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The European Union – Security Community

Introduction

The chapter introduces the process, which transformed the European integration from a cooperative security organisation into a security community which strengthens collective defence of Member States (Cohen 2001; Molnár 2019: 81–98). The first successful European integration, parallelly to the failure of the first initiatives to establish organisations based on the idea of collective defence (the European Defence Community), started to develop in the field of economy. It grew steadily from the concise area of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) to the formation of the European Economic Community (EEC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM), and finally in 1993 the European Union (EU) was established. Besides the economic integration, cooperation in the field of foreign policy, security and defence has always been on the agenda.

For a long time, the Member States of the European Union accepted the idea that ultimately the NATO, and with that, the United States of America has been and still it is the main security provider of Western Europe. During the first decades of the European integration's development, this solution might have been seen as a win–win situation for both sides. The Second World War (WWII) devastated Europe and left it with ailing national economies and defence forces, which supported the idea of relying heavily on the help of NATO and the USA. Nevertheless, if we looked closely at the formed (economic) integrations, ECSC, EURATOM and EEC, they all had security and defence related aspects. This trait was especially prominent in ECSC and EURATOM, which addressed aspects to avoid further armed conflicts and wars in Europe, while all three organisations were ultimately aimed to strengthen Europe as a whole (Molnár 2019: 81–82). However, the EEC and later the EU defined itself as a civil, soft and normative power, leaning to use its enlargement, development and trade policies to stabilise not just itself but also its immediate and extended neighbourhood. This initial thinking was represented also in the European Security Strategy (ESS), accepted in 2003, which stated that the EU was contributing to stability within Europe and the wider region (European Council 2009: 16–18). However, the ESS also acknowledged the need for the development of intervention capabilities (Bailes 2005: 17).

Nevertheless, even preceding the conclusions of the ESS, integration in the area of security and defence did not stop at the initial failures, but continued parallel with the ongoing economic integration. The first step of it was the idea of the European Defence Community (EDC), which was too early and too federalist for the countries just regaining their full control over their territories after WWII. The creation of a much less demanding Western European Union (WEU) created a niche for European countries

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to work together in a NATO-like collective defence structure (Cohen 2001). This quasi-independent line of integration was moulded into the European Union with a process started in 1992 and finished in 2011, and this was reflected in the organisation's external actions as well. The EU carried on with the legacy of the WEU as a security provider, introducing military and civilian missions as a hard tool to promote security outside of the EU. To be able to capitalise on the new tools and instruments, the EU needed to modify its treaties to accommodate new elements, as well as to establish new institutions to prepare and oversee these activities. The Treaty of Lisbon gives the current legal framework of the EU, while relatively newly established security and defence related bodies include the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC). The EU established one of its top positions to represent not only the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) but also the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) to third partners, the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission (HR/VP) in 2009.

The EU's Global Strategy of 2016 created the strategic framework for the European Union to develop into a defence union. Then, the introduction of the Strategic Compass in 2022 carried further this idea of strategic autonomy, taking the EU one step forward in the direction to be a great power. These developments together with the deteriorating security situation in the EU's neighbourhood, which was never as precarious as in 2022 and 2023 with the unprovoked Russian aggression in Ukraine, led to further developments in the defence domain.

Historical background

The European integration has been intertwined with security from the very beginnings. In the late 1940s, the continent was left weakened and stripped from its power after WWII. This led to the first international initiatives to enhance security in the continent. In 1947, the Dunkirk Treaty about cordial friendship was signed by France and the United Kingdom (Molnár 2018: 47–48). This was the first attempt to provide reciprocal security guarantees against an outside aggressor. In this setting, the fear of the renewal of German aggression was the main driver of the treaty. Based on this bilateral treaty, on 17 March 1948 France, the United Kingdom, together with Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg (BENELUX states) signed the Brussels Treaty on economic, social and cultural collaboration as well as on collective self-defence. The treaty was to remain in force for 50 years, and called for "all the military and other aid and assistance in their [the signing nations'] power" in case of an armed attack on any of the contracting parties in Europe (The Brussels Treaty 1948). This meant a broadened spectrum of challenges, as a possible Soviet expansion was also considered a tangible threat. The establishment of a defence organisation, the Western Union Defence Organisation (WUDO), on the bases of the Brussels Treaty of 1948 was considered the first concrete step towards the idea

of European unity in the field of defence (Field Marshal The Viscount Montgomery of Alamein 1993: 53; Csiki 2010: 66).

