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## Missed opportunities: The impact of EU institutional compartmentalization on EU climate diplomacy across the international regime complex on climate change

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**Key words:** climate diplomacy, European Union, compartmentalization, regime complex

### Abstract:

The international governance of climate change no longer takes place in one single forum – the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) – but is increasingly spread across a multitude of fora that collectively make up the International Regime Complex on Climate Change (IRCCC). For ambitious actors with climate leadership ambitions, like the European Union (EU), the IRCCC offers the potential for connecting their activity across fora to achieve their climate objectives. Although the EU has appeared increasingly aware of the need to connect its activity across fora, the compartmentalization of EU institutional structures makes such connections unlikely. This paper seeks to understand the extent to which internal compartmentalization affects the EU's ability to connect its activities across the IRCCC in support of its negotiation objectives across four climate agreements negotiated from 2015-2018: Paris Agreement (UNFCCC; 2015), CORSIA (ICAO, 2016), Kigali Amendment (Montreal Protocol; 2016), and the Initial Strategy on Reducing GHG Emissions (IMO, 2018). It answers the question: How do EU internal coordination structures affect the extent the EU demonstrates a comprehensive climate diplomacy across the IRCCC? Based on triangulation of official documents and 43 semi-structured interviews, it finds that internal EU compartmentalisation in general hinders the EU's attempts to pursue a comprehensive climate diplomacy, though the compartmentalization worked in different ways across the four cases. Various combinations of a lack of communication channels, different priorities and policy framing, and a lack of resources and expertise contributed to situations where the EU was either limited in how it used specific fora or to the extent it used any fora at all to further its negotiation objectives.

## 1. Introduction

While the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) is considered the main forum for international climate governance, a variety of other international fora have emerged over recent decades as important settings for dealing with different aspects of the broader climate challenge, including informal clubs like the G7, treaty-based frameworks like the Montreal Protocol (MP), and formal international organizations like the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). Collectively, these fora constitute the International Regime Complex on Climate Change (IRCCC). The overlapping nature of the fora within a regime complex creates situations in which action in one forum can impact outcomes in another (Alter & Meunier, 2009; Alter & Raustiala, 2018).

For ambitious actors with climate leadership ambitions, like the European Union (EU), the IRCCC offers the potential for connecting their activity across fora to achieve their climate objectives. In recent years, the EU has developed a robust and increasingly strategic climate diplomacy apparatus to support its objectives of encouraging ambitious international mitigation action on climate (Oberthür & Dupont, 2021; Schunz, 2019). Furthermore, the EU itself seems to hint at the possibility of connecting activity across IRCCC fora, such as the G20, Major Economies Forum (MEF), and Petersberg Dialogue to achieve its objectives in various multilateral climate negotiations, most notably within the UNFCCC, but also in the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), the International Maritime Organization (IMO), and the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer (MP). The European External Action Service (EEAS) and European Commission issued Joint Reflection Papers in 2011, 2013, 2015, & 2016 that underlined the importance of using various international meetings of fora dealing with climate change in order to move forward EU objectives in those negotiations (European Commission & European External Action Service, 2011, 2013, 2015, 2016). Taken together, the EU's ambition, resources, and own statements suggest that the EU seeks to use the different IRCCC fora in a comprehensive manner in order to achieve its negotiating objectives. In this paper, we refer to the EU as its institutions or member states acting on the basis a common position.

However, the potential seems undercut by the compartmentalization, or lack of communication and alignment, of EU institutional venues that handle its involvement in various fora of the IRCCC. As is the case in many countries, the EU has a policy-making system that is principally organized by policy area. Indeed, EU positions for the different fora are determined in separate venues, with different Council configurations, Council working parties or Commission Directorates General being the key institutional locus for internal EU coordination. Moreover, EU policy-making in general is characterized by rather isolated venues, siloes and secluded committee governance, complicating cooperation across venues to facilitate and thereby hindering the EU to make full strategic use of the different fora in the IRCCC.

Hence, on the one hand, the EU's recent track-record as a climate leader and its Joint Reflection Papers suggest a strong potential for it to connect its activity in different fora of the IRCCC

to facilitate its climate negotiation objectives. However, on the other hand, its bureaucratic compartmentalization makes such connections less likely. This paper therefore seeks to understand the extent to which internal compartmentalization affects the EU's ability to connect its activities across the IRCCC in support of its negotiation objectives. It aims to answer the following research question: *How do EU internal coordination structures affect the extent the EU demonstrates a comprehensive climate diplomacy across the IRCCC?* We distinguish between two types of constitutive fora of the IRCCC: (1) focal fora, which are those fora that are the default fora for concluding agreements for their respective areas; (2) non-focal fora, which are the remaining fora of the IRCCC, where these negotiations could also be brought up. By comprehensive climate diplomacy, we refer to the extent the EU connects its activity in the non-focal fora of the IRCCC in a way that facilitates the achievement of its objectives in the focal forum negotiations. To answer the research question, the paper examines the EU's diplomacy relating to the negotiation of four international climate agreements from 2015-2018, concluded in four different focal fora: Paris Agreement (UNFCCC; 2015), Carbon Offsetting Reduction Scheme for International Aviation (ICAO, 2016), Kigali Amendment (Montreal Protocol; 2016), and the Initial Strategy on Reducing GHG Emissions in Shipping (IMO, 2018). Each represents a different aspect of the broader climate challenge. Each agreement was prepared in the EU in a separate EU coordination structure. The four cases provide an encompassing picture of the impact (if any) of the EU's internal structures on its ability to use the IRCCC in a comprehensive manner.

