASEAN in Jakarta.</p>	0	0	0	0	0	1	https://www.eesa.europa.eu/node/66098_en		
2019	1-Aug	EU	Federica Mogherini/the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission	ASEAN	Press Release	High Representative/Vice-President Mogherini holds bilateral meetings in the margins of the EU-ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference	1	0	0	1	<p>Federica Mogherini and the State Councillor and Foreign Minister of China, Wang Yi focused on the follow-up to the most recent EU-China Summit, including trade and investment issues. They discussed increased cooperation on the Afghanistan peace process, Iran, Venezuela and the South China Sea.</p>	0	0	0	1	0	0	https://www.eesa.europa.eu/node/66106_en		
2019	2-Aug	EU	Federica Mogherini/the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission	ASEAN	Press Release	Strengthening the partnership between the European Union and Southeast Asia top of the agenda as Ministers meet in Bangkok	1	0	0	1	<p>"We believe that Asian security is also European security, and that Asian prosperity is also European prosperity", said the High Representative, stressing the importance to further engage on security cooperation. "We have coordinated closer than ever also on security issues. We Europeans have, for the first time ever, taken part in an ASEAN naval exercise. And I am grateful for the opportunity we have had to participate in the East Asia Summit".</p> <p>On the South China Sea, the High Representative called for transparency and the rapid conclusion of negotiations for a legally binding Code of Conduct between China and ASEAN as well as the respect for international law, including UNCLOS.</p>	0	0	0	1	0	0	https://www.eesa.europa.eu/node/66146_en		
2019	2-Aug	EU	Federica Mogherini/the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission	ASEAN	Press Release	A focus on security issues as High Representative/Vice-President Mogherini participates in the ASEAN Regional Forum and holds bilateral meetings in the margins	1	0	0	1	<p>She called for transparency and the rapid conclusion of negotiations for a legally binding Code of Conduct in the South China Sea between China and ASEAN as well as the respect for international law, including UNCLOS.</p>	0	0	0	1	0	0	https://www.eesa.europa.eu/node/66143_en		
2019	5-Aug	EU	Federica Mogherini/the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission	Vietnam	Speech	Remarks by High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini at the press conference with Pham Binh Minh, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Vietnam	1	0	0	2	<p>Last but not least, Mr Minister, let me reassure you that the European Union fully shares your position and your concerns when it comes to the situation and the increasing tensions in the South China Sea. We believe that these tensions and this militarisation is definitely not conducive to a peaceful environment. As the European Union, we always stand for the freedom of navigation and overflight, which is in the interest of all states. We support transparency in and the rapid conclusion of negotiations for a legally binding code of conduct between China and ASEAN. You can count on the European Union to always defend not only the need to decrease tensions, but also and first of all, the need to have full respect for international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).</p>	0	0	0	0	1	0	https://www.eesa.europa.eu/node/66186_en		
2019	6-Aug	EU	Federica Mogherini/the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission	ASEAN	Speech	EU keen to strengthen security ties with Asia: foreign policy chief	1	0	0	1	<p>Our partners in Asia are increasingly looking to the EU to be present and engaged on security matters in the region. What happens in the Korean Peninsula, or in the South China Sea, matters to all of us. This is why in my five years as high representative I have worked for the EU and Asia to cooperate more closely than ever. Some of that is through active engagement with our partners in the region, such as at the ASEAN Regional Forum later this week. Some of that is through concrete steps with individual countries in the region. So after Bangkok I will be in Hanoi to sign an agreement on Vietnam's participation in our European military and civilian missions: I expect it to be the first of many with our friends in ASEAN, because our missions do not only serve European interests, but serve first and foremost the interest of peace and security globally. It is the EU as a whole that has decided to enhance its engagement on security issues in and with Asia, and we are intent on delivering on that objective.</p> <p>The question about the Indo-Pacific reminds me about the debate on the borders of Europe: Where does Europe start? Where does it end? You can ask 10 people and get 10 different answers. What ultimately matters is not the semantics, but the content. Do we base ourselves on the same values, the same interests? International law, territorial integrity, freedom of navigation? If yes, we can all work together with our different concepts.</p> <p>The ASEAN way is often very close to the European way, and ASEAN's outlook on the Indo-Pacific is no exception. ASEAN's approach is inclusive; they want to promote a region of dialogue and cooperation instead of rivalry. And the areas of cooperation set out by ASEAN – maritime security, connectivity, the sustainable development goals, and economic cooperation – are objectives that we as the EU share.</p>	0	0	0	1	0	0			
2019	26-Aug	G7	EU, France, Germany, Italy		Joint Statement	G7 Leaders' Declaration - Biarritz, France, 26 August 2019	0	0	1	-	<p>Unilateral actions during the past weeks in the South China Sea have resulted in mounting tensions and a deterioration of the maritime security environment which represents a serious threat to the peaceful economic development of the region.</p> <p>It is crucial for all parties in the region to exercise self-restraint, take concrete steps towards reverting to the status quo ante, refrain from militarising the region and resolve disputes through peaceful means in accordance with international law, notably the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The parties could also seek third party assistance in the form of mediation or arbitration to facilitate the settlement of their respective claims, if deemed useful.</p> <p>The EU will continue to fully support regional ASEAN-led processes, in order to further promote a rules-based regional and international order, to consolidate multilateral cooperation, as well as closer cooperation with third parties. We are looking forward to a swift conclusion, in a transparent manner, of the talks on an effective, substantive and legally binding Code of Conduct.</p> <p>The EU is committed to the legal order for the seas and oceans based upon international law, maritime security and cooperation, as well as the freedom of navigation and overflight, in the interest of all states.</p>	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	Issues addressed: Iran, Ukraine, Libya, Hongkong	https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2019/08/26/g7-leaders-declaration-biarritz-26-august-2019/
2019	28-Aug	EU	EEAS		Statement Declaration	Statement by the Spokesperson on recent developments in the South China Sea	1	0	0	3	<p>The EU will continue to fully support regional ASEAN-led processes, in order to further promote a rules-based regional and international order, to consolidate multilateral cooperation, as well as closer cooperation with third parties. We are looking forward to a swift conclusion, in a transparent manner, of the talks on an effective, substantive and legally binding Code of Conduct.</p> <p>The EU is committed to the legal order for the seas and oceans based upon international law, maritime security and cooperation, as well as the freedom of navigation and overflight, in the interest of all states.</p>	0	0	0	0	0	1	https://www.eesa.europa.eu/ees/statement-spokesperson-recent-developments-south-china-sea_en		
2019	31-Oct	EU	Nicolas Chapuis/EU Ambassador to China	China	Press Release	First EU-China Maritime Security Seminar held in Hainan	0	1	0	-	<p>In his opening speech, EU Ambassador to China Nicolas Chapuis stressed the role of the EU as a maritime actor and global maritime security provider. The EU further promotes and implements the law-based order in the maritime domain, which is based on the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The EU is present in high-risk security areas through its CSDD Missions and Operations, such as EU NAVFOR Atalanta, which is also supported by China. In terms of peace and security, Ambassador Chapuis stressed the need to deepen the dialogue and engagement between the EU and China. The cooperation should be based on positive elements, however the differences should not be ignored and should be dealt with in a candid way. The stability of the strategic lines of communication, which are vital to the economic interests of the two sides, is of utmost importance.</p>	0	0	0	1	0	0	https://www.eesa.europa.eu/delegations/china/fm-ec-china-maritime-security-seminar-held-hainan_en		

2020	28-Jan	EU	EEAS	The Philippines	Press Release	Philippines: 1st Joint Committee assesses cooperation with the EU	1	0	0	1	The EU and the Philippines further reaffirmed that the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) is the overarching framework of legal order for the seas that must be respected by all countries. The Philippines noted that the EU looks forward to the swift conclusion, steered by the Philippines, of an effective and substantive Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC) that is consistent with international law, including the UNCLOS.	0	0	0	1	0	0	https://www.ec.europa.eu/eeas/philippines-1st-joint-committee-assesses-cooperation-eu_en	
2020	11-Feb	EU	EEAS	ASEAN	Press Release	EU-ASEAN: Senior Officials' Meeting Co-Chairs' Press Statement	1	0	0	1	We also exchanged views on regional and international issues of mutual interest and concern, including recent developments in the South China Sea, the situation in the Korean Peninsula, and transboundary challenges such as terrorism and cyber threats. There was also a comprehensive exchange of views from the Member States which are current members of the United Nations Security Council on their priorities for their respective terms. We discussed the importance of promoting the rules-based international order, including through upholding international law such as the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).	0	0	0	1	0	0	https://www.ec.europa.eu/eeas/eu-asean-senior-officials-12th-8999-meeting-co-chairs%E2%80%99-press-statement_en	
2020	14-May	EU	Josep Borrell High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy & Vice-President of The European Commission	Op-Ed	Trust and reciprocity: the necessary ingredients for EU-China cooperation	1	0	0	1	The EU's relation with China is so multi-faceted that our approach cannot be reduced to one simple prism. Our 2019 Strategic Outlook, endorsed by all EU member states, underlines that China is simultaneously a partner with whom the EU has closely aligned objectives; a negotiating partner, with whom the EU needs to find a balance of interests; an economic competitor in pursuit of technological leadership; and a systemic rival promoting alternative models of governance. But we also need to acknowledge that our approaches on multilateralism differ, for instance on the universality and indivisibility of human rights or when it comes to UNCLOS and the tensions in the South China Sea.	0	0	0	1	0	0	An Op-Ed published in multiple sources and republished by the EEAS on the official EU website	Yes	https://www.ec.europa.eu/eeas/trust-and-reciprocity-the-necessary-ingredients-eu-china-cooperation_en
2020	22-Jan	EU	EC	China	Press Release	EU-China Summit: Defending EU interests and values in a complex and vital partnership	0	1	0	-	The EU called on China to assume greater responsibility in dealing with global challenges through the rules-based international system, promoting international peace and security...The EU expressed concerns about the escalation of other regional conflicts and the importance of upholding international law in the maritime domain.	0	0	1	0	0	0	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ipr_20_1159	
