

QMV in CFSP: Impending necessity or resurfacing utopia?

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go for years.⁶ Therefore, this should not be an obstacle to work on further EU evolution. Anyhow, a future enlargement is likely to be the breaking point when the EU will have to answer the QMV in CFSP question the latest (Interview #5). Even though, some express concern that foreign policy priorities of some Western Balkan countries which are awaiting their EU membership may be so different from the current “EU mainstream” that the encompassing impact of QMV in CFSP may become negative once these countries become members (Interview #8).

In response to the aforementioned, the Czech Council presidency in the second half of 2022 set the topic on its agenda, as minister Bek sent out a questionnaire to his counterparts to examine whether there is a will among the member states to ultimately achieve movement on the issue.⁷

What are the pros, the cons and the alternatives?

Proper introduction of QMV to CFSP requires a Convention (Art. 48(3) TEU) and a following Treaty change, by itself a lengthy and complicated process.⁸ An option of only introducing it to some CFSP areas⁹, or of using the mechanisms which are already at disposal in the EU Treaties, can be seen as an ideal solution¹⁰ or even as a first step¹¹ towards deeper integration in CFSP issues¹² (and Interview #7). The latter case is exactly what countries such as Hungary fear. As the country is not supporting a full QMV introduction to CFSP, it chooses to rather not support QMV introduction to any of its areas to prevent its spread across further instruments later on (Interview #9).¹³ It is recognized that the European Parliament and the Commission do have a general tendency to ask for more powers, and the debate over broadening QMV falls under that. It is safe to assume

⁶ Economic crisis (2008-9), migration crisis (2015), COVID-19 pandemic (2020+).

⁷ “Czech Presidency takes EU countries’ temperature on bloc reforms,” *Euractiv*, July 18, 2022. Available online: <https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/news/czech-presidency-takes-eu-countries-temperature-on-bloc-reforms/> (accessed on January 4, 2023).

⁸ As previous experience with the unratified draft of Constitution for Europe in 2005 or with the criticism surrounding adoption of the Lisbon Treaty showed.

⁹ Human rights or sanctions are being widely mentioned as probably the least controversial areas under CFSP. The Czech presidency focused more on the option of using passarelle clauses in its questionnaire.

¹⁰ The EU Strategic Compass recommends this approach, as it protects political and financial solidarity of the EU member states. The document names constructive abstention and coalition of willing as ideal options for this.

Source: “A Strategic Compass for security and defence,” European Union External Action, 2022. Available online: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/strategic_compass_en3_web.pdf (accessed on January 6, 2023).

¹¹ Jokela (2022) recommends to start with constructive abstention in this regard, as it does not prevent adoption of decisions, before it’s time to move on to a broader QMV in CFSP. Nováky (2021) prefers to start with issues related to international human rights to build trust among member states in this process.

Sources:

J. Jokela, “Five enablers that could help the EU to re-emerge as a proactive actor on global stage,” in: K. Brudzińska, “Geopolitical Europe: Are we ready for it?,” *Globsec*, January 2022, p. 11 – 12. Available online: https://www.globsec.org/sites/default/files/2022-01/Geopolitical-Europe-What-and-How-of-EU-foreign-policy-in-2022_final.pdf (accessed on January 6, 2023).

N. Nováky, “Qualified majority voting in EU foreign policy: Make it so,” *Wilfried Martens Centre for European Studies*, September 2021. Available online: <https://www.martenscentre.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/Qualified-Majority-Voting-in-EU-Foreign-Policy-Make-It-So-.pdf> (accessed on January 6, 2023).

¹² Treaties already provide member states with the following alternatives to a proper QMV introduction to CFSP: A) passarelle clauses (two standard ones under Article 48(7) TEU and six specific ones from which two are interesting for our case – Art. 31(3) TEU and Art. 333 TFEU); B) constructive abstention; C) enhanced cooperation; D) coalition of willing.

¹³ With its position, Hungary perceives its closest allies in the topic to be in the V4, Slovenia and Italy (Interview #9).

that in case QMV broadens to one area of CFSP, such as human rights declarations, which seem to be the least controversial at this point, the institutions would try to push it further afterwards (Interview #8).

On the other hand, this requires support from all member states, a prospect that is nowhere near coming to fruition at the moment. Around a quarter of member states is currently against adoption of QMV in CFSP in principle – even if they recognize that they generally agree with majority (for example on human rights issues), they still refuse to move on, not even in one of the CFSP areas (Interview #2).