Based on triangulation of official documents and 43 semi-structured interviews (see Annex), we qualitatively assess (1) the connections employed by the EU to non-focal fora for each negotiation and (2) the impact of the EU internal coordination structures on the use of connections. We find that internal EU compartmentalisation in general hinders the EU's attempts to pursue a comprehensive climate diplomacy, though the compartmentalization worked in different ways across the four cases. In other words, various combinations of a lack of communication channels, different priorities and policy framing, and a lack of resources and expertise contributed to situations where the EU was either limited in how it used non-focal fora or to the extent it used any non-focal fora at all to further its negotiation objectives.

This paper makes contributions to both the literatures on global governance complexity and on the EU as an international (climate) actor. Regarding the literature on global governance complexity, it provides an inventory of situations in which an actor simultaneously connects activity across different fora of a regime complex in support of a negotiation in a focal forum. It also demonstrates how precisely internal considerations can affect an actor's behaviour in a regime complex. Regarding the EU, by focusing on diverse climate negotiation settings and the restrictions imposed by compartmentalization on the EU's climate diplomacy therein, the paper not only moves the lens of analysis away from the EU as an actor in the UNFCCC, but also nuances our understanding of the EU's climate leadership.

The paper is organised as follows. Section 2 introduces the existing literature on the EU as international climate actor in the IRCCC, as well as the literature on bureaucratic politics and EU compartmentalization. Section 3 lays out the conceptual framework. Section 4 presents the four case studies. The impact of internal compartmentalization on the EU's activities in the whole IRCCC is examined in detail in section 5. Finally, section 6 concludes and identifies avenues for future research.

## 2. State of the Art

### 2.1 The EU in the IRCCC

Though its progress has not always been linear, the EU has established itself as an international climate leader over the past decades (Oberthür & Dupont, 2021). Moreover, the EU's ambitious internal policies give it a vested interest in reaching ambitious, international climate-related agreements (Delreux, 2018). From 1990s through early 2000s, the EU played important role in pushing for international climate action and sought to lead by example, instituting its own emissions reduction targets (Afionis, 2017). Following its side-lining at COP 15 at Copenhagen in 2009, the EU successfully reinvented itself as a pragmatic "leadiator", focusing on bridge-building and capacity building (Bäckstrand & Elgström, 2013). This role was reinforced at COP 21 in Paris (Oberthür & Groen, 2018).

Overall, the EU has become increasingly strategic in its pursuit of its climate policy objectives at the international level (Oberthür & Dupont, 2021; Schunz, 2019). Climate change is considered an important political issue, with the highest-levels of the EU political system, including the European Council, regularly involved in shaping EU positions for UNFCCC negotiations. The EU has developed a robust climate diplomacy toolbox, including the Green Diplomacy Network and Joint Reflection Papers (Biedenkopf & Petri, 2021; Cross, 2018; Torney & Cross, 2018). The Joint Reflection Papers, drafted in collaboration by the EEAS and Commission, identified diplomatic priorities and key outreach opportunities, both bilaterally and multilaterally.

While there is strong consensus in the literature that the EU is an ambitious and increasingly strategic actor in international climate negotiations, this assessment has taken place almost exclusively in the context of the UNFCCC. There has been less work on the EU's approach to climate negotiations outside UNFCCC, though there has been an acknowledgment of need to focus elsewhere to examine extent EU leadership has gone beyond UNFCCC (Oberthür & Dupont, 2021). To that end, it is unclear how much this leadership and ambition is present elsewhere, such as in ICAO, IMO, and the MP.

While the UNFCCC was originally envisioned as principal venue for climate governance, there has been a proliferation of international fora dealing with climate change over the past decades. These fora overlap with each other in the sense that they all deal with aspects of the larger climate challenge and share similar memberships, thus constituting a regime complex (Keohane & Victor,

2011). While slightly different names and configurations have been proposed, the overlapping nature of international climate governance has remained a key concept in the literature. The IRCCC is generally understood to include a variety of fora such as international organizations like ICAO and IMO, established negotiation frameworks such as the Montreal Protocol and UNFCCC, clubs like the G7 and G20, and mixed arrangements bringing together public and private actors, such as the Center for Climate and Energy Solutions (C2ES). These fora deal with diverse policy areas like the environment, transport, finance, generally diplomacy, and of course those focusing exclusively on climate (Keohane & Victor, 2011; van Asselt & Zelli, 2018). The literature has mostly focused on mapping the complex (Biedenkopf, 2017; Keohane & Victor, 2011) and its consequences for global governance (Hoch et al., 2019; van Asselt, 2014).

The overlapping, inter-connected nature of a regime complex creates a dynamic where action in one forum can influence an outcome in another. For actors with significant resources and expertise, this creates opportunities for strategic activity to connect action in different fora to achieve overall objectives (Drezner, 2009; Faude & Parizek, 2020; Jupille et al., 2013). Alter and Meunier (2009) famously use the concept “chessboard politics” to summarise the potential ways in which actors might work across institutions in a complex. Thus far, the literature has mainly focused on situations in which an actor finds one forum unsatisfactory for reaching their objectives and therefore looks elsewhere in the regime complex. Such activity includes: “forum shopping” (Busch, 2007; Drezner, 2009), “regime shifting” (Helfer, 2009; Verdier, 2021); “contested multilateralism” (Faude & Parizek, 2020; Morse & Keohane, 2014), and institutional creation (Jupille et al., 2013).

With respect to explanatory factors of cross-forum activity, the literature has predominantly focused on the impact of the regime complexity, its fora, and, their relevant politics in shaping such an actor’s behaviour (Alter, 2022). There has been less focus on the role of compartmentalisation in shaping how actors navigate a regime complex. A notable exception is the work by Morin and Orsini (2014), who stress internal considerations – notably political motivation and bureaucratic capacity – can affect an actor’s coherence across a regime complex. We build on this work by explaining how internal considerations – here compartmentalisation – affect the EU’s action in the IRCCC.

