

The role of the European Union in the Brazilian foreign policy: an analysis of the Brazil-European Union Strategic Partnership

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1 Introduction

Historical, cultural and economic ties unite Brazil and the European Union (EU). Brazil was the first Latin American country to establish diplomatic relations with the European Economic Community (EEC) and, on a political level, “Brazil and the EU recognize themselves as players of a multipolar and transforming international system” (Brasil, 2018a). In terms of trade, Brazil stands out from other countries in Latin America, accounting for 30.8 per cent of total EU trade and holding 48.5 per cent of the total investment of the bloc in the region. In turn, the EU is Brazil’s second largest trading partner, accounting for 18.3 per cent of its total trade and the country’s largest importer of agricultural products, while Brazil is the EU’s eleventh largest trading partner, representing 1.7 per cent of its total trade¹ (European, 2018). In addition, there are numerous and vast initiatives of cooperation between the two parties.

The relations gained a new momentum on July 4, 2007, at the 1st EU-Brazil Summit, when the Brazil-EU Strategic Partnership was signed. On that occasion, the parties agreed “to enhance their longstanding bilateral relationship and in particular to reinforce the political dialogue at the highest political level” (Council, 2007, p.1-2). They were also committed to “identify and promote common strategies to tackle global challenges” and to “fully support the [sectoral] dialogues in addressing topics of mutual interest so as to enhance the existing co-operation” (Council, 2007, p.1-2). Among other initiatives, the Strategic Partnership established annual summits between Brazil and the EU – which took place between 2007 and 2014 – aiming to intensify the interaction between diplomacies, elaborating thus two Joint Action Plans (2008-2011 and 2012-2014).

The initiative was put on hold in 2015 when the annual summit did not occur and the Third Joint Action Plan (scheduled for 2015 and lasting until 2017) was postponed *sine die*. Such stagnation reflects a multilevel crisis in both the EU and Brazil. While the EU has been under stress with the annexation of Crimea, the *Brexit*, the migration crisis and the advent of parties with an anti-EU agenda, Brazil has endured a political-institutional, economic and social crisis with the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff (2011-2016) and the arrival of Jair Bolsonaro (2019-2022) (Ferreira-Pereira, 2021).

Therefore, the general objective of this article is to discuss the EU’s role in the Brazilian foreign policy, based on the analysis of the Brazil-EU Strategic Partnership. The difficulties involved in

¹ Data from 2016, 2015 and 2017, respectively (European, 2018).

analyzing the relations between Brazil and the EU are acknowledged since they are composed of at least four distinct levels: Brazil's bilateral relations with EU countries; relations within the framework of the Brazil-EU Strategic Partnership; interregional relations, especially MERCOSUR-EU; and relations in multilateral fora (Gratius, 2018). This study assumes the overlap and synergy between the constituent levels of Brazil-EU relations, even though its investigative effort is directed at the interactions established between the country and the bloc within the framework of the Strategic Partnership.

Thus, this article aims to answer the following question: considering the analysis of the Brazil-EU Strategic Partnership, what is the locus of the European bloc in the Brazilian foreign policy today? The hypothesis of this research is that the EU is an important partner for Brazil and that the country has specific interests in issues such as technology transfer, science and development support. However, its locus in Brazilian foreign policy is not well defined. This lack of definition is related to the difficulties inherent to an essentially asymmetric relationship – due to the fact that the actors involved are different in nature, Brazil being a state and the EU being an economic and political union – and to the overlapping of the different levels at which Brazil's relations with the European bloc take place: besides the Strategic Partnership, at the bilateral level with EU countries, the inter-regional level with Mercosur-EU relations, and the multilateral level.

This research has as methodological basis a qualitative approach and, regarding the objectives, an exploratory character. As for the procedures, bibliographical and documentary research was adopted. For the literature review, relevant references, both Brazilian and European, were selected. As for the document analysis, the most significant work was the analysis of the joint statements of the Brazil-EU summits (2007-2014) with the proposal of five thematic categories. The study is divided into four parts. The first part deals briefly with the evolution of Brazil-EU relations. The second part discusses the concept of strategic partnership and its nuances in the foreign policies of Brazil and the EU. The third and fourth parts, at last, discuss the *modus operandi*, content and implications of the Brazil-EU Strategic Partnership.

2 The evolution of Brazil-European Union relations and the origin of the Strategic Partnership

Under the presidency of Fernando Henrique Cardoso (1995-2002), the Interregional Cooperation Agreement was signed (1995), an important milestone in MERCOSUR-EU relations. Cardoso's foreign policy saw in MERCOSUR not only one of its regional fronts of action, but an articulating axis of Brazil's external action aiming at a greater international projection. The understanding of MERCOSUR as a mere instrument of economic liberalization was, therefore, partially overcome, and the regional integration process began to assume an important role in the country's South American bet. In addition, the European continent was considered as an option within the redevelopment framework of the post-Cold War international system as Brazil sought to negotiate some matters of the foreign policy interest, such as the permanent seat in the UN Security Council. However, as to the Brazil-EU relations, Cardoso gave priority to the interregional relations (Silva, 2008; Lazarou and Fonseca, 2013).

Negotiations for such an association began at the First MERCOSUR-EU Summit, in 1999, and, during Cardoso's presidency, they were marked by mutual rejection as a result of unsatisfactory

proposals for sensitive sectors and products of both parties². Challenging the predictions of a rapid outcome, the negotiations of the association lingered on, and the parties reached an agreement only in June 2019. The agreement comprises three pillars: political dialogue, cooperation and free trade. The trade pillar is especially significant, with provisions about tariff elimination, export duties, rules of origin, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, intellectual property, etc., as shown in the provisional texts published for information purposes. However, in order for the agreement in principle to be binding on the parties, the final texts still need to be finalized, signed and ratified (European, 2019).

When Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva became president (2003-2010), the Brazilian foreign policy developed a new profile, adopting a more active position in the international scene. One of its main traits was the framing of an international context in transition within the framework of an international system characterized by asymmetries of power to the benefit of the great powers. In this context, two main general objectives, embodied in specific objectives, were pursued by foreign policy: to obtain regional leadership in the South American continent and to become a global player in reorganizing international institutions from the defense of reciprocity in multilateralism³. The country, therefore, reoriented its behavior through the valorization of greater autonomy in external action, the strengthening of universalism through the diversification of ties – with emphasis on South-South cooperation – and through strong participation in multilateral fora, increasing its proactivity in international politics. However, the ties with developed countries did not recede; on the contrary, a good relations policy was implemented (Saraiva, 2012).

