

# TRACK Dissemination Conference

## Spreading knowledge about the European Council

### Conference Report

7 -8 July 2021

Joint Conference of

*Centre for Turkey and European Union Studies (CETEUS)*  
and

*Trans European Policy Studies Association (TEPSA)*

In the framework of the Jean Monnet Project TRACK



**TRACK** Teaching and Researching  
the European Council



## Abstract

The TRACK conference "Spreading knowledge about the European Council" took place online on 7 and 8 July 2021 and has been joined by 51 participants.

The conference aimed to shed light on the current role of the European Council as a highly under-researched and widely unknown key institution of the European Union. The panels elaborated on the European Council's role for the recent Corona crisis management and in international affairs. The conference thereby aimed to contribute to open research on the European Council.

## Highlights of the Conference

- **Keynote speech by Herman van Rompuy** (President European Council emeritus and TRACK Advisory Board)
- **Opening Panel: The scientific and practical objectives for Studying the European Council**
- **Panel I: The European Council: A Crisis Manager beyond the Corona Crisis? Looking back and forward**
- **Panel II: How the European Council Works: A look at the dynamics**
- **Panel III: Spreading the knowledge: A look at the State of the Art**
- **Panel IV: Concluding Panel**

**with contributions of:**

Harun Suratli, Adrian Krieger & Steffen Bartsch



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With the support of the  
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Wednesday, 7 July 2021

09:30 – 10:45 CET

**Welcome**

**Mariam Khotenashvili** | TEPSA

**Harun Suratli** | CETEUS, University of Cologne

and

**Opening Panel: The scientific and practical objectives for  
Studying the European Council**

Chair: **Harun Suratli** | CETEUS, University of Cologne

Contributions:

**Michele Chang** | College of Europe

**Hartmut Marhold** | University of Cologne

**Wolfgang Wessels** | University of Cologne

*Rapporteur: Adrian Krieger*

10:45 – 11:00 CET

Break

11:00 – 12:15 CET

**Keynote Speech: A Look Behind the Scenes**

Chair: **Michele Chang** | College of Europe

**Herman van Rompuy** | Former President of the European Council

Commentator:

**Sophia Russack** | Centre for European Policy Studies, Brussels

*Rapporteur: Steffen Bartsch*

12:15 – 14:00 CET

Break

14:00 – 15:30 CET

**Panel I: The European Council: A Crisis Manager beyond the Corona  
Crisis? Looking back and forward**

Chair: **Julie Smith** | Cambridge University

Contributions:

**Juha Jokela** | Finnish Institute of International Affairs

**Eduard Soler** | Barcelona Centre for International Affairs

**Ramunas Vilpisauskas** | Vilnius University

*Rapporteur: Harun Suratli*



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Thursday, 8 July 2021

9:00 – 10:00 CET

**Panel II: How the European Council Works: A look at the dynamics**

Chair: **Christian Lequesne** | Sciences Po, Paris

**Jim Cloos** | TEPSA Secretary-General, former Deputy Director General at the General Secretariat of the European Council

Commentators:

**Paula Reppmann** | University Greifswald

**Darius Ribbe** | University Greifswald

*Rapporteur : Steffen Bartsch*

10:00 – 10:15 CET

Break

10:15 – 11:45 CET

**Panel III: Spreading the knowledge: A look at the State of the Art**

Chair: **Wolfgang Wessels** | University of Cologne

Contributions:

**Birgit Bujard** | Alexander von Humboldt Foundation

**Thomas Christiansen** | LUISS School of Government, Rome

**Astrid Worum** | European Parliament Research Service, Brussels

*Rapporteur: Adrian Krieger*

11:45 – 12:00 CET

Break

12:00 – 13:00 CET

**Panel IV: Concluding Panel**

Chair: **Lucia Mokrá** | TEPSA

Contributions:

**Christine Neuhold** | Maastricht University

Conclusions:

**Wolfgang Wessels** | University of Cologne

*Rapporteur: Harun Suratli*



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## Welcome and Opening Panel: The scientific and practical objectives for Studying the European Council

### Welcome

*Mariam Khotenashvili* from TEPSA welcomed the participants at 09:30 CET, giving a short description of the TRACK projects aims: studying the European Council as one of the most important but understudied institutions of the European Union (EU). Furthermore, Mariam Khotenashvili gave context about the European Council in general and introduced the speakers and organizers before giving the floor to Harun Suratli.