## 2.2 Compartmentalisation and silos in the EU

As is the case with any actor, the EU’s internal bureaucratic policies and politics ultimately influence its external action (Allison, 1971). Like many Weberian bureaucracies, the EU is made up of issue-specific, specialized sub-structures that govern their respective policy areas. Although such a setup facilitates expertise, it makes coordinating and communicating across these sub-structures difficult (Duffy & Cook, 2018). Coordination requires voluntary cooperation from these different sub-structures who each have their own constituencies and view issues from different perspectives (Scharpf, 1994).

In order to understand the EU's external action, we must also look at its internal bureaucratic politics (Delreux, 2015; Vanhoonacker et al., 2010). The EU is a highly-complex political system with many different internal stakeholders, who are primarily organised around different policy areas. These policy areas are made up of different member state and institutional actors with their own interests and understandings of a given issue (Marangoni & Raube, 2014). The literature has long acknowledged the role of bureaucratic politics, notably the differing perspectives and often infrequent communication across policy-making channels, in contributing to compartmentalisation and silos inside the EU (Hartlapp et al., 2014; Vantaggiato et al., 2020).

The EU's track record of compartmentalisation, particularly in the domain of EU external action (Elgström & Pilegaard, 2008; Furness & Gänzle, 2017; Young & Peterson, 2013), calls into question its internal coordination capacity to employ a comprehensive climate diplomacy. Generally speaking, positions are developed in different Council configurations (or their associated working parties), with a different Directorate General (DG) of the Commission involved. Hence, EU external action in international fora remains the purview of a series of different venues that do not necessarily share the same priorities or constituents, nor do they regularly coordinate with each other (Elgström & Pilegaard, 2008; Furness & Gänzle, 2017). Such an absence of cooperation could limit the potential for connecting activity in non-focal fora handled by different EU venues, as these venues could be unaware of or uninterested in the EU's objectives in the focal forum.

### 3. Conceptual framework

In this section, we introduce our conceptual framework for the paper. We do so in three parts. First, at the international level, we focus on the opportunity to connect fora within an international regime complex in the context of a negotiation in a focal forum. Second, at the EU level, we assess the potential impact of compartmentalisation and silos across the different internal EU venues responsible for coordinating action in different non-focal fora on the EU's climate diplomacy. Third, to do so, we develop three variables that could hinder the EU's comprehensive climate diplomacy in the four cases. Hence, our distinction between the conceptualization of 'fora' and 'venues' is key. *Fora* are the constitutive units of the IRCCC (e.g. UNFCCC, IMO, G20). *Venues* are the institutional loci in the EU's internal coordination system that handle EU involvement in various fora.

#### 3.1 Focal fora and non-focal fora in the IRCCC

An international regime complex is made up of fora, which are institutional settings that can take the form of, among others, international organizations, treaty frameworks or informal clubs. We distinguish between focal and non-focal fora, depending on the negotiation process in question. A forum that is a focal forum in one negotiation process can be a non-focal forum in another negotiation process. A **"focal forum"** (FF) is the forum that is viewed as the natural, default setting for negotiating agreements in a particular subset of the issue area (Jupille et al., 2013, p. 27). For

instance, in the case of the negotiations on the Paris Agreement, the UNFCCC is the focal forum. The other fora where the agreement will not be concluded, but where connecting activities can be employed, are the “**non-focal fora**” (NFF). Indeed, should actors find the status quo of the negotiations in the focal forum unsatisfactory, they will likely seek to connect their activity in non-focal fora to influence the negotiations in the focal forum.

Such connections differ from the aforementioned cross-fora activity, as the actor is in this case limited by their ability to move away from the established FF. Activities in a NFF therefore supplement and facilitate an actor’s endeavours in the FF. In that sense, activity in the NFF is *connected* to activity in the FF.

### 3.2 Focal venues in the EU’s coordination system

Furthermore, the EU’s coordination of the position it will defend and the way it will be involved in international fora lacks uniformity and a central hierarchy. It is instead spread across a variety of venues, with the specific venue ultimately depends on the forum in question (Keukeleire & Delreux, 2022). In that sense, each forum in the IRCCC has its own corresponding ‘**focal**’ **venue** inside the EU for coordinating its action therein. We define a focal venue as the institutional locus in the EU where the EU’s participation and/or position in a forum (irrespective whether it is focal or non-focal) in the IRCCC is primarily discussed. These are most often Council Working Parties but can vary depending on the forum in question (see below in Table 2). For instance, the focal venue of the UNFCCC is the Working Party on International Environmental Issues – Climate Change (WPIEI-CC) because the EU’s participation in UNFCCC negotiations is primarily prepared in the WPIEI-CC.

Connecting activity between an FF and an NFF in a regime complex therefore involves alignment and communication between the respective focal venues responsible for the EU’s involvement in each forum (unless the focal venue is the same in both fora). Hence, the EU’s ultimate ability to achieve a comprehensive climate diplomacy therefore depends on alignment and cooperation between the focal venue of the FF and the focal venue of relevant NFF.

### 3.3 The potential impact of compartmentalisation across focal venues

From the literature on bureaucratic politics and compartmentalisation, both general and EU-specific, we identify three variables that could complicate the ability of the focal venue of the FF to cooperate with the focal venue of NFFs.