Since 1949, with the creation of NATO, it seemed that any European initiative regarding common defence is redundant. In 1950, the WUDO decided that the military activities of the organisation should be carried out through NATO and thus it did not have a peacetime military structure as its trans-Atlantic counterpart (Bailes – Messervy-Whiting 2011: 9). Just a couple of years later, the failed plan of the EDC was also following this pattern, entrusting the security of Europe to NATO. The plan of the EDC was the result of multiple events. The growing fear of Soviet expansionist ambitions, events to lling European military capabilities like the First Indochina War and the war in Korea engaging French and British forces, and also unsettling events within Europe, as the coup in Prague and the blockade of Berlin all indicated the rearmament of West Germany. This idea was also supported by the USA. However, French mistrust in West German intentions made it difficult to reach a consensus, and Robert Schuman envisioned West Germany's reintegration to Europe via its participation in the ECSC of 1950. However, the USA's proposal made it clear that France should find a solution, since NATO reinforcement in Europe was tied together with the rearmament of West Germany. Thus, the idea of creating a defence organisation within Europe gained momentum. Then French Prime Minister René Pleven introduced a plan to create a common European army in 1950 following the suggestion of Jean Monnet (Pastor-Castro 2006: 388–390). The army was to be subordinated to a supranational authority, under the command of a common European Defence minister, who would have been directly subordinated to the European Defence Council. The army would have consisted of 43 multinational divisions with 100,000 personnel. It was to integrate the entire West German army on a battalion level, while the other signatory parties would have kept their armies and were to contribute division level units to the structure. The European army would have been financed from a common European budget. The treaty was signed on 23 May 1952 in Paris by Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxemburg and the Netherlands. Only four of the signatory parties ratified the treaty. Italy left the question of the ratification for later, whereas the French National Assembly voted against the EDC. Thus, the plan of the EDC failed in 1954 (Andersson 2015: 1; Molnár 2018: 50–53).

Attempts to establish a European defence integration, however, did not cease with the failure of the EDC. In 1954, the United Kingdom proposed the modification of the 1948 Brussels Treaty, which, in its new form included Italy and West Germany as well, in addition to the original members. The Modified Brussels Treaty, establishing the Western European Union, codified a serious commitment towards collective defence. According to Article V. "[I]f any of the High Contracting Parties should be the object of an armed attack in Europe, the other High Contracting Parties will, in accordance with the provisions of Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations, afford the Party so attacked all the military and other aid and assistance in their power" (Brussels Treaty 1954). The WEU, however, inherited the decision made in 1950. The organisation did not have a peacetime military structure; it was leaning on NATO institutions. The question of European defence was thus entrusted again to the NATO practically (Bailes – Messervy-Whiting 2011: 12–13).

Throughout its existence, the WEU remained a reserve organisation besides the NATO. Eventually the EEC was set to enhance the WEU, and in 1992 the Petersberg Declaration was introduced. This enabled the organisation to conduct humanitarian and rescue tasks; peacekeeping tasks; and tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peacemaking (Taylor 1994: 1–2). This resulted in the WEU taking up missions, although only those, which were not wanted by other security guarantors. Notwithstanding, the WEU operated missions, and promoted security through participation (Van Eekelen 1998: 151–152).

Besides the various defence initiatives, the European integration, following a functionalist approach, also continued in the field of economy (Figure 1). In 1957, the Treaty of Rome was signed about the establishment of EURATOM and EEC. These organisations accepted NATO's preferential role in Europe's military defence. However, the European Communities and later the European Union took the leading role on the continent in providing security within the community's borders and externally through soft policy instruments, mainly with its most successful stabilising tools, trade and enlargement policies. Becoming an ever-growing actor in the field of economy, the European community realised the need for political cooperation as well.

