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Eckes, C.

Published in:
The European Court of Justice and external relations law: constitutional challenges

Citation for published version (APA):
The Court of Justice's Participation in the Judicial Discourse: Theory and Practice

Christina Eckes*

Introduction

Judges argue within a legal frame of reference. They identify and interpret this frame and read factual situations before them in the light of it. By interpreting the law and the facts coherently with the relevant legal frame of reference they aim to objectively justify their decisions. This may sound naïve and often be much less heroic in practice. However, the core value of separation of powers and of independent judicial review is widely accepted, including the added value of the judiciary’s attempts to objectify what is ‘just’ outside of the political power struggle. Judicial discourse, it is here argued, could help the judiciary to continue to offer this objectifying value in a pluricontextual setting,¹ where the internal and the external become increasingly interlocked because policy making is increasingly externalized, rights relevant decisions are taken by the executive outside the domestic constitutional framework, and an increasing number of players claim authority, including ultimate authority, to govern a legal situation.²

The chapter hopes to contribute to the thinking about the role of the judiciary in a pluricontextual setting and turns to the European Union (EU) for inspiration. Within the EU the relationship between EU law on the one hand and the Member States collectively and individually on the other is characterized by an on-going pulling and pushing of law and politics.³ Both the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) and Member States’ courts have long functioned in this setting. The Union legal order is a compound constitutionalized construction with interlocking claims of ultimate authority. This chapter considers what

* Associate professor, University of Amsterdam; 2012-2013 Emile Noël Fellow-in-residence at New York University. I would like to thank Dennis van Berkel and Stephan Hollenberg for their comments on earlier drafts and Robert-Jan Winters for his research assistance. All remaining errors are of course my own. This chapter loosely draws on my earlier work published as: ‘EU Accession to the ECHR: Between Autonomy and Adaptation’ (2013) MLR and ‘European Union Legal Methods – Moving Away From Integration’ in: U Neergaard and R Nielsen (eds), European Legal method - Towards a new European Legal Realism? (DJØF Publishing, 2013).

¹ Throughout the text the term legal ‘context’ is chosen rather than ‘level’ or ‘order’, since the different contexts are not layered because they do not relate hierarchically to each other and PIL is not organized to a degree that would justify calling it an order.


³ For an excellent analysis: L van Middelaar, De passage naar Europa – Geschiedenis van een begin (Groningen, Historische Uitgeverij, 2009).
could be learned from interaction between different judiciaries within the EU legal order for
the CJEU’s approach to external claims of authority.

Traditionally, the phenomenon that courts refer to decisions of other jurisdictions is
called ‘judicial dialogue’. This chapter however uses the term ‘discourse’, which, from Latin
discursus, refers more loosely to ‘running to and from’ rather than to the purposeful
directed exchange that ‘dialogue’ seems to evoke. This appears appropriate since judicial
interaction ranges from ‘ignoring’ or ‘appearing to have considered’ to ‘taking into account’
or ‘making references’. Furthermore, with the participation of an ever-increasing number of
international judicial bodies, as well as an increasing number of highest courts within the
EU, the interaction has moved from a dialogue to ‘a round table discussion’ or a
‘multilogue’.

The chapter is structured as follows. Section One lays out the theoretical grounding
of the value and necessity of judicial reasoning. It then makes the argument that both within
the EU and beyond the boundaries of the EU legal order, the same philosophical arguments
and theories require not only an inward looking judicial reasoning but also a discourse with
other judicial bodies. Section Two looks consequently into the practice of judicial interaction
between the CJEU and the courts of the Member States (internal discourse) and then to the
interaction between the CJEU and international judicial bodies (external discourse). This sets
the scene for Section Three, which addresses the core questions of this chapter: What
lessons can the CJEU learn from the internal European judicial discourse that can be
transferred to the external discourse with international courts and tribunals? What
considerations should guide the CJEU’s external relations case law in the described
pluricontextual setting?

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The Value of Judicial Discourse

Legal reasoning is commonly and appropriately supported by coherence theories.\(^8\) Coherence theories require that any proposition that is to be justified (judicial decision) harmoniously relates to other propositions that find reasonable support (recognized claims of judicial authority; authoritative norms). Justification of a judicial decision takes place in the world of legal propositions in a legal, mind-dependent context rather than reality. The aim is to ‘objectify’ the decision of what is just or unjust and to communicate in a legal context with others about the supporting reasons.\(^9\) If we accept the justifying value of placing judicial decisions within a coherent relationship with norms that are recognized as authoritative it is logical that all *relevant* norms would have to be considered. The latter requires an interpretation of law as a meaningful whole and a decision on which norms are relevant. In a pluricontextual setting, this includes external claims of (ultimate) authority that compete with internal claims of ultimate authority. As a consequence, the reference framework will have to be determined by recognizing or rejecting these external claims. *Ultimate* authority is only claimed where the external authority supposes that no internal recognition of the specific proposition is necessary for its validity inside the domestic legal context. EU law for instance claims ultimate authority within national legal orders. Even if originally recognition by national authorities was necessary, individual provisions of EU law now become part of the national legal context without requiring specific recognition. However, direct practical effect, e.g. of the decisions of international expert bodies, is different from claiming ultimate authority.

External claims of authority multiply in the pluricontextual setting. Across an ever-wider range of policy areas, an ever-wider range of actors engages in cross-border activities. These cross-border activities produce an increasingly dense net of rules with an ever greater impact not only on national legal orders and on the EU, but also on individuals.\(^10\) Multiple claims of authority over the same factual situation exist that somehow recognize each other

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and that find expression in multiple norms potentially applicable to that situation. ‘Somehow recognize’ means that an internal actor has confirmed the relevance of the external claim of authority, including in the past. Continuous recognition can result in expectation to recognize and in an interlocking of legal spheres. While these interlocking processes of different legal spheres aspiring to exercise ultimate authority can be witnessed internationally, they are particularly strong in the EU. As Anne-Marie Slaughter puts it: ‘The world is not likely to replicate [the European] experience in terms of actual political and economic integration monitored by coercive supranational institutions. But to the extent that the European way of law uses international law to transform and buttress domestic political institutions, it is a model for how international law can function, and in our view, will and must function to address twenty-first century international challenges’. Classic contemporary examples under international law are: the standards of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, which have gained formal weight through the SPS Agreement; the rulemaking, both formal and informal, in international organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO) or the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO); sanctions of the UN Security Council; and standards of international regulatory associations such as the Basel Committee for Banking Supervision or the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering (FATF). Furthermore, there is a growing amount and intensity of rulemaking by private actors that directly impacts on domestic law. Examples that came to fame more recently are debt security rating agencies, such as Moody’s and Standard &

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\[14\] Counter-terrorist sanctions against individuals resemble individual decisions rather than ‘rules’ but they certainly have a great and direct impact on the rights of individuals and domestic legal orders: C Eckes, EU Counter-Terrorist Policies and Fundamental Rights - The Case of Individual Sanctions (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2009).


