

EAC Protocol on Foreign Policy Coordination: Why has the Implementation Fallen Short of Expectations?

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Abstract

The study assesses the performance of the EAC Protocol on Foreign Policy Coordination by identifying challenges in implementing the agreed direction and strategy for the attaining a common regional foreign policy. This assessment was motivated by the progress and effort made by the East African Community (EAC) in implementing and operationalizing the policy coordination protocol. Although the implementation is still ongoing and progress is noted with mixed results, this article addresses the following questions: Why has the implementation of the policy fallen short of expectations? What challenges are faced by the EAC in the implementation of the protocol? Rational choice and constructivist theories were used to evaluate EAC foreign policy practices with partner states. Qualitative thematic analysis of various literature revealed that progress is being made in implementing the policy, but at a slow pace due to frequent disagreements among partner states in areas such as security and trade, thus delaying the establishment of common foreign policy as provided in the EAC Treaty. The paper suggests that member states must set aside their individual interests to achieve effective EAC foreign policy coordination under the said protocol through actionable political will.

Keywords:

Coordination protocol, East African Community, Foreign Policy, National interest, Political will

1. Introduction

Since the inauguration of the new East Africa Community (EAC) on December 1st, 1999, in Arusha, Tanzania, the organisation has gradually assembled a normative framework, instruments, and an action-oriented Common Foreign Policy for creating a conducive atmosphere for regional cooperation. The policy would set a functional structure for effective implementation of decisions taken by the Member States in entire areas of foreign policy coordination and a functional system including structure for an effective realisation of such common regional interests as respect for democratic principles, good governance, peace and security, respect for human rights, and international agreements, which could also accelerate achievement of continental common interests as defined in the African Union (AU) Charter and a long-term vision such as ‘Africa we want 2063’.

Such thinking was guided by Article 123 of the EAC Treaty, which calls on partner states to establish as well as implement common foreign and security policies. In the effort to achieve the noble goal of the stated article and taking into consideration that no country can survive on its own, on January 22, 1999, the EAC Partner States signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Foreign Policy Coordination. The MoU was later upgraded into an EAC Protocol on Foreign Policy Coordination (also sometimes

known as Policy Protocol or Policy), effective December 3rd, 2010. Among the activities envisaged for action under the Protocol for the Partner States were diplomatic missions to effectively coordinate their diplomatic and consular matters; collaboration in multilateral diplomacy; economic and social activities; and capacity building (EAC, 2010).¹

The process is still ongoing and looks strong on paper (Reith & Boltz, 2011), nevertheless, and regrettably, since the establishment of the protocol, more than a decade has passed with mixed results. The process is slow, (though progressive) and as of now, remains an unfinished work. This is evident as partner states have been known to frequently disagree and/or compete in many areas, such as trade and national security matters (The East African, 2018). This scenario indicates a lack of common regional values and futuristic principles to guide the design of a common foreign policy to take the countries closer to the dream of a United Africa. Such gap attracted the author of this article to examine the state of the EAC Foreign Policy Coordination and determine challenges in its implementation.

In order to gather more information on the subject matter, this study utilized a qualitative research approach, including literature reviews, interviews, and consultations with EAC and government officials. It aimed to address cross-cutting issues related to EAC's foreign policy implementation in partner states. The study employed qualitative content analysis and a hermeneutic approach to interpret officials' documents and interview data. The goal was to identify key themes and priorities influencing EAC's foreign policy decisions and create a cohesive framework for collaborative efforts among member states to address regional challenges. The article first introduces the reader to the concept of foreign policy, before embarking on a theoretical consideration. Then the paper provides a short background to the protocol. The next part after the background suggests some identifiable limiting factors to the progress of the protocol. At the end, a general conclusion is provided based on the limiting factors identified. The conclusion incorporates some policy and action recommendations.