In the meantime, negotiations of the EU-MERCOSUR Association Agreement were halted in mid-2004, which would only be resumed at the end of the second mandate of Lula da Silva, weakening the interactions between Brazil and the EU at the interregional level and laying the foundations for a more intense bilateral relation. The halt may be explained by the prominence of the negotiations in the Doha Round of the World Trade Organization (WTO), in which Brazil articulated the G-20. With this initiative, Brazil gained international recognition, as well as the country's regional operation of strong integrationist nature, desirous of establishing and consolidating a cooperation network with the countries of its surroundings. This led to the understanding of MERCOSUR as a predominantly political project, in opposition to the old economic vision⁴ (Cervo and Bueno, 2011). Such a context, coupled with the proliferation of strategic partnerships and reinforcement of the EU's bilateral strategy during the 2000s, are elements that make up the situation in which the establishment of the EU-Brazil Strategic Partnership took place in 2007.

In this sense, during Lula's first mandate (2003-2006), relations with the EU were marked by

² The largest divergences concern the agricultural issue, on the European side, and the liberalisation of the industrial, services and government procurement sectors, on the South American side. With the progress of the negotiations, internal disputes in each of the blocs gained momentum (Albuquerque and Lohbauer, 2012).

³ Brazilian diplomacy elaborated the concept of reciprocity in multilateralism based on two presuppositions: the existence of rules to compose the international order, without which the asymmetries of power prevail in favour of the great powers; and the joint elaboration of these rules, essential to ensure reciprocity of legal effects and to prevent the interests of some from overriding the interests of others. In other words, "reciprocity is ensured when the rules of multilateral order benefit all nations" (Cervo and Bueno, 2011, p. 531).

⁴ Group of intermediate countries interested in the end of European domestic subsidies and subsidies for US exports of agricultural products and greater access to traditional Northern markets, articulated within the WTO (Cervo and Bueno, 2011). It is noteworthy that there is another G-20: one formed in 1999 by finance ministers and central bank governors of the world's 19 largest economies plus the EU. In the joint declarations made within the framework of the Brazil-EU Strategic Partnership, reference will be made to the latter.

competition and conflict, caused by Brazilian demands in various trade disputes within the Doha Round and the negotiations of the Bi-regional Association. The second one (2007-2010) was characterized by a reduction in tensions, which contributed to the decrease in the (political, economic and international) power differential between Brazil and the EU – given the relative maturation of the country’s international projection – and Brazil’s growing interest in strengthening relations with the European bloc to increase its negotiating power and its international visibility and prestige.

Moreover, Lula’s second mandate also included a closer attitude on the part of the European Commission, chaired by the Portuguese José Manuel Durão Barroso, who set as one of the objectives of his mandate to intensify relations with Brazil (Ayllón, 2011). It is noteworthy that Brazil was the last BRICS country to meet with the EU at a summit meeting, which can be explained by the fact that “EU-Brazil dialogue has not been sufficiently exploited and carried out mainly through EU-MERCOSUR dialogue” (Commission, 2007, p. 2).

Then we can conclude that the evolution of the Brazil-EU relations was marked by a qualitative leap, which increased its intensity and scope (of a highly mercantile nature at first, the relations began to encompass several political themes). Initially, this relation was located within an asymmetric axis and was marked by verticalization. With the passage of time, verticalization was restricted and created spaces for more horizontal partnerships, leading to the diagonalization of relations. The country’s economic growth and the reduction of political distances, in terms of influence and prestige, in the 2000s, made relations more horizontal, which in turn made the Brazil-EU Strategic Partnership possible.

3 The concept of strategic partnership and the Brazilian and European experiences

The term “strategic partnership” emerged as an expression in international politics in the 1990s (Blanco, 2015). In that decade and in the subsequent decade, several players began to use it to designate bilateral relations understood as priorities. However, the term was widely used in diplomatic rhetoric, without there being a clear definition of what strategic partnerships are and what they are supposed to be. Some authors indicate a growing popularization of the expression (Lessa,2010; Lessa and Oliveira,2013).

One of our assumptions is the possibility to identify common characteristics that justify the use of a minimum concept of strategic partnership, since “most part of this type of relation serves the purpose of selecting and conducting bilateral relations in order to effectively contribute to the achievement of key national, regional and/or global objectives” (Becard, 2013, p.38).In this sense, the definition of strategic partnership proposed by Blanco (2015) gathers the notion of “partnership” and the broader conception of “strategy”. The author defines strategic partnerships, in general terms, as a relationship in which coordinated planning is implemented towards a desired end, which is a common goal of the parties involved and that is based on common interests or even common values⁵ (Blanco,2015).

Lessa divides the strategic partnerships signed by Brazil into two generations: the first one comprises the strategic partnerships of the 1970s and 1980s, while the “new generation” is formed

⁵ Despite presenting a concept of strategic partnership, Blanco believes that a broad definition of the phenomenon is not enough, but that each strategic partnership must be analysed separately, observed and understood within its specific context (Blanco, 2015).

by the partnerships signed since the 1990s (Lessa,2010). The author situates this first generation of strategic partnerships based on universalism as an escape valve, in which Brazil has built strategic partnerships to face adverse political and economic situations in a reactive movement. The “new generation” of Brazilian strategic partnerships, in turn, began to show a tendency towards structuring, at both bilateral and interregional level and gained strength not only in Brazilian foreign relations, but also in the diplomatic rhetoric of the country, especially in the 2000s (Lessa, 1998 and2010).

Table 1 (in Annexes) shows the strategic partnerships formally established by Brazil, that is, established through joint declarations or statements⁶. Of the twenty-two strategic partnerships, ten were signed with developed countries (United Kingdom, Germany, Spain, France, Finland, Sweden, Switzerland, Italy, Norway and Australia), five with emerging countries (India, South Africa, Russia, China and Turkey), six with developing countries (Argentina, Peru, Venezuela, Ukraine, Indonesia and Angola) and one with the EU. As can be inferred from the table, the scope of strategic partnerships is quite broad, and the inclusion of themes related to global governance is a trend. Topics such as trade, finance, culture, education, science and technology, defense and the environment are also common.

With a greater degree of structuring and institutionalization, most of these strategic partnerships are guided by Joint Action Plans that present usually broad objectives and a series of measures in areas defined as priorities, which guide the partnership for a certain period. Regular meetings, at the presidential and ministerial levels, are held to evaluate the progress of the Joint Action Plans and the resulting initiatives, as well as to strengthen the political dialogue between the partners. Therefore, the number and scope of contemporary Brazilian strategic partnerships, as shown in Table 1, reflect the multiple interests of Brazilian foreign policy, especially under Lula da Silva’s mandates (2003-2010).