As for the results of the abovementioned questionnaire, the Council expressed¹⁴ preference to focus on those COFOE proposals which can be implemented under current Treaties. Concerning the QMV introduction in CFSP, there was therefore rather support for a potential use of passerelle clauses, even though this was also only in terms of “consideration” and on case-by-case basis. In summary, the CZ PRES initiative did not lead the debate tangibly further due to several countries’ opposition or hesitation. The initiative was a good exercise for holding an important discussion, even though it was essentially condemned to fail, as already in May 2022, twelve member states openly responded to the EP’s call for Convention by a statement¹⁵ condemning any “premature” attempts for Treaty change.

Concerning alternatives to QMV in CFSP, which can already be used, these tend to always have shortcomings, making them only a partial, half-way solution. In case of constructive abstention (CA), it is the fact that it can only be used for legal acts (such as mission deployment), while most of the foreign policy is actually non-legal acts (Interview #2). Furthermore, if assuming that a country thinks it is important to use veto in some issue, it simply does not make sense for it to abstain because if a country is ready to abstain, it should be ready to be outvoted (Interview #3, #6). In this regard, CA falls short of representing a sufficient alternative to QMV in CFSP, as it does not serve as a solution to a structural problem. Importantly, use of CA requires a goodwill and will not alleviate the current situation in which member states occasionally veto on purpose to get some concessions (Interview #5). However, some member states which are not yet willing to proceed to QMV in CFSP perceive CA as a suitable tool to practice on smaller issues (namely declarations), which should be followed by an assessment of its consequences and if a new approach is needed (Interview #10).

For passerelle clauses, even though they are often mentioned as an ideal alternative, they require to be adopted by unanimity; hence, states that oppose QMV in CFSP in principle are essentially also opposing this procedure (Interviews #2, #3). Also,

¹⁴ “General Affairs Council: Main results,” Council of the EU, September 20, 2022. Available online: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/gac/2022/09/20/> (accessed on January 10, 2023).

¹⁵ “Non-paper by Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, and Sweden on the outcome of and follow-up to the Conference on the Future of Europe,” n.a., May 9, 2022. Available online: https://twitter.com/SwedeninEU/status/1523637827686531072?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw (accessed on January 10, 2023).



there is an obstacle in form of national parliaments' veto which enable, at least, a wasteful time delay (Interview #3, #4). On the other hand, in case of Article 31(2) TEU, the Council could have already acted by QMV, if some domains (human rights at least, but ideally also sanctions, as these have more powerful impact) would be declared as strategic interests of the EU. In combination with the "emergency break", there is supposedly no reasonable justification of not implementing these options under currently applicable Treaties (Interview #6).

In case of both civil and military mission deployments, there is no bigger issue demonstrated with their approval even under the currently applicable decision making system of unanimity. Also, these are extra sensitive due to potential losses of life, therefore, if QMV is going to be introduced to CFSP gradually, it can be expected that missions will be the last part to which it would get applied. As member states do not have to participate in deployed missions, but can support it, there is no reason for them to block it (Interview #6).

Enhanced cooperation, as another QMV in CFSP alternative, is good for its flexibility of allowing cooperation where unanimity would be impossible to reach (Interview #8). However, this only brings benefits up to a point where its use would lead to a two-speed Europe of substantial dimension. In such case, the finances pooled under it, instead of being part on the common budget and expenditure, would only get used for the participating member states' development. Such situation would introduce deep imbalances in the EU, which is exactly an opposite of a desirable and beneficial development (Interview #3).

A detailed overview of the arguments used for and against introduction of QMV in CFSP and their critical evaluation falls out of the scope of this publication. However, a brief overview (based on author's examination of a variety of relevant studies and interviews she led with experts) needs to be provided in order to proceed with this publication and apply the author's findings further.

Arguments FOR:

- 1) QMV in CFSP will allow quicker and more effective external action of the EU, which is crucial in times of rapidly changing security architecture and rising competition of global powers (namely Russia and China).
- 2) QMV in CFSP will encourage the EU member states to make more effort on achieving a widely acceptable compromise and common position for action on foreign policy issues, as no country will be able to use its veto power anymore.
- 3) Unanimity leads to watering down decisions and only achieving the lowest common denominator, which can easily turn EU external action "toothless" and lower the EU's geopolitical importance and reputation. In contrast to this, QMV in

CFSP would lead to adopting more decisions, while these would also be stronger in terms of their impact.