The process of political integration started in 1961 with the first Fouchet Plan, aiming for an intergovernmental structure in the field of foreign policy. This initial French proposal nonetheless failed, just like the second, similar Fouchet Plan of 1962, because of the fear from French and West German dominance within the political union. Two consecutive events contributed to the renewal of foreign policy integration: the French assurance of supporting British integration efforts to the EEC (1969) and the Werner Plan on forming a monetary union (1970). In consequence, the Hague summit of foreign ministers tasked Belgian diplomat, Étienne Davignon, to create a plan on possible political cooperation. The Davignon report was presented in 1970 with the plan of the European Political Community (EPC). The EPC kept the intergovernmental structure outside of the Communities' institutional framework, and proposed cooperation in areas where Member States' interests already coincided. Just a decade after its formulation, operational deficiencies became more and more visible, and an institutional reform proposal was presented in 1984. The reform plans led to the institutionalisation of the previously voluntary EPC, and in 1986, the Single European Act established the EPC secretariat, also providing a legal basis for the cooperation (Molnár 2018: 142–149; Gazdag 2011: 244–246; Gálik 2020: 624–627; Penders 1988: 41–42). The three different lines of integration were joined together within the EU over time: the Treaty of Maastricht (1992) integrated the EPC establishing the CFSP and started the integration process of the WEU. Later, with the introduction of the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) by the Treaty of Lisbon (2007), military defence structures and instruments appeared in the EU's toolbox (Molnár 2019: 81–82).

The Common Security and Defence Policy is the youngest policy area of the EU. It has been developed only since the late 1990s with the institutionalisation of its own security and crisis management structures, integrating the tasks and some institutions of the Western European Union (WEU). In the early 2000s, the EU deployed its first CSDP

missions and operations. The CSDP has become an integral part of the CFSP. During the last two decades, parallel to the development of the crisis management structures and to the debate on the EU's relations to NATO, the idea of a European Security and Defence Union, and the concept of strategic autonomy appeared repeatedly (Molnár et al. 2022).

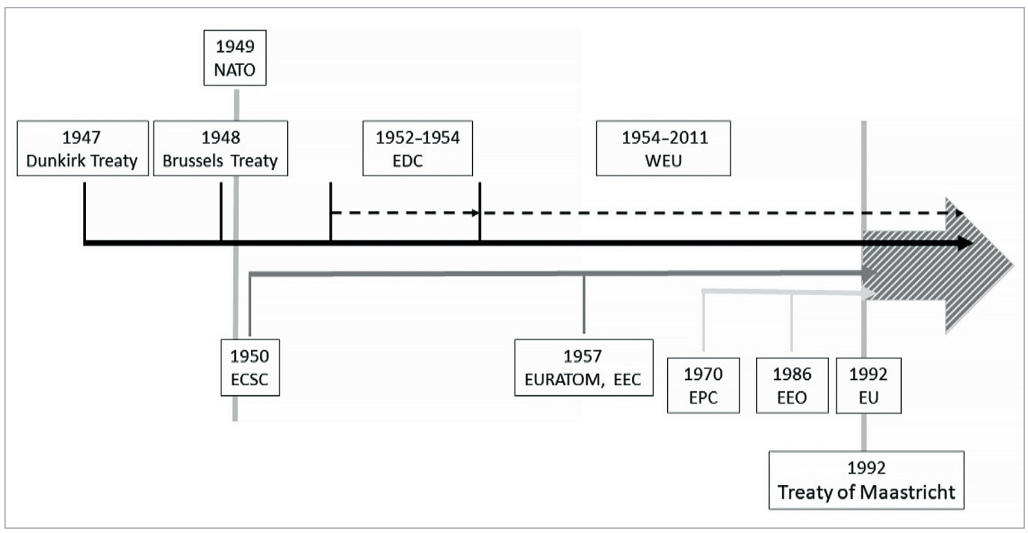

Figure 1: Timeline of European defence integration
Source: Compiled by Mariann Tánczos

Theoretical framework

It is mostly agreed that the EU is a security provider, however, the nature of this has changed over time together with the security situation. Why can the EU step up as such from the beginning of the integration? It is, firstly, an example of a security community. Regional security complexes tend to form such communities, and the EU by definition is one (Kelly 2007: 200–209). The significance of a regional security complex is that "where states no longer expect, or prepare, to use force in their relations with each other" (Buzan 2003: 142), and where a sense of community and common identity is developed. These communities tend to resolve the problems both internally and externally in a peaceful manner (Tusicisny 2007: 426).