*Harun Suratli* also bade the participants and experts welcome and introduced the contributors for the Opening Panel.

### Opening Panel: The scientific and practical objectives for Studying the European Council

**Speakers:** Michele Chang, College of Europe

Hartmut Marhold, University of Cologne

Wolfgang Wessels, University of Cologne

**Chair:** Harun Suratli, CETEUS University of Cologne

**Rapporteur:** Adrian Krieger, University of Cologne

*Hartmut Marhold* opened by expressing his fascination with the complexity of studying the European Council and recommended a three-level systemic approach in studying the Council in order to assess the Council in its institutional and post-institutional environment. In the European Council all sorts of groups and individuals play an important role; inside the 'black box' of the Council they represent variables interacting with each other. Furthermore, the Council is only one player in the larger 'black box' of the institutional system of the EU, in which all institutions interact as variables. Finally, the system itself interacts with its environment, thus completing the three-level system. Hartmut Marhold invited the participants to see the potential of a systemic approach to integrate all factors and variables into one analytical framework.



*Michele Chang* commented on this by first looking at the origins of the institutional layout of the European Council. In 2009 the Council was, formerly being an informal arrangement, formalised in the Treaty of Lisbon; this coincided with the Euro crisis and the Financial crisis. During this time, for a variety of reasons, an intergovernmental institution was desired by member states. Thus the Council could be seen as a 'counterargument' to the so-called 'union-method'. Future questions regarding the Council may include questions such about the Council's influence and its approach in dealing with differences between member states, something that became very apparent during the sovereign debt crisis.

*Wolfgang Wessels* directed the audience's attention to empirical evidence, starting with the number of meetings of the European Council. He noted that the institutionalisation in the Lisbon Treaty did not really change the way the Council worked in the 'Living Constitution'. The Council had 204 meetings since its inception; Chancellor Merkel took part in over 100 meetings during her time in government, which only shows that the Council's frequency of meeting increased drastically. Looking at the number of 'leaders' which were present at the meetings we would come to a number of over 100. Wolfgang Wessels expressed his support for the systemic approach but also mentioned the Triple-A-Approach (analyse assess advice). Analysis should start with looking at the rules and patterns of the Council. Here there is a major gap in research; often most discussions are done before the meetings which cannot be analysed in detail.

Historically speaking, the European Council played a similar role in combatting the 'polycrisis' of the 70s as it does in today's. Furthermore, we should not forget the 'Power of the purse' which is not found in the Treaties. The Council also plays a role in external relations, formulating positions regarding the 'Strategic interest' of the EU. In conclusion, the Council often did not stick to the Treaties but instead found their own ways to deal with crises and play a role as a constitutional architect.

Furthermore, the Council has a 'Pre-legislative' function, in the last years this has often been seen in climate policy, health policy, the realm of security, freedom and justice etc. Often, we underestimate the impacts of the conclusions of Council meetings; they could be vague strategies or concrete instructions. Thus it is important to further study the Council conclusions.

One thing that should also be analysed is the leadership role within the European Council: What does leadership in the Council mean when all members have veto power? How did the permanent Council president change the power dynamic?