Poor’s (S&P). Additionally, international law becomes increasingly judicialized and domestic courts are increasingly and actively referring to each other’s judicial decisions, as well as to international law. However, most international examples are claims of authority and even ultimate expertise but they do not claim to govern in the internal legal context without further recognition. Yet, the practical effect can at times be very similar. The WHO for instance determines the existence of public emergencies and makes specific recommendations for appropriate measures that states comply with without further implementing legislation. The developments are far from homogeneous but one general tendency is that international claims of authority shift from considering the will of sovereign state subjects as the ultimate benchmark of legality to focusing on the impact on individuals.

Pluricontextuality makes it necessary to consider the applicability of authority external to the domestic legal setting. Typically, it is the task of the judiciary to discover and determine the internal relevance of external authoritative claims. The judiciary does so by relying on internal constitutional principles and norms; however these are often far from narrowly prescriptive and do not clearly determine the relevance of any particular international claim. The judiciary from different constitutional orders is required to make sense of the interlocking, the same norms (with different grounds for recognition), and de facto interdependence between legal contexts. This does not entail that the different judiciaries come to the same conclusions. Justice that can be achieved through judicial review is necessarily system bound. It is the just outcome within an artificially limited normative structure that serves as a practical tool to determine justice. The justice delivered by domestic courts necessarily does not at all times approach a standard of universal

18 Other examples are ICANN – Internet Cooperation of Assigned Names and Numbers; the International Standards Organization (ISO); and the International Accounting Standards Committee (IASC).


22 The German Constitution (Grundgesetz (GG)) did introduce a provision on EU law only after the Treaty of Maastricht, see Art 23 GG. See also Art 59 II GG for the status of international law.
justice. Where the frame of reference includes external claims of authority the normative structure can change through sustained recognition by courts, political players and citizens. Courts are creatures of their system, be it a state or be it the EU: changes in the domestic system and the frame of reference influence the exercise of their powers and potentially even their entire role within this system. Both legal reasoning and judicial discourse are tools to achieve coherence with accepted, albeit limited, standards of justice and to make some standard of justice possible in practice. Judicial discourse is a tool to allow for limited interaction between judiciaries rooted in different system. While it does not necessarily lead to harmonization it extends normative claims beyond the domestic legal context and can contribute to controlling the external exercise of political power, as well as to a cross-border exchange on the legitimacy of specific claims of authority.

In the pluricontextual setting, recognition of external claims by courts is unavoidably part of the legal reasoning since it includes determining the frame of reference in which a decision must be coherently placed. Judicial discourse is then the necessary next step to contribute to coherence in a compound pluricontextual setting where the global, the regional, and the local directly interlink. Under the separation of powers doctrine, the judiciary has a duty towards the individual to counterbalance the other powers and to maintain its authority necessary settle disputes that are brought before it. A network of mutually recognized judicial claims could contribute to counterbalancing the emerging network of executive power. Limits could emerge in a discursive fashion. As states lose part of their autonomy as a result of the growing network of external norms and factual constraints, their actions cannot be judged coherently without taking into account these external norms. Under these circumstances, courts are no longer able to effectively and coherently fulfil their task in the state structure without taking account of the claims of external judicial bodies. Only the latter can effectively control the validity of the claims made by the political actors of their own legal order, including in the international context. Indeed in the pluricontextual setting, the monolithic state is subdivided into its different bodies and entities which then cooperate outside and, some would argue, above the state structure.

Judicial discourse offers a combination of domestically rooted and constitutionally

legitimised jurisprudence with an external reach. A ‘network of judges’ could make a contribution to construe and control the pluricontextual legal reality.\(^{26}\)

**Inside the EU Legal Order: Discourse Practice in a Pluricontextual Setting**

Cross-jurisdictional judicial discourse is long established within the European Union. The focus here is the communicative and restraining function of judicial discourse through judgments. The underlying question is what lessons, if any, could be learned from the internal EU discourse for a broader international judicial discourse.

**Under the Preliminary Ruling Procedure**

The internal discourse between the CJEU and national courts has a direct institutionalized dimension: the preliminary ruling procedure (Article 267 TFEU). National courts ask questions and enforce the CJEU’s replies in the national legal order. A recent example of a broad judicial discourse, where a number of the highest national courts and the CJEU are considering the same factual situations and legal norms, is the judicial consideration of legal instruments adopted to mitigate the Eurocrisis. In 2012, the German Constitutional Court (GCC) gave two rulings concerning the Treaty Establishing the European Stability Mechanism (ESM): first in an intergovernmental dispute (June 2012)\(^{27}\) and then in a challenge of its compliance with German constitutional law (September 2012).\(^{28}\) The Estonian and Irish Supreme Courts ruled on the constitutionality of the ESM under their respective law.\(^{29}\) Furthermore, while the Irish High Court had earlier declined to refer to the CJEU,\(^{30}\) the Irish Supreme Court made a reference to the CJEU. The questions raised before the different national courts and the CJEU concern the same legal instrument and raise

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\(^{29}\) Supreme Court of Estonia, no 3-4-1-6-12, decision of 12 July 2012, available in English at: [http://www.riigikohus.ee/?id=1347](http://www.riigikohus.ee/?id=1347); Irish Supreme Court, *Thomas Pringle v The Government of Ireland, Ireland and the Attorney General* [2012] IESC 47, focussed on the lawfulness of using the simplified revision procedure in Art 48 (6) TFEU to add a paragraph 3 to Art 136 TFEU and on the lawfulness of the alleged ‘vague and open-ended amendment that enables the granting of financial assistance without limitations or restrictions as provided for in the Union Treaties’ (argument of the appellant).

\(^{30}\) See summary in *Pringle v Ireland*, above n 29.
parallel issues, including whether the agreed Treaty amendments entailed an increase in Union competences (in this case the simplified amendment procedure cannot be used); whether it involved the Treaties or the general principles of Union law, such as the Union’s exclusive competences in monetary policy, the functions of the Union institutions, and the principle of sincere cooperation;\textsuperscript{31} whether the budget autonomy of national parliaments was infringed, whether the ESM limited unduly the autonomy of the constitutional legislator, and whether the ESM undermined the democracy principle and crossed the line to a federal state.\textsuperscript{32} It is artificial to hide behind a strict dualist reading and argue that each court only considers domestic law (ratification and implementation measures in the case of national courts or the ESM Treaty in the case of the CJEU) and unrealistic to assume that the courts do not take notice of each other’s decisions. It was the Irish Supreme Court that framed the preliminary questions on the legality of the ESM and that influenced in this way the debate. The GCC by contrast has so far avoided entering into this very direct discourse that would necessarily entail a formal recognition of a relationship with the CJEU, in which the latter give guidance to the former in questions of EU law. The GCC stands increasingly isolated. The UK House of Lords, now Supreme Court, has entered into a direct discourse with CJEU many times. Recently, even the Italian Constitutional Court has started referring preliminary questions to the CJEU.\textsuperscript{33} The Polish Constitutional Tribunal has at least accepted direct communication with the CJEU through the preliminary reference procedure as a possibility.\textsuperscript{34} From the perspective of the individual who wants to rely on her rights under EU law the constitutional complaint to the GCC may become less attractive because the Court refuses to refer questions to the CJEU. Yet, arguably the GCC enjoys a unique position among national courts as an enormously powerful\textsuperscript{35} and popular\textsuperscript{36} constitutional court in a big and

\textsuperscript{31} See questions referred under the expedited reference procedure (Art 104a of the Court’s Rules of Procedure) in \textit{Pringle v Ireland}, above n 29.