In fact, the Brazilian foreign policy has taken on a new profile with Lula da Silva. During his mandates, three objectives were pursued by foreign policy: the first, the search for a permanent seat in the United Nations Security Council; the second, the restoration of traditional economic channels and the valorization of economic relations little explored; and the third, the opening of spaces for Brazilian companies, especially those in strategic sectors (Lessa, 2010).

Objectives of this scale demanded numerous efforts, such as the expansion of the country’s bilateral relations, the sophistication of the cooperation agenda with traditional partners, as well as the extension of the Brazilian diplomatic network to regions once forgotten. Such efforts to expand the diplomatic network led to the widespread use of the adjective “strategic” to characterize relations, albeit modest, established with the most diverse players, introducing thus a sense of opportunity and urgency in the Brazilian discourse and updating the country’s international profile. Therefore, the 2000s witnessed the popularization of the idea of “strategic partnership”, since several bilateral relations with players with different degrees of importance and not so fundamental for the expansion of the capacity of realization of their interests happened to be qualified as “strategic” (Lessa, 2010). The high number of the strategic partnerships formally established by Brazil and their broad content also show the flexible and circumstantial approach that the idea of strategic partnership can acquire, due to the inexistence of a well-defined concept, at least officially, in the context of the country’s

⁶ During Lula da Silva’s mandate, there were also other players who were referred to as “strategic” in diplomatic rhetoric, but with whom no strategic partnership was formalised: Chile, Mexico, Colombia, Canada, Namibia, Morocco and the Democratic Republic of Congo (Vaz, 2014).

external action (Vaz, 2014).

In the European case, although partnerships are defined as a principle of the EU external action (as established by Article 21 of the Maastricht Treaty), the existence of strategic partnerships has been recognized in the European Security Strategy, by the name of A Secure Europe in a Better World and published in 2003 (Ferreira-Pereira and Vieira, 2016). One of the strategic objectives listed by the document is the establishment of an international order based on effective multilateralism, since “the development of a stronger international society, well-functioning international institutions and a rule-based international order is our objective”(Council,2009b, p.36).

One can argue that there is no clear definition of strategic partnership in the document, since it is not clear which (and to what extent) objectives and values should be shared regarding its establishment and, above all, what to be prepared to act in support of these goals and values means. Possible interpretations are the status of these countries as regional powers (a global power in the case of China), their robust material capabilities or the existence of sufficient political will for the establishment of a strategic partnership. Even if the term has not been explicitly and accurately conceptualized, it is possible to frame European strategic partnerships, according to the 2003 European Security Strategy, as a tool for the joint foreign policy towards the strengthening of multilateralism as a fundamental principle of governance (Ferreira-Pereira and Vieira, 2016).

In 2008, the Report on the Implementation of the European Security Strategy addressed Europe’s role in a world that is changing and reinforcing the role of partnerships in promoting effective multilateralism. The term strategic partnership is used twice, but this time it does not refer to any country but to the partnership between the EU and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), which should be strengthened for better cooperation in the administration of crises. Therefore, the concept of strategic partnership is presented more than once but not explained. Also, it seems to widen as it comes to describing the relation of the European bloc with a regional organization.

More recently, in the document entitled The Global Strategy for the European Union’s Foreign and Security Policy (or simply EU Global Strategy) of 2016, which replaces the 2003 European Security Strategy, a change of emphasis can be observed. Several references are made to the need to build a “stronger Europe” to promote the interests of European citizens and many themes of domestic order. Such an inflection must be analyzed and understood from a very different international context than in 2003, characterized by the repercussion of the 2008 economic crisis, by the debate on migratory flows and the divisions within the European bloc arising from them.

In fact, the term strategic partnership has never been clearly and precisely defined in any EU document at the legal or political level, so European strategic partnerships have been developed in different ways and to varying degrees, being established on an *ad hoc* basis (Ferreira-Pereira and Vieira,2016).One can argue that the imprecision of the concept of a strategic partnership in the external action of the European bloc and the lack of an explicit definition of the objectives and values that must support them give the joint foreign policy a good deal of flexibility.

Finally, it is worth mentioning the current strategic partnerships of the European bloc. Given the multiplicity of the vocabulary of the European foreign policy discourse, it is not a simple task to identify the strategic partners of the bloc. There are players with whom agreements were made – such as Brazil, Mexico, South Africa and India –, and others who are only cited as strategic partners in

official documents or have regular meetings with the EU⁷. There are also non-state strategic partners, such as NATO, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), and the African continent (Blanco, 2016). In general, the literature recognizes the existence of ten strategic partners: South Africa, Brazil, Canada, China, South Korea, USA, India, Japan, Mexico and Russia⁸ (Grevi and Khandekar, 2010; Blanco, 2015; Ferreira-Pereira and Vieira, 2016).

From Table 2 (in Annexes), we can infer that the EU has strategic partnerships with six emerging countries (Russia, China, India, Brazil, South Africa and Mexico) and four with developed countries (USA, Japan, Canada and South Korea). The most noteworthy fact is that the number of strategic partnerships with emerging countries is higher than the number of partnerships with developed countries – which are reduced to three if only the formally established ones are considered –, showing recognition and adaptation to the multipolar order. In fact, all its strategic partners can be considered ambitious international political players, since they rely on the foreign policy not only to obtain economic, political and private gains, but also to project power beyond their borders and, therefore, position in the international system (Blanco, 2015).

4 The Brazil-European Union Strategic Partnership (2007-2021): an analysis of the joint statements

The Strategic Partnership was established at the first summit between Brazil and the EU, which took place in Lisbon in July 2007. The proposal to establish the Strategic Partnership was an EU initiative. In the document *Towards an EU-Brazil Strategic Partnership*, the scope of the relationships within the framework of the initiative emerges. The document lists ten areas and cooperation sectors at global, regional and bilateral levels that delineate the Strategic Partnership (Commission, 2007):

- a) strengthening multilateralism;
- b) raising human rights standards, fostering democracy and governance;
- c) achieving the Millennium Development Goals and promoting regional and social development;
- d) protecting the environment;
- e) strengthening energy cooperation;
- f) enhancing Latin America's stability and prosperity;
- g) advancing the Mercosur agenda;
- h) reinforcing trade and economic relations;
- i) justice, freedom and security;
- j) bringing people together.

In order to implement the comprehensive thematic program of the Strategic Partnership, besides the establishment of the Action Plan, the *modus operandi* of the initiative was negotiated. It consists of holding high-level annual dialogues at regular summit and ministerial meetings that address global

⁷ Terms such as “partner”, “associated country”, “candidate for membership”, “potential candidate for membership” and “strategic partner” do not infrequently qualify players in overlapping ways (Blanco, 2016).