2. Conceptualizing Foreign Policy

The current foreign policy practices of the states of the world are as old as the states themselves. Their origins are generally traceable to the Treaty of Westphalia, signed in 1648, which created the framework for modern international relations by establishing concepts of national sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of other states (Akopari, 2001; Bojang, 2018). Thus, concepts of state sovereignty, mediation between nations, and diplomacy all find their origins in the text of this treaty. It marks the beginning of governments and statesmen orchestrating relations between their states and others (Patton, 2019). Bojang (2018) added that the establishment of the United Nations (UN) and the process of decolonization that has liberated many states into sovereign entities have further provided the impetus for interrelationships among states. Such moves resulted in the formation of 'foreign policies' with the aim of determining and identifying decisions, strategies, and ends of the interaction of a state with another.

¹ EAC Protocol on Foreign Policy Coordination 2010, Art.2.

Furthermore, globalization has increased these interrelationships or interactions among states. Hence, there is unanimity among scholars on the necessity of a foreign policy for each state, since no state could function in complete isolation. Feliks (1954) argued that a state without a foreign policy could be compared to a ship in the deep sea without any knowledge of directions. Thus, foreign policy helps a state to fulfil its national interests and acquire a rightful place among the community of nations.

The term itself (i.e., foreign policy) has been defined in various ways by scholars and involves a variety of theories attempting to understand as well as interpret how the policy is made, who made it, who implements it, and how and what outcomes are achieved. However, despite its necessity, foreign policy analysis is a contested study, especially in terms of definition (Mushtaq & Choudhry, 2013). Gwatiwa (2020) defines foreign policy as the manner in which decision-makers such as heads of state and government, ministers, and international diplomats conduct diplomacy in an international milieu. Hostli (1982) contends that foreign policy is a behavioural pattern of the state adopted to respond to the international environment in which the state exists. Therefore, we are certain that it is concerned with the behaviour of a state in relation to external actors (Bojang, 2018; Bischoff, 2020).

Besides, foreign policy is composed of goals sought, values set, norms, decisions made, and actions taken by states and national governments acting on behalf in the context of the external relations of national societies (Jensen, 1982). It is a tool used to pursue, promote, and protect national interests, as well as project national norms and values. According to Modelski (1962), it is defined as the system of activities evolved by communities for changing the behaviour of other states and for adjusting their own activities to the international environment. Foreign policy must throw light on the ways states attempt to change and succeed in changing the behaviour of other states. Modelski noted only aspects of policy that aim at change in the existing behaviour of states as primary objectives of foreign policy.

However, foreign policy is not only to change but also to continue the behaviour at different times. It is concerned both with change and the status quo as long as they serve the national interest. In the same vein, the EAC's founding three member states—Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda—decided to re-establish the community in 2000 after its collapse in 1977. It is the foreign policy of the three mentioned states towards the continuation of relationships with an old ally within a community after realising the potentiality of the entity. According to Frankel (1968), foreign policy consists of decisions and actions that involve, to some appreciable extent, relations between one state and others. Foreign policy involves a set of actions that are taken within a state's borders, intended to target forces existing outside the country's borders. According to Frankel, it comprises the formulation and implementation of a set of ideas that govern the behaviour of states while interacting with other states to defend and enhance their national interests.

The question of what defines national interest, however, has been up for debate for a while. The phrase “national interest” can be broadly defined as the goals of a state in its interactions with the outside world. National interests are very dynamic. However, they are fundamentally composed of three things: economic development, state ideology

protection, and national security. Although these are the longest-lasting aspects of foreign policy, it is possible for other transient goals and interests to emerge. Hence, there are three levels to foreign policy. They encompass fundamental interests and ideals such as unity, defence, self-preservation, and the preservation of values. The middle-range goals, which include trade, international aid, and military prowess, are included in the second level. Universal long-range goals, such as plans, aspirations, and designs about the final political or ideological structure of the international system, make up the third category of national interests.