\textsuperscript{32} BVerfG, above n 28.

\textsuperscript{33} Italian Constitutional Court, decision n 103 of 2008, available at: www.corteconstituzionale.it.

\textsuperscript{34} Polish Constitutional Tribunal, decision of 11 May 2005, K 18/04, para 18.

\textsuperscript{35} Its decisions take the exceptional force of ordinary laws in the national legal hierarchy, see Art 93 and 94 GG, in particular Art 94 (2).

\textsuperscript{36} See a Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung article on an opinion poll conducted by the respected Allensbach Institute finding inter alia that 80 percent of interviewees welcomed Karlsruhe’s ability to overrule parliamentary decisions. Available at http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/inland/bundesverfassungsgericht-das-bollwerk-11863396.html (last visited 14 January 2013). See also comments by Armin von Bogdandy, stating: ‘(The GCC) give[s] a voice to those parts of the population that don’t have an influence […] It is largely successful. The court enjoys very high public reputation.’ Available at http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/78df7420-dfa5-11e1-9bb7-00144feab49a.html#axzz2Hlhzmit (last visited 14 January 2013).
influential Member State. If one understands EU law and German law as two juxtaposed legal contexts, rather than as interlocked in a way that excludes taking an exclusively national perspective, one could argue that a reference would limit the GCC near absolute judicial powers within the national legal context. Hence, from an internal perspective, based on an artificial conceptual separation of the two legal contexts, the GCC’s choice not to refer to the CJEU is preserving its own powers. In the ‘Euro Bailout case’, another recent high-profile missed opportunity of the GCC to refer a question to the CJEU, the Court faced a great amount of international criticism. Some argue that it might face marginalization as a consequence of its continuous boycott of the preliminary ruling procedure. At the same time as was discussed above, the GCC does not choose the course of open confrontation. It took the same deferential approach to its ultra vires control in the Euro Bailout case as it did in Honeywell.

The preliminary ruling procedure only works as part of a relationship of trust and cooperation between the judiciaries of the different legal contexts. The CJEU ‘for the most part, has been careful to understand its position as a *Primus Inter Pares*—as playing its role in a cooperative, non-hierarchical, judicial process involving “European” courts [...].’ Lower national courts may by requesting preliminary rulings ‘be good Europeans, extend the reach of the rule-of-law to cover the obligations their states have assumed within the European Union and, last but certainly not least, enjoy a huge judicial empowerment boost.’ The preliminary ruling procedure creates hence a win-win-situation. It empowers (lower) national courts, extend the reach of their control and has the great advantage of the ‘compliance pull associated with domestic courts’. This has allowed the CJEU to give influential constitutional rulings under a procedure, which is meant to ensure that the application and enforcement in detail is left to the national court and is part of a system that is aimed to ensure cultural and legal diversity. Indeed, the CJEU’s case law distilling general principles of EU law from the ‘constitutional traditions common to the Member States’

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38 Cartabia, ‘Europe and rights’, above n 7 at 29. See also: JHH Weiler, ‘Judicial Ego’ (2011) 9 *International Journal of Constitutional Law* 1, arguing that ‘on matters of European law its [the GCC’s] reputation has gone from bad to worse and at present its credibility on Europe is in the dog house.’
41 *ibid*
42 *ibid*, at 1.
43 Later codified, see Art 6 (3) TEU.
presupposes that the traditions of the Member States are different from the outset and that they remain diverse. It does not impose one set of uniform European values. The costs of breaking with the legal recognition of claims of EU law are extraordinarily high and for lower national courts this would also mean breaking with the broader continuous recognition of EU law by national law. This gives the CJEU extraordinary compliance pull. Perhaps originally there was no ‘compelling reason’ to subscribe to the CJEU’s vision of the EU as an integration organisation\(^\text{44}\) - neither for national courts nor for national Governments. The interlocking of legal spheres, furthered by the CJEU’s case law, has created this compelling reason.

**Without a Formal Mechanism**

As is well-explored in literature, national courts and the CJEU have also entered long ago into a judicial discourse outside of the preliminary ruling procedure. The most articulate discourse has taken place between the CJEU and the German Constitutional Court (GCC), including the early rulings in *Solange I*, *Solange II*, and the *Maastricht Treaty* ruling, as well as the more recent rulings in *Lisbon Treaty* (2009) and *Honeywell* (2010). The relationship between the two courts is characterized by a mix of exercising judicial pressure and respect for political reality.

The GCC has flagged up different issues of concern, including human rights protection (*Solange I* and *II*), *ultra vires* control (*Maastricht Treaty*), and an identity review (*Lisbon Treaty*). Additionally in the recent case of *Honeywell*, the GCC accepted for the first time to rule on whether the CJEU had acted *ultra vires*. Yet, it took a ‘remarkably restrictive approach to *ultra vires* review’ and followed in this ‘a similar path as in its famous *Solange* jurisprudence with regard to fundamental rights review’.\(^\text{45}\) The GCC explained its decision to reject the constitutional complaint against the CJEU’s decision by stating that the CJEU is ‘not precluded from refining the law by means of methodically bound case-law’.\(^\text{46}\) This might


\(^{46}\) BVerfG, above n 39 at para 62: ‘Dem Gerichtshof ist auch Rechtsfortbildung im Wege methodisch gebundener Rechtsprechung nicht verwehrt’. Similarly the GCC ruled that national courts had an obligation to consider the ECHR and rulings of the ECHR in a methodologically sound manner. See BVerfG, 2 BvR 2307/06
surprise in light of the poor reasoning that the CJEU offered in the contested case, *Mangold*, for introducing a general principle of non-discrimination on grounds of age, which came to many as a surprise.  

Nonetheless, the case demonstrates national courts’ respect for methodologically sound legal reasoning in principle. While legal reasoning of course is not free of the political, legal reasoning can allow stepping away from immediate political pressures and give courts an authority different from policy-makers (see above). Legal reasoning has allowed for a parallel discussion that complements and restrains the political debate in the specific compound context of EU law. Indeed, what the internal EU discourse demonstrates is that courts can draw lines for the political, but that they must be sufficiently aware of political realities. At the same time, if law is used to disguise the political it loses its independent judgment and ultimately credibility.

This is the background of Joseph Weiler’s accusation that the GCC has ‘cried Wolf too many times to be taken seriously’, which continues to be very relevant in the context of the judicial review of instruments adopted to mitigate the Eurocrises. In 2009, the GCC indicated specifically that ‘fundamental fiscal decisions on revenue and expenditure’ must be taken in the national context. In 2011, the GCC ruled that ‘the amount of the guarantees given’ in the Greece aid and Euro rescue package did not exceed ‘the limit of budget capacity to such an extent that budget autonomy would virtually be rendered completely ineffective’ and that it cannot step into the shoes of the national legislator. The ‘lines drawn in the sand’ that the Lisbon Treaty judgment placed around the national expenditure, appear to have been erased by the tides of the financial markets. In 2012, the heads of states and governments of 25 Member States took a further step of interlocking by signing a Treaty on Stability, Coordination and Governance in the Economic and Monetary Union (Fiscal Compact) that requires its signatories to introduce the agreed budget deficit

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48 Weiler, ‘Judicial Ego,’ above n 36.