⁸ Because of the Crimea crisis, Russia is no longer recognized as an EU strategic partner but a “strategic challenge”, while China has been relabeled a “strategic competitor” (Renard, 2021).

challenges and crises in a broader approach while pursuing a common position between the parties. At a lower hierarchical level, meetings of senior officials and the EU-Brazil Joint Committee were held, responsible for the preparation of the presidential and ministerial summits, as well as for the monitoring of the Sectoral Dialogues and implementation of the Joint Action Plans. The need to deepen and strengthen the Sectoral Dialogues, of a less political and more technical nature, between specialized community institutions and their peers from ministries, entities and agencies of the federal administration of Brazil was also recognized⁹. In this context, the “EU-Brazil Sector Dialogues Support Facility” was created, whose resources were established by the Country Strategic Paper 2007-2013¹⁰ (Ayllón,2011).

Throughout the 14 years of Partnership, seven summits took place between 2007 and 2014, as well as the first Joint Action Plan, in 2008-2011, and the second, covering the period 2012-2014. The initiative was suspended in 2015, a year in which there was no annual summit. The third Joint Action Plan (2015-2017), in turn, was postponed. In this subsection, the joint statements prepared at the summits between Brazil and the EU will be analyzed (Council,2007, 2008, 2009a, 2010, 2011, 2013 and 2014). The high-level meetings and the text of the joint statements arising therefrom are interesting primary sources for understanding the content of the Partnership and the dynamics of relations within the framework of the initiative. Moreover, such joint statements not only reflect the broad objectives of the Partnership in the field of official discourse, but also some elements of the scenario in which they were conceived. These elements, in turn, influenced the relations, leading to changes of focus throughout the summits and even to soft changes of tone.

To better organize the analysis of the documents, a summary table of the contents of the joint statements was prepared (Table 3), in which five thematic categories are proposed, in order to facilitate the examination of the documents and to make the modulation of the topics throughout the summits more evident. The categories adopted were:

- a) multilateralism;
- b) security and peace;
- c) economic issues;
- d) environment;
- e) science and technology.

Given the breadth of the topics covered by the Strategic Partnership, such a categorization was necessary, considering the thematic axes of the initiative and the recurrence of these topics in the joint statements. In the summary table, the subjects were grouped in the order in which they appear in the

⁹ “The Sectoral Dialogues are an instrument of cooperation between the EU and Brazil based on the principles of reciprocity, complementarity and mutual interest. Sectoral Dialogue means the exchange of knowledge, experiences and best practices of a technical, political or both natures, in themes of common interest and occurring regularly in different hierarchical levels” (Diálogos, 2018, s.p.). Although they emerged in 1982, it was only with the establishment of the Strategic Partnership and the EU-Brazil Sector Dialogues Support Facility that they expanded and gained momentum.

¹⁰ Country Strategy Papers (CSP) are documents, drawn up by the European Commission, which guide international development cooperation with third countries over a period of time. In Brazil, two were published: one referring to the period 2001-2006 and other referring to the period 2007-2013. The structure of these documents consists of presenting the objectives of the European cooperation, analysing the situation in the country using various indicators, a review of the European Commission’s cooperation with the country concerned, and the strategy to be adopted by the bloc during the period defined by the CSP.

documents to facilitate possible consultations with the primary sources.

Considering the content of the joint statements and the summary table prepared, we can notice the recurrence of some themes. In the case of multilateralism, there is often a reform of UN bodies, with explicit references to the reform of the Security Council, and the strengthening of relations at the interregional level. In the security and peace category, disarmament and non-proliferation, as well as the fight against organized crime, corruption and illicit drugs are recurrent themes.

In economic issues, the seven joint statements mention the need for joint efforts to conclude not only the EU-MERCOSUR Association Agreement (whose negotiations were stalled in 2004 and resumed only in 2010, the year of the fourth summit) but also the Doha Round, within the framework of the WTO. Overall, there is a consensus on strengthening the principles and measures of trade liberalization and the need to regulate the international financial architecture, given the profound impacts of the 2008 crisis, especially on the European continent.

Table 3 – Summary table of the joint declarations of the Brazil-EU summits (2007-2014)

	Multilateralism	Security and peace	Economic issues	Environment	Science and technology
1 st EU-Brazil Summit Lisbon July 2007	Reform of the main UN bodies	Disarmament, non-proliferation; arms control	Conclusion of the EU-Mercosur Association Agreement; conclusion of the Doha Round	Strengthening the multilateral climate change regime; energy efficiency; renewable energies	Strengthening the sector dialogues on science and technology
2 nd EU-Brazil Summit Rio de Janeiro Dec.2008	Reform of the main UN bodies; strengthening the bioregional relations	Commitment to combat organized crime, corruption and illicit drugs	International financial crisis and its impact; conclusion of the Doha Round; conclusion of the EU-Mercosur Association Agreement	Climate change; reducing the current rate of biodiversity loss; renewable energies	Innovative technologies oriented to the production of goods and services; cooperation agreement in the field of research on fusion energy
3 rd EU-Brazil Summit Stockholm Oct.2009	Reform of the main UN bodies; strengthening the bioregional relations; triangular cooperation in Africa	Situation in Honduras; endeavors towards peace in the Middle East; disarmament, non-proliferation; Iranian nuclear program; commitment to combat organized crime, corruption and illicit drugs	International financial crisis and its impact; consolidation of the G-20 as the premier forum for international economic cooperation; conclusion of the Doha Round; conclusion of the EU-Mercosur Association Agreement	Strengthening the multilateral climate change regime; Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation; low-carbon economy; high level meeting in the run-up to Copenhagen Conference; renewable energies; Rio+20	Coordinated call on research in second generation biofuels; cooperation agreement in the field of research on fusion energy
4 th EU-Brazil Summit Brasília July 2010	Reform of the main UN bodies; Brazil-EU cooperation in multilateral fora; entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty; strengthening the bi-regional relations (EU-Latin America and the Caribbean)	Commitment to combat organized crime, corruption, illicit drugs and people traffic; endeavors towards peace in the Middle East; disarmament, non-proliferation; support and reinforcement of the International Atomic Energy Agency; Iranian nuclear program	International financial crisis and its impact; global recovery; strengthening the financial systems; importance of G-20; promotion of international trade and investments; conclusion of the EU-Mercosur Association Agreement; conclusion of the Doha Round	Rio+20; COP 16 of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change with a view to obtaining an effective legally binding outcome; renewable energies; efforts for combating biodiversity loss	Civil aviation; working group on information and communication technologies; launching of joint calls in the area of second-generation biofuels, nanotechnologies and public health; future cooperation in the field of satellite navigation