2020	27-Aug	EU	EEAS	Other	Other	The Sinatra Doctrine: How the EU Should Deal with the US-China Competition	1	0	0	1	This is not a change in policy, but rather a development within the boundaries of the 2019 EU strategy on Beijing, which already identified China as a strategic partner with which the EU cooperates, as well as a competitor and a systemic rival. Let us not fall into the trap of seeing things in black and white: our relationship with China is and will inevitably be complicated because it is our second biggest trading partner, and which is in fact a necessary interlocutor if we are to solve global problems. At the same time, it is, inevitably, a technological and economic competitor. The problem with our relationship with China also lies in the difference between our political systems. China's expansionism is more visible in the South China Sea, where Beijing has increased its presence by creating artificial, militarised islands, in breach of the 2016 arbitration ruling in favour of its Southeast Asian neighbours.	0	0	0	0	1	0	Yes	https://www.ec.europa.eu/eeas/sinatra-doctrine-how-we-should-deal-us%E2%80%99s-china-competition_en
2020	14-Sep	EU; Germany	Charles Michel/President of the European Council; Ursula von der Leyen/President of the European Commission; Angela Merkel/Federal Chancellor of Germany	China	Press Release	EU-China Leaders' Meeting: Upholding EU values and interests at the highest level	1	0	0	1	On regional and international issues, the EU referred to the escalating tensions in the South China Sea, urging for self-restraint and a peaceful resolution of disputes in accordance with international law.	0	0	0	0	1	0	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ipr_20_1648	
2020	14-Sep	EU	Charles Michel/President of the European Council	China	Speech	Remarks by President Charles Michel after the EU-China leaders' meeting via video conference	1	0	0	1	We called on China to refrain from unilateral actions in the South China Sea, to respect international law, and avoid escalations. While we focus on COVID-19 and plan the recovery, we should be vigilant about the undercutting of the international rules-based order in other domains. We cannot allow countries to unilaterally undermine international law and maritime security in the South China Sea, thereby representing a serious threat to the peaceful development of the region. Any disruption or instability affects trade flows for everyone, at a time when the pandemic has already struck all our economic systems. Around 40% of the EU's foreign trade goes through the South China Sea. All parties should refrain from the threat or use of force, the militarisation of maritime features, and from any provocative actions. Instead, they should exercise self-restraint and resolve disputes through peaceful means, such as the dispute settlement mechanisms under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).	0	0	0	0	1	0	Low priority as it was only one sentence near the end of speech.	https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/09/14/remarks-by-president-charles-michel-after-the-eu-china-leaders-meeting-via-video-conference/
2020	18-Sep	EU	Josep Borrell High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy & Vice-President of The European Commission	Op-Ed	"ASEAN-EU: Strengthening our partnership is a necessity", opinion article by EU High Representative Josep Borrell	1	0	0	2	We look forward to the conclusion of the talks on an effective, substantive and legally binding Code of Conduct in the South China Sea, which should not prejudice the interests of third parties. Asian security is closely linked to European security. Also here, we need to intensify our cooperation. Last year, the EU signed an agreement on Vietnam's participation in our European military and civilian missions, which are deployed from the Indian Ocean to Africa. I hope it will be the first of many with our friends in ASEAN, because our missions do not only serve European interests. They serve the interest of peace and security in some of the most troubled parts of the world. In the European Union you will always find a trustworthy, reliable and predictable partner. We have no hidden agenda. Only a clear and public agenda: to defend the rules-based international system, and ensure all can enjoy the security and rights we sometimes take for granted.	0	0	0	0	0	1	https://www.ec.europa.eu/eeas/boom-eu-strengthening-our-partnership-is-a-necessity-opinion-article-eu-high-representative-josep_en		

2020	13-Nov	EU	Charles Michel/President of the European Council	ASEAN	Speech	Keynote speech by President Charles Michel at the ASEAN Business and Investment summit 2020	1	0	0	1	<p>Finally, we can only achieve those objectives when we agree on rules and respect them. This is why multilateralism is key.</p> <p>International cooperation is the most effective way to save lives – from the threat of COVID to the threat of climate change. This means reinforcing the United Nations. This means making the World Trade Organisation an effective organisation. This means supporting the World Health Organisation.</p> <p>We need to reinforce the rules-based international order and the respect for international law – from Ukraine and the Eastern Mediterranean to the South China Sea.</p> <p>Our economies and societies are so interlinked that Asian security is European security. We stand ready to play our role.</p> <p>Our partnership with ASEAN is at the heart of our policy in Asia. A strong ASEAN is squarely in the interest of the EU. It provides stability for the region, and drives prosperity for its citizens.</p> <p>A strong ASEAN is a like-minded partner for multilateralism. We want to further upgrade our partnership and make it truly strategic.</p> <p>In these times of global uncertainty, our common commitment to a multilateral, rules-based order, based on dialogue and mutual understanding, is more relevant and more crucial than ever.</p>	<p>https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press-press-releases/2020/11/13/keynote-speech-by-president-charles-michel-at-the-asean-business-and-investment-summit-2020/</p>
2020	26-Nov	EU	Charles Michel/President of the European Council; Ursula von der Leyen/President of the European Commission	Australia	Press Release	Joint press release: EU-Australia Leaders' Virtual Meeting	1	0	0	2	<p>The leaders agreed to enhance cooperation to promote shared interests in security and prosperity in Asia and the Pacific, spanning the Indian and Pacific oceans. They recognised the importance of the principles of regional engagement set out in the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific, including openness, transparency, a rules-based framework, good governance and respect for sovereignty and international law. In this regard, they agreed to work together in the ASEAN Regional Forum and also to continue their dialogue on cooperation in other ASEAN-led processes. They also expressed serious concern about the unilateral and destabilising actions in the South China Sea and underlined the importance of upholding international law, particularly the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. They underlined that dialogue is the only way to achieve peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and urged the DPRK to comply with all relevant UN Security Council resolutions.</p>	<p>https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_2215</p>
2020		EU			Project	Critical Maritimes Routes in the Indian Ocean II (CMARIO II)	0	1	0	-	<p>CRIMARIO II enables the EU's Indo-Pacific partners and organisations to better govern their maritime spaces by promoting cross-sectorial, interagency, and transregional cooperation in the areas of maritime security and safety and, to a lesser extent, supporting authorities in addressing illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fisheries. The philosophy behind the CRIMARIO concept is that through this cost-effective approach all like-minded partners, and the EU, will benefit from safer and more secure trade routes, and fisheries will become more sustainable. Exercises are perhaps the most powerful training tool available to prepare personnel, administrations and governments to confront the vast spectrum of maritime safety and security challenges, in today's complex world. The project also facilitates the conduct of national exercises that bring together personnel from various agencies to collectively face challenges in a benign environment, and learn lessons and techniques that will improve their response to real-world emergencies. CRIMARIO II offers all public services involved in Law Enforcement at sea, in the Indo Pacific Region, the opportunity of participating in Regional Maritime Security Exercises, either alone or in partnership with other countries/regional/international organisations. This activity contributes towards one of the main objectives of the CRIMARIO II project: to enhance maritime security and safety in the Indo-Pacific by supporting the region to develop its own maritime domain awareness (MDA) and law enforcement capacities... These (tailor-made training) could be in the fields of law enforcement, addressing operational maritime law, evidence compilation and forensics, amongst other topics; it also offers maritime safety, primarily addressing search and rescue and tackling marine oil pollution incidents.</p>	<p>https://www.crimario.eu/</p>
2020	1-Dec	EU	Pawel Herczynski/Managing Director for Common Security and Defence Policy and Crisis Response/EEAS	Vietnam	Press Release	EU-Vietnam Consultations on Security and Defence	1	0	0	2	<p>During their second consultations, the European Union and Vietnam discussed the global and regional situation, including in the South China Sea. They reaffirmed their commitment to upholding the rules-based international order, to freedom of navigation and to the universal and unified character of the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, which sets out the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas should be carried out. The European Union and Vietnam called for maritime disputes to be resolved peacefully in accordance with this Convention.</p> <p>We engaged in frank and fruitful discussions on regional and international issues of mutual interest and concern. We underlined the importance of the respect for the rule of law, sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, maritime security and safety, freedom of navigation and overflight, peaceful resolution of disputes, in accordance with the universally recognised principles of international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and the relevant standards and recommended practices of the International Civil Aviation Organisation and the International Maritime Organization. We also reaffirmed our support for the open, inclusive and rules-based multilateral system and reiterated our shared interest in promoting international law and internationally agreed norms and standards. We also reaffirmed the importance of maintaining and promoting peace, security, stability, safety, and freedom of navigation in and overflight above the South China Sea. We emphasised the importance of non-militarisation and self-restraint in the conduct of all activities by claimants and all other states, including those mentioned in the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) that could further complicate the situation and escalate tensions in the South China Sea. We further underscored the importance of the full and effective implementation of the DOC in its entirety, and encouraged negotiations towards the early conclusion of an effective and substantive Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC) consistent with international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS.</p>	<p>https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/eu-vietnam-consultations-security-and-defence_en</p>
2020	1-Dec	EU		ASEAN	Press Release	Co-chairs' press release of the 23rd ASEAN-EU ministerial meeting	1	0	0	2	<p>They exchanged views on regional security issues, on maritime security including in the South China Sea, and on possible cooperation and coordination with EU missions and operations under its Common Security and Defence Policy. The EU also raised increasing tensions in the Taiwan Strait. They welcomed the good cooperation in specific areas, such as the fight against piracy off the Horn of Africa, where China has been cooperating with EU NAVFOR Atalanta.</p>	<p>https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press-press-releases/2020/12/01/co-chairs-press-release-of-the-23rd-asean-eu-ministerial-meeting/</p>
