

A photograph of two people, a man and a woman, seated at a table and signing documents. The man on the left is wearing a dark suit, a light blue shirt, and a red patterned tie. The woman on the right is wearing a blue blazer over a white top. They are both holding blue pens. In front of them are documents and a black folder. The background features a large blue flag with the United Nations emblem on the left and the European Union flag on the right. A faint watermark 'Summer School EU HIGH' is visible diagonally across the image.

Universalism vs Regionalism in Global Health: the role of the EU

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The EU and global health

- EC's document "Together for Health – A Strategic Approach for the EU, 2008 – 2013"
 - establish a broad cross-policy framework to respond to a wide range of health challenges in a comprehensive way and reflected the need for the EU to play a global role in health.
- The 2010 EU Commission Communication and the EU Council Conclusions on "The EU Role in Global Health"
- G7 meeting of health and development ministers in May 2022, EU Commissioners announced the launch of the process to develop a new EU Global Health Strategy.....but first.....

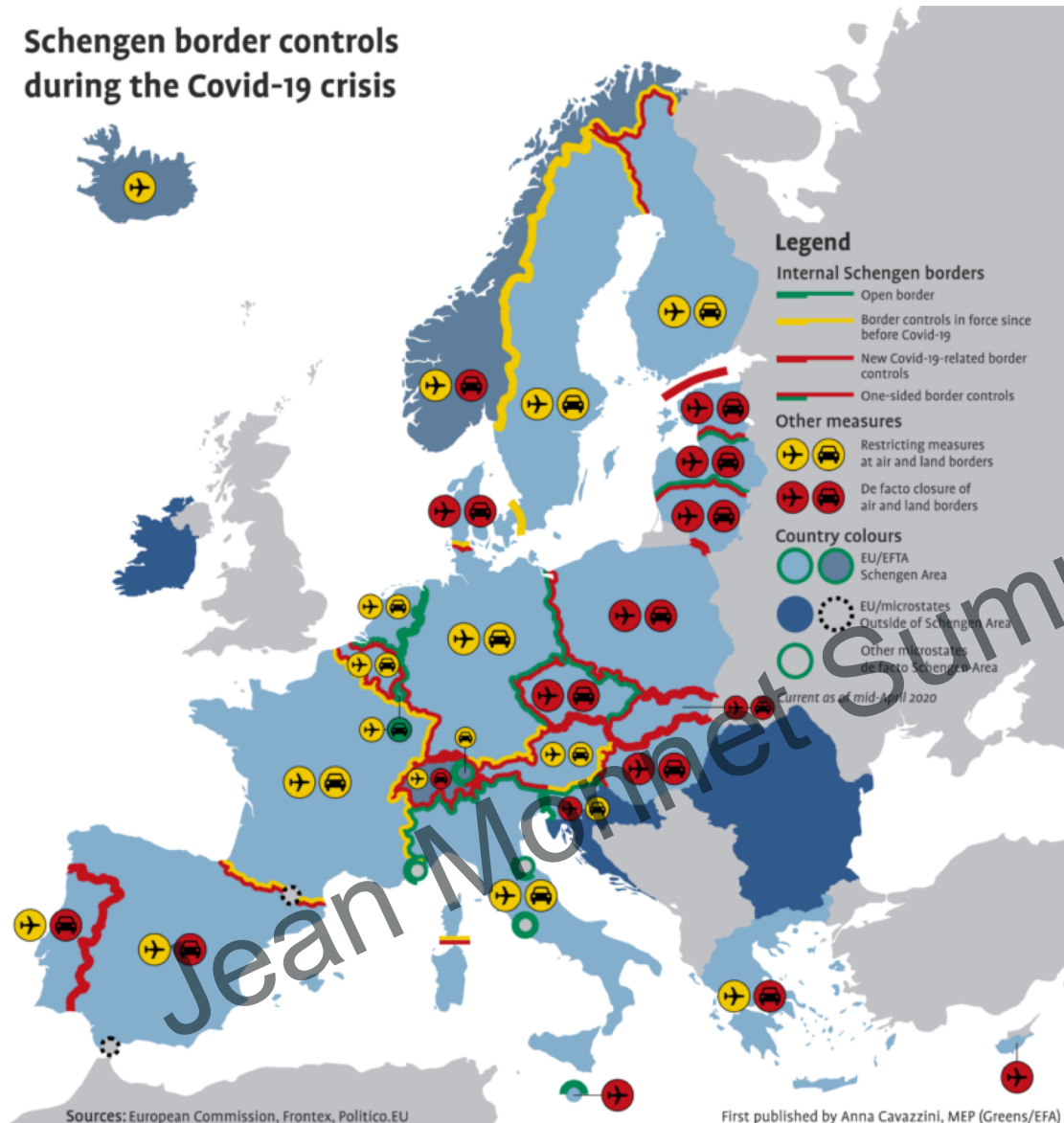


COVID-19
and EU
internal (and
external?)
relations

Jean Monnet Summer School EU4GH

Early internal actions

- uncoordinated with the disorganised adoption of lockdowns
- conflicting approaches and a lack of coordination.
- The absence of exports of medical equipment from EU countries to Italy gave the impression that protectionism dominated the reaction of EU countries – even within other EU members.
- The reintroduction of internal border controls and the suspension of the freedom of movement by 17 member states, with a complete lack of coordination.



VACCINE NATIONALISM

- “no one is safe till everyone is safe.” “Without Europe, many countries would not yet have received their first dose.”
- "population-wide immunization against COVID-19 as a global public good for health and the crucial role of quality, safe, and efficient vaccines therein".
- EU proposed text for a consolidated zero draft on a WHA73 "COVID-19 response" World Health Assembly (WHA) resolution on COVID-19, finally adopted on May 19, 2020, the EU submitted a proposal for a consolidated zeroo draft on a WHA73 "COVID-19 response"