	Multilateralism	Security and peace	Economic issues	Environment	Science and technology
5 th EU-Brazil Summit Brussels Oct.2011	Commitment to promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms; triangular cooperation to support the Universal Periodic Review mechanism	Situation in Syria and Libya; endeavors towards peace in the Middle East	International economic situation; unity and determination in the G-20; conclusion of the Doha Round; conclusion of the EU-Mercosur Association Agreement; inclusion of the civil society in economic matters; loan agreement between the European Investment Bank and Banco Nacional de Desenvolvimento Econômico e Social	Rio+20; greater international cooperation in response to climate change; renewable energies and bioenergy	Academic cooperation and mobility (Erasmus, Marie Curie and Science Without Borders); future structured space policy dialogue; strengthening the scientific cooperation in environmental topics
6 th EU-Brazil Summit Brasília Jan.2013	Promotion and protection of human rights; moratorium on the death penalty in multilateral fora; EU-Community of Latin American and the Caribbean States Summit; trilateral cooperation to support electoral processes in African Portuguese Speaking Countries and East Timor	Situation in Syria; endeavors towards peace in the Middle East; opposition to Israeli plans of expansion in the West Bank; Iranian nuclear program; situation in Mali and Guinea-Bissau; disarmament; peacekeeping and peacebuilding; non-proliferation; combating corruption, money laundering, drug trafficking and human trafficking	Satisfaction with the volumes of bilateral trade and investment flows; international economic situation; strong, sustainable and balanced economic growth in the G-20; conclusion of the Doha Round; conclusion of the EU-Mercosur Association Agreement	Commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions; Amazon biome; biodiversity; Rio+20; universal access to all forms of energy; renewable energies; biofuels; emissions of the aviation sector; good practices concerning the safety of offshore oil exploitation installations	Commitment to promoting bilateral dialogue in science, technology and innovation; training and cooperation activities under the Brazilian mobility program Science Without Borders; coming into force of the agreement for cooperation in the field of fusion energy research; information society; academic mobility

	Multilateralism	Security and peace	Economic issues	Environment	Science and technology
7 th EU-Brazil Summit Brussels Feb.2014	Converge on the global agenda; promotion and protection of human rights; promoting the strategic partnership EU-Community of Latin American and the Caribbean States; need for a reform of the UN Security Council	Haiti; peacekeeping and peacebuilding; disarmament; non-proliferation; Syria; negotiations Israel-Palestine; Iranian nuclear program; Tunisia; Mali; Guinea-Bissau; Central African Republic; South Sudan; transnational security issues; drugs	Economic ties; contacts between business communities; conclusion of the EU-Mercosur Association Agreement; conclusion of the Doha Round	Greater international cooperation in response to climate change; sustainable development; renewable energies	Cooperation in research and development in renewable energy; Internet governance

Source: Adapted from Council of the European Union (2007, 2008, 2009a, 2010, 2011, 2013, 2014).

The climate change regime, the preparation and results of Rio+20 and the energy issue, indicated as one of the foundations of the Strategic Partnership in the fifth joint statement, are included in the environment category. Finally, issues related to science and technology are less explored throughout the joint statements, being reserved for the Sectoral Dialogues. Still, nuclear fusion and biofuel research are frequent topics. Some topics have not been covered by the categories proposed in the summary table, such as cultural cooperation and tourism.

In addition to the recurrence of certain themes in the joint statements, it is interesting to note the changes of focus throughout the documents. While the first joint statement welcomes the establishment of the Strategic Partnership and uses a more general language, the subsequent declaration of December 2008 has a more economical tone, with references to the impacts of the global financial crisis and the need for economic and financial measures to restore market confidence, stabilize financial markets, and promote global economic growth.

The third joint statement focuses on environment-related themes, with climate change topics and on the preparation for the Copenhagen Conference. It is noteworthy that this joint statement mentions, for the first time, the Brazilian and European positions on events in the international system, with references to the violation of the constitutional order in Honduras and the manifestation of support for peace efforts in the creation of two States (Israel and Palestine) in the Middle East. From then on, allusions to the international system will be made in other joint statements, including the mediation of Brazil and Turkey on the Iranian nuclear issue and the situations of Libya, Syria and other countries.

In the fifth declaration, with the presence of President Dilma Rousseff, the social dimension of globalization is mentioned, and the role of academic research, technology and innovation in generating sustainable growth and increasing productivity and employability is highlighted. In subsequent statements, the cooperation in science and technology gains more focus. Finally, the last two joint statements are the longest and most dense ones, emphasizing security and peace and alluding to the convergence of Brazilian and European positions on many international events.

In short, the reaffirmation of the principles and values underlying the Strategic Partnership appears in all joint statements. In addition to the existence of recurrent themes, shown in the summary table, it is possible to notice changes of focus and an inflection in the tone of the declarations between 2007 and 2014. The first four declarations present themes more broadly, using a more general language to encompass cooperative interactions, emphasizing the efforts of Brazil and the EU to build a relationship marked by positive collaboration and complicity. The other three declarations, however, are longer, denser and cite concrete cases, listing convergent positions in the international system, but at the same time urging the parties “to converge further on the global agenda and on our positions in international fora” (Council, 2014, p. 2).

By presenting joint positions on issues of global concern, the parties advocated the idea of showing the projection of their relationship. Also, by citing the need to converge even more on the global agenda, it was suggested that “the parties would have to find a way to find a common ground to act together instead of defending positions that often put them on different sides at the negotiations table” (Blanco, 2015, p. 192) so that their Strategic Partnership could be deepened. Such an inflection of tone in the last declarations is related to a less favorable international scenario, with the impasse and paralysis of multilateralism, especially in the WTO and the UN, and the reflections of the Arab Spring, with the consequent change in the political forces in the Middle East and North Africa. This

scenario updated the content of the Strategic Partnership by making efforts to promote multilateralism more urgent through greater articulation in the multilateral arena (Silva and Pérez, 2019). However, such maturation of relations within the Strategic Partnership framework, which can be inferred from the change in tone of the last joint statements, did not prevent the halting of the initiative with the interruption of the summits after 2015 and the postponement – with no future date – of the third Joint Action Plan.