- 4) QMV in CFSP will prevent third power interference in the EU foreign policy action, as it will not be sufficient to project power through only one consenting member state.
- 5) QMV in CFSP is crucial to not only bring, but also keep capacity of the EU action in this area after further enlargement, as larger number of member states would only complicate the matter under unanimity rule.

Arguments AGAINST:

- 1) Unanimous decision is stronger and respected by all member states (internally). It reinforces the EU unity and cohesion.
- 2) Decisions achieved by unanimity also send a stronger signal to third countries. Disagreements among the EU member states when reaching a decision under QMV in CFSP visible to third countries would reveal EU's weak links to a potentially malign actor.
- 3) Unanimity rule guarantees smaller member states (as they naturally represent a little percentage of the EU inhabitants, which is one of the two requirements to fulfil double majority condition under QMV¹⁶) that they cannot be overruled in questions falling within foreign policy area which they consider to be important for their sovereignty and security. QMV in CFSP would allow dominance of larger EU member states in external action.
- 4) If overruled, these member states could tend to circumvent the adopted decisions (by not implementing it/ not participating in it, or by concluding contradicting bilateral agreements out of its scope), while there is no way of enforcement^{17,18}. Also, there is a risk of internal politicization of the issue, causing tension in society and potentially increasing Euroscepticism in the EU.
- 5) Quicker adoption of decisions under QMV does not automatically guarantee their quality.

In addition to this, there is an ongoing “chicken and egg” discussion, with supporters on opposing sides contemplating whether: A) the EU should first work further on building an actual shared strategic vision internalized among its member states and subsequently

¹⁶ QMV in the Council of the EU is based on double majority rule as follows: 1) 55 % of the member states (currently at least 15 out of 27); 2) representing at least 65 % of the EU citizens.

¹⁷ The EU member states will face a decision over whether it is better to have (A) one or two states (because if there is a disagreement in the Council and states are overruled, it is in small numbers) that do not comply with foreign policy decisions, namely sanctions being important, but others do, or (B) to have weaker sanctions. In this regard, even states which would be overruled would be rather willing to comply in order not to lose its political capital in the EU. Despite of not being able to claim which one is better at this point, as we do not have data of a non-implemented regime, stronger sanctions implemented by 26/27 seem to be more useful and influential than weak sanctions of the entire community (Interview #6). This also ties in with the argument of eliminating third countries influence on the EU, as the one/two member states may block sanctions because of their ties (economic ties, supply chains, or other) on a third country.

¹⁸ Apart of enforcement, there is even a lack of an EU instrument which would monitor whether EU member states properly implement adopted sanctions. We miss data on this (Interview #8).

proceed towards introducing QMV to CFSP; or B) QMV should be first introduced to CFSP and then, by cultivating deeper discussions and culture of compromise in the Council, the EU will eventually get to a shared strategic culture.¹⁹

It is undeniable that, even though some work has already been done in the past few years²⁰, the strategic culture and threat perception currently varies across member states. This is undoubtedly natural, as their foreign policy priorities and positions differ due to being rooted in various historical experiences, geographical positions, strategic cultures and sizes of the countries.

Another viewpoint (Interview #3, #4) on these two opposing positions adds that maybe it is counter-productive to put QMV in CFSP with strategic culture in consecutive order. Just like the EU figured that its strategic autonomy does not only rely on security and defence, neither should its strategic culture. Geo-economy is becoming far more important in this evolution of thinking.²¹

The decision making system in the Council will need to be reformed sooner or later, for two reasons: 1) the current system has been adopted under the Lisbon Treaty in 2007 and does not reflect significant changes in the EU which occurred since²²; 2) the vision of future EU enlargement (Western Balkans, but also Ukraine) promises to further complicate the process if the rule of unanimity is kept.

Lastly, it is useful to point out that introducing QMV to CFSP area will not “magically” resolve all problems related to EU’s foreign policy action. In terms of threat perception, even if a shared viewpoint was achieved over time, there will always be natural differences among member states. Also, there are not only different priorities and threat assessments among the EU member states, but also among the institutions. For example, in the area of human rights, the Parliament’s and the Council’s positions differ most of the time, including QMV (Interview #8), and that hinders proper progress.

Are the concerns of smaller member states reasonable or rather an excuse for conformity?

As identified above, the argument mainly used by smaller member states to object adoption of QMV in the CFSP area is the one of their interests getting potentially easily disregarded, resulting into being overruled in the Council by bigger member states. The imaginary division line here lies between France and Germany, both big and important EU

¹⁹ For example, Hungary strongly argues against with the case of feeling to lose national sovereignty over foreign policy issues (Interview #9).