2020	11-Dec	EU	Pawel Herczynski/Managing Director for Common Security and Defence Policy and Crisis Response/EEAS	China	Press Release	China: 11th consultations on security and defence	1	0	0	1	<p>They exchanged views on regional security issues, on maritime security including in the South China Sea, and on possible cooperation and coordination with EU missions and operations under its Common Security and Defence Policy. The EU also raised increasing tensions in the Taiwan Strait. They welcomed the good cooperation in specific areas, such as the fight against piracy off the Horn of Africa, where China has been cooperating with EU NAVFOR Atalanta.</p>	<p>https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/china-11th-consultations-security-and-defence_en</p>
2020	30-Dec	EU	Charles Michel/President of the European Council; Ursula von der Leyen/President of the European Commission	China	Statement/Declaration	EU-China Leaders' meeting: Delivering results by standing firm on EU interests and values	0	0	1	-	<p>We shared concerns on escalating tensions in the South China and East China Seas – and also about the situation in Hong Kong. On this last issue, we discussed with Ministers the urgency for Chinese and Hong Kong authorities to respect the rule of law, human rights, and democratic principles.</p>	<p>https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/statement_20_2846</p>
2021	25-Jan	EU			Speech	Foreign Affairs Council: Press remarks by High Representative Josep Borrell	1	0	0	1	<p>We shared concerns on escalating tensions in the South China and East China Seas – and also about the situation in Hong Kong. On this last issue, we discussed with Ministers the urgency for Chinese and Hong Kong authorities to respect the rule of law, human rights, and democratic principles.</p>	<p>https://www.ec.europa.eu/eeas/foreign-affairs-council-press-conference-high-representative-josep-borrell-14_en</p>

2021	Mar	EU		Document	A STRATEGIC COMPASS FOR SECURITY AND DEFENCE For a European Union that protects its citizens, values and interests and contributes to international peace and security	0	1	0	-	<p>With the Indo-Pacific becoming an increasingly important region, we will work with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to enhance shared awareness and information exchange on violent extremism, Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear threats, cybersecurity, maritime security, transnational crime, humanitarian and disaster relief and crisis management. With a view to full membership in ASEAN's Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus setting, we will seize every opportunity to engage in shared awareness activities with ASEAN and contribute to its effort to build pan-Asian security arrangements. Working notably through the ASEAN Regional Forum, we will further enhance our security contribution and presence in the Indo-Pacific region.</p> <p>A new centre of global competition has emerged in the Indo-Pacific, where geopolitical tensions endanger the rules-based order in the region, and put pressure on global supply chains. The EU has a crucial geopolitical and economic interest in stability and security in the region. We will therefore protect our interests in the region, also by ensuring that international law prevails in the maritime and other domains. China is the EU's second biggest trading partner and a necessary one to address global challenges. But there is also a growing reaction to its increasingly assertive regional behaviour.</p> <p>Conduct, by 2023, five maritime exercises with partners in the Indo-Pacific in addition to more frequent EU port calls and patrols.</p> <p>The Council notes however with concern the current dynamics in the Indo-Pacific that have given rise to intense geopolitical competition adding to increasing tensions on trade and supply chains as well as in technological, political and security areas. The universality of human rights is also being challenged. These developments increasingly threaten the stability and security of the region and beyond, directly impacting on the EU's interests. It should aim to secure free and open maritime supply routes in full compliance with international law, in particular UNCLOS, in the interest of all.</p> <p>The EU will further develop partnerships and strengthen synergies with like-minded partners and relevant organizations in security and defence. This will include responding to challenges to international security, including maritime security.</p> <p>The EU has taken the decision to extend the geographic scope of its CRIMARIO II activities from the Indian Ocean into South and Southeast Asia with a view to contribute to safer sea lanes of communication with the EU.</p> <p>Assess the opportunity to establish Maritime Areas of Interest in the Indo-Pacific, taking into account the lessons learned from and first assessment of the Coordinated Maritime Presences concept. In line with the EU Maritime Security Strategy and its Action Plan, the objectives of coordinating EU maritime presences, based on voluntary contributions from Member States, could be, inter alia, to cooperate with partners' navies, and build their capacities where relevant, to establish comprehensive monitoring of maritime security and freedom of navigation, according to international law, in particular UNCLOS, and taking action to ensure environmental security in the area. While being distinct from CSDP missions and operations, the concept could contribute to addressing the existing security challenges in the region. Member States acknowledge the importance of a meaningful European naval presence in the Indo-Pacific.</p> <p>Current dynamics in the Indo-Pacific have given rise to intense geopolitical competition adding to increasing tensions on trade and supply chains as well as in technological, political and security areas. Human rights are also being challenged. These developments increasingly threaten the stability and security of the region and beyond, directly impacting on the EU's interests.</p> <p>Free and open maritime supply routes in full compliance with international law remain crucial. The EU will look to work together with its partners in the Indo-Pacific on these issues of common interest.</p> <p>The EU will continue to develop partnerships in the areas of security and defence, including to address maritime security, malicious cyber activities, disinformation, emerging technologies, terrorism, and organised crime.</p> <p>This picture, however, contrasts with the complex security situation in the Indo-Pacific where tensions are on the rise, fuelled by a worrisome mix consisting of geopolitical rivalries, territorial and maritime disputes, and non-traditional security threats. Just as is the case with the region's prosperity, the EU and the world have a stake in the stability of the Indo-Pacific. To give just one example – we will step up maritime cooperation. The EU has a major stake in the free and open maritime supply routes across the Indo-Pacific and in ensuring full compliance with international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). It is a commitment that we share with many Asian partners and a precondition for sustainable stability and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific and beyond. The strategy also lays out our goals to ensure high quality and sustainable connectivity, ensure maritime security and advance collaboration on research, innovation and digitalisation – all priorities which we share with the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific.</p>	0	0	0	0	0	1	https://www.ec.europa.eu/eas/strategic-compass-security-and-defence-1_en	
2021	16-Apr	EU	Council of the EU	Document	Council conclusions on an EU Strategy for cooperation in the Indo-Pacific	0	1	0	-	<p>In the event of ASEM</p>	Yes	https://www.ec.europa.eu/eas/strategic-compass-security-and-defence-1_en						
2021	19-Apr	EU	Council of the EU	Press Release	Indo-Pacific: Council adopts conclusions on EU strategy for cooperation	0	1	0	-	<p>Free and open maritime supply routes in full compliance with international law remain crucial. The EU will look to work together with its partners in the Indo-Pacific on these issues of common interest.</p> <p>The EU will continue to develop partnerships in the areas of security and defence, including to address maritime security, malicious cyber activities, disinformation, emerging technologies, terrorism, and organised crime.</p>	0	0	0	0	1	0	https://www.ec.europa.eu/eas/strategic-compass-security-and-defence-1_en	
2021	19-Apr	EU	Igor Driesmans/EU Ambassador to ASEAN	Op-Ed	"ASEAN at the Centre of EU's Indo-Pacific Strategy", opinion article by EU Ambassador Igor Driesmans	0	1	0	-	<p>The launching of EU Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific</p>	Yes	https://www.ec.europa.eu/eas/strategic-compass-security-and-defence-1_en						
2021	24-Apr	EU	EEAS	Statement/Declaration	South China Sea: Statement by the Spokesperson on challenges to peace and stability	1	0	0	3	<p>Tensions in the South China Sea, including the recent presence of large Chinese vessels at Wharton Reef, endanger peace and stability in the region.</p> <p>The EU is committed to secure, free and open maritime supply routes in the Indo-Pacific, in full compliance with international law, in particular the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), in the interest of all.</p> <p>The EU reiterates its strong opposition to any unilateral actions that could undermine regional stability and the international rules-based order. We urge all parties to resolve disputes through peaceful means in accordance with international law, in particular UNCLOS, including its dispute settlement mechanisms. The EU recalls in this regard the Arbitration Award rendered under UNCLOS on 12 July 2016.</p> <p>The EU supports the ASEAN-led process towards an effective, substantive and legally binding Code of Conduct, which should not prejudice the interests of third parties. The EU urges all parties to pursue sincere efforts towards its finalisation.</p>	0	0	0	0	0	1	https://www.ec.europa.eu/eas/south-china-sea-statement-spokesperson-challenges-peace-and-stability_en	
2021	5-May	EU	EEAS	ARF	Press Release	Maritime security: Joint press release by the co-chairs of the ASEAN Regional Forum Inter-Sessional Meeting	0	1	0	-	<p>The Australia, Viet Nam, and EU co-chairs emphasised the central role of maritime law enforcement agencies as the first responders and front-line actors in addressing maritime security challenges. They have organised three workshops on Enhancing Regional Maritime Law Enforcement Cooperation. These workshops reviewed many examples of maritime law enforcement cooperation and their operational, policy and legal aspects. ARF members shared best practices in managing incidents at sea, building capacities to fight maritime crimes and making seas safe for the exercise of navigational freedoms. The co-chairs noted the significant progress made in these workshops and recognised that further efforts are needed to develop guidelines for maritime law enforcement cooperation.</p>	0	0	1	0	0	0	https://www.ec.europa.eu/eas/maritime-security-joint-press-release-co-chairs-asean-regional-forum-inter-sessional-meeting_en