## Keynote Speech: A Look Behind the Scenes

**Speaker:** Herman van Rompuy, President European Council emeritus & Head of TRACK  
Advisory Board

Sophia Russack, CEPS Brussels (Commentator)

**Chair:** Michele Chang, College of Europe

Rapporteur: Steffen Bartsch, University of Cologne

In a keynote speech on Wednesday 7th 2021, *Herman van Rompuy* (Former President of the European Council) gave a look behind the scenes of one of the key institutions of the European Union. *Michele Chang* (College of Europe) chaired, and *Sophia Russack* (Centre for European Policy Studies, Brussels) commented the discussion that was attended by 20 participants.

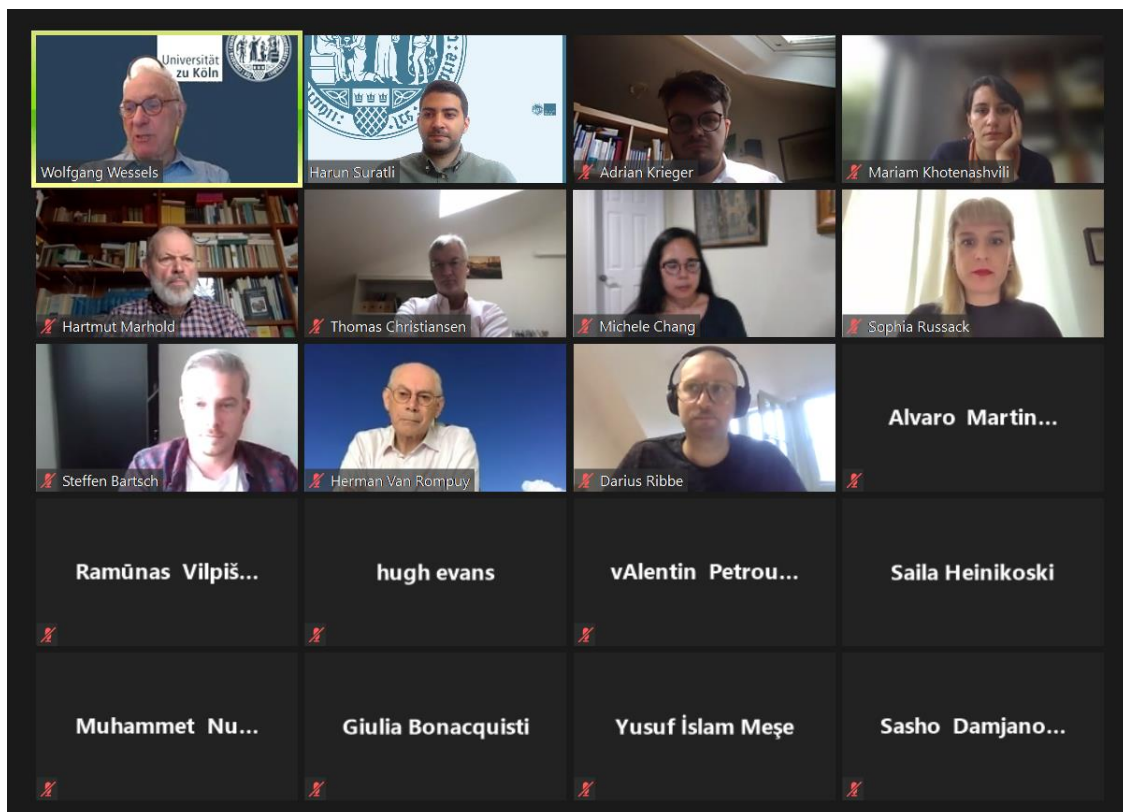
*Herman van Rompuy* started his keynote speech by raising the question: "Are there striking facts or developments to be noted regarding the role of the European Council in the past year?" According to him, the European Council is also in times of crises like the Corona pandemic the central institution in terms of decision making. Since the Corona crisis, the European Union focused on his economic role by engaging in deficit spending and, via the Commission, issued its own bonds for that purpose. In this sense, the euro becomes an international investment instrument, and its global status is enhanced. Van Rompuy referred to four comments regarding a EU's recovery plan due to the Corona crisis. The first comment is about solidarity with those European Union-countries who are most affected by the pandemic, and he referred to the solidarity between big and small countries. The next comment deals with the Franco-German axis, which played an indispensable role in the setting up of the economic program in times of the Corona crisis. The third comment indicates that the European Commission has fully played its role as a motor in the vaccination part. In the economic part, the driving part was the German chancellor Angela Merkel and the French President Emmanuel Macron. Nevertheless, the European Commission was essential in the implementation. The fourth comment is about the rotating presidency of Germany in the second half of 2020 was much more than instrumental, which had become the rule since the Lisbon Treaty. It contributed to the agreement in the European Council on the Recovery plan and on the rule of law conditionality linked to the European funds. Hence, the German presidency can be seen as much more important than previous rotating presidencies. However,