Additionally, Mushtaq and Choudhry (2013) contend that a number of factors influence the foreign policy process. They fall into two categories: internal and external forces. Since foreign policy is a continuation of national policy, internal variables working within the state have a critical role, particularly when it comes to international policy development. Three tiers of domestic issues that influence the formulation of foreign policy are identifiable. The head of state and other members of the foreign policy elite are among the actual policymakers who make up the first level. Interest groups that impact foreign policy procedures make up the second level. Domestic variables, such as customs, values, and norms, make up the third level. As a result, the process of formulating foreign policy revolves around a number of domestic elements, including interest groups, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the head of state, and the media. However, the type of government determines how many domestic variables are involved. For example, in a military dictatorship compared to a democracy, non-state players have less influence on foreign policy. Foreign policy elites are influenced by bureaucracy in the government, public opinion, and the psychology and mental health of their leaders while making choices. The development and application of foreign policy are also influenced by outside variables. This is so because the framework for implementing the policy is created by the global system.

Furthermore, Mushtaq and Choudhry (*ibid.*) note that a number of universally relevant criteria influence how a state behaves in its foreign policy. They comprise topographical elements, including topography, mineral riches, and position. Another factor is a state's past, including its interactions with the outside world. Global warming, international law, and other contemporary concerns are examples of international issues, pressures, and limits that affect a state's foreign policy decisions. Both the quality of the leader in charge and quantifiable behaviours like population size and quality are important. Any state's foreign policy is also determined by its economic and military prowess.

3. Theoretical Stance

Nevertheless, in evaluating the EAC foreign policy practices this article utilises two theories: rational choices, which tend to favour a state-to-regional level approach, and constructivist theories, which favour a regional-state level approach. Constructivism in this context is a systemic approach to understanding state interests and state behaviour by investigating a regional character with a focus on issues of social values that affect identities and even interests. The principal concerns of constructivism theory are three aspects: Firstly, states are the core units of analysis. Secondly, structures of states are intersubjective, and, relatedly, state identities and interests are similarly socially constructed.

Constructivism is similar to rational choice theory in that it applies to a variety of areas, including economics, psychology, and philosophy. This theory states that individuals use their self-interests to make choices that will provide them with the greatest benefit. People weigh their options and make the choice they think will serve them best. Rational choice theory can be helpful in understanding individual and collective behaviours. It helps to pinpoint why people, groups, and society as a whole move towards certain choices based on specific costs as well as rewards. Therefore, this study combines constructivism theory in understanding EAC foreign policy coordination and practices towards its member states, together with rational choice theory.

4. Background of the EAC Protocol on Foreign Policy Coordination

The current community's protocol on foreign policy dates back to the interaction of three East African states throughout pre-colonial times (Mangachi, 2011), especially after Britain's acceptance of the League of Nations mandate over the former three East African counties (Tanganyika, Kenya and Uganda). The first move towards cooperation between the countries was made in 1919. Kenya, Uganda, and Tanganyika (current mainland Tanzania), all of them under the British East Africa Administration, formed a customs union between Kenya and Uganda in 1917, with Tanganyika joining the two in 1927 (Hazlewood, 1979; Adar & Ngunyi, 1994; EAC, 2010; Bar, 2018).

Economic and political links were strengthened in 1948 after the establishment of the East African High Commission (EAHC) as a coordinating and supervisory body for the execution of common initiatives within the region: economic (among others, the postal and customs union, developing uniform tariffs for external services), scientific and educational undertakings (for example, the East African University), transportation and communication (railways, harbours, airports, the telegraph), as well as a common department of meteorology. The East African Common Services Organisation (EASCO) was founded in 1961 to replace the colonial-era EAHC after its structure became outdated following the colonial system's collapse (Johns, 1963).