First, the *extent to which communication channels exist between the focal venue of the FF and the focal venues of the NFF* could affect the potential for connections. Communication between venues is a precondition for an actor’s internal coordination (Vantaggiato et al., 2020). In that sense, established communication channels between different venues facilitate integrated policy making and coordination in the EU (Hartlapp et al., 2014; Vantaggiato et al., 2020). Extending this to EU action in an international regime complex, communication channels and regular interactions between

the focal venue of the FF and the focal venue of the NFF facilitates the potential for cooperation, with both focal venues remaining informed of each other's work. Conversely, a lack of communication channels makes it difficult for each focal venue to keep up with each other's work, while also raising the cost of employing a connection in the NFF, as the focal venue of the FF would need to establish contact with the focal venue of the NFF and familiarise them with the issues at hand.

Second, the *expertise and resources available in the focal venue of the NFF* could affect its ability and/or willingness to engage on a given issue in the NFF in connection to the FF. Generally speaking, increased specialization inside governments and their bureaucracies reduces the ability for coordination, as different specialized structures lack expertise on areas outside their specific policy area (Peters, 2018). The specialized nature of policy venues in the EU implies that a given venue's level of expertise generally does not extend beyond its specific policy area (Vanhoonacker et al., 2010). In the context of the negotiation of an international climate agreement, which is inherently specialized and requires significant technical expertise, a focal venue of the NFF, particularly if climate is not a regular part of its work, may not have the necessary technical expertise to understand the intricacies of the negotiations and then adapt their activity in the NFF accordingly. Moreover, they might not have the resources available to dedicate to the negotiations. This could thereby limit their potential to employ connections.

Third, *differences in priorities and policy framing* between the focal venue of the FF and the focal venue of the NFF could affect employing connections in the NFF. Officials working in a particular issue area have their own priorities and objectives. Moreover, they frame issues within their own experiences and expertise, which largely reflect the sectors and constituencies they represent (Bach & Wegrich, 2019; Scharpf, 1994). Within the EU, this extends to policy venues, which typically frame issues within their larger sectoral policy priorities (Furness & Gänzle, 2017; Young & Peterson, 2013). This likely implies that action in a given forum of the IRCCC is ultimately shaped by the principal interests and priorities of its associated focal venue in the EU. Hence, the extent that the connecting activities will be employed in the NFF depends on how the focal venue of the FF and the focal venue of the NFF frame and prioritise the negotiations in the FF. Should they correspond, this would ultimately facilitate the use of connections, as both fora would recognise the importance of acting outside the FF to support the negotiations and would be motivated to cooperate to that end. If there is a significant difference, the potential for connections would be limited.

#### 4. Focal Fora, non-focal fora, and focal venues in the negotiation of four international climate agreements

We study the impact of the EU's compartmentalisation on its use of connections in NFFs in the context of four cases. These cases are negotiation processes that have led to multilateral agreements on climate change in the period 2015-2018, each concluded in a different FF.



First, the *Paris Agreement* (2015), reached at UNFCCC COP 21, was the end-result of a tumultuous negotiating process of working towards a universal, binding agreement on GHG reduction to succeed the Kyoto Protocol. The WPIEI-CC of the Environment configuration of the Council was the main locus (thus focal venue) for coordinating the EU position, with an informal team of lead negotiators representing the EU in the negotiations (Delreux, 2018).

Second, the negotiations leading to *CORSIA* (2016) in ICAO were centred around the precise format that a long-discussed market-based measure for GHG emissions would take, as well as its level of ambition, and means of implementation (Martinez Romera, 2017). EU coordination for ICAO matters takes place within the Aviation Working Group (AVIA) of the Transportation, Telecommunication, and Energy (TTE) configuration of the Council (Martinez Romera, 2017), making it the focal venue for ICAO. However, a broader coordination takes place in an extra-EU coordination venue – the European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC), a grouping of the 44 European states (including all EU member states and the Commission).

Third, the negotiations leading to what would become the *Kigali Amendment* to the Montreal Protocol (2016) were focused around the international phase-out of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), chemicals typically used as cooling agents that were introduced as an alternative to harmful, ozone-depleting substances (Roberts, 2017). EU coordination mainly takes place within a National Experts Group (NEG), convened by a specialised unit of the Commission’s DG CLIMA and co-chaired by the Council presidency (interviews 1c, 2c, 6c), making it the focal venue.

Fourth, the negotiations on the *Initial Strategy* (2018) inside the IMO’s Marine Environmental Protection Committee (MEPC) focused around how shipping could contribute to reduce its share of global emissions, both with respect to increased energy efficiency and making overall reductions in emissions. EU coordination takes place in the Shipping Working Party (SWP) of TTE Council configuration. The SWP thus served as the focal venue. Outside of official EU coordination, a group of EU member states, supported by the European Commission, informally collaborated with Pacific Island States as part of a “Shipping High Ambition Coalition” (SHAC), which serves as an extra-EU coordination venue.

Table 1 summarises the relevant FF and associated EU focal venue for each case presented above.

	<b>Focal forum (FF)</b>	<b>EU focal venue</b>	<b>Extra-EU coordination venue</b>
<b>Paris Agreement</b>	<b>UNFCCC</b>	<b>WPIEI-CC (ENV)</b>	
<b>CORSIA</b>	<b>ICAO</b>	<b>AVIA (TTE)</b>	<b>ECAC</b>
<b>Kigali Amendment</b>	<b>Montreal</b>	<b>NEG (Comm.)</b>	
<b>Initial Strategy</b>	<b>IMO</b>	<b>SWP (TTE)</b>	<b>SHAC</b>

*Table 1: Focal fora for the negotiations and their associated EU focal venues*

However, the structure of the EU system means that all IRCCC fora, FF or NFF, have a corresponding focal venue. Table 2 lists the different NFF that the literature and our own research suggest were important for negotiations within the IRCCC over the time period 2015 – 2018. Therefore, connections – and ultimately a comprehensive climate diplomacy – require cooperation and alignment amongst the focal venue of the FF and those of the NFF, which as Table 2 demonstrates, are quite diverse, potentially complicating the use of connections.