Gratius (2018) evokes Putnam's (1988) two-level model to explain the weakening of Brazil-EU relations, which would be the consequence of severe domestic crises on both sides, which led to changes in foreign policy. She argues about the migratory issue and its developments in the EU and in the political, moral, social, and economic crisis of Brazil, which would have created the conditions for Dilma Rousseff's impeachment. Blanco and Luciano (2018), on the other hand, are more emphatic in blaming Brazil for the cooling of Brazil-EU relations within the framework of the Strategic Partnership. Based on interviews with European diplomats, they underline "the irregularity and lack of consistency of Brazilian diplomatic positions hindered the maintenance of solid connection with the European diplomats, jeopardizing the overall progress of the strategic partnership" (Blanco and Luciano, 2018, p. 11).

5 The Brazil-European Union Strategic Partnership (2007-2021): an assessment

The contributions of Gratius (2012, 2018), Ferreira-Pereira and Vieira (2016), Saraiva (2017) and Gardini (2018) are used to complement the analysis of the joint statements and to identify the main implications of the initiative, in order to provide elements that allow answering the research question previously presented. It is a consensus that the establishment of the Brazil-EU Strategic Partnership represented a qualitative leap in relations between the parties, once marked by distrust, arising from divergences in the commercial sphere, and by the interregional option, which relegated bilateral relations with the MERCOSUR countries to the background. The Strategic Partnership, therefore, changed the terms of engagement of the relations by proposing an institutional framework that began to shape them, including, in addition to trade topics, other relevant topics that best fit Brazil's new international position as an emerging power, a fact recognized by the European bloc itself. It should also be considered that the technical cooperation between the parties has become denser, as illustrated by the strengthening of the Sectoral Dialogues, which currently total thirty-five, with emphasis on those dealing with migration, science and technology, and energy (Ferreira-Pereira and Vieira, 2016; Blanco and Luciano, 2018).

While acknowledging the existence of common principles and values between Brazil and the EU and the qualitative leap in relations provided by the Strategic Partnership, some studies do not fail to mention the results, initially intended, that were not achieved by the initiative. Ferreira-Pereira and Vieira (2016) emphasize the existence of divergent views between the parties, "notably in terms of the implementation of international norms and rules, the framing of debates and the choice of language" (Ferreira-Pereira and Vieira, 2016, p.65). Gratius (2012) argues that both Brazil and the EU aspire to multilateralism, but that their strategies differ. While Brazil seeks a "multilateral multipolarity", the EU seeks a "multipolar multilateralism", which means that the European bloc prefers a multipolar order based on international law and binding commitments. Brazil, on the other hand, values a balance of power with neorealist traits and, therefore, the multilateralism sought by

the country is less normative, more pragmatic and considers the interests of the South. In turn, such strategies have led to different positions in multilateral fora. Here, once again, the different levels of Brazil-EU relations overlap, as the author's conclusions consider the positions of the EU member countries in multilateral fora, not the European bloc itself.

In addition, further obstacles to building a global mutual agenda are mentioned, given the different understandings in the areas of trade, development cooperation, climate change, international peace, and the global financial system. In fact, the trade issue has not presented such qualitative advances, and it still raises controversies, evidenced by the non-consummation of the MERCOSUR-EU Association Agreement. As to climate change, despite the defense of a firm global commitment on this issue, Brazil and the EU start from different premises about its main cause, with the consequent adoption of different methods, emphasizing voluntary commitments, on the Brazilian side, and binding commitments, on the European side (Gratius, 2012).

Such divergences in the positions adopted by Brazil and the EU should be understood in a broader context, considering "the two actors' distinct identities, historical trajectories and different loci in a globalized multilateral world" (Ferreira-Pereira and Vieira, 2016, p. 65). This discussion certainly goes beyond the scope of this study, but it is worth quoting the brief summary proposed by Gratius (2012). When citing the multilateral convergences of Brazil and the EU, she lists the maintenance of the liberal order, the commitment to protect the environment, the defense of fewer trade barriers, the maintenance of the current development regime, and the regulation of migration. Concerning the differences, she cites the understanding of sovereignty (while the EU defends "Responsibility to Protect", Brazil defends "Responsibility while Protecting"), the application of sanctions, the understanding of democracy (the EU undertakes to promote democracy, Brazil adopts the principle of non-intervention), the North-South divide, and trade issues (European protectionism encouraged by environmental interests *versus* opposition to non-tariff barriers and defense of the interests of the South on the Brazilian side).

Gardini (2018), in turn, says that the implications of the Strategic Partnership are heterogeneous, and that it is necessary to adjust the objects of analysis, given the multiplicity of themes and objectives proposed by the initiative. In addressing the implications of the initiative, he affirms that the strengthening of "effective multilateralism" did not materialize as desired, since there were divergences in the voting pattern of Brazil and European countries in multilateral fora. For the author, the greatest progress was made in the field of sustainable development, with the Sectoral Dialogues and the bilateral projects between Brazil and some European countries in this area, and bilateral trade, which became three times larger but still comprises an asymmetric relation¹¹. It is noteworthy that other authors see in environmental cooperation some of the greatest advances of the initiative. Saraiva (2017) assures that "despite the different scenarios faced by both players, the Strategic Partnership paved the way for greater understanding and cooperation" (Saraiva, 2017, p. 6), leading to a joint proposal between Brazil and the EU on carbon market regulation, which served as the basis for the Paris Agreement, signed in 2015.

Saraiva (2017) makes a review of the Brazil-EU Strategic Partnership, pointing to the change of focus observed in the Lula da Silva-Rousseff transition. Referring to the implications of the

¹¹ According to the data presented by Gardini (2018), only 26 per cent of the Brazilian products exported to the EU are manufactured, while 82 per cent of the European products imported by Brazil consist of manufactured products.

initiative during Lula's second mandate (2007-2010), the author emphasizes a greater understanding and articulation of environmental issues and triangular cooperation on the African continent, as well as advances in science and technology, with a more intense exchange between Brazilian and European scientific institutions. As to the interregional level, she claims that the gains were sparse and that, at a multilateral level, divergences prevailed, since aligning the interests of both parties proved difficult. In this sense, she affirms that "by the end of the Lula administration, the concrete results of the Strategic Partnership were limited" (Saraiva, 2017, p. 5).

In addressing the Strategic Partnership under Rousseff's mandate (2011-2014), she states that there were no significant results in the international arena, which is explained, furthermore, by the changes in the Brazilian external performance, since there was a decline in participation in international and regional fora, leading Brazil to take a reactive position. She argues that, within the framework of the Strategic Partnership, there was a negative impact on multilateral topics, while the technical-level Sectoral Dialogues received more attention and funding, which promoted a greater exchange of ideas and cooperation (Saraiva, 2017).