49 BVerfG, above n 35.

50 MacCormick, *Questioning Sovereignty*, above n 43 at 100 with regard to the Maastricht decision.
rules in national law through ‘provisions of binding force and permanent character, preferably constitutional, or otherwise guaranteed to be fully respected and adhered to throughout the national budgetary processes’. As a result the authority of the EU and of the national (constitutional) legislator are so closely interlocked that they blur from the perspective of the individual. The Fiscal Compact was concluded by national governments, ratified by national parliaments. It is an intergovernmental treaty adopted outside the EU legal context but so closely interwoven with the EU law, in particular the fiscal provisions of the EU Treaties, that it can easily be mistaken for EU law. In light of the complex political and economic situation, the GCC understandably demonstrated great respect for the political powers (internal legislator). It may also have recognised that rulings on EU issues are no longer a matter of EU power versus national sovereignty but that the two contexts are so closely interlocked that they set together the background for an on-going struggle between law and politics.

The CJEU’s rulings also frequently contain statements of principle that are in practice highly flexibly interpreted, including by the CJEU itself. Illustrative examples are the CJEU’s flexible approach to finding a legal basis and its broad human rights approach without paying much attention to the specific boundaries of EU law in its rulings on rights of transsexuals and citizenship. Hence, both the GCC and the CJEU can at times be accused of making constitutional assertions but finding practical solutions that later undermine these vocal assertions. This is part of their discourse: both make principled statements about existing legal limits of EU competences but when it comes to the test of political reality they are willing to extend these limits. Even before the German Constitution introduced a special provision on EU law in 1992, the GCC accepted that EU law ranks higher than later adopted ordinary national laws – arguably without any basis in the national constitution but rather influenced by the (constitutional character of) EU law itself and of the decisions of the

51 Art 3 (2). The German Constitution does already contain a clause on budgetary discipline, see Art 109 GG.
54 E.g. Case C-256/11 Dereci et al v Bundesministerium für Inneres [2011] not yet reported.
Similarly, the GCC’s *Solange* doctrine recognized the authority of EU law and accepted it as different from international law – again before the special position of EU law was codified in the Germany Constitution.

The disagreement about how tensions between international, national and EU law should be reconciled is not new. Nor are situations where different courts rule on identical or at least very similar factual situations that involve the same norms. However, in certain policy fields a new intensity of overlapping judicial review has been reached, including beyond the boundaries of the EU. An example is counter-terrorist sanctions against individuals implementing United Nations Security Council Resolutions. A large number of judicial bodies have been called on to rule on the legality of these measures, including the CJEU, the Court of First Instance/the General Court, the ECtHR, the UK Supreme Court, the Swiss Supreme Court, and the Canadian Federal Court. The different courts have considered each other’s decisions to different degrees. In the latest high profile ruling on sanctions in the case of *Nada*, the ECtHR engaged intensively with the previous sanctions decision of other courts. In its *Ahmed* ruling of 2010, the UK Supreme Court by contrast largely ignored the previous *Kadi* ruling of the CJEU and also disregarded the existing EU law governing the legal situations of the applicants - ignoring in fact the ‘legal limits on the sovereignty of the UK Parliament [...] entailed by membership of the EU’. The judicial discourse will continue: the CJEU is now asked to rule for the second time on the legality of UN counter-terrorist sanctions. And even from the ‘internal perspective’ of the same legal order there is no longer normative agreement on how the different claims of authority

55 BVerfGE 22, 293 (1967) and BVerfGE 31, 145 (1971).
57 ECtHR Case of Nada, above n 56.
60 The hearing in the appeal against the *Kadi II* decision of the General Court took place on 16 October 2012.
relate to each other. In truly interlocked legal contexts, the one correct solution can no longer be found by simply looking harder. The internal legal context has been modified and the validity of internal norms depends (at least *de facto*) on external norms and *vice versa*.

In the past, both national courts and the CJEU have regularly argued from a systemic perspective of national law versus EU law and *vice versa*. However, the understanding might be growing that in legal contexts that are so deeply interlocked this systemic juxtaposition is misrepresenting not only political but also legal reality. This is to some extent also a result of judicial interaction. The internal European judicial discourse, including the judicial discourse outside of the preliminary ruling procedure, has contributed as much to the enforcement of the principle of supremacy as it has contributed to the delimitation of EU powers. The latter is often the focus of the analysis of the discourse between the CJEU and the GCC. The GCC has not only threatened to impose limits, but also vested EU law with authority by giving it a special position not recognised by the German Constitution at the time and by adapting its own principled statements to politics. It would be wrong to conclude that the GCC is not listened to, only because it does not enter into the direct institutionalized discourse. Its rulings concerning Union law extensively engage with the existence and nature of EU law. They aim to establish an intellectual authority and attract much attention beyond the national legal context. It is questionable whether the UK Supreme Court’s choice to ignore EU law has placed it in a more credible position in the internal European discourse.

**The Court of Justice Taking Part in the External Discourse**

Besides the judicial discourse within the EU, the CJEU is also increasingly involved in an external discourse. It takes account of and refers to the decisions of external judicial bodies, most prominently the ECtHR. It further gives rulings in cases concerning issues that are overlapping with the issues raised in other judicial bodies, such as the EFTA court and the WTO Dispute Mechanism.

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61 The most prominent example is the diametrically opposed decisions of the CJEU and the CFI in the *Kadi* case, above n 56. However, equally interesting on this point is a comparison of the attitude of the First and the Second senate of the GCC. While the former appears more open towards EU law, the latter is in principle responsible for European affairs. In its data retention decision the First Senate barely mentions the Lisbon Treaty decision of the Second Senate. See BVerfG, 1 BvR 256/08, 1 BvR 263/08, 1 BvR 586/08, vom 2.3.2010, Absatz-Nr. (1 – 345).
European Court of Human Rights

The Strasbourg and the Luxembourg Court take note of each other’s rulings – this has already been observed twenty years ago. A significant ruling in the early years was the *Marckx* case. The ECtHR relied on a completely new doctrine of temporary limitation of the effects of judicial ruling by referring to the CJEU’s ruling in the *Defrenne* case, in which the CJEU for the first time limited the retroactive effect of its own ruling. The CJEU did not rely on the ‘common traditions of the Member States’ in this case since the retroactive limitation of the effect of judicial rulings was largely unknown.

