1. **Introduction**

- **The puzzle:** while the EU’s involvement in international governmental organizations (IOs) is growing in both scope and depth, systematic studies of the topic are yet scarce and a common analytical tool-kit is lacking.
- **Guiding question:** *What are suitable ways of analysing the EU’s involvement in IOs?*  
- **Intention:** arguing for and presenting an interdisciplinary approach to the study of the topic.  
- **Definitions:** multilateral governance vs. international governmental organizations.  

IOs are “forms of cooperation founded on an international agreement usually creating a new legal person having at least one organ with a will of its own, established under international law” (Blokker/Schermers, 2001: 23).

Core attributes of IOs (Kennedy, 1988: 39): created by a treaty between two or more States; possess a constitution; legal entities in international law; generally, but not always, have an exclusive membership of States or governments.

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2. **Current approaches in legal and political science and the rationale for an alternative**

- **Diagnosis:** Literature on the EU’s participation in IOs is so far largely compartmentalized.  

*The four dimensions of research on the EU’s participation in IOs*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Legal science</th>
<th>Political science</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Global level</td>
<td>International Law/Law of IOs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional (European) level</td>
<td>International Relations, Global Governance studies (GG)</td>
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</table>

- **Problems:** tunnel vision, blind spots  
- **The rationale for an alternative, interdisciplinary approach:** getting to more holistic accounts, establishing synergies between legal and political science scholars.

3. **An interdisciplinary framework for the analysis of the EU’s participation in IOs**

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**Legal science**

- **Global Level**
  - I - International Law
  - De jure recognition
  - Procedures (Tabling, Voting, Speaking)
- **Regional (European) level**
  - II - European Law
  - Competences: Representation
  - Internal decision-making rules
  - Legal instruments
  - Treaty objectives

**Political science**

- **Global Level**
  - III - International Relations/GG
  - De facto recognition
  - State and non-state actors and their capacities (power structures)
  - (Informal processes of policy-making
- **Regional (European) level**
  - IV - EU (Foreign Policy) Studies
  - Representation in practice: ‘Actorness’
  - Internal coordination in practice
  - Foreign policy tools
  - Strategic objectives

**Recognition, Governance mode, Actor capacity, Actor objectives**
Utility: strong descriptive tool, can be embedded into theoretical considerations

Strengths and deficits of the framework

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Shortcomings</th>
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| - Holistic descriptive tool: Better understanding of EU activity in multilateral IOs  
- Legal and political science can be jointly applied through such a framework  
- Mutually benefiting | - Sub-categories yet under-specified |

4. Towards an interdisciplinary research agenda

Shared research interests of legal and political science scholars:

- 3 types of research: descriptive (understanding), explanatory and normative (improving)
- 3 areas of shared interests: institutional frameworks, processes, agents and their behaviour

A tentative research agenda: research questions interesting lawyers and political scientists -

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Framework</th>
<th>Processes</th>
<th>Agency</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understanding the EU’s involvement in international organizations:</td>
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<tr>
<td>What are the legal and institutional frameworks of the multilateral body x? What are the relevant institutional structures within the EU for its participation in body y on issue z?</td>
<td>How do multilateral negotiations function in IO x? How does the EU take decisions in preparation for its participation in multilateral negotiations in forum y? How does the negotiation style affect outcomes of the negotiation process (hard law, soft law) and, vice-versa, how does the proposed outcome affect negotiation position and styles? How do the two negotiation arenas (EU internal and international level) link up?</td>
<td>How does EU representation in IO b on issue a function? How does country y perceive the EU’s participation in body z? What are the capacities and margins of manoeuvre of the EU, of country c,d,e in a given multilateral IO? How do EU negotiators and EU Member States coordinate under varying degrees of legal obligation to do so?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explaining trends of EU participation in international organizations:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Why has a specific set of institutions emerged to deal with issue x? Why has the EU been granted a specific legal status in forum y? What are the consequences of EU multilateral activity at the national, regional and international level?</td>
<td>Why has a certain negotiation style emerged in forum x and what is the contribution of the EU to this?</td>
<td>Why has the EU in some cases been recognized as a (unitary/powerful) actor and not in others? Why has the EU in some cases been successful in pushing its policy objectives through and not in others? Why does EU coordination/representation/participation in IOs take so many different forms in different fora and why does it take these exact forms?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving the democratic legitimacy (effectiveness/participation) of international organizations and the EU’s contribution to it</td>
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<td>How can and should the legitimacy (effectiveness/participation) of IOs be enhanced? How should multilateral arrangements be framed to better accommodate regional organisations?</td>
<td>How should procedures be improved to enable broader participation of various (non-state) actors at various stages in negotiation processes? Should procedures within the EU be made more transparent to enable better control of the National and/or the European Parliament(s)?</td>
<td>How should the EU act in multilateral fora to enhance the legitimacy of multilateral governance and its own legitimacy as a foreign policy actor? How could and should the EU assume more international responsibility?</td>
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5. Concluding Remarks

- Our interdisciplinary approach built on existing concepts to overcome flaws of current mono-disciplinary approaches. It yields new insights and mutual benefits for the two disciplines.
- Turning to the future, as the relevance of this topic is bound to grow, interdisciplinary research may be the answer to analytically keep up with real-life developments happening right at the intersection between International and European law and politics.
- In conclusion, we encourage researchers to consider working increasingly with interdisciplinary perspectives when studying the EU as an actor in IOs.

6. References