<b>Forum</b>	<b>EU Focal Venue</b>
<b>2030 SDG</b>	CONUN (FAC), CODEV-PI (FAC), WPIEI-Global (ENV)
<b>ASEM</b>	COASI (FAC)
<b>C2ES</b>	WPIEI-CC (ENV)
<b>Cartagena Dialogue</b>	WPIEI-CC (ENV)
<b>CCAC</b>	NEG (European Commission)
<b>FfD</b>	CONUN (FAC), CODEV-PI (FAC), WPIEI-Global (ENV)
<b>G20</b>	European Council; COREPER
<b>G7</b>	COREPER (limited)
<b>ICAO</b>	AVIA (TTE)
<b>IMO</b>	SWP (TTE)
<b>MEF</b>	WPIEI-CC (ENV)
<b>Montreal Protocol</b>	NEG (European Commission)
<b>OECD CCXG</b>	WPIEI-CC (ENV)
<b>One Planet Summit</b>	WPIEI-CC (ENV)
<b>OzonAction</b>	NEG (European Commission)
<b>Petersberg Dialogue</b>	WPIEI-CC (ENV)
<b>Progressive Ministerial</b>	WPIEI-CC (ENV)
<b>UNEA</b>	WPIEI-Global (ENV)
<b>UNFCCC</b>	WPIEI-CC (ENV)
<b>UNGA/SG</b>	UN Working Party (FAC), FAC, EU Delegations

## 5. Empirics

This section presents the empirical data from the four case studies in chronological order. Each case is divided into two parts: (1) connections employed across the IRCCC as part of its climate diplomacy and (2) the effect of compartmentalization on connections the EU's climate diplomacy.

### 5.1 Paris Agreement

#### *5.1.1 Connections employed*

Of all four cases, the EU's use of connections was the most extensive for the Paris Agreement. However, it did not use all NFF in the same way, with NFFs being used in three main ways (Earsom & Delreux, forthcoming). First, the EU used NFFs specifically dealing with climate change to address issues directly related to the negotiations in the FF. For instance, the EU used the Cartagena Dialogue, C2ES, the Major Economies Forum (MEF), the OECD Climate Change Expert Group (OECD CCXG), and the Petersberg Dialogue to advance the EU negotiation positions, and identify potential solutions for a final agreement (interviews 1a, 2a, 4a, 5a, 6a). The EU actively worked in the Cartagena Dialogue and the Progressive Ministerial Club to form alliances with progressive developing countries and agree on concrete solutions on negotiation texts (interviews 1a, 3a, 4a, 6a). It also used the MEF and the G20 to overcome specific issues related to the negotiations, such as a mismatch in ambition between leaders' political statements and the actual positions taken by negotiators in UNFCCC meetings.

Second, the EU used NFFs like the G7, G20, and UN Secretary General Summits to create political momentum for the negotiations by pushing for climate discussions and seeking high-level commitments from parties (interviews 3a, 5a, 8a). Within the G7 and Petersberg Dialogues, it reframed climate change as a security issue in order to attract more interest from foreign affairs ministers and heads of state and government (interviews 7a, 8a).

Third, for those NFF not directly dealing with climate change and at a lower level of political authority, the EU was mainly focused on maintaining coherent positions and messaging on climate related issues. This included the 2030 Agenda negotiations, the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), Financing for Development (FfD) negotiations, ICAO, and IMO (4a, 5a, 7a, 8a, 9a, 10a).

#### *5.1.2 The effect of compartmentalization on connections*

The absence of a coordination structure between the UNFCCC focal venue and focal venues of the NFF (*lack of communication channels*) appears to have restricted how the EU was able to use NFF that did not regularly deal with climate change. This was reinforced by a *lack of resources* in the EEAS.

The *lack of communication channels* between the UNFCCC focal venue and the focal venues of NFF manifested itself in the absence of central coordinating structure for the EU's multilateral climate diplomacy (interviews 2a, 8a). The lack of such a system meant that for those NFF not dealing directly with climate change, the EU relied on a "coordination through narrative, more than hands on coordination, because the complexity of the system, the number of stakeholders is just mindboggling" (interview 8a). This mainly entailed drafting Foreign Affairs Council Conclusions mentioning the importance of fora like ICAO, IMO, and the G7, and G20 in acting on climate, thereby pushing the relevant venues to action, as opposed to detailed coordination and reflection on how NFF could be used (interview 8a). The lack of regular contact between the WPIEI-CC and the focal venues of the NFF meant that, although there were high-level political signals on the importance of ambitious agreement, the actual utility of NFF not directly dealing with climate change, was relatively limited.

Additionally, *the lack of resources* dedicated to climate diplomacy by the EEAS reinforced the relatively compartmentalised approach to the IRCCC. The EEAS, which had been charged with liaising between the climate negotiating structures for the UNFCCC and for the NFFs, only had three people working on climate diplomacy issues at the time, with a strong focus on coordinating its outreach in delegations around the world (interviews 1a, 2a, 5a, 7a, 10a). The EEAS did not appear to have the human resources necessary to invest in working across focal venues in a way that could facilitate an efficient use of the IRCCC in support of EU objectives in the UNFCCC.