In the other direction, as is well-known, the Lisbon Treaty has made EU accession to the ECHR a legal obligation. Pre-accession, the EU is not itself directly bound by the Convention, either under international law or EU law. However, the ECHR and its interpretation by the ECtHR have played a great role in the EU’s constitutionalisation. In many landmark cases, the CJEU uses both general principles of EU law and the ECHR and the ECtHR’s case law to support its argument and the EU Treaties and the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights all include references to the ECHR. In more recent years, the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights has grown in importance and the CJEU has dropped its earlier ‘general principles’ or ‘source of inspiration’ approach, and has started to refer directly to ECHR provisions. The EU Charter – after much discussion – also specifically refers to the case law of the ECtHR, albeit in its Preamble, not in the main text. The CJEU

63 ECtHR *Marckx v Belgium* Series A no 31 (1979).
64 Case C-43/75 *Defrenne v Sabena* [1979] ECR 455.
65 F Jacobs, ‘Judicial Dialogue and the Cross-Fertilization of Legal Systems: the European Court of Justice’ (2003) 38 *Texas International Law Journal* 547: Austria, which was not a Member State until 20 years later, applied this doctrine.
66 Art 218 (8) TFEU.
67 Case C-60/00 *Carpenter* [2002] ECR I-6279; Case C-112/00 *Schmidberger* [2003] ECR I-5659.
68 See Art 6 (2) and (3) TEU, Art 218 (6)(a)(i) and (8) TFEU; Art 1 and 2 of Protocol 8 and Protocol 24. Art 52 (3) and 53 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights.
69 See e.g.: Joined Cases C-92/09 *Volker and Markus Schecke GbR* and C-93/09 *Hartmut Eifert v Land Essen* [2010] ECR I-000. See also: N O’Meara, “‘A More Secure Europe of Rights?’ The European Court of Human Rights, the Court of Justice of the European Union and EU Accession to the ECHR’ (2011) 12 *German Law Journal* 10, 1813-1832 at 1819.
70 Case C-413/99 *Baumbast* [2002] ECR I-7091, 72; Case C-60/00 *Carpenter*, above n 66 at 41-42; Case C-200/02 *Kungian Catherine Zhu Chen* [2004] ECR I-9925, 16.
72 Art 52 (3) of the Charter of Fundamental Rights.
has ruled in *J.McB. v L.E.* that where rights in the Charter correspond to rights in the ECHR the CJEU should follow the case law of the ECtHR. The CJEU has made significantly more references to the ECHR in the years 2010, 2011 and 2012 than in the previous three years.

By contrast with the internal discourse discussed above, the CJEU has not taken a systemic perspective in the interaction with the ECHR and the case law of the ECtHR, but rather considered individuals the ultimate point of reference. This becomes apparent in recent cases on citizenship and migration, in which the CJEU relies particularly often on Convention rights. Furthermore, EU law is regularly used in the arguments before the ECtHR and the ECtHR has repeatedly given judgments that are directly relevant for the EU. In line with its mandate, the ECtHR does so by relating all considered law to the position of the individual. In the light of Article 6(3) TEU in particular, it would be contrary to EU law to disregard the Convention. At the same time, there is an important legal difference between ‘giving due account to’ and being legally bound by the provisions of the ECHR, as authoritatively interpreted by the ECtHR. This was demonstrated most impressively by the CJEU’s *Kadi* ruling. Even though before 2008 the Court had in settled case-law given due account to UN Security Council Resolutions, it chose to rely on the fact that the EU is not a member of the UN and is therefore not directly bound by its Charter or its Security Council Resolutions.

After the EU’s accession to the ECHR, the ECHR will be directly binding on the EU and judicial discourse between the CJEU and the ECtHR will become institutionalized with

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73 Case C-400/10 PPU *JMcB v LE* [2010] ECR I-8965, 53. S Douglas-Scott interprets ‘correspond’ as ‘the same’ or ‘identical’, at: ‘The European Union and Human Rights after the Treaty of Lisbon’ (2011) 11 Human Rights Law Review 4, 655-656. This seems to be an overly strict reading. Indeed, the explanations to the Charter offer a list of ‘corresponding rights’. This appears to offer a good interpretation of the scope of the Court of Justice’s ruling.

74 In 2010, 2011 and 2012, 90 judgments of the CJEU and AG opinions refer to the ECHR. In the three previous years (2007-2009), 68 judgments and opinions made a reference to the Convention.

75 In the years 2010 to 2012, the Court referred to the ECHR in nine judgments concerning Area of Freedom, Security and Justice (AFSJ) matters and in four judgments concerning citizenship, including landmark cases such as Case C-34/09 *Ruiz Zambrano* [2011] ECR nyr. In the same period, the ECHR was used in thirteen AG opinions on cases concerning AFSJ matters, nine opinions concerning citizenship and three opinions concerning equal treatment (list with the author). See also: C Eckes, ‘EU Accession to the ECHR: Between Autonomy and Adaptation’ (2013) MLR, forthcoming.

76 In 2012 only, the European Union was brought up 51 times in rulings of the ECtHR, including 15 times by the parties and 18 times by the court (including separate opinions). List with the author.

77 See: C Eckes, ‘EU Accession’, above n 75.

78 Cases C-402/05 P and C-415/05 P *Kadi*, above n 56.


80 Cases C-402/05 P and C-415/05 P *Kadi*, above n 56 at 294: ‘special importance’ not ‘binding force’.

81 See on the EU’s accession also: J Heliskoski, ‘The Arrangement Governing the Relationship between the ECtHR and the CJEU in the Draft Treaty on the Accession to the ECHR’ and I Bosse-Platiere, ‘The Implications of the EU accession to the ECHR for the External Relations Law of the EU,’ both chapters in this volume.
the establishment of the prior involvement option under the co-respondent mechanism.\textsuperscript{82} The co-respondent mechanism will ‘allow the EU to become a co-respondent to proceedings instituted against one or more of its Member States and, similarly, to allow the EU Member States to become co-respondents to proceedings instituted against the EU.’\textsuperscript{83} If the CJEU was not previously involved in a case, in which the EU becomes a co-respondent, the ECtHR may stay the proceedings and give the CJEU the opportunity to scrutinise compliance with the Convention. Similar arrangements have earlier been made under the second Agreement on the European Economic Area\textsuperscript{84} and under the Agreements Establishing the European Common Aviation Area.\textsuperscript{85} It places the CJEU in the privileged position of being asked for an interpretation before the ECtHR gives its ruling. The Court’s opinion is likely to have an impact on the legal discourse in Strasbourg. It might even frame the further discussion, since parties are invited to submit their observations after the CJEU has given its opinion on the case.\textsuperscript{86} They will most likely engage with the CJEU’s views. At present, the CJEU does so by holding the case law of the ECtHR at arm’s length. This might no longer be possible after accession. The CJEU would for the first time be at the receiving end of a formalized judicial discourse.

**EFTA Court**

Less frequently discussed is the discourse between the EFTA Court and the CJEU. The EEA Agreement sets out that the interpretation and application of EU law and EEA law must

\textsuperscript{82} This is what has been agreed in the Draft Agreement on the Accession of the European Union to the European Convention on Human Rights, CDDH-UE(2011)16.


\textsuperscript{84} Accepted by the Court of Justice in Opinion 1/92 Re Second Draft EEA Agreement [1992] ECR I-2821. See Art 105 (3) and 111 (3) of the EEA Agreement.

105 (3): If the EEA Joint Committee within two months after a difference in the case law of the two Courts has been brought before it, has not succeeded to preserve the homogeneous interpretation of the Agreement, the procedures laid down in Article 111 may be applied.