In its existence, EASCO adopted a number of solutions and plans from its predecessor but executed them within the new, changed political conditions (Mangachi, 2011). Therefore, upon achieving independence, new nations generally regarded some form of continued association with the former metropolitan power as useful and necessary. At the same time, they strongly believed that the continuation of their ties with their former colonial masters should be accompanied by the forging of new links with other states in order to tackle the major problems of economic development and technical assistance. Thus, the leaders of the newly independent states, Julius Nyerere of Tanganyika, Milton Obote of Uganda, and Jomo Kenyatta of Kenya, urged for continued cooperation in joint integration ventures undertaken within the new political reality on the countries' own initiatives and under independent leadership.² This was the first time that the three EAC countries, which together made up the EAC bloc, collaborated on foreign policy. This confirms constructivism theory which grounded on the assumption that every state's policy system is demonstrable in its socio-cultural and historical realities which, to some

² The region's countries gained their independence in the early 1960s (Tanzania in 1961, Uganda in 1962, and Kenya in 1963).

degree, explains the state's foreign policy efforts and behaviours instead of the out-and-out material interests (Burchill et al., 2005).

Nevertheless, transformation from the EAHC to the EASCO did not change the structural pattern of the economic system put in place by the British during the colonial period, where most of the major foreign industrial companies and colonial interests were located in Kenya, for example, British American Tobacco, Shell, East Africa Bata Shoes, and ESSO, to mention a few (Johns, 1963; Green, 1967; Mangachi, 2011). To address this problem, the three countries met in Kampala in 1964 to discuss the inter-territorial imbalance in trade and industry. In the meeting, they agreed to provide for the introduction of quotas by countries sustaining deficits in interterritorial trade, to limit trade imbalances, and to allocate new major industries in favour of Tanzania and Uganda on the basis of a licencing system. The agreement, usually referred to as the Kampala Agreement (Green, 1967; Mangachi, 2011), was not actually ratified and was never implemented because it was not fully satisfactory to any of the partner states (Mangachi, 2011; Arowolo, 1970). For example, Tanzania considered it ineffective because it failed as it did in its prime task of redressing East African trade imbalances. Failure to implement the Kampala Agreement led to the introduction of quantitative restrictions on inter-territorial trade.

The three member states were dissatisfied with the drift towards disintegration because of their failure to implement the Kampala agreement. Therefore, in late 1965, Presidents Nyerere, Kenyatta, and Obote agreed to set up the Commission on East Africa Cooperation to review existing arrangements and propose means of increasing their viability and net benefits as well as equalising the distribution of regional gains among the partner states aimed at preserving common services under EASCO. The Joint Commission, under an independent chairperson, was established in late 1965 from those meetings and tasked with coming up with recommendations, among other things, for continuing and strengthening the East Africa Cooperation in order to address the problem of disintegration. The Committee, consisting of three ministers from each state and chaired by a former Danish finance minister, Professor Kjeld Philip, began work early in 1966 and presented its report in May 1966. The Philip's Commission was also the basis for negotiations with the East African Community. This is because the three heads of state directed the Commission to write a treaty based on the Philip Report (Green, 1967).

The outcomes of those negotiations were the draft Treaty for East African Cooperation, which was submitted to the East African government in May 1966 (Hazlewood, 1979). After further negotiations, the Treaty of East African Cooperation was signed in June 1967 by the three heads of state and came into effect on December 1st, 1967, with an agreement of cooperation on a wide range of economic and social issues (EAC 1967). Consequently, these agreements were replaced by the 1967 Treaty for East African Cooperation (Green, 1967; Hazlewood, 1979; Bar, 2018). According to Mangachi (2011), the conclusion of the treaty demonstrated the willingness of the three states to work together and their fear of the consequences of splitting apart. It was a typical example of a sub-regional organisation whose members were connected through the history of British colonialism and experienced integration solutions in colonial times.

The Treaty specified the main areas of cooperation in which the three partner states agreed to cooperate and establish an East African Community and, as an integral part of such Community, an East African Common Market of the three partner states: Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda (Mangachi, 2011). In addition, the establishment of a common market, uniform customs duties, and a comparable range of public services were among the community's top priorities, all of which were intended to support balanced economic growth across the region. The organisation had already achieved currency parity—the recognition of the Tanzanian, Kenyan, and Ugandan shillings as having equal value—and had operated as a monetary union with a currency board. An all-East African railway, harbour and airways system, postal service, telegraph, and East African Development Bank were to be established by a merger of public businesses. One of the first attempts at regionalism in history, the treaty was dubbed the world's most advanced regional trade treaty. It was established to foster political, socioeconomic, and cultural cooperation among the peoples of East Africa and to acquire a common voice in international affairs.