## 5.2 CORSIA

### 5.2.1 Connections employed

Overall, connections with NFF in the IRCCC appeared restricted to three fora and of limited value to the EU's objectives in ICAO. First, negotiators prepared briefing material for the G20 but noted it was more informative than anything (interview 7b, 9b). Second, the EU discussed the negotiations at a Transportation G7 Meeting in September 2016 under the Italian Presidency, which served as a "formal alignment of thoughts" amongst transportation ministers who were largely already in agreement on a negotiation position (interview 8b). Third, DG CLIMA attempted to conduct outreach in climate fora such as the Petersberg Dialogue and the Major Economies Forum (interviews 6b, 7b, 11b). However, these fora were of limited use as they primarily convened climate and foreign affairs officials, while the negotiations were typically under the purview of transportation ministries (interviews 4b, 6b). Moreover, unlike the Paris Agreement, the EU was not particularly active on the ICAO negotiations in high-level political fora, such as the G7, G20, or UNGA (interviews 3b, 4b, 5b, 11b).

### 5.2.2 The effect of compartmentalization on connections

The limited extent to which the EU considered acting outside of the ICAO at all seemed strongly influenced by the attitude of the AVIA working party, i.e. the focal venue towards the ICAO

negotiations (*different priorities and policy framing*). This was then reinforced by a *lack of expertise* on the negotiations in other EU venues than the AVIA working party. Finally, the limited efficacy of those connections employed appeared affected by the *lack of communication channels* between AVIA and the focal venues dealing with other climate fora.

With respect to *different priorities and policy framing*, there was a strong consensus inside AVIA that ICAO, as a specialised UN agency, was the only appropriate forum for negotiations “because the very specific nature of the global international aviation industry” (interview 5b). The AVIA working party emphasised that they were best equipped to handle the negotiations due to the technical nature of an MBM and the particularities of international aviation (interviews 1b, 4b, 5b). At the same time, they viewed it as only one part of ICAO’s broader work and did not wish to re-create the tensions that emerged following the EU’s ETS debacle in earlier assemblies (interviews 1b, 2b, 3b, 6b). DG CLIMA viewed the issue as part of the Union’s larger climate policy and sought to incorporate its approach from the UNFCCC, including bilateral and multilateral climate diplomacy coordinated in the UNFCCC focal venue (interviews 4a, 5b, 7b). While DG CLIMA pushed for a larger outreach, they struggled to make their transport counterparts understand “that we could not just go to Montreal, arrive the day before, and just wait and see what our partners were thinking about” (interview 6b). It therefore appeared that there was little appetite for working outside the FF within the ICAO focal venue.

A *lack of expertise* on the issues being negotiated in other EU venues, including at higher political levels, appeared to reinforce AVIA’s unique position as the only EU venue for coordination (interviews 3b, 4b, 6b, 7b, 11b). For instance, DG CLIMA attempted to bring up the negotiations in COREPER, but the lack of technical understanding complicated the matter. An EU official summarized the issue:

But the challenge was over time, it’s very, very easy to talk about generalities, ambition...at the end of the day you have to translate that into highly technical rules, and COREPER is not the best place to talk about technicalities, so it’s always been an issue to solve that with the right level of political involvement and also of technical involvement.” (interview 6b)

In that sense, the lack of technical expertise and detailed understanding of the issues reinforced the agency of the focal venue and its attitudes towards outreach, with the EU system defaulting to AVIA. As such, as the focal venue, AVIA maintained a monopoly on the negotiations and the associated outreach (interviews 4b, 6b). There was a dominant mindset that ICAO would take care of the problem (interviews 1b, 6b).

Finally, the interviews suggest that a *lack of communication channels* between the ICAO focal venue and the focal venues of the NFFs could have also complicated the use of connections therein. The level of communication inside both the EU and the EU member states on climate issues in ICAO varied (interviews 5a, 4b). In many cases, the climate and transport processes appeared to exist in parallel, with little interaction between them (interviews 4b, 6b). For example, when asked about coordination with climate colleagues on the Petersberg Dialogue, an EU member state official

noted “The topic was there on the agenda, I’m pretty sure, but we were not involved in the preparation” (interview 11b).

## 5.3 Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol

### 5.3.1 *Connections employed*

Similar to the Paris Agreement, the EU used a variety of NFF to advance its objectives on an HFC, with three main types of connections emerging.

First, the EU used IRCCC fora dealing more directly with HFCs, namely the Climate and Clean Air Coalition (CCAC) and OzonAction Workshops, to engage concretely on specific issues related to the negotiations. At the CCAC, EU member states worked to bridge political discussions with technical concerns amongst certain developing states and to show that resources are available to facilitate the phase out of the HFCs (interviews 4c, 5c, 7c, 8c). At the OzonAction Workshops, regional capacity-building exercises organised by the United Nations Environment Program which bring together climate and ozone experts, the EU engaged with other parties to understand specific issues affecting other states’ concerns with phasing out HFCs, as opposed to political positioning and language which was common in the formal negotiations (interviews 4c, 6c). The EU used the workshops to discuss “discuss and to learn about practical concerns about the proposal. That was that...sometimes it's quite surprising to learn where the problems lie, in you discover quite sometimes things you never thought about...” (interview 4c).

Second, thanks in part to strong political interest from the United States, the Montreal Protocol was a regular item for discussion at high-level international fora (interviews 1c, 2c, 4c, 5c, 6c, 8c). In the G7, Germany, France, Italy, and the United Kingdom worked to push for general language that would “step by step be more clear and more supportive” of an amendment (interview 1c). The EU also used the G20 to a similar end. One month before the final negotiations at MOP 28, the EU also participated in a meeting of the “Coalition to Secure an Ambitious HFC Amendment,” convened on the side-lines of the UN General Assembly, with several EU member states pledging additional financial resources to help developing countries transition away from HFCs (interviews 1c, 3c, 5c; Council of the EU, 2016).

Third, the EU also used more traditional climate fora like the UNFCCC, Major Economies Forum, and the Petersberg Dialogue in a somewhat limited capacity (interviews 1c, 4c, 6c) to “familiarise with the [HFC] problem and to signal that this is something important to us” (interview 4c) At the UNFCCC, this mainly took the form of side events and presentations, as well as bilateral outreach. Inside UNEA, the EU, at the initiative of a Montreal Protocol negotiator who also covered UNEA, unsuccessfully tried to include ambitious language on an HFC amendment inside a decision (interview 5c).