Secondly, according to Robert Cooper's typology, states can be divided in three categories: pre-modern, modern and postmodern.[1] The EU itself belongs to the third, postmodern category. In the postmodern world, the imperialistic instincts of the modern

[1] The nations of the pre-modern world lost their monopoly in the use of force, and they show the signs of failed and fragile states, where all is in war with all (e.g. Somalia, Afghanistan and Myanmar). The world of the modern states is full of risks, and existing peace only means a balance in the status quo. These states believe that the borders can be changed by the use of force (e.g. Russia, China and Iran) (Cooper 2002; Cooper 2003; Molnár 2018: 19–20).

world are replaced by moral consciousness. Postmodern states no longer think of solving either internal or external issues with the use of force. The importance of borders fade, but the fundamental building block remains the state; however, supranational organisations like the EU are formed (Cooper 2002; Cooper 2003; Molnár 2018: 19–20).

Now it is also important to establish through what approach the EU operates as a security provider. It is often debated if the EU is a military power, notwithstanding, a great power at all to provide security. Most sources agree that the elements of being a great power are a capable military, economic and political strength, which can influence international affairs. From these elements it is evident that the EU possesses at least one: economic strength (Keohane–Nye 1973: 158–161; Collins English Dictionary s. a.). It can be argued if the EU has the political strength to influence international affairs. If we look at the early stages of the EU's approach to external crises, through the lens of civilian, soft and normative power instruments, it is evident that the EU has political influence to some extent. This approach fuelled the elaboration of the first security strategy of the EU, the European Security Strategy of 2003, which is rather optimistic. Until 2016, normative and soft elements dominated in the EU's external actions (Molnár 2019: 82–83).

The introduction of the EU Global Strategy (EUGS) in 2016 however, brought some changes to this approach. The deteriorating security situation in the neighbourhood (the Russian annexation of the Crimea in 2014 in particular) resulted in the introduction of *realpolitik* in the new strategy. Of course, the EU gave its own characteristics to the old term. In this sense, it means that the EU should cooperate with its partners on equal terms in the areas of security, economy and politics, where both parties see a win–win situation. This might fuel a need for equality in the partaking countries as well. However, it does not mean that the EU must engage with all countries regardless of its values. This idea is called principled pragmatism in the EUGS, which also pledges to guarantee the security of its citizens (Biscop 2019: 30–32). Thus, the EU can be considered a political power through its normative tools. The third element of being a great power is the existence of a capable military. As the previous section outlined, at the dawn of the European integration the failed defence initiatives led to a general lean on NATO military structures to seek the defence of Europe. The question if the EU could or should become a military power surfaced from time to time over the organisation's history, and was reintroduced again with the articulated need for European strategic autonomy after the launching of the European Global Strategy in 2016.

The Strategic Compass offered a practical step towards the long desired military structure, the concept of EU Rapid Deployment Capacity was introduced. This meant a 5,000 troops strong modular unit based on the modified EU battlegroup concept, including land, air and maritime components. This is of course not a common army, but a pre-identified unit (European Council 2022a: 13–14). The war in Ukraine has become a driving force for strategic autonomy and a security and defence union. The Russian aggression in the EU's neighbourhood boosted the will for greater cooperation in the field of defence among EU Member States. New initiatives were introduced, like the Hub for European Defence Innovation (HEDI) on defence innovation in the framework of the European Defence Agency. Moreover, EU Member States spent significantly more

on defence; the expenditures doubled since 2014 from 21 billion EUR to 43 billion EUR in 2021. The Russian aggression boosted the spending even further. This process, however, was also parallel with an intensified EU–NATO cooperation. Nevertheless, the EU and its Member States are becoming more and more autonomous with these investments in their defence. This also shines through the EU's engagement in Ukraine with the wide utilisation of the European Peace Facility, a financial tool, and its engagement through CSDP missions (Andersson 2023).