Nevertheless, the 1967 project of the EAC was dissolved in 1977 for a number of reasons including ideological differences between capitalist Kenya and socialist-communist Tanzania; political divisions between Uganda and other EAC Partner States; and foreign interests aimed at disintegrating East Africa to avoid a strong federation emerging at the apex of the Nile Valley in the middle of Africa; and lack of steering functions, unequal distribution of benefits; and irreconcilable differences of opinion between key players, particularly between the Ugandan dictator, Idi Amin and the Tanzanian president, Julius Nyerere; the continued disproportionate sharing of benefits from the Community among the Partner States due to their disparate levels of development; and lack of appropriate policies to address this situation.

However, in the years that followed the collapse of the first EAC, the three former member states attempted to regulate economic affairs by means of individual multilateral agreements. At the same time, the desire and interest in reviving the EAC remained, as future events showed. Therefore, ad hoc trilateral meetings were held to deal with the pragmatic issues of dissolving the EAC (Mangachi, 2011; Schimmelfennig et al., 2020). From the early 1990s on, the region witnessed a number of negotiation meetings between Tanzania, Kenya, and Uganda on possible exploration of areas for future cooperation as well as the revival of the Community. Results from those meetings between Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda were signed as the East African Mediation Agreement (1984) for the division of assets and liabilities on May 14, 1984, in Arusha, Tanzania (EAC, 2000).

One of the provisions of the Mediation Agreement provided that the three Member States agreed to explore areas for future cooperation and to make highly concrete arrangements for such cooperation (EAC 2000, EAC 2016; Schimmelfennig et al., 2021). For example, they began with the agreement of joint operation of a limited number of regional institutions, such as the East African Inter-University Committee, the Eastern and Southern African Management Institute (ESAMI), the EAC Library Services, and the East African Development Bank (EADB). Subsequent meetings of the three heads of state led to signing of the Agreement for the Permanent Tripartite Commission for Cooperation, which was set up on November 30th 1993 (Schimmelfennig et al., *ibid.*), a coordinating institution that in 1998 produced a draft treaty for the later EAC.

In line with the above spirit, cooperation on security matters was also initiated during this period (Reith and Boltz, 2011). Therefore, on January 22nd 1999, the EAC Partner States signed a MoU on Foreign Policy and Security Coordination. In light of the need to consolidate regional cooperation, the Treaty for Establishment of the EAC was finally signed on November 30, 1999, at the 4th summit of the Authority in Arusha, and entered into force on 7 July, 2000 following its ratification by the original three Partners-Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda. Reactivating the EAC with membership comparable to that of the years 1967 to 1977. The process of establishing the new EAC included the creation of a common foreign policy. The EAC Partner States had already completed a MoU on Foreign Policy Coordination in January 1999, even before the EAC Treaty was signed on November 30th, 1999. This suggests that coordinating foreign policy is one of the top objectives of the EAC (EAC-EALA, 2022).

According to the treaty, the community's participating states must establish and carry out shared foreign and security policies. These policies aim to foster cooperation, including a dedication to discourse in international forums, and to establish the EAC as a unified entity in its interactions with the world community. In the framework of the Community, partner states are dedicated to working together on projects involving information sharing, multilateral diplomacy, economic and social activities, consular services, and liaison. The policy's Article 6 (2(a)) requires the partner states to coordinate their positions at the regional and global levels on a number of issues, including the Regional Economic Communities of the African Union and other bodies established by the Abuja Treaty for the creation of the African Economic Community and the Constitutive Act of the AU (EAC, 2010).