2021	5-May	EU	EEAS	G7	Communique	G7 Foreign and Development Ministers' Meeting: Communique	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	<p>We remain seriously concerned about the situation in and around the East and South China Seas. We underscore the importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait, and encourage the peaceful resolution of cross-Strait issues. We reiterate our strong opposition to any unilateral actions that could escalate tensions and undermine regional stability and the international rules-based order and express serious concerns about reports of militarisation, coercion, and intimidation in the region. We emphasise the universal and unified character of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and reaffirm UNCLOS's important role in setting out the legal framework that governs all activities in the ocean and the seas. We consider the 12 July 2016 award rendered by the Arbitral Tribunal under UNCLOS as a significant milestone and a useful basis for peacefully resolving disputes in the South China Sea. We reiterate our commitment to promoting a cooperative system of international governance for the ocean and seas and to maintaining the rules-based maritime order based on international law. We reaffirm UNCLOS's important role in setting out the legal framework that governs all activities in the ocean and seas. We reaffirm the need for all states to act in good faith, to build trust and ensure security on the oceans and seas, and to commit to the peaceful management and settlement of disputes in accordance with international law, including through internationally recognised legal dispute settlement mechanisms, including arbitration, without using the threat of force or coercion. We reiterate our commitment to the freedoms of the high seas, including the freedom of navigation and overflight, and to other rights and freedoms, including the rights and jurisdiction of coastal states, and other internationally lawful uses of the seas.</p>	<p>https://www.eesa.europa.eu/eesa/g7-foreign-and-development-ministers-meeting-communique-135432_en</p>		
2021	6-May	EU	Vincent Pilet/EU Ambassador to Indonesia & Benzi Dariusman; Igor Driessmans/EU Ambassador to ASEAN	Op-Ed	"ASEAN at the heart of the EU Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific", opinion article by EU Ambassador Vincent Pilet and EU Ambassador Igor Driessmans	0	1	0	-	0	0	0	1	0	0	Yes	<p>This picture, however, contrasts with the complex security situation in the Indo-Pacific where tensions are on the rise, fuelled by a worrisome mix consisting of geopolitical rivalries, territorial and maritime disputes, and non-traditional security threats. Just as is the case with the region's prosperity, the EU and the world have a stake in the stability of the Indo-Pacific.</p> <p>The new strategy should be seen as a confirmation of the EU's political commitment to the region that aims to strengthen our existing engagement, upgrade our partnerships and make our contributions to the region's stability and prosperity even more effective.</p> <p>Our approach will be both inclusive and flexible, working with all partners in the region who share the same objectives and stand ready to turn these shared principles, values, and interests into concrete cooperation. The EU's interest in upholding and devising rules-based approaches will serve as the common denominator for these efforts. To give one example – we will step up maritime cooperation. The EU has a major stake in the free and open maritime supply routes across the Indo-Pacific and in ensuring full compliance with international law, including the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). It is a commitment that we share with many Asian partners and a precondition for sustainable stability and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific and beyond.</p>	<p>https://www.eesa.europa.eu/delegations/indonesia/asean-heart-of-the-eu-strategy-cooperation-indo-pacific-opinion-article-eu-ambassador-vincent-pilet-and-igor-driessmans</p>		
2021	26-May	EU	Stefano Samino/EEAS Secretary General	US	Press Release	United States: Consultations between Secretary General Stefano Samino and Deputy Secretary Wendy Sherman	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	Yes	Yes	<p>The two sides underscored the shared U.S.-EU interest in strengthening the rules-based international order and pledged further close cooperation in support of democratic values, global and regional stability, and universal human rights. They discussed a range of foreign policy issues of mutual concern, such as Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus, and the recent violence in Israel and the West Bank and Gaza. They exchanged views on the Eastern Mediterranean, Western Balkans, Afghanistan, Syria, Myanmar, the Indo-Pacific, Ethiopia, and Venezuela.</p> <p>Deputy Secretary Sherman and Secretary General Samino held the first high-level meeting of the U.S.-EU dialogue on China. The two sides reiterated that the United States' and EU's relations with China are multifaceted and comprise elements of cooperation, competition, and systemic rivalry. They highlighted issues of shared concern, including ongoing human rights violations in Xinjiang and Tibet, the erosion of autonomy and democratic processes in Hong Kong, economic coercion, disinformation campaigns, and regional security issues, in particular the situation in the South China Sea. They discussed the importance of Taiwan's meaningful participation in the work of international organizations, including World Health Organization forums and the World Health Assembly. They also discussed pursuing constructive engagement with China on issues such as climate change and non-proliferation, and on certain regional issues.</p>	<p>https://www.eesa.europa.eu/eesa/united-states-consultations-between-secretary-general-stefano-samino-and-deputy-secretary-wendy-sherman</p>
2021	27-May	EU	Charles Michel/President of the European Council	Japan	Speech	Remarks by President Charles Michel after the EU-Japan summit via video conference	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	Yes	<p>We have also strengthened our security and defence cooperation. The EU decided to reinforce its strategic focus on the Indo-Pacific region. We have a strong interest to intensify, with Japan, our cooperation in maritime security, technology cooperation, cyber security, disinformation, and to promote fundamental values and principles in the region. As human rights and democracy are attacked around the world, the EU and Japan need to coordinate our actions.</p> <p>We also discussed a range of regional affairs, including the situation in the East and South China Sea, DPRK, Iran and JCPOA, Myanmar, Ukraine, Russia or China. We look forward to our next meeting in Tokyo to further strengthen our EU-Japan relationship.</p>	<p>https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2021/05/27/remarks-by-president-charles-michel-after-the-eu-japan-summit-via-video-conference/</p>	
2021	13-Jun	G7	EU, France, Germany, Italy	Communique	2021 G7 Leaders' communique: Our shared agenda for global action to build back better	0	0	1	-	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	<p>https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2021/06/13/2021-g7-leaders-communique/</p>			
2021	13-Jun	EU	Charles Michel/President of the European Council	G7	Speech	Remarks by President Charles Michel following the G7 summit in Carbis Bay, Cornwall	0	0	1	-	1	0	0	0	0	0	<p>https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2021/06/13/remarks-by-president-charles-michel-following-the-g7-summit-in-carbis-bay-cornwall/</p>			

2021	13-Jun	EU	Josep Borrell High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy & Vice-President of The European Commission	ASEAN	Speech	The European Union and ASEAN are natural partners and have a common agenda	1	0	0	1	<p>As the EU, we are well aware that the global center of gravity is shifting towards the Indo-Pacific region. The Indo-Pacific creates 60 percent of global gross domestic product and two-thirds of global growth. It is the second largest destination for EU exports and home to four out of the EU's top ten trading partners. Around 40 percent of the EU's foreign trade passes through the South China Sea. The EU is also the top investor in and development assistance provider for the Indo-Pacific.</p> <p>The Indo-Pacific region is the future, but the present is just as important. Insecurity and tensions are rising, threatening the order and balance of this region. Stability, development and economic growth rests on openness, on stable and shared rules and shared security, and the EU's interest is precisely this: that the region order stays rules-based and free and open for all. We can contribute to this significantly and our regional partners, who view the EU as a trusted and reliable actor, recognize this.</p> <p>The EU launched in April 2021 an Indo-Pacific strategy, with one key message: we want to step up our engagement and work with our partners to boost trade and investment, economic openness and a sustainable approach to connectivity in the region. Besides being an economic powerhouse, the EU is also ready to be a political and security actor in the region and to do more work on strategic and security issues, in particular maritime security.</p> <p>We already have a dialogue with ASEAN on maritime security cooperation, and are currently extending our Critical Maritime Routes Program, which strengthens regional maritime surveillance capacities from the Indian Ocean to South East Asia. We are also exploring options to enhance the EU's maritime presence in the vast Indo-Pacific space.</p> <p>We intend to closely consult and cooperate on the full range of issues in the framework of our respective similar multi-faceted approaches to China, which include elements of cooperation, competition, and systemic rivalry.</p>	0	0	0	0	0	1	Entails action.	Yes	https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/european-union-and-asean-are-natural-partners-and-have-common-agenda_en
2021	15-Jun	EU	European Council	US	Joint Statement	EU-US Summit 2021 - Statement Towards a renewed Transatlantic partnership	1	0	0	2	<p>We remain seriously concerned about the situation in the East and South China Seas and strongly oppose any unilateral attempts to change the status quo and increase tensions. We reaffirm the critical importance of respecting international law, in particular the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) noting its provisions setting forth the lawful maritime entitlements of States, on maritime delimitation, on the sovereign rights and jurisdictions of States, on the obligation to settle disputes by peaceful means, and on the freedom of navigation and overflight and other internationally lawful uses of the sea.</p> <p>We engaged in candid and productive discussions on regional and international issues of mutual interest and concern. We underlined the importance of the respect for international law, in particular the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). We also reaffirmed our support for the open, inclusive and rules-based multilateral system.</p> <p>We further reaffirmed the importance of maintaining and promoting peace, security, stability, safety, and the right of freedom of navigation in and overflight above the South China Sea, as well as the peaceful resolution of disputes, in accordance with international law, in particular the 1982 UNCLOS which is of universal character and sets out the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out. We further encouraged negotiations towards the early conclusion of an effective and substantive Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC) consistent with international law, in particular the 1982 UNCLOS. The positive role and contributions made so far by the EU as co-chair for two ASEAN Regional Forum Inter-Sessional Meetings – the ISM on Maritime Security and the ISM on Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime were also acknowledged and welcomed.</p>	0	0	0	0	0	1		Yes	chrome-extension://ef4dbbmmnhbpcqjccidcfndmkw/hhttps://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/af1756en/af1756en-summit-joint-statement-15-jun-final_final.pdf
2021	8-Jul	EU	EEAS	ASEAN	Press Release	EU-ASEAN Co-Chairs' Press Release on Senior Officials' Meeting	1	0	0	2	<p>We further reaffirmed the importance of maintaining and promoting peace, security, stability, safety, and the right of freedom of navigation in and overflight above the South China Sea, as well as the peaceful resolution of disputes, in accordance with international law, in particular the 1982 UNCLOS which is of universal character and sets out the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out. We further encouraged negotiations towards the early conclusion of an effective and substantive Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC) consistent with international law, in particular the 1982 UNCLOS. The positive role and contributions made so far by the EU as co-chair for two ASEAN Regional Forum Inter-Sessional Meetings – the ISM on Maritime Security and the ISM on Counter Terrorism and Transnational Crime were also acknowledged and welcomed.</p>	0	0	0	1	0	0	Yes	https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/eu-asean-co-chairs%E2%80%99-press-release-senior-officials%E2%80%99-meeting_en	