### 5.3.2 *The effect of compartmentalization on connections*

In the case of the Montreal Protocol, a combination of a *lack of expertise* outside the Commission's National Expert Group (NEG), which serves as focal venue for the Montreal Protocol, and a lack of interest in focal venue of the NFFs (*different priorities and policy framing*) appeared to limit how the NFF not dealing directly with HFCs were used. This was exacerbated by the relative isolation of the Montreal Protocol focal venue (*lack of communication channels*).

A *lack of expertise* on the issues being negotiated in other venues than the NEG limited the extent that the NEG could rely on other venues in its outreach for the negotiations. The NEG was confronted with needing to explain an inherently technical subject matter to relevant non-focal venues where there was not a strong familiarity with the issues (interviews 1c, 4c, 5c). The focal venue at times had difficulty finding "the right level to do justice to the real difficult crunch issues, and, at the same time, you know, is really comprehensible for the political level" (interview 1c). Ultimately, the lack of understanding appeared to affect the engagement of EU officials outside of the NEG. According to an EU member state official in the NEG: "There is a certain resistance that comes out of the people. It's a very personal, very reservational: 'OK, this is very technical. I don't really have any idea of that, and let the technicians deal with that.'" (interview 6c). Ultimately, this appears to have had two impacts on the EU's ability to pursue a compensative climate diplomacy. First, coordination for the negotiations and outreach mainly stayed within the Montreal Protocol focal venue, i.e. the NEG (interviews 1c, 2c). Second, outreach arguments provided to the focal venues of the NFF were relatively simplified and pedagogical (interviews 4c, 5c).

Additionally, *the different priorities and policy framings* of the focal venues responsible for NFF meant that, despite the fact that the negotiations were discussed in high-level political fora like the G7 and G20, there appeared to be a lack of interest in focal venue of the NFF handling climate issues at lower political levels (i.e. not the leader or minister level). This manifested itself in less-than successful efforts by the NEG to have the HFC negotiations included in climate diplomacy discussions in the WPIEI-CC, serving as the UNFCCC focal venue. According to an EU official in the NEG, "In the run up, of course also the focus was so much on reaching the Paris Agreement that until 2015, the system was largely absorbed, and all we could do is to try to mention that here and there, to organize side events and give presentations at the margins of the COP" (interview 4c). Another EU member state official noted that it could be difficult to include the negotiations in Council Conclusions, with officials in the WPIEI-CC arguing "You know that's very nice, but it's a very specific issue and maybe we don't need it." (interview 5c). In the case of UNEA, the EU ultimately decided to drop the reference to the HFC Amendment in favour the priorities of that negotiation itself (interview 5c). Concretely, with the potential exceptions of the G7 and the G20, the negotiations were not necessarily being seen as a priority outside of the NEG.

Finally, while its precise impact is difficult to assess, there appeared to be a *lack of communication channels* between the NEG and other EU venues, as the NEG was relatively insulated from the rest of the climate policy area (interviews 2c, 5c). This segregation appeared to

be an extension to the EU level of the larger “Ozone Family” in the Montreal Protocol, where delegates have formed a close-knit community with strong working relationships (Roberts, 2017). In that sense, officials in the focal venue worked closely together in a smaller setting. Additionally, the ozone experts working on the Montreal Protocol did not have systematic contacts with climate experts, though some EU member states were more integrated than others (interviews 2c, 6c).

## 5.4 IMO Initial Strategy

### 5.4.1 *Connections employed*

The EU’s use of connections with NFF outside the IMO appeared restricted to two fora: the UNFCCC and the One Planet Summit. First, SHAC members, including the European Commission, used UNFCCC COP 23 and mid-year Bonn Sessions to raise awareness of the importance of reducing shipping emissions, to draw more attention to the negotiations, and to recruit potential partners (interviews 1d, 3d, 5d, 6d, 7d, 11d). Second, at the initiative of France, SHAC crafted a declaration to be considered by world leaders at ‘One Planet Summit’, organized by France on the occasion of the second anniversary of the adoption of the Paris Agreement, in December 2017 (interviews 5d, 7d, 9d, 11d). The objective of the so-called ‘Tony de Brum Declaration’ was to draw political attention to the negotiations and overcome situations in which a state’s position in the IMO contradicted its level of ambition in the UNFCCC (interviews 1d, 3d, 5d, 7d). Unlike the other cases, the EU did not use fora like the G7, G20, or UN to advocate for its negotiating position, nor did it use climate-specific fora like the MEF or the Petersberg Dialogue. Moreover, the efforts to draw attention to the IMO negotiations at the UNFCCC and via the One Planet Summit were undertaken primarily via an extra-EU coordination setup.

### 5.4.2 *The effect of compartmentalization on connections*

The EU’s very limited use of connections appeared influenced by a combination of a lack of interest in the shipping negotiations outside of the IMO focal venue (*different priorities and policy framing*) and a *lack of communication channels* with focal venue of the NFF. This was then aggravated by a *lack of resources* inside DG CLIMA, which was tasked with coordinating with the WPIEI-CC. Like the case of ICAO, focal venues of the NFF were largely absent from the EU’s approach to the negotiations. Instead, it was internal EU entrepreneurs, here acting via the SHAC, who sought to work across the UNFCCC and the One Planet Summit.