Institutional framework by the Lisbon Treaty

The Lisbon Treaty provided legal personality to the EU and abolished the former three-pillar system of the EU. The new treaty has brought significant change in the field of foreign and security policy introducing new legal instruments and institutional framework, such as the permanent structured cooperation in the field of defence (Article 42.6 and Protocol 10 of the TEU), the mutual assistance (Article 42.7 of the TEU) and solidarity clause (Article 222 of the TFEU). The Treaty of Lisbon changed the name of the European Security and Defence Policy to the Common Security and Defence Policy. The creation of a permanent chair to the European Council has, among other things, helped the European Union to act in a more united way outside its territories. The creation of the position of the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, who is also Vice-President of the European Commission (HR/VP) in 2009, and the creation of the European External Action Service in 2010 were important steps forward in achieving coherence between the European Union's external actions.

With the mutual assistance clause of the Treaty of Lisbon (Article 42.7), the European Union assumed an important role in the protection of its own territory. However, the text emphasises that NATO remains the primary framework of collective defence for NATO members, as twenty-two out of the 27 EU member states are also members of NATO. In terms of territorial defence, the mutual assistance clause only supplements the collective defence arising from Article 5 of NATO. Article 42.7 does not state the clear obligation to provide military assistance, this article only contains an obligation of aid and assistance by all the means in the power of the member states (which can be military of course).

One of the most significant features of the Treaty of Lisbon was that it promoted a more transparent separation of competences between different levels of governance. This new contractual framework also achieved results in the separation of the competencies of external policies. By abolishing the pillar system of the Treaty of Maastricht, the CFSP is no longer clearly separable from other external actions, yet it remains a special policy which is an exception to all the general rules of the functioning of the EU. The strong connection between the two areas is nonetheless ensured by the European Council with its orientation role, the Foreign Affairs Council (i.e. the Council of the Union in charge of foreign affairs and chaired by the HR, FAC), the European Commission, the European External Action Service and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. The HR has had an increased political role being also

Vice-President of the European Commission and leading the European External Action Service (Molnár–Csiki 2023).

In the context of a complex set of foreign policy instruments, a multifaceted institutional system, (both intergovernmental and community) decision-making processes have developed. The role of the acting institutions varies depending on the policy areas (Lauffer–Hamacher 2016: 31; Vanhoonacker–Pomorska 2017: 97). Nowadays the external relations network of the EU can be described as the continuous interplay and development of at least eight fields: 1. common commercial policy (CCP); 2. development policy; 3. economic, financial and technical cooperation; 4. aid policy; 5. the process of enlargement; 6. association agreements (like the EEA [European Economic Area] or ENP [European Neighbourhood Policy]); 7. diplomatic relations; and 8. the CSFP/CSDP. The EU's commercial policy is closely linked to EU development policy, to the enlargement process and to CFSP. The decision-making processes and institutional systems of these external policies vary considerably and "develop according to their own integration logic" (Vanhoonacker–Pomorska 2017: 98). The association agreement contains chapters on development or economic financial and technical cooperation, and these are closely connected to issues on stabilisation and security.

The CFSP and as an integral part of it, the CSDP continue to operate on an intergovernmental basis. The European Council and the Foreign Affairs Council have a key role in the decision-making processes of the CFSP and CSDP. The European Union is represented in international relations externally by the President of the European Commission, the President of the European Council, the HR/VP, the EU Delegations (EU's diplomatic missions) and the European External Action Service. As an integral part of the CFSP, the CSDP is shaped by the governments of the Member States and the different bodies of the Council. The main instruments for decisions are the general guidelines laid down by the European Council (European Council conclusions) and the decisions adopted by the Council. Decisions are taken by consensus. According to the treaties there are some exceptions to unanimity (e.g. appointing a special representative). Nevertheless, in the case of "vital and stated reasons of national policy", a MS can oppose the adoption of a decision to be taken by qualified majority. The Treaty of Amsterdam introduced the possibility of constructive abstention, when a MS abstaining in a vote, making a formal declaration about it, it is not obliged to apply the decision, but accepts the decision of the Union (Article 31 of the TEU).

One of the key players in the promotion of the CFSP and the CSDP is the European Council, which, with the Treaty of Lisbon, has become a formal EU institution and is chaired by a permanent President. The European Council is composed of the heads of state or government of EU Member States. One of the key roles of the European Council is to set political priorities and guidelines to tackle the EU's foreign, security and defence policy challenges and crises. The political weight of the conclusions issued after the meetings stems mainly from the fact that they express the common political will of the Member States at the highest possible level.