A Sectoral Council on Foreign Policy Coordination was established in March 2008. Similar to Article 123 of the Treaty, partner states are required to put in place a common foreign security policy with the objectives of promoting cooperation at international forums as well as strengthening international security among the partner states and within the regional bloc (EAC, 1999). Similarly, in line with the oversight role of the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA), Article 59(3c) of the EAC Treaty, *inter alia*, provides that "the Assembly shall hold an annual debate on the report to be submitted to it by the Council on the progress made by the Community in the development of its common foreign and security policies" (EAC, 2002: pg.44).

On December 3, 2010, an agreement was reached to upgrade the MoU on Foreign Policy Coordination between the Partner States to an EAC Protocol on Foreign Policy Coordination. Articles 5, 6, 7, 123, and 125 of the EAC Treaty reinforce the Protocol, which requires partner nations to work together and coordinate on foreign policy issues and to seek shared international goals that will increase integration gains (EAC, 2010). However, the policy was still pending Tanzania's ratification by the time this article was written. This is not a good indicator of progress made by the EAC in ratifying this protocol due to the fact that it has been more than 12 years since negotiations for the foreign policy coordination protocol were concluded. This protocol hasn't been fully ratified yet, though. The EAC bloc's efforts to coordinate its foreign policy may face obstacles due to the actions of certain member states.

5. Identifying the Limiting Factors

Channels and structures for developing EAC foreign policy coordination have evolved since the ratification of the current EAC in early 2000, and the process is still underway. However, EAC foreign policy coordination in a broad sense remains divided into two components: the EAC foreign policy (including member states' individual foreign policies) and the external action led by the foreign actors as well as NGOs. The EAC Member States are less willing to engage in collective foreign policy making at the EAC level, prioritising other multilateral frameworks or unilateral national actions.

Moreover, the EAC Treaty mandates that a common foreign policy be adopted (see EAC 2000.Art 123(1)). Nevertheless, in defiance of the treaty's requirements, the partner states have decided to coordinate rather than integrate their foreign policies (EAC, 2010). This confirms rational choice theory which contends that individual states can use self-interest to make choices that will provide them with the greatest benefit. The completely ratified policy was delayed, and there were no updates regarding the status of the policy's implementation, which demonstrated the actual situation. The fact that certain EAC members, particularly Tanzania, have not yet ratified the Protocol is one of the reasons for this uneven implementation of the policy among members. The EAC's current lack of coherence among its partner states and institutions is impeding its ability to act, particularly in terms of coordinating foreign policy. Member nations frequently view policy issues differently from one another. This situation creates several identifiable limiting factors.

First, the EAC bloc's partner states faced significant challenges to their political and economic integration because of a deficiency of political will to act decisively as a regional bloc in the implementation of protocols and agreements in foreign policy coordination in a timely manner.³ For instance, the delay of some member states to ratify the policy protocol and other members who have ratified but still choose to coordinate their foreign policies and not integrate as provided by the EAC Treaty is a sign of a lack of political will.

Second, state self-interest is another major reason for the delay. The EAC member states first of all act according to national interests, and EAC's interests come second. Therefore, this situation of competing state self-interest is among the major factors hindering smooth implementation of the foreign policy of the regional bloc. This conforms with the rational choice theory which contends that people weigh their options and make the choice they think will serve them best. This situation frequently affects the EAC Secretariat's ability to arrive at united positions in the implementation of the coordination of foreign policies. Besides that, as the EAC member states number is increasing, the task of materialising EAC common foreign policy has proved to be quite complicated. The EAC, especially the new member states (Rwanda, Burundi, the DRC, South Sudan, and Somalia), have very different historical backgrounds, and consequently, their understanding of foreign policy coordination in the bloc varies widely. Geographical location is undoubtedly a key factor in defining the interests and agenda of

³ Political will in the context of this paper would therefore refer to a strong desire or determination on the part of the EAC member states to advance political and economic integration by taking action that actually advances integration.

each country, as there are cultural and linguistic divergencies. Some EAC states focus on regional and continental integration, while others are highly interested in handling their internal conflict and border problems (for instance, the case of South Sudan, the DRC, and Rwanda). Getting so many different voices to sing the same tune is a task that requires a great deal of finesse as well as a strong commitment from each member.