²⁰ Adoption of the EU Global Strategy in 2016 or of the Strategic compass in 2022 serve as a good example.

²¹ For example, China has already cut the EU off when there was an emergency on medical equipment during COVID-19 pandemic. Once the EU recognizes that this can happen again, for example in case of raw materials, this kind of realization can help building a common strategic culture.

²² This is the case of Croatian accession to the EU and Brexit.

member states, on the side of clear QMV supporters, and countries mainly of the CEE region on the other hand. Would it be that easy for larger EU member states to simply dominate the common foreign policy by overruling their partners? What reassuring mechanisms and counter arguments can we find?

Nováky (2021) argues that, while these concerns of smaller EU member states have an admittedly legitimate basis, the benefits of QMV introduction in CFSP outweigh them.²³ Also, presenting the debate as “big versus small” member states is simply invalid. Poland belongs among the largest EU countries when it comes to the size of its population and it belongs among great critics of the QMV in CFSP idea. On the background of the Russian aggression in Ukraine, Prime Minister Morawiecki argues that QMV in CFSP would leave space for France and Germany to dominate this domain, while they were for a long time wrong in their threat perception of Russia, despite warnings from CEE countries with historical experience under the rule of the Soviet Union.²⁴

Moreover, it is important to point out that the Treaties already contain several “safety measures” that should help to alleviate concerns of smaller member states over QMV introduction to further areas. These include a blocking minority of at least four Council members (Art. 16(4) TEU)²⁵ and, importantly, an “emergency brake” enabling a member state to stop a vote on an issue that threatens its vital interests of national policy (Art. 31 TEU). Furthermore, it innately does not make sense for the EU member states to harm each other as this would easily backfire, negatively influencing the entire community. With this logic, even if some state would get overruled, it can be expected that the system automatically counts with helping it to overcome any negative consequences of a common decisions (such as financial support balancing out a negative impact of sanctions).

Furthermore, common practice in the Council of the EU already prioritizes achieving a consensus also in those policy areas where the decision making process is only bound by qualified majority of votes (Interview #2). Such established culture of work in the Council therefore suggests that the proceedings would be similar also in case of CFSP, if the QMV would be introduced to this area. If so, the QMV system would thus rather serve to overcome unreasonable obstacles in form of circumventing a member state that intentionally misuses its veto power and holds Council decisions hostage to its national and often unrelated self-interests. In 2022, the case of Hungary is widely mentioned as an example of such behaviour.²⁶ The experience with Hungarian actions in 2022 and

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ M. Morawiecki, “Historical challenges and false directions – Europe at the crossroads,” August 10, 2022. Available online: <https://www.gov.pl/web/cyprus/article-by-the-prime-minister-of-the-republic-of-poland-mateusz-morawiecki-historical-challenges-and-false-directions---europe-at-the-crossroads> (accessed on January 12, 2023).

²⁵ “Consolidated version of the Treaty on European Union,” C 326/15, Official Journal of the European Union, October 26, 2012. Available online: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/resource.html?uri=cellar:2bf140bf-a3f8-4ab2-b506-fd71826e6da6.0023.02/DOC_1&format=PDF (accessed on January 12, 2023).

²⁶ This is due to Hungary’s blocking or watering down of some sanction packages against Russia or financial assistance package to Ukraine, while negotiating concessions from Brussels (such as lowering the amount of frozen EU funds and aid which is caused by its ongoing dispute over the state of rule of law and other issues in the country).

disagreement with them can possibly also become an incentive for some member states to support QMV in CFSP to prevent similar deadlocks in the future (Interview #4). However, it is likely that without change of Hungarian Prime Minister, the EU may not move on in this question (Interview #3, #5, #7). The solid position of Hungary in this question was also confirmed in Interview #9.

While discussing a potential of QMV being introduced to CFSP, it is rightful to think about its potential negative consequences in order to take them into consideration and make an informed decision. Could the system cause such division among member states over foreign policy issues that it would lead to disintegration in terms of exit(s) of the EU's member state(s)? Even though this is a hypothetical case, following a trend from those policy areas where QMV is already used in the Council decision making process (this also includes areas sensitive to national sovereignty, such as Justice and Home Affairs), it is obvious that these do not cause extra harm and disintegration tendencies. Arguably, there is no reasonable justification to expect that QMV in CFSP would have such undesirable consequences. The case of Brexit was exceptional, as the disintegration tendencies were present there across years and topics. Other than this, QMV in general has rather integration tendencies, as it incites more constructive debates (Interview #6).