- “We see the crest of a third wave [of infection] forming in member states, and we know that we need to accelerate the vaccination rates.”Were this situation not to change, the EU would “have to reflect on how to make exports to vaccine producing countries dependent on their level of openness.” - EC President Ursula von der Leyen
- the EU had proved to be “the most inclusive world power.” and had, had “merely put in place a system for controlling the export of doses produced in the EU.” – Charles Michel

Vaccine nationalism (2)

- European countries within the bloc began to restrict the export of vaccine doses to non-bloc countries
- 2021 Italian authorities urged the European Commission to block 250,700 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine destined for Australia.
- “AstraZeneca’s failure to live up to expectations in supply” and Australia not being a “vulnerable country.” The request was also based on the EU export control mechanism on COVID-19 vaccines, introduced in January 2021 with the intention to block exports of vaccines outside the union.
- “The objective of this measure is to ensure timely access to COVID-19 vaccines for all EU citizens and to tackle the current lack of transparency of vaccine exports outside the EU.” European Commission
- “We should not let ourselves be misled by China and Russia, both regimes with less desirable values than ours, as they organise highly limited but widely publicised operations to supply vaccines to others.” “for propaganda purposes.....The EU, in contrast, promoted its values.” – Charles Michel

Vaccine passports

- “preferential vaccination of travellers could result in inadequate supplies of vaccines for priority populations considered a high risk of severe COVID-19 disease.” - WHO
- “hinder equitable access to a limited vaccine supply and would be unlikely to maximize the benefits of vaccination for individual societies and over-all global wealth.”
- favoured a small number of vaccine candidates developed and manufactured in EU.
- Even rejected ‘Covidsheid’ the Astra Zenica vaccine that was being made under licenced by **Serum Institute of India**,
- More difficult because most widely administered vaccine globally – in LMICs – were not on the EMA approved list. Created a two-tier system.