that the standing of the European Union during the pandemic did not improve despite the positive effects on the economic side and on the vaccination side. Moreover, Van Rompuy talks about the European Council's central role in foreign policy by referring to the conversation with the new President of the USA Joe Biden shortly after he took office and the relations with Russia and China. The relations to Russia and China are marked by sanctions which show that there is more foreign policy unity in the European Union than is often said. Van Rompuy concluded his keynote speech by mentioning, that some proposals by France and Germany have been blocked by a number of small countries, which are demanding a more important role and do not want to simply join the Franco-German agreement. However, the Franco-German cooperation is indispensable for the European Union. A political instability in one of those two countries could seriously damage the European Union.

*Michele Chang* summarized the findings and opened the discussion with the commentator *Sophia Russack* and the audience. *Sophia Russack* broadened the focus of the perspective by looking at the impact of the European Council regarding the institutional balance in the European Union. She argued for the leading role of the European Council for the EU's decisions making, which is uncontested. It has been the decisive forum for the most important initiatives and it continues to increase in importance.



Source: Screenshot was taken by the TRACK project team on 7 July 2021.



**Panel I: The European Council: A Crisis Manager beyond the Corona Crisis?  
Looking back and forward**

**Speakers:** Juha Jokela, Finnish Institute of International Affairs

Eduard Soler, Barcelona Centre for International Affairs

Ramunas Vilpisauskas, Vilnius University

**Chair:** Julie Smith, Cambridge University

**Rapporteur:** Harun Suratli, University of Cologne

The Panel "The European Council: A Crisis Manager beyond the Corona Crisis? Looking back and forward" was moderated by *Julie Smith*, Cambridge University, Member of the House of Lords and TRACK Advisory Board.

The first panelist *Juha Jokela*, Finnish Institute of International Affairs (FIIA), focused his speech on the European Council's external action. "While the European Council gives direction to the EU in general, it does not in CFSP in particular", he said.

*Eduard Soler*, Barcelona Centre for International Affairs, gave a brief historical introduction to the topic. In addition to that, *Ramunas Vilpisauskas*, Professor at Vilnius University, emphasized that one of the key issues of this event should be the important role of the European Council in crisis management. "As we saw last year, this is the result of the European Council holding the power of the purse", he said.

In the Question & Answers session, the panelists discussed about the upcoming elections in Germany and France and its possible impact on the European Council. One conclusion from the Q&A session is that it may take some time for the outcomes of the current crisis to start showing. *Ramunas Vilpisauskas* from the Vilnius University mentioned the crisis between Belarus and Lithuania where migration is furthermore an important topic even years after the refugee crisis in 2015.