The ministerial level decision-making body, the Council of the European Union (Council), which assembles monthly, and its foreign and security policy formation, the

Foreign Affairs Council (FAC), takes decisions on the CFSP and CSDP. The FAC is composed of foreign, trade or development ministers. There is no separate Council for defence. Defence ministers attend meetings of foreign ministers twice a year. Since the Treaty of Lisbon, meetings of the Foreign Affairs Council (excluding trade formation) have been chaired permanently by the HR/VP. The dossiers on the agenda of the meetings are prepared by COREPER II, which brings together the ambassadors of the Permanent Representatives of the Member States to the EU. The decision-making structure of the Council includes the military and civilian crisis management decision-making bodies set up since 2000: the Political and Security Committee (PSC), the EU Military Committee (EUMC), the Committee for Civilian Aspects of Crisis Management (CIVCOM) and the Politico-Military Group (PMG).

The Political and Security Committee (ambassadorial level) monitors the international situation, makes recommendations to the Council and provides political control and strategic direction of military operations (European Council 2022b). The EU Military Committee is the highest military body in the EU, its members are the Chiefs of Staff of the Member States. The EUMC provides recommendations to the PSC on military matters (European Council 2022d). The CIVCOM provides advice to the PSC on civilian (i.e. non-military areas related primarily to the rule of law and civilian security sector) aspects of crisis management (European Council 2022c). As an intermediate organisational form, the PMG is carrying out preparatory work for the PSC both on military and civilian–military issues in crisis management (European Council 2017).

The European External Action Service was established in July 2010 by a decision of the Council of the European Union (2010/427 / EU) and became operational in 2011. The EEAS is directed by the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (Josep Borrell in 2022). It is an independent body of the European Union, neither affiliated to the Commission nor to the General Secretariat of the Council. The EEAS is made up of a central administrative body and the EU Delegations, its diplomatic missions (2010/427 / EU Art. 1). The EEAS is responsible for assisting the HR/VP in formulating and implementing the Common Foreign and Security Policy. The body is responsible for maintaining diplomatic relations and strategic partnerships with non-EU countries, cooperating with the diplomatic services of international organisations and countries. It also plays a key role in peacebuilding, security, EU development policy, humanitarian aid and crisis response, the fight against climate change and promoting human rights.

The Brussels-based EEAS also cooperates continuously with Member States' Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defence, as well as with EU institutions (such as the European Commission, the Council and the Parliament) and international organisations (such as the UN). Although the EEAS is directed by the HR/VP, the daily tasks are performed under the supervision of the Secretary General. The Secretary General relies on three Deputy Secretaries General. Like national foreign administrations, the EEAS is made up of geographical and thematic directorates. There are five geographical units: 1. Asia-Pacific; 2. Africa; 3. Europe and Central Asia; 4. the wider Middle East; and 5. the Americas. The various thematic units deal with global and multilateral issues, such as human rights,

democracy support, migration, development, crisis response, and administrative and financial issues.

The EEAS has merged and created the various institutionalised structures for crisis management related to the CSDP: the EU Military Staff (EUMS) and, as part of it, the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC) from 2017, the Directorate Integrated Approach for Security and Peace (ISP), the Directorate Security and Defence Policy, the Civilian Planning and Conduct Capability (CPCC) and the EU Intelligence and Situation Centre (IntCen).

The network of diplomatic missions and delegations assists the central administration. In accordance with the Treaty of Lisbon, the EEAS is responsible for the functioning of the EU Delegations, which are the successors of the delegations of the Commissions. The EU has delegations or offices in almost 150 countries and international organisations (UN, AU, OECD, COE, FAO, WTO) and has an extensive network. The delegations are responsible for representing EU citizens and the EU itself, in order to promote the values and interests of the EU. Besides liaising with the host country, they analyse and report on political and economic developments in the country, and support development cooperation through projects and grants. Delegations have an important role in raising the international visibility of the EU (Glume–Rehrl 2017; European External Action Service 2021a; Molnár 2020a: 243–244).