2021	9-Aug	EU	EEAS	UNSC	Statement/Declaration	EU Statement – United Nations Security Council: "Enhancing Maritime Security: A case for international cooperation"	1	0	0	1	<p>Maritime security aims to ensure a free and peaceful use of the seas and is a prerequisite for safe, clean and secure oceans and seas for all types of activities. It is, hence, a clear priority for the European Union (EU) and its Member States. The EU will continue to work with partners to promote respect for basic principles of maritime passage, security and safety as well as protection of the oceans and to strengthen its role as a global maritime security provider and promote international law, in particular the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The strategy focuses on a strong coordination and cooperation at all levels and across all sectors (civil-civil, civil-military, military-military), within EU borders and beyond, and a dynamic international cooperation based on inclusive multilateralism to enhance a rules-based governance at sea under the UNCLOS, which establishes the overarching legal framework within which all activities in oceans and seas must be carried out. To this end, it is imperative that both the freedoms enjoyed under the Convention by all states, as well as the sovereignty and sovereign rights of coastal states over their maritime zones, including those generated by islands, are respected. The EU reiterates its strong opposition to any unilateral actions that could undermine regional stability and the international rules-based order and urges all States to resolve disputes through peaceful means in accordance with international law, in particular UNCLOS, including its dispute settlement mechanisms. ... numerous maritime situational awareness initiatives and capacity building programs for coastal partner states in the Gulf of Guinea, Red Sea, the Caribbean or East and South China sea. In support of regional agreements and international Codes of Conduct, the EU and its Member States coordinate closely their capabilities and financial aid to enhance the maritime situational awareness of partner countries, and to improve regional cooperation and networking between Maritime law enforcement agencies.</p>	0	0	0	0	0	1	Statement on behalf of the EU and its Member States at the UN Security Council High Level VTC Open Debate on "Enhancing Maritime Security: A case for international cooperation"	Yes	https://www.eeas.europa.eu/de/positions/en/news-work/cu-statement-%E2%80%93-17-08-2021-united-nations-security-council-15-17-80%9Cenhancing-maritime-security-council-international_en
2021	16-Sep	EU	EC	Document	JOINT COMMUNICATION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL: The EU strategy for cooperation in the Indo-Pacific	1	0	0	2	<p>In recent years, geopolitical dynamics in the Indo-Pacific have given rise to intense competition, including tensions around contested territories and maritime zones. There has been a significant military build-up, including by China, with the Indo-Pacific's share of global military spending increasing from 20% of the world total in 2009 to 28% in 2019. The display of force and increasing tensions in regional hotspots such as in the South and East China Sea and in the Taiwan Strait may have a direct impact on European security and prosperity.</p> <p>Cooperation to maintain and ensure maritime security and freedom of navigation, in accordance with international law and in particular the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), will be essential.</p> <p>The EU will Continue to play a key role as a global maritime security provider.</p> <p>Proposed Action: Exploring ways to ensure enhanced naval deployments by EU Member States to help protect the sea lines of communication and freedom of navigation in the Indo-Pacific while boosting Indo-Pacific partners' capacity to ensure maritime security.</p> <p>The EU appreciates ASEAN's commitment to effective multilateralism and supports the principle of ASEAN centrality, its efforts to build a rules-based regional architecture, and the multilateral anchor that it provides. The EU also supports the ASEAN-led process towards an effective, substantive and legally binding Code of Conduct in the South China Sea, which should not prejudice the interests of third parties.</p>	0	0	0	0	0	1		Yes	chrome-extension://ef4dbbmmnhbpcqjccidcfndmkw/hhttps://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2021-09/joint-communication_2021_24_1_en.pdf	

2021	16-Sep	EU	Josep Borrell High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy & Vice-President of The European Commission		Speech	Indo-Pacific: Remarks by the High Representative/Vice-President at the press conference on the Joint Communication	0	1	0	-	In this region, there are conflicts over land and maritime borders. And there is a lack of trust among the main players in the region. That is why we have a special interest - I would say a vital interest - that the regional order remains open and rules-based. We can say that one of the two astra veritas of the European [Union's] economy goes through this region. Through the South-Asia Sea, 40% of our trade is being conveyed by boat. We have a lot of interest in keeping this navigation area free. We have a big stake in the region's future. And we want to be a contributor to the peace, stability and prosperity of the region. A special part [of the Indo-Pacific Strategy] is devoted to security and defence. The last one [priority area] would be human security. But on security and defence, I want to stress the importance that we give to a meaningful European naval presence in this area. We will explore ways to ensure an enhanced naval deployment by our Member States in the region, taking into account the lessons learned from the first assessments of the Coordinated Maritime Presence concept. We will assess the opportunity of establishing maritime areas of interest in the Indo-Pacific and engage with our partners in the region, associating them with our initiative, helping to create capacity-building projects in the Southern Pacific and participating in the ASEAN security architecture. We will deepen, as I said, our security engagement making our cooperation as concrete as possible, especially in the field of maritime and cyber security. China's cooperation is essential. Our Strategy is one of cooperation, not confrontation. I think it is important to stress this sentence. Our Strategy is built on the will to cooperate, not to confront. Certainly, we do not want to go there to solve problems. The countries of the region are the main actors in the region, and it is up to them to solve their problems. We are not going there to give lessons or to bring solutions. They are much better fitted to do that. But, at the same time, we are concerned, interested in the security of the navigation on this part of the world, and we have warships everywhere in the world. I think that our presence there has not to be considered as a threat to anyone, but as a contribution to the security of the maritime lines of transportation. There are many threats in the area and our presence will increase the security in this area.	0	0	0	0	0	1	Yes	https://www.ec.europa.eu/com/indo-pacific-remarks-high-representative-vice-president-press-conference-joint-communication_en	
2021	24-Sep	EU	Charles Michel President of the European Council	UNGA	Speech	Speech by President Charles Michel at the UN General Assembly	1	0	0	1	Security and freedom of navigation in the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean must be guaranteed in accordance with international law. The European Union will shoulder its full responsibility in that regard.	0	0	0	0	0	1	entails action by provoking EU's full responsibility	https://www.cerilijm.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2021/09/24/discuss-eh-vice-president-charles-michel-1-1-assembly-ec-general-des-nations-unies/	
2021	20-Nov	EU	Ursula von der Leyen President of the European Commission		Speech	Speech by President von der Leyen at the Global Town Hall 2021	1	0	0	1	This is true even for regions like ours - that are geographically distant from one another. Just think about these simple facts. Trade exchanges between Europe and the Indo-Pacific region are higher than between any other regions in the world. And 40 per cent of Europe's foreign trade flows through the South China Sea. The Indo-Pacific produces 60 per cent of the global GDP, but also 60 per cent of global CO2 emissions.	0	0	0	1	0	0	Yes	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/speech_21_6000	
2021	21-Nov	EU	EEAS		Statement/Declaration	South China Sea: Statement by the Spokesperson on recent incidents	1	0	0	3	This episode follows other unilateral actions by vessels of the People's Republic of China in the South China Sea over the past months. The European Union reiterates its strong opposition to any unilateral actions that endanger peace, security and stability in the region and the international rules-based order. Furthermore, the European Union emphasises the importance for all parties to respect freedom of navigation and overflight in the South China Sea. We urge all parties to resolve disputes through peaceful means in accordance with international law, in particular the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), including its dispute settlement mechanisms. In this context, the European Union recalls the Arbitration Award rendered under UNCLOS on 12 July 2016, which found that Second Thomas Shoal lies within the Philippines' exclusive economic zone and continental shelf. The European Union supports the ASEAN-led process towards a Code of Conduct in the South China Sea, which should be effective, substantive and legally binding, and not prejudice the interests of third parties. They reiterated that the EU's and United States' respective relations with China are multifaceted and emphasized the importance of the EU and United States maintaining continuous and close contacts on our respective approaches as we invest and grow our economies, cooperate with China where possible, and manage our competition and systemic rivalry with China responsibly.	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	https://www.ec.europa.eu/eeas/south-china-sea-statement-spokesperson-recent-incidents_en	
2021	2-Dec	EU	EEAS	US	Press Release	EU-U.S.: Joint Press Release by the EEAS and Department of State on the Second High-Level Meeting of the EU-U.S. Dialogue on China	1	0	0	2	They expressed strong concern over China's problematic and unilateral actions in the South and East China Seas and the Taiwan Strait that undermine peace and security in the region and have a direct impact on the security and prosperity of both the United States and European Union. They further reaffirmed the importance of upholding and promoting freedom of navigation and overflight in accordance with international law as reflected in the 1982 Law of the Sea Convention and discussed how to counteract risks in the areas of strategic stability and cybersecurity.	0	0	0	0	0	1	Yes	https://www.ec.europa.eu/eeas/eu-us-joint-press-release-eeas-and-department-state-second-high-level-meeting-eu-us-dialogue-china_en	
2021	3-Dec	EU	EEAS	US	Press Release	EU-U.S.: Joint Press Release by the EEAS and Department of State on the High-Level Consultations on the Indo-Pacific	0	1	0	-	The two reviewed their respective Indo-Pacific engagement and strategies. Both reaffirmed their intention to work together and with partners in support of a free and open Indo-Pacific that is inclusive, based on the rule of law and democratic values, and contributes to the stability, security, and sustainable development of the region. The United States and the European Union share a strategic interest in strengthening cooperation with partners in the Indo-Pacific on the basis of shared values and interests, and in support of multilateral rules-based frameworks. They affirmed their shared goal to coordinate on Indo-Pacific engagement and identified possible priority areas and immediate themes for cooperation, such as... freedom of navigation and maritime security... The United States and the EU share an interest in security, stability, and predictability in the region, including regarding freedom of navigation and overflight in accordance with international law as reflected in the 1982 Law of the Sea Convention. They reaffirmed their interest in stability and the status quo in the Taiwan Strait, and both sides noted a shared interest in deepening cooperation with Taiwan consistent with their respective "one-China" policies.	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	Yes	https://www.ec.europa.eu/eeas/eu-us-joint-press-release-eeas-and-department-state-high-level-consultations-indo-pacific_en
