

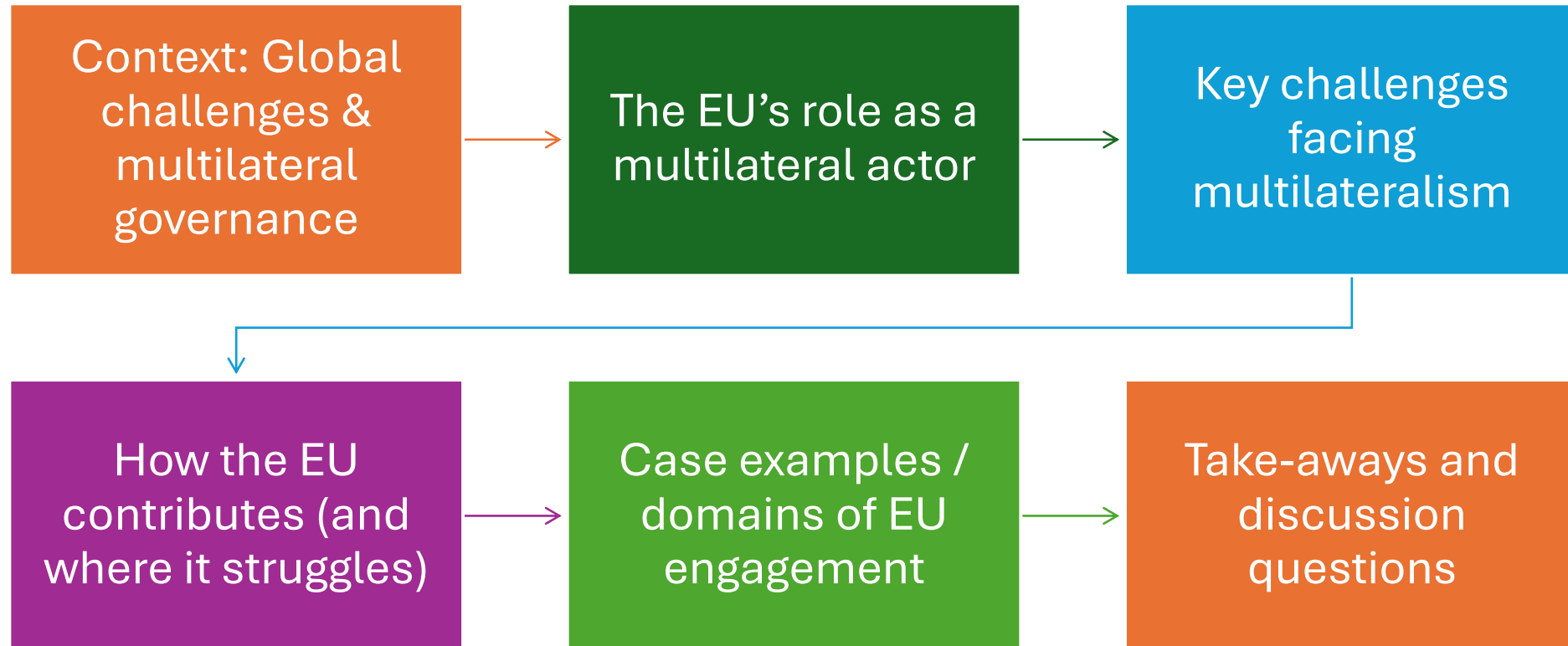


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Multilateral Governance and the EU's Contribution to Global Challenges

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AGENDA



Why Multilateral Governance Matters

Deepening global interdependence in economics, health, security, environment

Global challenges (pandemics, climate change, geopolitics) cannot be solved by single states alone

Multilateral governance = cooperation via international institutions, norms & shared rules

The EU as a Global Actor

- The EU has evolved from a purely regional actor to one with global ambitions and responsibilities.
- It brings unique features: internal integration, normative power, multilevel governance, external partnerships
- Its external dimension includes diplomacy, development assistance, trade policy, security & defence cooperation

Crisis of Multilateralism: Key Challenges

Multilateral system remains **state-centric**, while global problems demand more inclusive, agile forms of governance.

The EU is structurally challenged (fragmentation, internal divisions, multiple layers of governance).

Power competition, rising great-power rivalry, weakened international institutions.

The EU's capacity to act coherently on the global stage is questioned.

EU's Contribution to Global Challenges: Strengths

Normative leadership: promoting human rights, rule-based order, sustainable development.

Financial & development resources: aid, trade, partnerships with third countries.

Networking & multilevel governance: leveraging regional to global networks.

Institutional experience: The EU's internal governance model gives lessons for external governance.

EU's Contribution: Constraints & Weaknesses

Lack of a “single voice”: Member states’ divergent interests hamper coherent external action.

Institutional complexity: multilevel layers (EU-level + national + regional) slow decision-making.

Enforcement & legitimacy issues: The EU depends on member-states and external partners for implementation.

Multilateral fatigue and global fragmentation make sustained cooperation harder.

Domain Examples Where the EU Engages Globally

Climate & Environment: The EU pushes global climate governance (e.g., Paris Agreement frameworks).

Health & Pandemic Response: Coordination of global health initiatives, support for global health institutions.

Security & Geopolitics: Partnerships in neighbourhood policy, cooperation with strategic partners (US, China, Africa).

Trade & Development: Trade agreements, development aid, global value chains.

Multilevel & Regionalised Approach

- the EU's external action is shaped by “globalisation-cum-regionalisation”.
- The EU often uses **regional strategies** (neighbourhood, macro-regions) as building blocks of global engagement.
- Implication: The EU contributes to global governance not only through global institutions, but via regional platforms.

Implications for Multilateral Governance

- The EU's model suggests multilateralism must adapt: more flexible, networked, regionally anchored.
- Multilateral institutions should be complemented by regional/regime-based cooperation.
- For the EU to be effective, internal coherence is crucial—external action mirrors internal governance capacity.
- Global challenges require “regime complexity”: overlapping institutions, actors, levels. The EU is both a contributor and a case study in this complexity.

Discussion Questions

In what global domains is the EU best positioned to contribute meaningfully to multilateral governance?

What are the biggest internal barriers within the EU that hinder its global role?

How do regional strategies (neighbourhood, macro-regions) enhance or limit the EU's global governance contribution?

Given rising global fragmentation, what reforms to multilateral institutions would make the EU's engagement more effective?



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