Data following previous trends also show²⁷ that concerns of smaller countries from the CEE over foreign policy domination by larger Western countries and becoming the ones mostly overruled under QMV in CFSP are not well justified. Since 2010, the most overruled member state in the Council decision making was Germany, followed by Poland. Before Brexit, the first place belonged to the UK. The first five places are completed with Austria, Hungary and Netherlands. It predominantly pertains to larger and/or Western countries, with the exception of Hungary, for obvious reasons. However, several experts (Interviews #2, #3, #8) are questioning whether France and Germany, as the most vocal proponents of QMV in CFSP, are actually ready to get overruled in foreign policy questions. Even though their strong position in the Council is evident, there also are issues of significant importance for them (Nord Stream II for Germany, arms export for France).

Nevertheless, it seems that the willingness of the member states to proceed in this issue is currently very low. It does not depend only on a few opposing member states. Twelve of them already released a non-paper; other sources claim²⁸ that 17 member states are opposing the idea of even organizing a Convention followed by Treaty revision at this moment, thus a majority of EU members. Even though the war in Ukraine and the complications in the Council decision making may be shifting the opinion of smaller member states towards adopting QMV, or at least making them think about it more, there

²⁷ R. Wessel & V. Szép, „The implementation of Article 31 of the Treaty on European Union and the use of Qualified Majority Voting,“ *Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs, Directorate-General for Internal Policies*, November 2022, p. 71. Available online [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2022/739139/IPOL_STU\(2022\)739139_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2022/739139/IPOL_STU(2022)739139_EN.pdf) (accessed on January 16, 2023).

²⁸ „Brussels Playbook: Scrapping vetoes — Unga Unga party — Trade scoop,“ *Politico*, September 20, 2022. Available online: <https://www.politico.eu/newsletter/brussels-playbook/scrapping-vetos-unga-unga-party-trade-scoop/?hc=1> (accessed on January 16, 2023).

is still a lot of uncertainty. In Central Europe, Hungary (Interview #9) and Poland are strictly opposed to the idea, as well as Austria (Interview #10). For Czechia, QMV in CFSP is not a preferred solution, but the country remains open to further discussion (Interview #2), and Slovakia did not yet formulate a clear position. Heading North, Estonia has been recommended²⁹ by experts to change its cautious position on QMV in CFSP, but did not confirm this yet. Lithuanian leaders are divided on the topic³⁰, Latvia is sceptical and explicitly opposed to QMV in CFSP³¹.

Exactly the opposite of the small states' argument on fear of being marginalized in the foreign policy decision process stands a claim that QMV in CFSP would, on the contrary, benefit them. It would incentivise them to be more proactive and initiate proposals alongside building internal coalitions, instead of waiting for leadership of Franco-German consensus, and therefore their influence in EU's foreign policy would increase.³² Also, the EU's capacity for action benefits smaller member states more than the large ones, as the latter can make bilateral agreements more easily and are thus less reliant on common foreign policy. This refutes the main argument of small member states against QMV in CFSP of the EU (Interview #6).

To point out, an important part of QMV introduction to CFSP would need to be its proper communication to citizens, which would serve as a prevention of public distrust and disapproval of this step. At the same time, there lies a risk that political leaders from a member state that would get overruled in the Council decision making could easily use it for domestic political campaign, nourishing feelings of lost sovereignty and public unrest. As it was pointed out during Interview #2, even if QMV would prove to have positive impact in a long run, it could definitely be misused by some politicians in a short term horizon in the aforementioned way.

Opponents of QMV in CFSP also argue that the EU member states are able to unite and agree on important foreign policy decisions³³ in times of need. The past year's EU action responding to the Russian aggression in Ukraine is currently a prevailing example for this logic. However, it was the great shock from the unexpected war in Ukraine and a significant interference of the Biden administration that helped to unite the EU's 27 to formulate a quick and strong response to this crisis. It would be irrational to expect that

²⁹ „Study: Estonia could withdraw from unanimity voting in EU foreign policy,” *ERR*, July 5, 2022. Available online: <https://news.err.ee/1608648526/study-estonia-could-withdraw-from-unanimity-voting-in-eu-foreign-policy> (accessed on January 19, 2023).

³⁰ „The pros and cons of unanimity in EU's foreign policy and what's better for Lithuania – opinion,” *Lithuanian National Radio and Television*, August 25, 2022. Available online: <https://www.lrt.lt/en/news-in-english/19/1766518/the-pros-and-cons-of-unanimity-in-eu-s-foreign-policy-and-what-s-better-for-lithuania-opinion> (accessed on January 19, 2023).