2021	7-Dec	EU	Daniela Gauci/ Counsellor, Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations	UNGA	Statement/Declaration	EU Statement - United Nations General Assembly: Oceans and the law of the sea	0	1	0	-	The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea is the fundamental pillar for ocean governance as it establishes the overarching legal framework within which ALL activities in oceans and seas must be carried out and counts 168 Parties, including the European Union and its Member States. At the eve of its 40th anniversary of its adoption by the Third United Nations Conference on the Law of the Sea, it is rightly recognised as the constitution of the oceans. Its provisions generally reflect customary international law and are thus binding on all States irrespective of whether they have acceded to the Convention or not. To this end, it is imperative that both the freedoms enjoyed under the Convention by all States, including landlocked States, as well as the sovereignty and sovereign rights of coastal States over their maritime zones, including those generated by islands, are respected. All members of the international community must abide by the fundamental principles and rules of the law of the sea and should refrain from any actions undermining regional stability and security.	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	Statement on behalf of the European Union and its Member States delivered by Ms. Daniela Gauci, Counsellor, Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, at the General Assembly 76th Plenary Meeting: UNGA debate on Oceans and the law of the sea [Item 78 (a) and (b)]	https://www.ec.europa.eu/delegations/in-new-york/eu-statement-76th-plenary-meeting-unga-general-assembly-oceans-and-law-sea-07_en

2021	11-Dec	EU	Josep Borrell/High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy & Vice-President of The European Commission	G7	Press Release	G7: Press remarks by High Representative Josep Borrell following the meeting of Foreign and Development ministers	1	0	0	2	We also talked about China. China represents today a challenge, a strategic and ideological challenge. And there also, we have to be vigilant, gathering our forces in order to ensure, for example, the freedom of navigation in the South China sea where 40% of the exports of European Union pass by these waters. For us, to keep free navigation in these waters is very important. This part of the world is the aorta vein of the economies of Europe.	0	0	0	0	0	1	gathering our forces	https://www.eesa.europa.eu/eea/7-press-remarks-high-representative-josep-borrell-following-meeting-foreign-and-development_en	
2022	1-Feb	EU	EEAS	India	Press Release	Second EU-India Maritime Security Dialogue	0	1	0	-	The EU and India are committed to a free, open, inclusive and rules-based maritime order in the Indo-Pacific region, underpinned by respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty, democracy, rule of law, freedom of navigation and overflight, unimpeded lawful commerce, and peaceful resolution of disputes in accordance with international law, notably the United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).	0	0	1	0	0	0	Yes	https://www.eesa.europa.eu/eea/second-eu-india-maritime-security-dialogue_en	
2022	22-Feb	EU		Various	Press Release	Ministerial Forum for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific	0	1	0	-	Reaffirm their commitment to a rules-based international order, democratic values and principles, as well as to the strengthening of multilateralism and the rule of law, respect for international law, and freedom of navigation, in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). In the field of security and defence, the EU announced the extension of the concept of a coordinated maritime presence in the north-west Indian Ocean. This will allow the EU to further support stability and security in the Indo-Pacific region, to optimise naval deployments, to promote coherence of European action and to facilitate the exchange of information and cooperation with partners in the Indo-Pacific, including by conducting joint maritime exercises and port calls. Furthermore, the EU reaffirmed its determination to enhance its engagement in security and defence with partners in the region, for example through strengthening its dialogues and bilateral relationships, deepen existing cooperation programmes, aimed at carrying out capacity-building actions with the Indo-Pacific partners, in particular through the ESIIWA programme (Enhancing Security Cooperation in and With Asia), in the field of counter-terrorism, cyber, maritime security and crisis management, promote maritime domain awareness, notably through the IORIS information exchange platform of the CRIMARIO project (Critical Maritime Routes in the Indo-Pacific), the extension of which to the Pacific Ocean will be explored in the coming months.	0	0	1	0	0	0	Yes	https://www.eesa.europa.eu/eea/ministerial-forum-cooperation-indo-pacific_en	
2022	24-Feb	EU	H.E. Ambassador Olof Skoog/Head of the European Union Delegation to the United Nations	UNGA	Statement/Declaration	EU Statement – UN General Assembly: Our Common Agenda, Frameworks for a peaceful world	0	0	1	-	China is a partner for cooperation, an economic competitor and a systemic rival. With China, we can address matters of global concern such as climate change. China is increasingly both involved and engaged in regional tensions. A new centre of global competition has emerged in the Indo-Pacific, where geopolitical tensions endanger the rules-based order in the region, and put pressure on global supply chains. The EU has a crucial geopolitical and economic interest in stability and security in the region. We will therefore protect our interests in the region, also by ensuring that international law prevails in the maritime and other domains. China is the EU's second biggest trading partner and a necessary one to address global challenges. But there is also a growing reaction to its increasingly assertive regional behaviour.	1	0	0	0	0	0	The statement addresses EU's concerns and interests within the new agenda for peace	https://www.eesa.europa.eu/delegations-in-peace-work-eu-statement-%E2%80%93-un-general-assembly-our-common-agenda-frameworks-peaceful-world_en	
2022	21-Mar	EU	Council of the EU		Document	A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence - For a European Union that protects its citizens, values and interests and contributes to international peace and security	0	1	0	-	With the Indo-Pacific becoming an increasingly important region, we will work with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to enhance shared awareness and information exchange on violent extremism, Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear threats, cybersecurity, maritime security, transnational crime, humanitarian and disaster relief and crisis management. With a view to full membership in ASEAN's Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus setting, we will seize every opportunity to engage in shared awareness activities with ASEAN and contribute to its effort to build pan-Asian security arrangements. Working notably through the ASEAN Regional Forum, we will further enhance our security contribution and presence in the Indo-Pacific region. Conduct, by 2023, five maritime exercises with partners in the Indo-Pacific in addition to more frequent EU port calls and port calls.	0	0	0	0	0	1	Yes	Yes	https://www.eesa.europa.eu/eea/strategic-compass-for-security-and-defence-2022-2025_en
2022	1-Apr	EU		China	Statement/Declaration	EU-China summit: Restoring peace and stability in Ukraine is a shared responsibility	0	0	1	-		1	0	0	0	0	Focus on Russian invasion of Ukraine, Afghanistan, Myanmar, and Korean Peninsula	https://www.council.europa.eu/council/press-releases/2022/04/01/eu-china-summit-restoring-peace-and-stability-in-ukraine-is-a-shared-responsibility_en		
2022	1-Apr	EU	Charles Michel/President of the European Council	China	Speech	Remarks by President Charles Michel after the EU-China summit via videoconference	0	0	1	-		1	0	0	0	0		https://www.council.europa.eu/council/press-releases/2022/04/01/remarks-by-president-charles-michel-after-the-eu-china-summit-via-videoconference_en		
2022	7-Apr	EU	EEAS		Press Release	4th ASEAN Regional Forum Workshop on Enhancing Regional Maritime Law Enforcement Cooperation	1	0	0	2	Participants discussed regional maritime law enforcement developments, best practice in bilateral and multilateral cooperation, as well as principles, guidelines and capacity building in the field of maritime law enforcement. In addition to interventions by ARF members, participants heard presentations by international experts on illicit activities at sea, on maritime law enforcement in areas of overlapping claims under international law, on preventing miscalculations and escalation in the South China Sea, and on possible non-binding guidelines for interaction between law enforcement agencies in the maritime domain. The co-hosts will submit a summary of discussions to the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Maritime Security, and will follow up with further activities in the area of international maritime law.	0	0	0	1	0	0		https://www.eesa.europa.eu/eea/4th-asean-regional-forum-workshop-enhancing-regional-maritime-law-enforcement-cooperation_en	
2022	27-Apr	EU		The Philippines	Statement/Declaration	Philippines and EU renew ties in the Second Joint Committee Meeting	0	1	0	-	On maritime security, both the Philippines and the EU expressed concern over unilateral actions that endanger peace, security and stability and the international rules-based order. Both sides underscored the importance of abiding by international law, including the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and its dispute settlement mechanisms, and recalled the Arbitration Award rendered under UNCLOS on 12 July 2016. The two parties agreed to further explore modalities for strengthening cooperation on the full scope of maritime matters. The Philippines' proposed the establishment of a sub-committee on maritime cooperation, including the possibility of expanding cooperation on maritime jurisdictions, security, ocean governance, shipping, seafaring, among others.	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	Yes	https://www.eesa.europa.eu/eea/philippines-and-eu-renew-ties-second-joint-committee-meeting_en

2022	28-Apr	EU		Vietnam	Press Release	EU-Vietnam: 3rd Joint Committee	1	0	0	1		They also discussed EU-ASEAN relations and the situation in Myanmar. As regards the South China Sea, they reaffirmed the importance of peace, security, stability and freedom of navigation and overflight. Both sides expressed concern at recent developments and underscored the importance of abiding by international law, including the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).	0	0	0	1	0	0	Yes	https://www.eesa.europa.eu/eesa/ev-vietnam-3rd-joint-committee_en		
2022	29-Apr	EU	H.E. Mr. Olof Skoog/ Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations	UN	Statement/Declaration	EU Statement – UN High-Level Commemorative meeting on the 40th anniversary of the adoption of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea	0	1	0	-		It (UNCLOS) enshrines the fundamental principles of the freedom of navigation and overflight, the rights of innocent and transit passage, creates a framework for the protection and preservation of the marine environment, and marine scientific research. It (UNCLOS) establishes a compulsory and binding framework for the peaceful settlement of disputes, including judicial mechanisms whose decisions must be respected. It is timely to recall that all parties have the responsibility to promote, and apply in good faith the provisions of UNCLOS, particularly as we wish to promote this "important contribution to the maintenance of peace, justice and progress for all peoples of the world". For this purpose, we call on all States to continue to maintain the integrity of UNCLOS, to respect all its provisions, and to condemn any attempt to restrict, undermine, or blatantly disregard this unique instrument. We also remind, especially in view of current situations across the globe, that all maritime claims should be made and peacefully resolved in accordance with UNCLOS. In conclusion, the European Union and its Member States reiterate their full commitment to UNCLOS and its two implementing agreements. We sincerely hope that the goal of universal participation in this Convention will one day be met.	0	0	1	0	0	0		https://www.eesa.europa.eu/delegations/in-new-york/cu-statement-%E7%89%93-un-high-level-commemorative-meeting-40th-anniversary-unclos-convention-law-sea_en		