Despite the importance of the European bloc for Brazil and the establishment of the Strategic Partnership in 2007, the EU was not a central player in the Brazilian foreign policy framework under the mandates of Lula da Silva and Rousseff, who gave more emphasis to South-South relations and to the articulation with other emerging countries. This does not imply the claim that traditional partners, including the EU, have been forgotten or ignored during the period. There was, on the contrary, maintenance of good relations with these players. In addition, the EU did not lose importance – but centrality – in external action, which was evidenced by the efforts of Brazilian diplomacy to consolidate the Strategic Partnership. Thanks to the institutional framework proposed by the initiative, Brazil-EU relations during this period can easily be located at the hybrid bilateral level.

Today, however, it is not so easy to situate these relations on one level. The interruption of the Brazil-EU summits and the postponement of the elaboration of the third Joint Action Plan were not, as far as researched, justified by Brazil or the bloc. Some authors point to the difficulties of the Brazilian and European domestic scenarios as the main cause of the loss of dynamism of the Partnership, while others point to the weakening of strategic partnerships worldwide. Considering the high degree of institutionalization and formalization of the initiative, it can be affirmed that the interruption of the Brazil-EU summits led to a relative paralysis of the Strategic Partnership. The use of the adjective "relative" is justified by the maintenance of the EU status as Brazil's strategic partner and the continuity of the Sectoral Dialogues.

The Sectoral Dialogues, in turn, aim to support partnerships between Brazilian and European institutions through projects that facilitate the exchange of experience and knowledge in the search for solutions to global problems. Between 2008 and 2016, 228 dialogue actions were supported, involving 68 institutional partners (41 Brazilian and 27 European), within the scope of 30 different Sectoral Dialogues. Eight calls for Action Proposals were also launched for Brazilian and European Institutional Partners. Today, the initiative continues to support studies, offering specialized technical assistance and providing logistical support for technical missions and the organization of events (Diálogos, 2021).

In this sense, one can affirm that Brazil-EU relations were not interrupted, but altered, even though the contours of this oscillation are not so clear and the evolution of Brazil-EU relations in the

coming years must be traced. One can also admit that in times of greater vulnerability, Brazil tends to interact with the EU at the interregional level – as in the 1990s, a period marked by attempts at economic stabilization and adaptation to the new international order –, while at a more favorable and prominent position in the external scenario, Brazil tends to interact bilaterally with the EU.

6 Conclusion

The establishment of the Strategic Partnership represented a qualitative leap in Brazil-EU relations since it changed its terms of engagement by proposing an institutional framework that increased and shaped the interactions between the parties. In fact, this institutional framework contributed to the overcoming of the mercantile character that once characterized relations, including other themes that, in turn, led to greater political articulation – even though it has not always materialized in convergent positions –, as well as strengthened technical cooperation by consolidating the Sectoral Dialogues. In addition, the establishment of the initiative has given Brazil-EU relations ideas of differentiation and hierarchization, as it assumed the EU recognition of Brazil's new status as an emerging power.

The hypothesis presented in the introduction concerns the locus of the EU in the Brazilian foreign policy framework today. It assures that the European bloc is an important partner of Brazil and that there are specific interests on the part of the country. The locus of the EU in Brazilian foreign policy, however, is not well defined, and this lack of definition is related to the difficulties inherent in an essentially asymmetric relationship and to the overlapping of the different levels at which Brazil-EU relations take place. Bearing in mind the discussions developed throughout this paper, it is believed that the hypothesis has been partially corroborated.

It can be said that the EU has been and continues to be an important actor in the Brazilian foreign policy framework. This is evidenced not only by the historical evolution of Brazil-EU relations and the conclusion of the Strategic Partnership, but also by the economic relevance of the EU for the country since the bloc is Brazil's second largest trading partner and the largest holder of foreign direct investment in Brazil. One cannot forget, also, the undeniable condition of the EU as a global player. It is believed that Brazil's specific interests in technology transfer, science and development support are manifested in the continuity of the Sectoral Dialogues, which gained momentum even when foreign policy was already showing clear signs of retraction during Rousseff's second term.

However, it is understood that the lack of definition of the European bloc's locus in Brazilian foreign policy is not explained by the fact that Brazil and the EU are distinct actors, as presented in the hypothesis, since such a relationship proved possible in the framework of the Strategic Partnership, with greater interaction between Brazil and Brussels favored by the initiative. This lack of definition is, it is believed, related to the multiplicity and overlapping of interaction levels and the difficulties of the Brazilian domestic scenario. With the relative paralysis of the Strategic Partnership, Brazil-Brussels relations (hybrid bilateral level) have lost momentum, allowing interactions at other levels to be strengthened, with a stronger relationship between Brazil and the EU through MERCOSUR (interregional level), within the framework of the Association Agreement and with the member countries of the bloc (pure bilateral level).

The celebration of the Brazil-EU Strategic Partnership was a milestone in Brazil-EU relations and, still today, represents a tool for bilateral convergence, encouraged by common goals, values and

principles. Despite the criticism that the concept of strategic partnership and the inflation of the thematic agenda of the Brazil-EU Strategic Partnership can be imprecise, scholars believe the initiative should be resumed, even in the medium or long term. They claim that the interactions between Brazil and the EU have not proved to be so fruitful at the interregional level and have potential that can be better exploited through hybrid bilateral interactions (Brazil -EU), situation in which the country would have greater room for maneuver to secure its interests and maximize the benefits of the relationship with the EU.

Specifically on the Brazil-EU Strategic Partnership, it is important to promote a reflection on the scope of the proposed objectives, as well as to choose indicators that measure success, to give the initiative more strategic direction and coordination. In this sense, we should add that international cooperation does not imply a total harmony, but the identification of common interests and an adjustment of behaviors by the players involved, whose divergences and clashes of interests must be recognized and submitted to dialogue. Finally, the Brazil-EU Strategic Partnership is an important forum for discussion of relevant themes – multilateralism, the environment, development cooperation, etc. –, somewhat forgotten in an international context that is more resistant to cooperation and full of challenges.