## Panel II: How the European Council Works: A look at the dynamics

**Speakers:** Jim Cloos, TEPSA Secretary-General, former Deputy Director General at  
the General Secretariat of the European Council

Paula Reppmann, University Greifswald (Commentator)

Darius Ribbe, University Greifswald (Commentator)

**Chair:** Christian Lequesne, Sciences Po, Paris

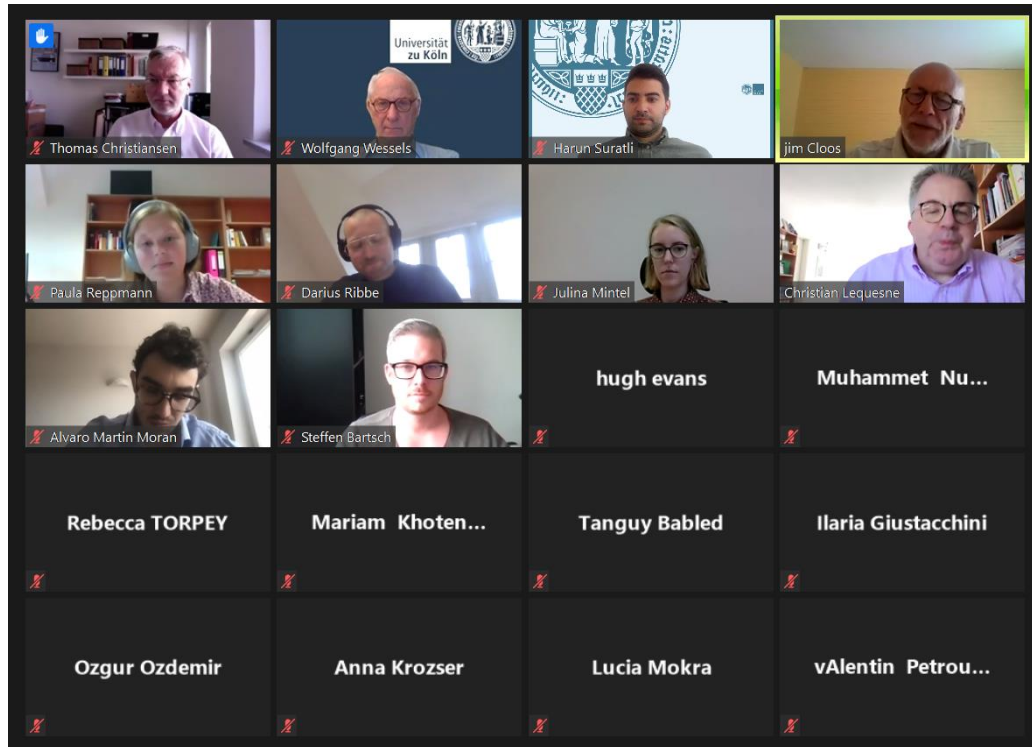
Rapporteur: Steffen Bartsch, University of Cologne

In the second panel *Jim Cloos* (TEPSA Secretary-General, former Deputy Director General at the General Secretary of the European Council) discussed how the European Council Works with a special look at its dynamics. *Christian Lequesne* (Sciences Po, Paris) chaired and *Paula Reppmann* and *Darius Ribbe* (both University Greifswald) commented the discussion that was attended by about 13 participants.

At the beginning, *Jim Cloos* started with a reference to the importance of the European Council for the functioning of the European Union. In this sense, he named the European Council as Club of national leaders. Moreover, he focused on the function of the European Council and mentioned dynamics from three angles: The first dynamic is over time, to look back in time and see how the European Council has evolved into what it is today. The second dynamic deals with procedures, in terms of preparing the European Council. The third dynamic focused on the atmosphere in the room over time. Cloos argues, that it is difficult to understand the dynamics if a person is not part of it. The only persons who are sitting in the room are the President of the European Council, the President of the European Commission, the High Representatives as the 27 Heads of State of Governments. Furthermore, Cloos also referred to what the European Council does. He stated that the European Council played a certain number of roles: First, the European Council sets the general political guidelines within the European Union, which is recognized in Article 15 TEU. Second, the EC at its level sets the overall constitutional framework (IGC). Third, the European Council can also be called as the Councils "Über-Vater". Fourth, the European Councils role as a crisis manager, which has been the case since 2008 when one crisis chased the other. For example, the Ukraine crises, migration and Brexit.