COVAX

- The original goal of COVAX was to facilitate vaccine equity by delivering 2 billion doses of vaccine to countries around the world by the end of 2021. COVAX acting as the “key purchasing agent for the world – pooling demand and allowing significant market shaping and equitable allocation powers”.
- EU leading voice in developing and creating this very system – early funder
- assumed that high-income countries would use COVAX for the purchase of vaccines, thereby, “delegating authority over R&D and allocation decisions to a new global partnership”.
- This turned out to be “overly ambitious and unrealistic”⁴⁰ and fewer than half of 1 billion doses were delivered under COVAX by the end of 2021



The EU and COVAX

- Financial Contributions: The EU has been a significant financial contributor to COVAX.
- Over 1bn euros....
- some of this is in the form of grants, and some in the form of loans, the terms of which are not public so cannot see repayment schedules, interest rates etc.
- the EU, while handing over money to COVAX was simultaneously buying up all the vaccine so COVAX couldn't



TRIPS waiver

- first proposed by the India and South Africa in 2020, would involve a temporary global easing of intellectual property rights on COVID-19 vaccines and treatments to enable them to be produced on a far larger scale, to support global health and a way out of the pandemic.
 - strong resistance from the EU, the UK and other Northern governments
 - agreed to at the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference in June 2022 (nearly two years from the initial proposal), - heavily weakened text
 - Does not give legal certain to manufacturers in LMIC, and far too late
-
- Legend: ■ Supporters ■ Co-sponsors



EU waiver



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 27.4.2023

COM(2023) 224 final

2023/0129(COD)

Proposal for a

REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL

on compulsory licensing for crisis management and amending Regulation (EC) 816/2006

(Text with EEA relevance)

{SEC(2023) 173 final} - {SWD(2023) 120 final} - {SWD(2023) 121 final} - {SWD(2023) 122 final}

EU Global Health Strategy...2022

- interests and approach as:
 - improving health systems' ability to prevent and respond to global health threats,
 - infectious and noncommunicable diseases (NCDs);
 - addressing inequalities; advancing universal health coverage (UHC);
 - strengthening strategic health partnerships;
 - reinforcing local health manufacturing capacities; and upholding the One Health approach
- *Overlaps with WHO role? Or complimentary to?*

Pandemic Treaty

The proposal for an international treaty on pandemics was first announced by the President of the European Council, Charles Michel, at the Paris Peace Forum in November 2020.



“We need to go further and learn the lessons of the pandemic. We see that it is absolutely crucial to be able to act more quickly and in a more coordinated way, to ensure that medical equipment is available and to exchange information with each other very quickly in order to protect our citizens as best we can.”

— Charles Michel, President of the European Council, at the Paris Peace Forum on 12 November 2020

Origins

- At a Special Session of the World Health Assembly (WHASS) in November 2021, member states agreed by consensus to establish an intergovernmental negotiating body (INB) to “draft a convention, agreement or other international instrument”
- Final draft to be presented at the World Health Assembly in 2024
- Dr. Tedros stated that that “a treaty is the best thing that we can do that can bring the political commitment of member states” to improve pandemic preparedness
- The underlying logic behind the treaty is that global governance failed during COVID-19, and a treaty is required in order for the global community to mitigate future challenges in preventing, detecting, responding to, and recovering from pandemic events.

What is the treaty intended to achieve?

- *“foster an all-of-government and all-of-society approach, strengthening national, regional and global capacities and resilience to future pandemics.*
- *greatly enhancing international cooperation to improve, for example, alert systems, data-sharing,*
- *local, regional and global production and distribution of medical and public health counter measures, such as vaccines, medicines, diagnostics and personal protective equipment*
- *recognition of a “One Health” approach that connects the health of humans, animals and our planet.*
- *should lead to more mutual accountability and shared responsibility, transparency and cooperation within the international system and with its rules and norms”.*

'Covid-19 Shows Why United Action Is Needed for More Robust International Health Architecture',
(Geneva, Switzerland: World Health Organization, 30/03/2021).

The EU and the Pandemic Treaty

- Despite its rhetoric on equity and solidarity, the EU's actions in pandemic treaty negotiations have been criticized for insufficiently addressing underlying structural inequalities in global health governance.
- Watering down the text on equity
- refusing to include discussions around intellectual property in the pandemic treaty – pushing the issue away from the health sphere and back into the IP sphere of the WTO, where the EU is even more influential.
- Despite its professed commitment to solidarity, the EU's approach to vaccine distribution underscores a narrow nationalism that prioritizes the well-being of its citizens over *global* public health considerations.