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Annexes

Table 1 – “New generation” strategic partnerships of Brazil

Partner	Basic documents	Areas
Argentina	1988 Treaty of Integration, Cooperation and Development. Bilateral Agreements	Political dialogue, trade, investments, education, labor, energy, transports, health, education, culture, tourism, security, defense, technical cooperation, environment, science and technology, justice, social policies, nuclear energy, space, regional integration
United Kingdom	1997 Joint Communiqué, Bilateral agreements Action Plan	Political dialogue, UN reform, trade, investment, finances, science and technology, health, education, environment, human rights, poverty eradication, defense, public management
Germany	2002 Action Plan	Political dialogue, UN reform, trade, investments, environment, science and technology, information technology, space, transport
Peru	2003 Joint Communiqué, Action Plan, Bilateral Agreements	Trade, investment, environment, energy, science and technology, education, social policies, defense, infra-structure integration, culture, fight of drug traffic and organized crime
Spain	2003 Joint Communiqué, Action Plan	Political dialogue, UN reform, economic development, social development
India	2004 Bilateral agreements	Political dialogue, development assistance, trade, investments, security, defense, science and technology, innovation, culture, education, energy, poverty alleviation, agriculture, environment
Venezuela	2005 Joint Communiqué	Energy, mining, customs, industry, trade, family agriculture, land reform, tourism, aquiculture, fishing, science and technology, military cooperation
France	2005 Bilateral agreements and Action Plan	Borders, security, water resources, health, education, family agriculture, defense, education, science and technology, nuclear energy, environment
European Union	2007 Action Plan	Political dialogue, trade, investments, environment sustainability, renewable energies, security, defense, science and

Partner	Basic documents	Areas
		technology, health, education, culture, development assistance, space activities, information society
South Africa	2007 Joint Communiqué, Action Plan	Political dialogue, human rights, governance, education, security, defense, trade, tourism, transports, agriculture, food security, social responsibility, technical cooperation, health, information technology, energy, labor and social policies
Russia	2008 Joint Declaration, Action Plan	Political dialogue, science and technology, space, military, energy, trade, agriculture, health, education, culture and sports
Finland	2008 Joint Communiqué, Action Plan	Political dialogue, UN reform, trade, environment, science and technology, education, innovation, defense, tourism
Sweden	2008 Action Plan	Trade, science and technology, human rights, education, renewable energy, environment, defense, UN reform, nuclear disarmament
Switzerland	2008 Memorandum of Understanding	Human rights, security, environment, energy security, poverty alleviation
Ukraine	2009 Joint Communiqué, Bilateral agreements	Space activities, education, energy, health, agriculture
Indonesia	2009 Joint Communiqué, Action Plan	Biogenetics, biofuels, science and technology, technical cooperation, renewable energy, defense, mining, social inclusion
China	2009 Joint Communiqué, Action Plan	Political dialogue, multilateral affairs, inter-regional cooperation, consular affairs, trade, energy, mining, finances, agriculture, space cooperation, science and technology, innovation, culture and education
Italy	2010 Joint Statement. Bilateral agreements and Action Plan	Political dialogue, judicial cooperation, defense and military cooperation, space, trade, finance, small and medium enterprises, energy, tourism, health, decentralized cooperation, sports, trilateral cooperation
Turkey	2010 Joint Communiqué, Action Plan	Energy, defense, agriculture, science and technology, culture, defense, trade, investment, environment, fight of organized crime and terrorism
Angola	2010 Joint Communiqué	Energy, health, education, agriculture, defense, public security, trade, investment, finances, food security, naval industry, mining, education and sports
Norway	2011 Joint Communiqué, Action	Energy, environment, human rights

Partner	Basic documents	Areas
	Plan	
Australia	2012 Joint Communiqué, Action Plan	Trade and investment, climate change and the environment, agriculture, mining and energy (including biofuels), education, culture and other people-to-people links

Source: Adapted from Vaz (2014).

Table 2 – Strategic partnerships of the European Union

Partner	Year	Areas
USA	–	Trade, investment, coalition-building, renewable energy, energy security, development issues, food security, global health, cyber-security
Japan	2001	Trade, investment, regional crises, aid coordination in Africa and South Asia, nuclear safety, energy cooperation, climate change, humanitarian assistance, emergency relief and disaster preparedness and prevention
Russia	2003	Trade, economic reform, growth and competitiveness, energy
China	2003	Trade, investment, governance, development cooperation, peacekeeping, reinforcing multilateralism
Canada	2004	International security, effective multilateralism, trade, investment, human rights, coordination in the UN context, non-proliferation, counterterrorism
India	2004	Trade, science and technology, counterterrorism, security, energy, climate change, reinforcing multilateralism, development cooperation
Brazil	2007	Trade, investment, democracy, peace, development, renewable energies, climate change, human rights, security
South Africa	2007	Trade, development cooperation, social affairs, education, crime and justice, energy, climate and global governance
Mexico	2008	Development assistance, triangular cooperation in Central America, global agenda on development, multilateral cooperation
South Korea	2010	Trade, democracy, peacekeeping, climate change, green technology, research

Source: Adapted from Grevi and Khandekar (2010).

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The role of the European Union in the Brazilian foreign policy: an analysis of the Brazil-European Union Strategic Partnership

Abstract. This article aims to discuss the role of the European Union (EU) in Brazilian foreign policy by analyzing the Brazil-European Union Strategic Partnership. To do so, this investigation involves the use of qualitative data, literature review, and documentary research. Both Brazil and the EU do not present precise definitions for what they understand as strategic partnerships and, hence, this phenomenon must be framed through structural elements in these actors' foreign policy. The European bloc is an important actor in Brazilian foreign policy, given the historic evolution of Brazil-EU relations, the establishment of the Strategic Partnership, and the EU's economic relevance for the country. In turn, the current locus of the EU in Brazilian foreign policy is still unclear, due to overlapping levels of interaction between Brazil and the EU and to the difficulties in the domestic scenarios of both actors.

Keywords: European Union; Brazilian Foreign Policy; Strategic Partnership; Joint Statement; EU-Brazil Relations.

O papel da União Europeia na política externa brasileira: uma análise da parceria estratégica Brasil-União Europeia

Resumo. O artigo tem como objetivo discutir o papel da União Europeia (EU) na política externa brasileira, analisando a Parceria Estratégica Brasil-União Europeia. Este artigo envolve pesquisa qualitativa e documental, assim como revisão de literatura. O argumento central é de que ambos, Brasil e União Europeia, não apresentam definições precisas do que eles compreendem como parceria estratégica, portanto, este fenômeno deve ser enquadrado através de elementos estruturais na política externa destes atores. O bloco europeu é um ator importante para a política externa brasileira, dados a evolução histórica das relações, o estabelecimento da Parceria Estratégica e a relevância econômica da União Europeia para o país. Por sua vez, o locus atual da União Europeia na política externa brasileira ainda não é claro, devido à sobreposição de níveis de interação entre Brasil e União Europeia e as dificuldades nos cenários domésticos de ambos os atores.

Palavras-chave: União Europeia; Política Externa Brasileira; Parceria Estratégica; Declaração Conjunta; Relações Brasil-União Europeia.