109 (5): In case of disagreement between these two bodies [EFTA Surveillance Authority and EU Commission] with regard to the action to be taken in relation to a complaint or with regard to the result of the examination, either of the bodies may refer the matter to the EEA Joint Committee which shall deal with it in accordance with Article 111.

111 (3): If a dispute concerns the interpretation of provisions of this Agreement, which are identical in substance to corresponding rules of the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community and the Treaty establishing the European Coal and Steel Community and to acts adopted in application of these two Treaties and if the dispute has not been settled within three months after it has been brought before the EEA Joint Committee, the Contracting Parties to the dispute may agree to request the Court of Justice of the European Communities to give a ruling on the interpretation of the relevant rules.


\textsuperscript{86} Article 3 (6) of the Accession Agreement.
be carried out ‘in full deference to the independence of courts’. Yet, it is an unequal institutionalized judicial discourse. The EFTA Court is bound by the case law of the CJEU preceding the conclusion of the EEA agreement and must take account of the CJEU’s case law subsequent to 2 May 1992. In practice, this has not made a difference. The EFTA Court refers to the CJEU’s case law in all its advisory opinions and in all its judgments. It has further frequently adopted both the CJEU’s reasoning and principles of EU law. The CJEU is not bound by the interpretation of the EFTA Court but has referred to and been influenced by its case law. This is a rare honour in the light of the fact that otherwise the Court only refers to the ECtHR. It even remains controversial whether it may be justified to interpret the EEA and the EU law differently. Daniele Galo argues that the EEA Agreement should be construed as aiming to ensure at all times uniform interpretation between the two legal regimes. The argument is that homogeneity is the purpose of the EEA Agreement, notwithstanding constitutional differences between EU law and EEA Agreement. Francis Jacobs argues that differences in context and objectives of EU law and the EEA Agreement could justify a different interpretation. This finds support in the case law of the CJEU.

It is fair to conclude that the relationship between the CJEU and the EFTA Court is very particular, because of its institutionalisation and also because of the choice to make it unequal – not only because of political importance but also as a matter of law. This has allowed the CJEU to recognise the authority of the EFTA Court without being threatened.

**WTO Dispute Mechanism**

The WTO has an exceptionally well-developed dispute settlement mechanism and produces (quasi-)judicial decisions that do not require consent and that are subject to an enforcement mechanism (trade sanctions). As is well known and possibly discussed too

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87 Rec 15 of the Preamble and Art 106 of the EEA Agreement.
88 Art 6 EEA Agreement.
89 Art 3 (2) of the ESA/Court Agreement.
90 Baudenbacher, above n 4 at 204-213.
94 Galo, above n 91 at 2 referring to: Preamble, paras 4 and 15; Art 1, 6, 106, 107 and 111 of the EEA Agreement, as well as Art 3 of the ESA/Court Agreement.
extensively,\textsuperscript{96} the CJEU does not give direct effect to decisions of the WTO dispute mechanism. This means that these decisions cannot directly be used as yardstick against which acts of the EU institutions can be reviewed. On appeal in the case of \textit{Biret},\textsuperscript{97} the CJEU indicated in passing that the question of whether WTO dispute decisions enjoyed direct effect could be examined separately from general WTO law. This gave rise to speculation of whether WTO dispute decision could enjoy direct effect. However, in the case of \textit{Van Parys},\textsuperscript{98} the Court closed this avenue and made clear that the nature of the dispute settlement mechanism did not justify conferring direct effect on WTO dispute decisions. It later confirmed this line in the case of \textit{FIAMM}.\textsuperscript{99}

The Court’s rejection of direct effect of decisions of the WTO dispute settlement mechanism is based on several strands of argument. The first focuses on the nature of the WTO dispute settlement mechanism. Both in \textit{Van Parys} and in \textit{FIAMM} the Court emphasized the fact that WTO dispute resolution relied on negotiation between the parties. It focussed on the temporary measures of compensation and suspension of concessions. The second strand traces the effect of WTO dispute decision back to the effect of WTO law as such. In \textit{FIAMM}, the Court explained that WTO dispute decisions do not have direct effect because they apply WTO law which does not have direct effect either.\textsuperscript{100} Thirdly and this is a motivation that the Court does not make explicit, the Court might want to avoid acting in the place of or even against the legislator.\textsuperscript{101} It should be added that this is not to say that WTO law does not play a role in disputes before the CJEU. The Court routinely interprets secondary EU law consistently with WTO law\textsuperscript{102} and with rulings of the WTO Appellate

\textsuperscript{96} See, eg E Paasivirta and PJ Kuijper, ‘Does one size fit all? The European Community and the Responsibility of International Organizations,’ (2005) 36 Netherlands Yearbook of International Law 169. They emphasise that WTO law and decisions of the dispute settlement bodies are the exception that confirm the rule that international agreements do form part of the EU legal order and can have direct effect. More recently also decisions of the UNCLOS Tribunal, see C-308/06 \textit{Intertanko} [2008] ECR I-4057.

\textsuperscript{97} Case C-93/02 \textit{P Biret International v Council} [2003] ECR I-10497.

\textsuperscript{98} Case C-377/02 \textit{Van Parys} [2005] ECR I-1465. See on the same issue and with the same outcome in more detail: Opinion of Advocate General Léger in Case C-351/04 \textit{IKEA Wholesale} [2007] ECR I-7723, para 77 et seq.

\textsuperscript{99} Cases C-120/06 P and C-121/06 P \textit{FIAMM v Council and Commission} [2008] ECR I-6513.

\textsuperscript{100} ibid


\textsuperscript{102} See for example Case C-70/94 \textit{Werner v Germany} [1995] ECR I-3189, para 23 and C-83/94 \textit{Leifer and Others} [1995] ECR I-3231, para 24; but see also for an example where the Court did not take recourse to the technique of consistent interpretation: \textit{Ikea Wholesale}, above n 98. See in more detail about the attitude of the Court of Justice to giving effect to WTO dispute decisions: Kuijper and Hoffmeister, ‘WTO Influence on EU Law,’ above n 101.
Body. It might even have entered into what Marco Bronckers called ‘a muted dialogue’. Decisions exist in which the panel or Appellate Body took a position on the allocation of responsibility on the basis of the division of competences or tasks between the EU and its Member States under EU law. In cases that could have been problematic, the Appellate Body has displayed considerable deference towards the EU. In the case of Selected Customs Matters, for instance, the Appellate Body was essentially invited to declare that the entire EU customs system was not sufficiently coherent. However, it chose not to enter into this argument.

The concept of ‘direct effect’ and its understanding both with regard to EU law and with regard to international law should be seen in the light of the relations and discourse between different judicial bodies. By not giving direct effect to the decisions of the WTO Dispute Mechanism the CJEU equally found a way to hold these decisions at arm’s length. It can give effect to them and consider them without having to submit to their authority.

What Lessons Can Be Taken from the Internal EU Discourse?