Afterwards *Christian Lequesne* opened the discussion with the commentators *Paula Reppmann* and *Darius Ribbe* and the audience. Paula Reppmann mentioned the role of staff members in the European Council and their contribution to the conclusions. Darius Ribbe referred to the teamwork with other key institutions of the European Union and focused on the inter-institutional balance with the European Parliament.



Source: Screenshot was taken by the TRACK project team on 7 July 2021.



Source: Created by the TRACK project team for the Dissemination Conference on 7/8 July 2021.

### Panel III: Spreading the knowledge: A look at the State of the Art

**Speakers:** Birgit Bujard, Alexander von Humboldt Foundation

Thomas Christiansen, LUISS School of Government, Rom

Astrid Worum, European Parliament Research Service, Brussels

**Chair:** Wolfgang Wessels, University of Cologne

Rapporteur: Adrian Krieger, University of Cologne

*Wolfgang Wessels* welcomed the participants, expressing that this panel can be seen as one of the main emphases of the TRACK project: Looking at the State of the Art of European Council studies.

*Birgit Bujard* started her presentation with a look on the European Council on Brexit. In a joined exercise with Wolfgang Wessels, she looked at the Council's role in Brexit from June 2019 to December 2020. Particularly the Council's conclusions were studied, which gave an idea of the Council's activities and relationship with the UK. Before Brexit the Council needed to accommodate the "Awkward Partner", the UK. As the supreme political institution, the Council shaped the relationship between the UK and the EU, being the ultimate decision maker on the European side. Multiple decisions (The Hague 1996, Opt-out decision, David Cameron's renegotiation 2016) show that even before Lisbon, the Council was the ultimate decision maker. During Brexit the Council made some key decisions quickly that can be divided into two groups. First, those dealing with Brexit directly (e.g. no unilateral negotiations) and second those on the future relationship with the Ex-EU member. It was remarkable how unified the Council remained during the negotiations, i.e. the member states followed through with the decision not to negotiate unilaterally. After the referendum, the Council framed its decisions in a narrative that put an emphasis on the Union's achievements and on the differences between member states and non-member states. Key elements were: non-member states cannot be better off than a member state, a balance of rights and obligations, semi-membership is not possible, the integrity of the single market (all four freedoms, no sectoral participation), solidarity among member states (in this case esp. Ireland), and the preservation of decisions on the negotiations and future relationship for the political leaders of the member states. There is much continuity in the Council's decisions and conclusions regarding these. The provisions were reaffirmed in May 2021 after the TCA Agreement and the end of the



transition period. The Council again spoke of the relationship between the UK and the EU to be “as close as possible” with respecting the restrictions of non-membership, basing it on a balance of rights and obligations at all times. For now, there does not seem to be an interest to move the relationship with the UK away from these principles.

*Thomas Christiansen* stressed the importance of meetings and conferences like the TRACK conference, putting an emphasis on the value of inter-sectoral participation (i.e. Academia, think-tanks, politics). While the access to the information that comes from the meetings is important, academics need to do their own research, recognising that access to the information regarding the Council is limited which makes it a difficult topic to research. From an academic POV we need to be clear about what we want to achieve, what the object of the research is. We need to formulate specific, answerable, but not too obvious research questions. Quite often, the “carriage is put before the horse” by talking about methods without asking questions. The issue furthermore needs to be framed in an analytical framework that systematically answers the research question. Lastly, and most difficult, the choice of method is important. Christiansen stressed the use of statistics but also pointed out the importance of using a wide array of quantitative and qualitative methods, especially when researching the European Council. For example, the social setting of the Council (i.e. the ‘club-like’ atmosphere) can only be captured by qualitative methods. We should study the conclusions of the Council by not only reading what is in them, but looking at what was left out. Discourse analysis and machine learning can be useful regarding the huge amount of subject matter. But other methods, such as process tracing and systemic analysis are also important. We need to be open to all possible outcomes. Christiansen suggested the triangulation with those who have a different view, beyond the participants and the institutions, i.e. also talking to NGOs, the Parliament, Lobbyist groups etc. In the European setting, comparative case studies could prove viable, though a system of proper justification which cases are selected is needed. Studying individual actors could also be useful to gain knowledge about their personal difference, their view on the social setting etc. Historical studies, e.g. diachronist comparison (how were things done before the permanent Council president/Spitzenkandidaten and after), could also prove useful. Nonetheless, it is important to connect the studies to the real world by talking to insiders etc. and keeping in mind that only a plethora of methods can make comprehensive studies possible.