The *different priorities and policy framing* manifested itself in a relative lack of interest in the negotiations inside focal venues of the NFF (interviews 1d, 5d, 7d, 11d). Such a lack of interest made it difficult to get shipping on the agenda of both other EU venues and in NFF outside the shipping bubble (interview 1d). This is perhaps best exemplified by the short amount of time dedicated to the Tony de Brum Declaration at the One Planet Summit. According to an EU member state official, it took up approximate two minutes of “a meeting that we controlled and with a declaration that that



we had made and a meeting agenda that we oversaw. That is to say that for a lot of people it's really a small issue" (interview 5d).

The concentration of EU diplomatic coordination within the Shipping Working Party (SWP), serving as the focal venue for the IMO, meant there was also a *lack of communication channels* between the SWP and the larger climate diplomacy apparatus. The SWP, made up of officials with transportation backgrounds, had little contact with the other venues working on climate issues (interviews 4d, 11d). In this case, that meant that their involvement and input on multilateral diplomacy coordinated elsewhere in non-focal venues was limited. An EU official from the SWP summarised their knowledge of an outreach demarche as "I heard of it from the side-line shall we say" (interview 8d).

Finally, the *lack of resources* inside DG CLIMA's shipping unit further contributed to the lack of connections. With a team of three people at its high point, DG CLIMA's shipping-dedicated team did not have resources to coordinate using various climate fora in service of the IMO objectives (interviews 1d, 7d, 8d).

## 6. Discussion & conclusion

Overall, we show that the three identified variables affect the EU's climate diplomacy in support of its objectives in the four FF. This primarily manifests itself in two ways: (1) in the case of the Paris Agreement and the Kigali Amendment, an evoking of the negotiations in a wide variety of NFF, but mainly limited to building political support and consistent messaging and (2) in the case of CORSIA and the Initial Strategy, a lack of use of any NFF, with the exception of efforts undertaken unilaterally by DG CLIMA (ICAO) and France (IMO). This fits with the assumption that EU internal compartmentalization affects its climate diplomacy, despite the high-level political attention and emphasis placed on climate policy. We also note the role of DG CLIMA (ICAO and IMO) and EEAS (UNFCCC) who serve as liaisons across focal venues and thereby somewhat counterbalance the effects compartmentalization on the EU's climate diplomacy. However, they were not able – or lacked sufficient resources – to undo these structural constraints of compartmentalization and ultimately facilitate a comprehensive climate diplomacy.

With respect to the types of connections the EU engaged in, they appeared to fall into three categories: those seeking more build political support (notably in fora like the G7 and the G20), those centred around a building a consistent narrative in fora dealing with other climate-related issues, and finally those focused around specific issues related to the negotiations.

These findings are important for three reasons. First, they provide detailed insight into how precisely an actor connects activity across NFF in support of a negotiation in a FF. Second, the case studies provided detail insight into how internal considerations precisely impact an actor's cross-forum activities inside a regime complex. While the EU has a unique internal policy-making system, its specialized bureaucracy faces many of the same organizational challenges as other actors. In that sense, the findings on compartmentalization are relatively transferable to other actors in the

IRCCC. Third, in focusing not only on the UNFCCC but also on ICAO, IMO, and the Montreal Protocol and the role of compartmentalisation therein, the paper underscores the potential limitations of the EU's strategic climate diplomacy and nuances its role as an international climate leader.

On the one hand, we find evidence that the EU has attempted to connect its activity in a variety of non-focal fora in support of its objectives in focal fora negotiations at the IRCCC. It confirms the EU is a strategic, resourceful actor on international climate issues. On the other hand, compartmentalisation seemed to undercut the comprehensiveness of the EU's climate diplomacy. The EU is clearly limited in how it can connect its activity because of the silos present across the different venues responsible for the different fora of the IRCCC. In that sense, at least in the case of the EU, the IRCCC is not the expansive, strategic chessboard it would seem at first glance. However, it remains unclear to what extent this ultimately affects the achievement of the EU's climate objectives. Along those lines, future research could examine the role of external variables in shaping the use of connections in the IRCCC and the transferability of our findings to other actors. In doing so, we can develop a more complete picture of how much the EU is actually handicapped by its silos, as compared to other actors in the complex and available opportunities in non-focal fora.

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## 8. Annex: List of interviews

Interview	Date	Category
Paris		
1a	12/02/2021	EU
2a	16/02/2021	EUMS
3a	17/02/2021	EU
4a	18/02/2021	EU
5a	22/02/2021	EUMS
6a	25/02/2021	EU
7a	03/03/2021	EU
8a	04/03/2021	EU
9a	08/03/2021	EUMS
10a	06/04/2021	EUMS
CORSIA		
1b	14/06/2021	EU
2b	16/06/2021	EU
3b	17/06/2021	EU
4b	30/06/2021	EU
5b	01/07/2021	EUMS
6b	06/07/2021	EU
7b	06/07/2021	EU
8b	27/07/2021	EU
9b	28/07/2021	EUMS
10b	29/07/2021	Non-EU
11b	11/08/2021	EUMS
Kigali Amendment		
1c	04/11/2021	EUMS
2c	16/11/2021	EUMS
3c	16/11/2021	EUMS
4c	18/11/2021	EU
5c	26/11/2021	EUMS
6c	01/12/2021	EUMS
7c	02/12/2021	EUMS
8c	14/12/2021	Non-EU
9c	17/12/2021	Non-EU
Initial Strategy		
1d	05/02/2020	EU
2d	10/02/2020	EUMS
3d	11/02/2020	EUMS
4d	12/02/2020	EU
5d	18/02/2020	EUMS
6d	28/02/2020	EUMS
7d	02/03/2020	Non-EU
8d	02/03/2020	EU
9d	03/03/2020	EUMS
10d	10/03/2020	EUMS

11d	13/03/2020	EUMS
12d	21/12/2020	Non-EU
13d	23/12/2020	Non-EU