The Court has gained, during the past fifty-plus years, considerable experience in interacting with Member States’ courts and in giving rulings that translate into different linguistic and conceptual universes. In areas falling within the scope of EU law, the case law of the CJEU serves as a ‘co-operation tool’ to frame the discussion in a linguistically accessible way. Suggestions have been made that international law could be used to a similar purpose and that the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the ECtHR should equally be equipped with the possibility of giving preliminary rulings. With regard to the

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107 Suggesting that this could also be the role of international law: E Benvenisti and GW Downs: ‘National Courts, Domestic Democracy, and the Evolution of International Law’ (2009) 20 EJIL 59, 66.
latter the first formalized direct discourse will be introduced between the CJEU and the ECtHR in the prior involvement procedure after EU accession. This raises the broader question: What could be learned from the inner EU experience for a wider judicial discourse?

The first main observation is that differences prevail between the judicial discourse within the EU and the external judicial discourse. In the former the CJEU has expressed a claim of ultimate authority for all matters of EU law, which reaches – in different degrees of intensity – across the full range of policy fields. The effect of EU law within the national legal order does not usually depend on recognition or implementation of the particular EU command. The CJEU is at the centre of a pluricontextual compound legal system that is built through and on internal judicial discourse. It does not stand in a straight hierarchical line at the peak of an appeal system, but is used to being greatly dependent on the support of national courts. Indeed, the internal EU judicial discourse is part and parcel of the systemic purpose of ‘creating an ever closer union among the peoples of Europe’, which has grown into a Union of fate and even if the ultimate threat of disobedience and even withdrawal from the Union continues to exist even after decades of interlocking between the EU and the national legal orders. Furthermore, within the EU the continuous joint decision-taking and ever so close interaction between national players has created an institutionalized European political discourse, which may not be matched by a popular European political discourse, but which contributes nonetheless to the creation and continuation of this community of fate. While withdrawal may remain a political option, albeit at high political costs, interlocking through continuous recognition makes disobedience legally very difficult to justify for any individual national court. In the interlocked legal context of the EU disobeying EU law would require lower national courts to also disobey national law and the authority of the higher national courts. For all courts, including the highest national courts, it entails disobeying national practice and disappointing created expectation.

By contrast, the purpose of an external discourse cannot be to work towards an ever closer Union. Indeed, the external discourse does not serve a joint systemic purpose. No external claim of authority is at the same time as comprehensive and ultimate as the claim

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109 Art 1 (2) TEU.

110 Great Britain has spoken more frankly about this option in 2012 than many years before that (see, e.g. the title story of the Economist of 8 December 2012).
of EU law within the national legal order. External claims of authority may be ultimate in the sense that they claim to set the highest applicable norm on a particular issue (e.g. UN Security Council Resolutions), but they do not claim ultimate authority on a broad range of issues immediately determining the lives of individuals, as does EU law. External claims remain limited to particular issues or areas and more often declare an ultimate expert judgment without direct legal authority within the domestic legal order. Hence, even though similarities can be indicated in the way, in which individual claims penetrate and in practice change the national legal context without specific confirmation by national legal authority in the particular case, the nature of the claim of ultimate authority of EU law is different from all phenomena in the international sphere. It is constitutional in nature because it claims ultimate authority over how to govern the political community. This has consequences for the judicial discourse. Externally the CJEU would neither be able to make a claim of ultimate authority. Even in the case of the EFTA Court, which follows the CJEU at all occasions, one cannot speak of ultimate authority.

Taking too much inspiration from the CJEU’s authoritative participation in the internal discourse would most likely result in an overstretching of the CJEU’s external authority. Only in a cooperative and interlocked system, where the distinction between external and internal claims of authority is at times impossible to draw, influence from the outside can be as effective as it is within the EU. Purely external control always entails a danger that the judicial body overestretches its authority and loses support within the other legal and judicial context. The described level of interlocking between the European and the national context, which is a result of both the CJEU’s claim of ultimate authority and the fact that power is exercised by the same persons in both contexts, does no longer allow neatly juxtaposing the two contexts in legal analysis. Any such juxtaposition is overly conceptually simplified. This is different from the external EU context. EU law is not to any similar degree interwoven with the international legal context. Even in the case of the ECHR, where it is largely assumed that membership is an unwritten requirement for EU accession and from which much inspiration is drawn for the interpretation of EU law, in particular the Charter, the interlocking has been softened by CJEU’s arm’s-length approach. Until accession the validity of EU law depends on compliance with the CJEU’s interpretation of the ECHR. This is a rejection of the ultimate authority of the ECTHR in matters of human rights. Similarly, the
CJEU has kept WTO law and the authority of the WTO dispute mechanism at distance with its decision not to grant direct effect.

A parallel between the judicial discourses within the EU legal order and outside is that they are both characterized by a power struggle between law and politics. Judicial decisions that cannot always be explained in purely legal terms restrain political actors, as well as the judiciary in a different legal context. A fundamental difference is the understanding of sovereignty in practice. States, including both the political actors and the national judiciaries, have accepted the limitation of their autonomy or sovereignty, if you will, in practice. EU law has managed to restrain Member States as a whole, and national actors, including the courts, individually. It attained a level of sovereignty within the national legal context that is not matched outside. To borrow the words of AG Jacob Francis this constitutes ‘sovereignty of [EU] law’, which empowers courts in the on-going struggle between law and politics. The CJEU does not have the same authority over external judicial bodies, nor do they have the same authority over the CJEU as national courts, whose recognition and support is particularly important in a constitutionalized system, with little tolerance for noncompliance. However, there are parallels between the internal and the external. One is the complexity of considerations underlying a decision in the balance between legal reasoning and political considerations. It is not always possible to make a transparent legal argument. It might be simply impossible to legally reconcile different claims of ultimate authority with reference to some consistent legal framework. From the perspective of the individual citizen both claims of ultimate authority have increasingly come into play alongside each other. Usually, demanding compliance with the same rules. The EU has installed its own claim of authority inside the national legal orders by evolution rather than revolution. No break has occurred and the old national political powers continue to rule alongside and within the EU sphere. Parallel developments can be witnessed in the international sphere. The test case is when the two claims conflict.

The CJEU is used to reconciling not only the views of different national courts but also to deal with executive power being exercised in the different contexts by either the same actors or at least in close interaction between the different contexts. The CJEU cannot be accused of being partisan for any individual Member State, European integration itself and the effectiveness of EU law has been the single most important concern of the CJEU. This

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might also explain why the CJEU avoids referring to case law of the Constitutional Courts of the EU Member States. It usually refers to the abstract of ‘constitutional traditions common to the Member States’ without specifically naming any. It does not endorse particular claims of authority more than others. The GCC by contrast, regularly refers to judgments of the CJEU\textsuperscript{112} - in 2011 more often than to the case law of the ECtHR.\textsuperscript{113} Outside of a constitutionalized framework inclusion of external claims of authority and recognition of the authority of specific external judicial bodies is necessary to strengthen their relevance and allows extending authority beyond the domestic legal context. Outside, the CJEU rightly takes a discriminative approach towards external claims of authority.