*Astrid Worum* stressed monitoring the heads of states. Her institute (European Council Oversight Unit, ECOU) was created during the financial crisis to look at the intergovernmental attempts by the European Council. Oversight by the European Parliament is of key importance.



In detail, ECOU looks at the outlook and outcome of European Council meetings. Systematic analysis of the Council's conclusions, following the activities of the heads of states and the president, examining the Council's promises and commitments and assessing the Council's activities (especially on defence and EU-Turkey relations) is very important. Furthermore, it is important to look at the personnel of the Council, its priorities, and the main policy issues. Annually looking at the European Council activities leads to a horizontal overview of the topics discussed in a year. On the other hand, assessing specific themes via thematic assessment allows in-depth analysis and study. Furthermore, institutional analysis, personality analysis, analysis of working methods, and the interactions with the European Parliament all can yield insightful results. ECOU looked at the Twitter activity of members of the European Council in 2019 to 2020, especially at communications regarding how and when, in which language, about which issues etc. the members communicated publicly. Furthermore, ECOU created a rolling checklist of commitments systematically analysing the Council's conclusions by organising the conclusions into 12 chapters defined around the main priorities stated in the 2019 Strategic Agenda. Finally, ECOU is currently working on a database of European Council conclusions since 2017 to produce statistics allowing fine-tuned analysis.

For their research ECOU differentiates between four kinds of conclusions and seven kinds of meetings.

#### Conclusions:

1. Commitment: Strategic Priorities, Calls for action or proposals, EUCO self-commitment
2. Reviews: Taking stock of progress, Comments on adoption/implementation, Call for review of action/proposal, Recall of a previous decision
3. Endorsements: Endorsing an action/proposal
4. Statement: General declarations

#### Types of Meetings:

Progressively, meetings became more and more formalised, reaching its high-point after adopting the rules of conduct for the Council after the Lisbon Treaty.

1. Quarterly Meetings, Formal
  - a. Adopts conclusions
2. Special European Council Meeting, Formal
  - a. Adopts conclusions
3. Meetings of Heads of States or Governments, Informal (traditionally two per year)
  - a. Makes statements or declaration
4. Videoconferences, Informal

- a. Provide possibilities to move forward on other topics during formal meetings, urgency meetings can take place, the EUCO can take action between physical meetings. They are inappropriate to discuss sensitive issues (foreign policy, MFF etc.)
- 5. Euro summit
  - a. Used to be crisis meetings, are now meetings on the future of the monetary union
- 6. Article 50 meetings
  - a. Brexit made meetings necessary, informal meetings to discuss the future of Europe, after the activation of Article 50 by the UK, these became formal and adopted EUCO conclusions
- 7. Leaders' Agenda
  - a. Reaching consensus in an informal meeting before adopting conclusions in formal meetings

Physical meetings are still more effective due to the chance for bilateral side meetings; thus several leaders can find arrangements between delegations and the president of EUCO. The pressure of coming to an arrangement also plays a big role. Videoconferences also are often not undertaken alone by the heads of states; during physical meetings, civil servants need to step away from the table. In conclusion, whilst there are a lot of formal meetings seen in the Treaties, many informal meetings are important to reach conclusions. This shows the flexibility and adaptability of the Council. The role of crisis manager can only be held due to this flexibility.