In addition to the network of delegations, EU Special Representatives (EUSRs) also operate in many countries around the world. In order to support the work of the HR/VP, EUSRs contribute to the consolidation of EU policies and interests and the consolidation of peace, stability and the rule of law in fragile regions and countries. The EUSRs contribute to the active political presence of the EU in key countries and regions such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Central Asia, the Horn of Africa, Kosovo, the peace process in the Middle East, the Sahel, and the crisis in the South Caucasus and Georgia (European External Action Service 2021b).

One of the biggest innovations of the Treaty of Lisbon was the introduction of the position of the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. The merging of the three previous positions (High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, introduced by the Treaty of Amsterdam, Commissioner for External Relations of the European Commission and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Member State holding the Presidency of the Council) resulted in a so-called "double-hatted" (sometimes considered a threefold identity because of the presidency) position of the High Representative. The new position became a "quasi-foreign minister". According to Article 18 of the Treaty on the European Union, "the European Council, acting by a qualified majority, with the agreement of the President of the Commission, shall appoint the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. The European Council may end his term of office by the same procedure". As the High Representative also holds the position of Vice-President of the European Commission, his or her appointment must be approved by the European Parliament after a hearing in the European Parliament's Committee.

The main purpose of creating the position of the High Representative was to enable the EU to act more consistently, to bring more continuity and play a stronger role in international politics. The High Representative prepares and chairs the Foreign Affairs Council and, as one of the EC Vice-Presidents, is also responsible for coordinating the external relations of the European Commission. The High Representative's role is to assist in the process of finding compromises among Member States in order to develop a common EU position, and to represent these foreign policy decisions on bilateral and multilateral international platforms. The High Representative complements, but does not replace, Member State diplomacy.

The High Representative is responsible for coordinating and harmonising the various areas of external actions, such as aid, trade, humanitarian aid and crisis response, in addition to traditional diplomatic activities. The HR/VP is also responsible for the management of the European Defence Agency and the European Union Institute for Security Studies. In the field of oversight and representation of foreign and security policy, the HR/VP has practically taken over the role of the country holding the rotating presidency as well, as he or she chairs the Foreign Affairs Council (Molnár 2015; Molnár 2020b: 237–238).

Conclusions

Following long decades of (sometimes unsuccessful) initiatives on European integration in the field of security and defence, the EU seems to achieve its long envisioned unity. This is the result of the trial and error decades starting with the Western Union Defence Organisation, through the failed European Defence Community as well as the Western European Union. This process was also supported by the security strategies of the European Union, which shaped common actions and decisions. The most significant leap forward was, besides the institutional reform dating from 1997, was the EUGS of 2016, which marked the starting point of wider cooperation on security and defence. The process has been building on at least six pillars: the establishment of the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO), the introduction of the Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD), the establishment of the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC), the creation of the European Defence Fund (EDF), and the establishment of the European Peace Facility (EPF) and the introduction of the EU Rapid Deployment Capacity in the EU's Strategic Compass of 2022. These are the building blocks of the European security and defence union (ESDU), which was described in 2017, by the European Commission. The "Reflection Paper on the Future of European Defence" underlined the need for the establishment of an ESDU (European Commission 2017: 11). Although the definition of the ESDU is still very broad, the gradual realisation of deeper European defence cooperation began after the adoption of the Global Strategy step-by-step based on the six pillars. These achievements were unimaginable just a decade ago (Molnár–Csiki 2023; European Commission 2016).

The war in Ukraine also gave impetus to the cooperation in the field of security and defence among EU Member States. The formerly unimaginable scale of aggression in the immediate neighbourhood resulted in increased military budgets, and intensified procurement of military equipment in EU Member States. The EU also capitalised on its existing tools and instruments, like CSDP action and the EPF to show its autonomous willingness to support Ukraine. Until May 2023 the EU contributed 4.6 billion EUR to Ukraine under the EPF framework, while it also decided to support training trough a new CSDP mission, launched in October 2022, EUMAM Ukraine. These actions show that the EU is willing and capable to act alone in the field of security and defence; however, development in this domain is still ongoing. The war in Ukraine can result in a strengthened defence cooperation both within the EU, and between EU and NATO. The increased need in cooperation can also lead the EU's way forward to establish a well-defined ESDU in the long term.

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