³¹ N. Koenig, „Towards QMV in EU Foreign Policy: Different Paths at Multiple Speeds,” *Jacques Delors Centre*, October 14, 2022. Available online: <https://www.delorscentre.eu/en/publications/towards-qmv-in-eu-foreign-policy> (accessed on January 19, 2023).

³² „Washington should push for a stronger EU Foreign Policy,” *War on the Rocks*, October 15, 2020. Available online: <https://warontherocks.com/2020/10/washington-should-push-for-a-stronger-e-u-foreign-policy/> (accessed on January 19, 2023).

³³ Such was also the case of Czech Prime Minister Fiala during CZ PRES, as cited in: „Zrušit veto při rozhodování EU? Česko je zdrženlivé” [Abolishing the veto in the EU decision making? Czechia is restrained], *Novinky.cz*, July 19, 2022. Available online: <https://www.novinky.cz/clanek/domaci-zrusit-veto-pri-rozhodovani-eu-cesko-je-zdrzenlive-40403332> (accessed on January 9, 2023).

this will happen on every occasion when the EU cohesion will be urgently needed.³⁴ This is also a reason why some reform of the existing system is needed.

Conclusion

Considering relevance of both supportive and opposing arguments of the QMV introduction to CFSP, it is now unimaginable to say when the EU member states will be able to proceed on this issue in a tangible way. The alternatives which are currently at the EU's disposal in the Treaties may serve as a means for increasing mutual trust before, but they will never be a proper solution to the structural deficiency in the EU's foreign policy ambition.

It is evident that even given quite favourable circumstances for QMV introduction to CFSP at this moment in time (war in Ukraine, COFOE, and vision of further enlargement), the EU is not going to reach tangible progress any time soon due to wide unwillingness of its member states. While it is undeniably useful to hold this kind of discussions, as they are important for forming a future vision of the EU, it is now a conducive time to accept that this issue will be on the table for a few more years. In the meantime, the EU leaders will have space to focus on it for a proportionately appropriate amount of time, while handling current crises. Importantly, even if the EU were to start making decisions on foreign policy questions by QMV, it would not solve all of the bloc's issues. Its impact should also not be overestimated, as consensus is already a priority in other Council configurations.

It is likely that the issue of QMV in CFSP will find an answer once the enlargement becomes more pressing³⁵, as it will not only be an incentive for questions over decision making process in the Council, but also because of broadening number of European Parliament members and of significantly influencing the EU budget as well. This may, however, take another 10 or more years.

Final decision on broadening QMV in the Council will, after all, depend on ideological and political decision of the EU member states' leaders. While we currently observe that these

³⁴ S. Lehne, "Making EU Foreign Policy Fit for a Geopolitical World," *Carnegie Europe*, April 14, 2022. Available online: <https://carnegieeurope.eu/2022/04/14/making-eu-foreign-policy-fit-for-geopolitical-world-pub-86886> (accessed on January 19, 2023).

³⁵ It is interesting to think about an option, that QMV in CFSP could become a condition for future enlargement. This would be relevant for those EU member states, that want the enlargement process to proceed (Interview #4). For CEE countries supportive of future EU enlargement, this could be a strong incentive to change their mind on QMV in CFSP (Interview #5). Nevertheless, in principle, it may not be ideal to condition enlargement with QMV in CFSP, as there are many more nuances to the issue (Interview #6).



can vary not only between the member states, but also among actors on national political scene, or in the EU institutions, several future national elections can bring a consensus on QMV introduction to CFSP over time. It is now up to the Swedish presidency to keep the discussion on this issue ongoing.



The list of interviews

Interview # 1; anonymous expert, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung; 12. 12. 2022

Interview # 2; anonymous expert of Czech background; 14. 12. 2022

Interview # 3; anonymous expert, Robert Schuman Foundation; 14. 12. 2022

Interview # 4; anonymous expert, journalist; 14. 12. 2022

Interview # 5; anonymous expert, Carnegie Europe; 15. 12. 2022

Interview # 6; anonymous expert, Institute of International Relations Prague; 15. 12. 2022

Interview # 7; anonymous expert, GLOBSEC; 15. 12. 2022

Interview # 8; anonymous expert, European Parliament; 16. 12. 2022

Interview # 9; Hungarian diplomat; 5. 1. 2023

Respondent #10; anonymous expert of Austrian background; statement sent by email; 11. 12. 2022



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