The CJEU is further in a particular position, different from national courts interacting with external legal contexts. \textit{Kadi} exemplifies the first particular difficulty of the CJEU in the external judicial discourse. The internal and the external discourse are connected at a deeper level. On the one hand, the CJEU may have additional difficulties to require obedience from national courts if it does not accept the authority of the UN Security Council (not a court!). On the other, had the CJEU accepted the UN Security Council’s claim for absolute authority within the EU legal order, the GCC might have reconsidered its \textit{de facto} acceptance that fundamental rights are sufficiently protected within the EU.\textsuperscript{114} Secondly, the CJEU’s position is different because the political organs of its own constitutional order (the EU institutions) are largely excluded from the decision-making process in most international organizations and under most international conventions by the simple fact that most international organizations and conventions allow only states to join. The UN, the Council of Europe, and the International Monitory Fund (IMF) are examples of powerful international organizations that the EU cannot join because of the provisions of their founding treaties.\textsuperscript{115} The ECHR is the most prominent example where this is currently changing.\textsuperscript{116} The exception is the WTO. This may explain way the CJEU defers to the EU political forces in the case of WTO dispute settlement decisions. At the same time within the EU legal order, Member States, rather than the EU political institutions, are at least in principle in the position to

\textsuperscript{112} 16 references in 2011. List with the author.
\textsuperscript{113} ECtHR: 11 times in 2011. List with the author.
\textsuperscript{115} Art 4 (1) of the UN Charter: ‘peace-loving states’; Art 4 of the Council of Europe Statute: ‘European state’; Art II s 2 of the Agreement of the International Monetary Fund: ‘other countries’.
\textsuperscript{116} Protocol 14.
include more specific provisions in the EU Treaties on how international law and the decisions of international courts and tribunals should be received.

On a more detailed level, a possible conclusion from the internal judicial discourse may be that there is a difference between influencing the specific substantive content of external claims of authority and reining in the exercise of power by the external institution. Within the informal internal EU discourse, national courts have exercised pressure and plausibly threatened disobedience not only to the EU actors but also to national political actors, who cannot control their own judiciaries. They mainly aimed to reign in the exercise of power and exclude *ultra vires* acts. To cooperate in a strictly organized constitutional structure, such as the preliminary ruling procedure, is a strong form of recognition. It allows debate on substance, while interaction and mutual influence are institutionalized, usually with clear consequences for the exercise of power. This institutionalized recognition also trickles down through the domestic system and influences formal political acceptance and ultimately acceptance by individuals. Depending on the institutionalized interaction courts are in a stronger position to influence the substantive focus of the discussion.

**Conclusion**

The times of self-contained jurisdictions are over. Legal spheres interlock with no reasonably articulated theoretical framework. This entails new configurations of compound executive power stretching across jurisdictions. It evokes a Schmittian view in several respects. Carl Schmitt’s analysis of the general debility of legislatures and judges in the modern administrative state applies not only to the exceptional times of war but may become a permanent phenomenon in a pluricontextual setting. It is most visible in the current economic and financial crises in the EU context. The practices of a ‘strong’ executive are unprecedented: instruments, practices and (even) institutions have emerged in Europe with extensive powers over national constitutions and institutions, particularly on national

117 Specific legal concepts, such as proportionality and legal certainty have been introduced into English law: F Jacobs, ‘Judicial Dialogue’, above n 65 at 549.

budgets, banking supervision and financial stability.\textsuperscript{119} When introduced into the national constitution, they are recognised by the domestic legal system. Yet, these external rules are not stable but develop separate from the domestic legal order and rooted in their separate claim of ultimate authority. At the same time, European and international executive power is composed of (components of) national executive power and thus they are inextricably linked in a manner that at times defies attempts to hold individual or collective actors to account separately, either legally or politically.

Judicial discourse can make a contribution to counterbalancing and controlling the executive in the increasingly pluricontextual setting, where norms interlock in a non-hierarchical manner. To formulate the issue within the state-centric linguistic framework of international law: judicial discourse is necessary to address problems resulting from the inter-state origin of intra-state norms of international and European law. This chapter concluded that the internal EU discourse can only contribute to reflections on the external discourse at an abstract level. Fundamental differences will continue to require a very different approach of the CJEU to the internal and the external. This is an indirect confirmation of the particularity of the Union.

What can be learned from the internal EU discourse is that in a struggle of power in the space between law and politics legal ambiguity can be a conscious choice to avoid political confrontation. The CJEU, as well as the Member States’ courts, have long experience in respecting the political while at the same time exercising judicial pressure. While many criticize the CJEU and also the GCC for ultimately bowing to politics, both have had great influence on reigning in the political forces in the EU context. At the same time in the external sphere, law is necessarily in a weaker position in relation to politics. Lower constitutionalisation requires more cautious legal attempts to exercise any control of the external context. External control largely depends on recognition and in the EU national recognition, by courts, political actors and individuals, of the EU’s claim of authority has led to an autonomous sovereignty of EU law within the national legal order. While all courts, national as well as international, start from a perspective of judicial autarchy and tend to be

self-referential, the national courts of the Member States have grown into their role as European courts. The CJEU has successfully convinced national courts to ‘include validity-in-E[U]-law as a criterion of validity domestically.’

Conceptual borrowing is a second characteristic of the internal EU discourse that could inspire and arguably has inspired the external in the case of the ECHR. The CJEU has succeeded in translating national constitutional rights into the EU context. These rights, read through the CJEU’s filter, have had a great effect on the development of the EU legal order. This has fostered recognition and mutual influence within the EU. Judicial discourse practices are a core element of the development of EU public law. Even though judicial systems deliver justice contingent on their own legal and constitutional context, repeated recognition of external claims of authority can change the conception of justice at a deep level. Legal systems are artificial normative constructions that develop dynamically. External norms can simply become part of the internal legal system, including their practice of claiming of ultimate authority. It becomes part of how citizens (and lawyers) understand the law. The motivation of compliance might become pluricontextual too. Citizens comply with EU law because their state says so, but increasingly citizens, in particular those who rely on their free movement rights, also recognize the Union’s authority and respect rules because the Union says so. As long as the two sources of authority point in the same direction no decision of loyalty needs to be taken. Contradictory claims of ultimate authority do not need to result in contradictory rules for citizens. This is similar in the external sphere. The most illustrative example might be the EFTA Court, which borrows the CJEU’s interpretation for identical legal concepts under the EFTA Agreement.

Finally, while the CJEU and national courts have often relied on a systemic legal reasoning, which is unsuited for the external judicial discourse, EU law itself also makes the individual the ultimate point of reference. In an environment where ultimate political authority remains ambiguous the individual has served as point of reference for actors from different legal contexts. The direct link between EU law, including rulings of the CJEU, and individuals is one of the particularities of EU law. The Court relies not only on support and recognition by national judges but also on the recognition (use in national disputes) by

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121 MacCormick, Questioning Sovereignty, above n 43 at 115.
individuals. For the external discourse this might be more difficult, since by their nature, external relations have less often a direct impact on the rights of individuals. They often concern question of division of power rather than straight forwardly questions of individual justice. One sign of this is the fact that many fundamental decisions in the area of EU external relations were taken as enforcement actions rather than preliminary rulings. However, examples are increasing in which external claims of authority affect individuals. This is a chance for a move away from a systemic approach to an approach that reasons from the position of the individual legal subject.