#### Panel IV: Concluding Panel

**Speakers:** Christine Neuhold, Maastricht University  
Wolfgang Wessels, University of Cologne

**Chair:** Lucia Mokrá, TEPSA

**Rapporteur:** Harun Suratli, University of Cologne

The final session of the Conference was moderated by *Lucia Mokrá*, Chairperson of the TEPSA Board. The panellists *Christine Neuhold*, Professor at Maastricht University, and *Wolfgang Wessels*, Director of CETEUS at University of Cologne, gave closing statements and summarized the outcome of the conference with a special focus on the role of the European Council in crisis management and the contribution of TRACK in teaching and researching this key institution.

*Christiane Neuhold* emphasized some important elements of analysing the European Council: First, she referred to the different roles of the European Council and the European Parliament and their interaction. She said that both institutions can be considered as “winners” of the Treaty of Lisbon, but they have different roles: The European Council surveys “EU affairs from on high”, whereas the European Parliament is “in the trenches”. She said that poly-crisis has put the European Council at centre of inter-institutional relations: “Crisis issues are seen as 'chefsache', i.e. issues which must be dealt with at the highest level”. The TRACK Project has closed many gaps in understanding an understudied this key institution. “The project is vital to bring academics and practitioners together in order to learn more about how this institution works on the inside”, she said and concluded by pointing out that “the debate not ended”.

With a view to its role in the last 50 years, the European Council can be considered as the “driving force for the transformation of Europe”, Wolfgang Wessels said. On the question of accountability and legitimacy, he said: “we need to look into how far European citizens are in the loop”. He emphasized the huge potential for teaching and research of the European Council and the network of experts on the European Council that has been created by TRACK. “Over this conference, we have collected a lot of insight and evidence for how the European Council works in times of crisis”, he said in his final remarks and concluded the TRACK dissemination conference.



## Jean-Monnet Project

*Teaching and **Researching** the European **Council**: Enhancing and disseminating knowledge on a  
key institution in challenging times*

### TRACK Objectives

Regarding political and academic challenges, TRACK responds to an ongoing need to provide regular offers for teaching and research on the European Council (EUCO) as a key institution. In view of known and unknown challenges in the EU, TRACK focuses on the EUCO's role in the EU's policy-making and in shaping the EU's future. By identifying challenges for Europe, TRACK analyzes and assess the EUCO's activities along five dimensions (history, real world functions, internal patterns of decision-making, impact on the EU's institutional architecture, lessons for teaching and research) for filling gaps in teaching and research.

### TRACK Key Points



#### Academic Analysis

TRACK regularly **analyses** and **assess** the EUCO's activities along **five analytical dimensions** (history, real world functions, internal decision-making, impact on the EU's institutional architecture, and lessons for teaching and research), aiming to **promote EU studies** by a **real-time analysis** of the EUCO as a **moving target**.



#### Events

TRACK organizes amongst other a **kick-off conference** in Brussels; **public lectures with panel discussions and a luncheon debate** across Europe; a **mid-term event** on the German Presidency in Berlin; **World Cafés** at secondary schools and a **dissemination conference** in Brussels



#### Online Activities

TRACK provides open access information comprising **analytical reports** on the EUCO's performance, **comments** after each EUCO meeting **on Twitter**, a set of **innovative online teaching modules**, contributions to **Wikipedia articles** and **living editions** on the EU system and **journal articles**.



#### Dissemination

TRACK follows a tailor-made dissemination strategy and spread its output via a constantly updated **website**, **newsletters**, **social media** (Twitter, Facebook) and the **partner institutes' networks**.

#### Project lifetime

01 September 2019 – 31 August 2021

#### Academic coordinator

Prof Dr Wolfgang Wessels, CETEUS | University of Cologne

#### Project manager

Harun Suratli, M.A., CETEUS | University of Cologne

The TRACK advisory board consists of high-level experts from different disciplines and countries with Herman van Rompuy, former president of the European Council, as the head of the advisory board.



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