Overprotection under the umbrella of national interest would therefore never lead to hopes of larger integration and collaboration in foreign policy. The breakdown of the previous (first) EAC and the reasons for the delay in ratifying the EAC foreign policy were both made evident in the preceding section of this article. Important strategic choices should be made on the fly to advance group goals rather than the national agenda in order to reduce this kind of behaviour. Achieving foreign policy goals that align with national strategic interests requires pursuing policy interaction that is inclusive of political and economic regional institutions and shared interests. In other words, a regional organisation will more likely expand and develop if the interests of individual members (states) or their constituents are in line with its overall goals.

Third, delaying the ratification of protocols and conventions adopted by the community is another cause for the delay in the implementation the EAC foreign policy. Protocols and accords are often signed by the EAC; however, they are rarely ratified on time or put into effect. The 2010 Protocol on Foreign Policy Coordination is a prime example, as this article pointed out. This demonstrates unequivocally that the only way to guarantee successful implementation is for member states to commit to implementing the policy.

6. Conclusion and Policy Recommendations

The article identifies and discusses challenges in implementing the EAC Protocol on foreign policy coordination. Since the policy was signed more than a decade ago, the implementation is still going on, but too slowly. Some progress is being made, but at a slow pace. Its performance produces mixed results and is sometimes disappointing due to frequent disagreements and competition among partner states in areas such as security and trade. Lack of capacity by the EAC to implement the policy also contributes to the current dilemma of a lack of expectations for the implementation of the protocol. The EAC's role as an international actor in the foreign policy and security field is not yet strengthened, and mistrust between member states demonstrates that decisive moves towards full implementation of the policy towards the establishment of common foreign policies by member states as provided by the EAC Treaty have not been achieved by the EAC or member states. The core argument of this article is that the implementation of the present foreign policy protocol is important but remains deficient because of the unwillingness of the member states to implement the policy, the delay of some of the member states to ratify the policy protocol, and some of the member states choosing the coordination path of the policy instead of integrating their national policies, as an example.

The article contends that for smooth implementation of the policy, member states shall put aside their own interests in order to reach consensus on many problems linked to the aforesaid policy. Otherwise, the long-awaited EAC regional foreign policy adapted to each different scenario will remain unresolved. This is due to the fact that the member nations' support and commitments are crucial to the EAC's success in its foreign policy

ambitions. The EAC institutions often work in an uncoordinated manner, and there is insufficient coherence between action on the EAC and the member-state level. In order to become a credible global actor, the EAC needs to overcome this fragmentation and bring its various foreign policy instruments together in a coherent fashion in a regional, continental, and globalised world through updated methodology and a highly joined-up approach. To confront challenges including security in the region, migration flows, and state failure.

A connection is observable between the current state of affairs and Article 123(4) of the EAC Treaty, which stipulates that the formulation of a common foreign policy ought to be methodical and carried out gradually, contingent upon the degree of community collaboration. Consequently, the operationalization of security and shared foreign policy is process-oriented, requiring a high level of consensus at various application stages. At times, opinions on how quickly to harmonise the policies do not seem to agree. Therefore, for the EAC regional integration to have a good effect, member states must speed up the process of coordinating and harmonising the various foreign policy components while also monitoring the pace at which it is happening.

This article argues that the long-aspired EAC Protocol on Foreign Policy Coordination tailored to each different scenario will remain an unsolved puzzle unless member states leave and set aside their individual particular interests. This will contribute to the realisation of full ratification and implementation of a common regional foreign policy. The objective of the discourse is to determine the challenges of instituting and implementing the already agreed common foreign policy through the EAC Protocol on Foreign Policy Coordination. The study assumes that uncommitted leadership and dysfunctional institutional arrangements, together with the tendency of member states' prioritisation of their national foreign aspirations, have all impeded and continue to be hurdles against this dream.

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