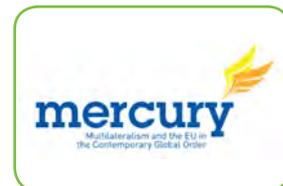




MERCURY

Helping the EU understand its past to better shape its future



The European Union aims to find common solutions to common problems by addressing such problems in concert with multiple other countries. How and where this works – and how it could work better – was investigated by the Mercury project.

The researchers working for Mercury (a consortium of nine academic partners from Europe, China and South Africa) investigated how successful the EU was at finding and promoting “multilateral” solutions over the last 10 years. In its minimal definition, multilateralism requires a minimum of three countries working together to find solutions to common issues, such as trade, national security or environmental policies.

Without a multilateral approach, solutions in these areas are hard to find. The researchers of Mercury investigated concrete cases to show where the EU was successful in its multilateral efforts, where it failed, and why.



The MERCURY consortium © MERCURY

IMPACT

Multilateralism helps to meet global societal challenges which cannot be solved at national level. Therefore, Mercury’s research on the application, practicability and optimization of multilateralism makes a significant contribution to the quest for solutions to such societal challenges.

The president of the European Union, José Manuel Barroso met with members of Mercury to discuss its results. The Commission noted that Mercury “is likely to have an impact on EU external relations”. Other high-ranking policy makers participated in a joint conference involving Mercury and two other projects on multilateralism (EU-GRASP and EU4Seas) in Brussels as well as in the final Mercury conference in South Africa.

Together with EU-GRASP and EU4Seas, Mercury has proposed a joint set of policy recommendations to European policy makers on where and how to better apply the concept of multilateralism. Many other publications, reports and policy briefs are available on the Mercury website (www.mercury-fp7.net). Many of them are translated into languages other than English (Mandarin and Portuguese, for example) in order to maximize the outreach to policy makers.



MERCURY closing conference in Pretoria © MERCURY

FACTS & FIGURES

Project Name	Mercury - Multilateralism and the EU in the Contemporary Global Order
Website	www.mercury-fp7.net
Research Area	SSH-2007-4.3-02: Multilateralism and the new external relations of the European Union
Coordinating Institution	The University of Edinburgh
Number of Partners	9
Start Date - End Date	01.02.2009 - 30.04.2012
Duration	39 months
Project Cost	1.975.910 €
Project Funding	1.500.000 €
Contract Type	Small or medium-scale focused research project

Policy makers show interest

The work of Mercury resulted in recommendations to the European Union on how to become better at finding multilateral solutions.

The results and the recommendations of Mercury have attracted the attention of high-ranking policy-makers, including the President of the European Union, José Manuel Barroso (see "Impact" box on the right).

Mixed findings

Mercury's results show that although multilateralism is the objective of the EU in its relations with other regions and partners, in practice, partners are sometimes approached bilaterally or even unilaterally. According to Mercury, the success of multilateralism also varies with policy issues.

In trade policies, for example, the EU is successful at finding multilateral solutions while it is less successful when it comes to questions of security. Exactly why this is so and what might be done to increase the effectiveness of multilateral policies is what Mercury identified through several publications, reports and policy briefs, many of them available on its project website (www.mercury-fp7.net).



NET4SOCIETY is an FP7 project funded by the EUROPEAN COMMISSION. This publication reflects only the author's views - the Community is not liable for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.

NET4SOCIETY is the international network of National Contact Points (NCPs) for Socio-economic Sciences and Humanities (SSH) in FP7. NCPs are set up to guide researchers in their quest for securing EU funding. www.net4society.eu