2022	12-May	EU	Ursula von der Leyen President of the European Commission	Japan	Speech	Press statement by President von der Leyen following the EU-Japan Summit	1	0	0	1		With concrete strands of work that will create opportunities for our economies and our citizens. And that will, at the same time, help us address the challenges that our regions are confronted with. Let me elaborate on that. The Indo-Pacific is a thriving region. It is also a theatre of tensions. Take the situation in the East and South China Sea, or the constant threat of the DPRK. As we discussed, dear Fumio, the EU wants to take a more active role in the Indo-Pacific. We want to take more responsibility in a region so vital to our prosperity. We remain seriously concerned about the situation in the East China Sea, including in the waters surrounding the Senkaku islands, and South China Sea and strongly oppose any unilateral attempts to change the status quo and increase tensions that could undermine regional stability and the international rules-based order. We express serious concern about reports of militarisation, coercion and intimidation in the South China Sea. We reaffirm the critical importance of respecting international law, including the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), in particular the obligation to settle disputes by peaceful means, and to maintain freedom of navigation and overflight and the obligation to comply with decisions rendered by a court or tribunal based on legitimate procedures under UNCLOS. We share the view that maritime claims must be based on the relevant provisions of UNCLOS. We underscore the importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait, and encourage the peaceful resolution of cross-Strait issues.	0	0	0	1	0	0	Yes	https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/statement_22_1072		
2022	12-May	EU		Japan	Joint Statement	Joint Statement EU-Japan Summit 2022	1	0	0	2		The European Union and its Member States want to stress that they remain true to the rules and principles of the UN Charter and to international law, and promote the peaceful resolution of disputes among States. In this regard, let me express our full solidarity with Ukraine and our condemnation of Russia's unprovoked and unjustified act of military aggression against a sovereign independent country, which grossly violates international law and the UN Charter, and undermines international security and stability. We stand firmly with Ukraine and its people in standing up against this cruel aggression.	0	0	0	0	0	1	strongly oppose	Yes	https://www.councilofeurope.eu/press/press-releases/2022/05/12-joint-statement-eu-japan-summit-2022	
2022	6-Jun	EU	John Brincat/ International Relations Officer, European Commission	UN	Statement/Declaration	EU Statement – UN Open-ended Consultative Process on Oceans and Law of the Sea: Ocean Observing	0	0	1	-		In this respect, we want to stress the overarching and fundamental role played by the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, the legal framework within which all activities in the oceans and seas must be carried out, and whose 40th anniversary we are celebrating this year. The EU and its Member States reiterate as always, their complete commitment and support to the integrity and universality of UNCLOS, as the 'Constitution of the Oceans'.	1	0	0	0	0	0		https://www.eesa.europa.eu/delegations/in-new-york/cu-statement-%E7%89%93-un-open-ended-consultative-process-oceans-and-law-sea-ocm-observing_en		
2022	7-Jun	EU	European Parliament		Resolution	The EU and the security challenges in the Indo-Pacific	1	0	0	2		China's rapid military build-up, its increasingly assertive and expansionist behaviour in the Indo-Pacific region, its military activities in the Taiwan Strait and in the East and South China Seas, including actions to hamper the freedom of navigation executed by the Chinese Coast Guard and the Maritime Militia, are driving up tensions in the Indo-Pacific on 12 July 2016 the Permanent Court of Arbitration in a landmark case ruled that there was no evidence that China had exercised exclusive control historically over the territories it claims within the South China Sea, whereas China has ignored this ruling and, among other actions, has created military bases on man-made islands. Expresses deep concern about China's rapid military build-up, including its recently uncovered test of a hypersonic missile, and its increasingly assertive behaviour, with the aim of, among other things, advancing its territorial claims in the East and South China Seas. Welcomes joint naval activities and calls for the EU and Indo-Pacific partners to further build on existing maritime cooperation frameworks; calls for the EU to evaluate with its partners the need to establish a monitoring system on breaches of international maritime law in the Indo-Pacific region; emphasises the added value for the EU of engaging in regional cooperation forums, such as the EU-ASEAN High-Level Dialogue on Maritime Security Cooperation, the Asia-Europe Meeting and the ASEAN Regional Forum;	0	0	0	0	0	0	1		Yes	https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52022E0224&from=EU

2022	13-Jun	EU	John Breizac/ International Relations Officer, European Commission	UN	Statement/Decla- ration	EU Statement – UN Convention on Law: Report of the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea	0	0	1	-								<p>Focused on Russian invasion on Ukraine</p> <p>As the fortieth anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea is approaching, the European Union and its Member States would like to pay a special tribute to the contribution of the Tribunal in implementing one of the most important dimensions of UNCLOS and the UN Charter, the peaceful settlement of disputes.</p> <p>We want to stress that the European Union and its Members States remain strongly committed to promoting the peaceful resolution of disputes among States.</p>	<p>https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/njw-york/eu-statement-9f29d0993-un-convention-law-report-international-tribunal-law-sea_en</p>
2022	28-Jun	G7	EU, France, Germany, Italy		Communiqué	G7 Leaders' Communiqué	1	0	0	2								<p>We remain seriously concerned about the situation in the East and South China Seas. We strongly oppose any unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion that increase tensions. We emphasise the universal and unified character of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and reaffirm UNCLOS's important role in setting out the legal framework that governs all activities in the ocean and the seas. We stress that there is no legal basis for China's expansive maritime claims in the South China Sea. In this regard, we urge China to fully comply with the arbitral award of 12 July 2016 and to respect navigational rights and freedoms enshrined in UNCLOS. We urge all parties to resolve disputes over maritime claims through peaceful means consistent with international law and support using the dispute settlement mechanisms established by UNCLOS.</p>	<p>https://www.g7.gov.uk/media/773567/22-06-28-leaders-communiqué-draft.pdf</p>
2022	5-Aug	EU		ASEAN	Document	Plan of Action to Implement the ASEAN-EU Strategic Partnership (2023-2027)	0	1	0	-								<p>Underline the importance of the respect for the rule of law, sovereignty and territorial integrity of States, maritime security and safety, freedom of navigation and overflight, peaceful resolution of disputes, in accordance with the universally recognised principles of international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and the relevant standards and recommended practices by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the International Maritime Organization (IMO).</p> <p>Enhance dialogue and promote cooperation on defence and security matters, such as in the area of maritime security.</p> <p>Explore potential collaboration in the four priority areas of the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific (AODIP): maritime cooperation.</p> <p>Enhance dialogue and exchange of views, experiences and best practices in maritime-related issues including through the regular conduct of the ASEAN-EU High Level Dialogue on Maritime Security Cooperation, and within the ARF Inter-Sessional Meeting on Maritime Security (ISM on MS) as well as sharing knowledge and expertise in the sustainable joint management of marine resources. □</p>	<p>https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/document/2022/08/2022-08-05-ASEAN-EU%20Strategic%20Partnership%20%282023-2027%29.pdf</p>
2022	5-Aug	EU	Josep Borrell High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy & Vice-President of The European Commission	ASEAN	Speech	Speech by HRVP Josep Borrell at the 29th ASEAN Regional Forum – highlights	1	0	0	2								<p>In Asia, an increased militarisation and destabilising actions in the South China Sea threatens freedom of navigation and overflight and can affect international peace and security. As China which fires ballistic missiles overflying Taiwan and several of them land in Japan's Exclusive Economic Zone, the EU calls on all parties to remain calm, to exercise restraint, to act with transparency and to maintain open lines of communication to prevent any miscalculations that could lead to tragic consequences. Disputes must be resolved through peaceful means and comply with the UN Convention on Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).</p> <p>Second, the South China Sea. We observe an increased militarisation and destabilising actions. This threatens freedom of navigation and overflight and can affect international peace and security.</p> <p>International law and maritime security in this region, as in any other maritime area, should not be undermined.</p> <p>Disputes must be resolved through peaceful means and comply with the UN Convention on Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). The threat or use of force and provocative actions should be excluded.</p> <p>That is why I encourage and support active progress in the ASEAN-led process towards an effective, substantive and legally binding Code of Conduct for this maritime area, respectful of the interests of third parties.</p> <p>Let me add that the EU has a clear interest in the preservation of peace and the status quo in the Taiwan Strait.</p> <p>We are strongly concerned by the actions of China which fired ballistic missiles overflying Taiwan and several of them landed in Japan's Exclusive Economic Zone.</p> <p>These are highly worrying developments that lead to destabilisation and risk escalation. Nobody should unilaterally change the status quo by force in the region, and we need to resolve cross-Strait differences by peaceful means.</p> <p>That is why the EU calls on all parties to remain calm, to exercise restraint, to act with transparency and to maintain open lines of communication to prevent any miscalculations that could lead to tragic consequences.</p>	<p>https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/china/newspeech-hrvp-josep-borrell-29th-asean-regional-forum-9f29d0993-tweets_en</p>
2022	5-Aug	EU	Josep Borrell High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy & Vice-President of The European Commission	ASEAN	Speech	29th ASEAN Regional Forum: Speech by the High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell	1	0	0	2								<p>That is why I encourage and support active progress in the ASEAN-led process towards an effective, substantive and legally binding Code of Conduct for this maritime area, respectful of the interests of third parties.</p> <p>Let me add that the EU has a clear interest in the preservation of peace and the status quo in the Taiwan Strait.</p> <p>We are strongly concerned by the actions of China which fired ballistic missiles overflying Taiwan and several of them landed in Japan's Exclusive Economic Zone.</p> <p>These are highly worrying developments that lead to destabilisation and risk escalation. Nobody should unilaterally change the status quo by force in the region, and we need to resolve cross-Strait differences by peaceful means.</p> <p>That is why the EU calls on all parties to remain calm, to exercise restraint, to act with transparency and to maintain open lines of communication to prevent any miscalculations that could lead to tragic consequences.</p>	<p>https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/29th-asean-regional-forum-speech-high-representative-vice-president-josep-borrell_en</p> <p>https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/hrvp-intervention-asean-regional-forum-key-challenges-peace-and-stability_en</p>
2022	16-Aug	EU		Indonesia	Press Release	EU-Indonesia - Joint press release on First Joint Naval Exercise	0	1	0	-								<p>The EU and Indonesia are committed to a free, open, inclusive and rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific region, underpinned by respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty, democracy, rule of law, transparency, freedom of navigation and overflight, unimpeded lawful commerce, and peaceful resolution of disputes. They reaffirm the primacy of international law, including the United Nations Convention on Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).</p>	<p>https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/eu-indonesia-joint-press-release-first-joint-naval-exercise_en</p>
2022	23-Sep	EU	Charles Michel President of the European Council	UNGA	Speech	Speech by President Charles Michel at the 77th session of the UN General Assembly	0	1	0	-								<p>We hope that the emerging powers, including China, will participate sincerely in collective efforts for peace and development. We believe in maritime security. We believe in stability in the Taiwan Strait. We adhere to the One China policy. But we will not turn a blind eye to human rights violations. Especially in Xinjiang and Hong Kong.</p>	<p>https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/09/23/speech-by-president-charles-michel-at-the-77th-un-general-assembly/</p>

2022	4-Nov	G7	EU, France, Germany, Italy	G7	Joint Statement	G7: Foreign Ministers' Statement	1	0	0	2	<p>East and South China Seas: We remain seriously concerned about the situation in and around the East and South China Seas. We strongly oppose any moves that increase tensions and undermine regional stability and the rules-based international order. We emphasize the universal and unified character of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and reaffirm UNCLOS' important role in setting out the legal framework that governs all activities in the ocean and the seas. We reiterate that the award rendered by the Arbitral Tribunal on 12 July 2016 is a significant milestone, legally binding, and a useful basis for peacefully resolving disputes. We reaffirm the need to uphold the principle of the UN Charter on peaceful settlement of disputes.</p> <p>We remind China of the need to uphold the principles of the UN Charter on peaceful settlement of disputes and to abstain from threats, coercion, intimidation, or the use of force. We strongly oppose any unilateral attempts to change the status quo by force or coercion.</p> <p>We reaffirm the importance of peace and stability across the Taiwan Strait and call for the peaceful resolution of cross-Strait issues. There is no change in the basic positions of G7 members on Taiwan, including stated one China policies.</p>	0	0	0	0	0	1	Statement by the entire G7 foreign ministers including the high representative of the EU.	https://www.ec.europa.eu/eas/g7-foreign-ministers-statement_en
2022	13-Nov	EU	Charles Michel/President of the European Council	ASEAN	Speech	Remarks by President Charles Michel at the ASEAN Global Dialogue	0	1	0	-	<p>The ASEAN outlook and the EU's Strategy for Cooperation on the Indo-Pacific both share the same view of the Indo-Pacific region namely as one for dynamic growth and opportunities.</p> <p>They also focus on important security challenges like maritime security in the Indo-Pacific region where we are working together to support connectivity and trade making critical maritime routes safer and more secure.</p>	0	0	1	0	0	0	Yes	https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/11/13/remarks-by-president-charles-michel-at-the-asean-global-dialogue/
2022	16-Nov	EU	Charles Michel/President of the European Council; Udo von der Leyen/President of the European Commission	Australia	Press Release	Australia-EU Leaders' meeting 2022: joint press release	1	0	0	1	<p>The Leaders discussed the shared interest in an open and rules-based regional maritime architecture. They acknowledged the primacy of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which provides the comprehensive legal framework for all activities in the oceans and seas. They reaffirmed their commitment to promote security and stability in the South China Sea, as well as to the peaceful settlement of disputes, in accordance with international law, particularly UNCLOS. They underscored their support for freedom of navigation and overflight, and States' ability to exercise their rights in relation to marine natural resources.</p> <p>They also shared their assessments of China's unilateral actions in the East and South China Seas. With respect to the South China Sea, they reiterated their shared concerns regarding China's expansive maritime claims, which are not consistent with international law as reflected in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). They emphasized the universal and unified character of the UNCLOS, which sets out the legal framework that governs all activities in the ocean and the seas.</p>	0	0	0	1	0	0	Yes	https://www.ec.europa.eu/delegations/australia/australia-eu-leaders%4E2%80%09-meeting-2022-joint-press-release_en
2022	2-Dec	EU	Stefano Samino/EEAS Secretary General	US	Press Release	EU-U.S.: Consultations between the U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Wendy Sherman and European External Action Service Secretary General Stefano Samino	1	0	0	2	<p>They committed to further pursue their coordination and complementary work for regional maritime security, including conducting a joint U.S.-EU naval exercise in the first half of 2023 and pursuing joint capacity-building efforts in the maritime domain to support freedom of navigation and other internationally lawful uses of the sea in the Indo-Pacific.</p>	0	0	0	0	1	Yes	https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/eu-us-consultations-between-us-deputy-secretary-of-state-wendy-sherman-and-european-external-action_en	
2022	8-Dec	EU		UNGA	Statement/Declaration	UN Statement – UN General Assembly: Adoption of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)	0	1	0	-	<p>The Convention (UNCLOS) enshrines the freedom of navigation and overflight and the rights of innocent and transit passage... All members of the international community must abide by the fundamental principles and rules of the law of the sea and should refrain from any actions undermining regional stability and security. We also remain that all maritime claims should be made and peacefully resolved in accordance with UNCLOS. We call on all States to continue to maintain the integrity of UNCLOS, to respect all its provisions, and to condemn any attempt to restrict, undermine, or blatantly disregard this unique instrument.</p>	0	0	1	0	0	0	Yes	https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/un-new-york/su-statement-5f29b09d3-un-general-assembly-adoption-un-convention-law-sea-unclos_en
2022	11-Dec	EU	Josep Borrell/High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy & Vice-President of the European Commission; Virginija Sinkevicius/Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries		Statement/Declaration	UNCLOS: Statement by High Representative Josep Borrell and Commissioner for Environment, Oceans and Fisheries Virginija Sinkevicius on the 40th Anniversary of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea	1	0	0	2	<p>The ocean and seas are amongst the world's foremost geopolitical arenas. The recent increase in tensions in the Eastern Mediterranean and in South and East China Seas and in the Taiwan Strait have proven this once again. In this regard, the full implementation of the EU Strategic Compass and the EU Strategy for the Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific is essential, together with ongoing EU work on maritime security.</p> <p>The European Union and its Member States call for respecting the freedom of navigation and overflight, as well as the rights of innocent passage and transit passage, for the peaceful settlement of disputes, in accordance with international law, and is strongly opposing any unilateral action that could undermine global and regional stability and the international rules-based order. The European Union and its Member States remain committed to the respect of the legal order established by UNCLOS given its centrality and universality and to the respect of its integrity. We urge all States to abide by the fundamental principles and rules of the law of the sea. Only the effective implementation of UNCLOS, as well as international cooperation at regional, sub-regional and bilateral levels can guarantee the global maritime security, safety and the sustainability of our ocean and seas.</p>	0	0	0	0	0	1	Yes	https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/unclos-statement-high-representative-josep-borrell-and-commissioner-environment-oceans-and-fisheries_en
2022	14-Dec	EU	Charles Michel/President of the European Council	ASEAN	Speech	Remarks by President Charles Michel at the opening ceremony of the EU-ASEAN commemorative summit	0	1	0	-	<p>And finally, we can deepen our cooperation in security and defence across many areas – like transnational crime, maritime security, women in conflict, and peacekeeping operations.</p>	0	1	0	0	0	0	Yes	https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/12/14/remarks-by-president-charles-michel-at-the-opening-ceremony-of-the-eu-asean-commemorative-summit/
2022	14-Dec	EU		ASEAN	Joint Statement	EU-ASEAN Commemorative Summit	1	0	0	2	<p>We reaffirm the importance of maintaining and promoting peace, security, stability, safety, and freedom of navigation in and overflight above the South China Sea, in accordance with international law, including UNCLOS. We reaffirm the need to enhance mutual trust and confidence, exercise self-restraint in the conduct of all activities and avoid actions that could increase tensions and the risk of accidents, misunderstandings, and miscalculation, as well as to pursue peaceful resolution of disputes in accordance with the universally recognised principles of international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS, which is commemorating its 40th anniversary this year.</p> <p>We recognised the benefits of having the South China Sea as a sea of peace, stability, and prosperity. We underscored the importance of the full and effective implementation of the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea (DOC) in its entirety. We encourage all countries to avoid any unilateral actions that endanger peace, security and stability in the region. We emphasise the need to maintain and promote an environment conducive to the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC) negotiations. We welcome further progress towards the early conclusion of an effective and substantive COC consistent with international law, including the 1982 UNCLOS.</p>	0	0	0	1	0	0	Yes	chrome-extension://c4adb2mmbbtpojgldelfndmkaj/http://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/60846/eu-asean-leaders-statement.pdf
2022	14-Dec	EU	Charles Michel/President of the European Council	ASEAN	Speech	Remarks by President Charles Michel at the press conference of the EU-ASEAN commemorative summit	0	1	0	-	<p>Finally, we discussed our intensified security cooperation with several Asian and ASEAN partners, including maritime security. Maritime security is vital for the world and also for Europe due to the importance of trade routes and their protection. It is in our mutual interest to bolster our cooperation in this area.</p>	0	0	1	0	0	0	Yes	https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/12/14/remarks-by-president-charles-michel-at-the-press-conference-of-the-eu-asean-commemorative-summit/